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# EDITORIAL COMMENT

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The AUCEA e-Journal is an important forum for exchanging ideas about Community Engagement, for reporting research, sharing philosophical ideas and opening projects to peer scrutiny. It is also a showcase of some of the work currently being done in Australia. In most disciplines, Australia has been able to access work from North America, Europe and elsewhere and emerge with a distinctively Australian view. This is occurring in Community Engagement as well. We have been exposed to international speakers and authors and this has been influential, as Australia was a little behind in entering the field in a concerted way. Already there are strong examples of a distinctively Australian approach, which is culturally and geographically located. We are generating new knowledge, exploring different ways of doing things and improving outcomes for the University, its staff and students and the community partners.

Like any other area of pursuit in Universities, there is a need for a scholarly framework for Community Engagement, with theoretical underpinnings and rigour in what we do. In this way we can ensure that we move from short term outcomes to longer term greater good, to an understanding of impact and to influence public policy. The challenge is to maintain sufficient flexibility to ensure diversity. This done, the next phase of development of Community Engagement in Australia can be met with confidence.

Professor Emeritus Barbara van Ernst AM  
Editor

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## Enhancing school to university engagement: an investigation of three pilot programs.

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**Key words:** Student aspiration, engagement, Higher Education participation

### Abstract

*Regional growth and sustainability is an issue of concern to many rural and peri-urban regions of Australian including outer eastern Melbourne which has experienced a decline in relative economic growth. Regional growth and competitiveness objectives can be realised through a culture of enterprise and education. Educational institutions have a key role to play because of their capacity to add to human capital and regional outcomes generally (Garlick, Taylor & Plummer, 2005). An audit of current regional skills and knowledge in the outer east of Melbourne conducted in 2007 demonstrated declining skill and knowledge requirements for the occupations of regional residents (Langworthy, Esposto & Feldman, 2007). Concurrently the region has also experienced lower participation and retention rates in higher education than the State of Victoria on average*

*A study of student aspiration undertaken in collaboration with 21 secondary schools in outer eastern Melbourne in 2006 investigated the aspirations of Year 10 students. Two hundred and forty-five students completed a survey instrument designed to gauge the links between parental, school and other influences on student attitudes. The study also investigated the combined effect on aspirations generally and more specifically on academic work and enterprise aspirations. Most of the surveyed students indicated that they planned to go on to study at university (Langworthy, Mawson & O'Connor, 2007).*

*However, the current destinations of school leavers in the Outer East indicate a much lower actual participation in tertiary education. Of those students who are offered tertiary positions, fewer students take up the offer compared to students across the state of Victoria on average. The reasons most often cited by school leavers in the Outer East for not studying are that they are 'not ready', 'it is irrelevant' or that they are 'not sure of coping' (Centre for Post Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, 2006). Therefore, although the majority of year 10 students in the Outer East of Melbourne may aspire to university, not all will actually turn the aspiration into reality (Langworthy, Mawson & O'Connor, 2007).*

*A range of models involving the engagement of universities with schools in order to increase higher education participation (for example, Farrell & Farrell, 2000; Monash University, 2006; Stuart & Murray, 2006; University of Pennsylvania, 2006; Koerner, 2006; University of Western Sydney, 2007) demonstrate the effectiveness of engaging university students with school students.*

*This paper examines the regional impetus for school and university engagement and the effectiveness of three pilot programs undertaken in collaboration with regional secondary schools in the outer east of Melbourne in 2007.*

*Initial evaluation of the pilot indicated that both university and school students report high levels of engagement in their learning. University students were able to identify graduate attributes developed in the process whilst surveyed school students demonstrated stronger intention to attend university.*

### Introduction

A focus on increasing student aspirations to undertake higher education in Outer Eastern Melbourne (OEM) arose from concern about regional sustainability. Previous planning schemes and now Melbourne 2030 have placed definite limits on urban growth in the region; the population tends to be ageing with pockets of socio-economic disadvantage (in the outer areas a high proportion of residents earn less than \$300 per week); and the economy is dominated by small and micro business rather than large industry. There is concern also about the skills and knowledge base of the community. Less than nine percent of residents have a Bachelor Degree or higher and over half of the population has no post school qualification at all (Langworthy & Brunt, 2005)

Outer Eastern Melbourne does not have the employment capacity to provide jobs for all regional resident workers. The fewest jobs are located in Yarra Ranges (of the 67,555 employed residents in Yarra Ranges,

44,030 or 65 percent travel out of the Shire for work) followed closely by Maroondah. Knox has a greater number of jobs but still significantly fewer than resident workers. In addition the lowest percentage of OEM employed residents work in Knox. The lack of local jobs presents a disadvantage to workers and to the local economy (Langworthy, Esposto & Feldman, 2007).

Whilst the period from 1991 to 2006 saw strong employment growth in both OEM and Melbourne SD, the patterns of this growth bear closer examination. In line with the findings of research into the changing nature of work, part time work is now taking a significantly greater share of employment growth. During this time women's participation in the workforce has also grown and thus it is not surprising to find that the growth of employment for women outstripped the growth in employment for men in both regions. This reflects trends Australia wide. (Langworthy, Esposto & Feldman, 2007).

An audit of current regional skills and knowledge conducted in 2007 demonstrated declining skill and knowledge requirements of the occupations of regional residents (Langworthy, Esposto & Feldman, 2007). Overall the trend away from high skilled occupations towards lower skilled occupations is a concern for the region. The trend can be explained to a certain degree by the dominant regional industries that tend to favour lower skilled occupations but the growth in the number of residents employed in lower skilled occupations throws into focus the issue of regional job creation.

The study raises a number of questions for government, local government and education. Given that the growth of globalisation and the knowledge economy suggests that in order to survive, regions need to be outward looking, create competitive advantage, invest in innovation, training and development and encompass the value of knowledge as a factor of production [reference], the trend in regional skill and knowledge intensity is a strong warning sign. Why are we not seeing the creation of the more skill and knowledge intense jobs for residents?

Based on tertiary application rates and numbers of students who do not complete the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) in the Outer East, we know many students do not aspire to further education. The On Track survey data, collected on the destination of all Victorian Year 12 school leavers, suggest that many students are employed post VCE. However the nature of the jobs is of concern, given that much of the employment is low skill and perhaps part-time and/or casual in nature.

A recent Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004) report '*Snapshots from the Edge: Young people and service providers in the urban fringe of Melbourne*' identified there are limited employment opportunities for young people within their local communities in Outer Eastern Melbourne, and further, young people carry an additional financial burden associated with having to travel further for work. Although young people can find work locally, they felt restricted by the variety and type of work and that to get a 'real job' they have to travel closer to the city.

Regional growth and competitiveness objectives can be realised through a culture of enterprise, and education institutions have a key role to play because of their capacity to add to human capital and regional outcomes generally (Garlick, Taylor & Plummer, 2005). They argue the greatest impact on regional growth will come from a combination of greater human capital, access to high technology, greater industry specialisation and less government intervention.

Enterprise and innovation is valued and encouraged as an economic development tool to varying degrees by all levels of Australian governments. This backdrop underpins the enterprise education priority in the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* that was endorsed in 1999 by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA, 2000) but how is this playing out in regional schools?

### **Student Aspirations**

A study of student aspiration undertaken in collaboration with 21 secondary schools in outer eastern Melbourne in 2005 investigated the aspirations of Year 10 students. Two hundred and forty-five students completed a survey instrument designed to gauge the links between parental, school and other influences on student attitudes and the combined effect on aspirations generally and more specifically on academic work and enterprise aspirations (Langworthy, Mawson & O'Connor, 2007).

The entrepreneurship research literature consistently finds that despite the fact that some high profile entrepreneurs manage to achieve success without a solid educational background, generally entrepreneurs in developed countries at least exhibit higher rates of success with a good general education (for example, Gibb,

1996; Scott, Rosa & Klandt; 1998; Hindle & O'Connor, 2005). Are we, as a region fostering enterprising young people who aspire to higher levels of education, creativity and the development of the globally competitive business that will ensure future economic viability and community resilience?

From a regional development perspective, it is encouraging that the majority of year 10 students surveyed intended to complete Year 12 and just over half were planning to study the VCE in Year 11, whilst 17 percent were planning Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the VCE. A small proportion of students were planning to undertake the Victorian certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and fewer than five percent were interested in a School Based Apprenticeship. They also planned to work and study within a 40km radius of their home which tends to suggest the current desirability of staying within or close to the region (Langworthy, Mawson & O'Connor, 2007).

Most of the surveyed students planned to go on to study at university. However the current destinations of school leavers in the Outer East indicate a much lower actual participation in tertiary education. Of those students who are offered tertiary positions, fewer students take up the offer compared to students across the state of Victoria on average. The reasons most often cited by school leavers in the Outer East for not studying are that they are 'not ready', 'it is irrelevant' or that they are 'not sure of coping' (Centre for Post Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, 2006). Therefore, although the majority of year 10 students in the Outer East of Melbourne may aspire to university, not all will actually turn the aspiration into reality.

A relatively high proportion of students (14.5 percent) were unsure of their study plan in Year 11 at the time of completing the survey (early Term 3). Perhaps this level of indecision may have an impact on what students actually do beyond their schooling in terms of further study.

Just over one quarter of Year 10 students indicated an interest in establishing a business, which is consistent with a similar percent of Year 12 graduates who were asked a similar question during a phone interview. This figure is well below the 68.2 percent of students in a previous study (Department of Industry, Science and Resources, 2001) who indicated an interest in establishing a business.

The survey identified a proportion of students who plan to establish a business which will employ others. This group offers the highest potential of developing a regional economy and avoiding the self-employment trap of a glut of low skilled and low income businesses. Following the Schoon and Parsons (2002) observation that society is increasingly expecting higher levels of education, the opportunity for education institutions is to tap into this group of growth oriented young enterprisers to inspire the development of their business activities with relevant and targeted educational support. The student aspirations study highlighted the importance of student aspirations and further the challenge of bringing those aspirations to fruition. Building a close relationship between school and university was identified as one methodology for achieving that aim.

### **School and university engagement**

There are strong drivers for school/university engagement that make it clear that this collaboration is a strong community engagement strategy for both since the mutual benefit is clear.

Real projects give university students an opportunity to apply their learning and reflect on the application of theory. Beyond discipline specific skill development and academic scholarship there is a need to prepare students more fully for the world of their future. Recognition of this need has inspired radical rethinking and the development of new models for teaching effectiveness and undergraduate education in institutions that have historically valued their research mission above all else. These models acknowledge the symbiotic relationship between all the participants in university learning (Boyer, 1996; Holland, 2001). Student projects provide an opportunity to enhance the development of graduate attributes identified now by most Australian universities. The same benefits of engaged learning apply to school students – applied and collaborative projects provide the opportunity to inspire, excite and motivate.

For universities, schools are a key regional stakeholder with whom long term relationships can be built. Building student projects with schools is practical in that curriculum and protocols can be constructed for the long term as

opposed to one-off projects for which support is extremely resource intensive. University student learning will be enhanced by a teaching mentoring role in schools; and student projects in schools will have a major impact on secondary school student educational aspirations (Holland, 2005; Harkavy, 2005).

Such a relationship refocuses student recruitment, shifting the emphasis from marketing and advertising to maximising educational synergy. In addition the relationship has the potential to impact long term on regional and community sustainability. Schools have the natural potential to be a focus for community and thus the partnership can promote wider learning, research and community development. In 2006 an internal learning and teaching performance university grant related was won to further research and develop university student projects in schools.

#### Developing a pilot program in Outer Eastern Melbourne

As a result of the local research discussions within Swinburne University Faculty of Higher Education Lilydale led to the formation of an executive group who met with secondary school principals in the region to discuss ways in which schools and the university could work together to raise student aspirations. Ideas canvassed included: working with Year 10 students; Year 11/12 orientation sessions held on campus; wider use of university facilities; and enrichment subjects that could give participating students bonus points for entry to Swinburne.

An executive level steering committee met throughout 2006 and a number of project models were researched. After an initial project forum/workshop (December 2006) hosted by Swinburne University of Technology together with nine local secondary colleges (Emerald Secondary College, Healesville High School, Lilydale High School, Lilydale Heights Secondary College, Monbulk College, Mooroolbark Secondary College, Pembroke Secondary College Senior Campus, Upper Yarra Secondary College, and Upwey High School), two project steering committees were formed to facilitate the development and implementation of partnership projects. The purpose of this work was twofold: to enhance the learning and engagement of university students; and to enhance the learning and raise the aspirations of regional secondary school students.

The inaugural "Enhancing School to University Engagement" (ESUE) Project Steering Committee was held on 14.03.07. Steering Committee members included staff from the Centre for Regional Development Swinburne University of Technology; academic staff from the Faculties of Higher Education at Lilydale and Life and Social Sciences at Hawthorn; and school staff from nine regional schools. The initial Steering Committee divided into two cluster groups each focusing on different pilot project models.

Three pilot projects were successfully completed in partnership with five of the regional secondary colleges represented on the steering committee (three secondary colleges collaborated on a single project). A total of 18 university students and 74 secondary school students participated in the pilot projects and representatives from eight schools attended the final project forum held at Swinburne University of Technology at Lilydale. Overall project management was co-ordinated through the Centre for Regional Development with learning programs supervised by Swinburne academic staff and senior school staff.

#### Project models

Project models were considered in the context of three broad criteria i.e. those that provided an alternative to the ENTER score as pathways into University, those that enhanced the transition from school to university, and those that utilised curriculum-based strategies. Some of the models researched include the following:

##### *Aptitude Tests – alternative pathway model*

Access and equity schemes within many universities acknowledge that potential university students come from a diverse range of backgrounds and life circumstances. Socio-economic status, educational opportunities, cultural diversity and linguistic characteristics may impact on ENTER scores to disadvantage some applicants for university places (VTAC, 2006). Some studies question the efficacy of ENTER scores to determine capacity and readiness for university studies (Levy & Murray, 2006). A variety of aptitude tests, tailored to test a range of skills

relative to course content, are currently offered as an alternative to ENTER scores to determine offers for university places.

The aptitude test considered for the schools project was the uniTEST which has been developed jointly by Cambridge Assessment and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The test has been designed to assess generic thinking and reasoning skills (across the two broad domains of: mathematics and science; and humanities and social sciences) deemed necessary for successful completion of university education. These skills are tested during a 96 item multiple choice test taken over 2½ hours. Areas tested include: qualitative and formal reasoning (dealing with information and problem solving); critical reasoning (decision making and argument analysis); and verbal and plausible reasoning (interpretation and socio-cultural understanding) (Cambridge Assessment & ACER, 2006a).

Monash University piloted the UniTEST at its Berwick campus in 2006. Early results from the pilot show the test identified a large pool of applicants who had the aptitude to study at university but weren't applying to doing so" (Monash University, 2006; Cambridge Assessment & ACER, 2006b). The University intends to monitor the academic progress of students admitted under this program to assess the ongoing viability of this form of admission.

#### *Diploma of Foundation Studies – alternative pathway model*

Whilst in the Australian context Foundation degrees have been used as bridging degrees for International students and those who have not performed well at VCE level, internationally new models of Foundation Degrees are linking the workplace, community and university to provide more meaningful learning and pathways through to accreditation and further study. The model provided by Foundation Direct established at the University of Portsmouth and significantly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council in the United Kingdom (HEFCE) gives some interesting insights into 'just in time' learning and potential methodologies for engaging with off-site students (University of Portsmouth, 2007; HEFCE, 2007).

The Diploma of Foundations Studies offered at the Monash University Gippsland campus was a model considered for the ESUE project. The Diploma is intended for recent schools leavers and TAFE students whose ENTER scores did not qualify them for University entrance. The Diploma tends to enrol students who would be considered academically "at risk".

Students undertake four foundation subjects (two of which are available and increasingly taken by mainstream arts students) and four electives chosen from Arts, Art & Design, Business & Economics, Civil & Environmental Engineering, Education, Information Technology, Nursing, and Science undergraduate courses. An evaluation study undertaken by Levy & Murray (2006) examined three years (2000 - 2003) of the Foundation Degree and discovered that in each year demand was over double the places available. The program had steadily expanded from 28 in 1999 to 82 in 2002. The evaluation assessed the outcomes for 91 students.

Eight out of ten students completed the Diploma (an aggregate of 86%) and eight out of ten were offered degree places; forty-seven percent have continued to study in the degree program of their first choice. The aggregate retention rate of these students was 73%. Of the 40 students who undertook the Diploma in 2000, 25 were enrolled in third year in 2002 (100% retention from 2001).

#### ***The Tertiary Awareness Program Pilot (TAPP) – transition model***

Central Queensland University (CQU) piloted a Tertiary Awareness Program (TAPP) in 1998. This program was highly evaluated in terms of subsequent university enrolment of students and participant perception. However research indicated that students tended to go to Metropolitan universities rather than CQU. (Central Queensland University, 2006).

The program evolved into a flexible format which catered for the needs of both local and remote students. Local students were offered a "program over a period of 10 weeks (2 – 3 hours per week) in the university environment where a high degree of 'socialisation' could be experienced" (Farrell & Farrell, 2000). Students could also stay



on-campus “for three full days of workshops, lectures, tutorials and other on-campus university activities. Topics covered in the program included: further study options, employment opportunities, study skills and additional information about Youth Allowance, Commonwealth Support and other issues” (Central Queensland University, 2006). The program was self-funded. Although targeted at low SES students, the fee-for service nature of the program did not appear to be a disincentive because there was no competing university within 650 kilometres. The TAPP program at CQU was discontinued after 2003.

It seems that some of the barriers for this type of program include:  
university restructure and/or relocation of program staff resulting in a lack of effective program coordination, staff motivation and commitment.  
difficulties in translating a faculty-based program to a ‘whole of university’ program;  
lack of strategic direction within the university regarding community engagement;  
uncertainty regarding long term project planning;  
funding issues;  
difficulty evaluating/quantifying outcomes; and  
difficulty evaluating value to the university.

### ***Academically-based community-service courses – curriculum-based model***

An international example of these sorts of courses can be found at Pennsylvania University. To fulfill the Compact’s commitment to local engagement, the university is collaborating with local communities on many initiatives to improve public education, public health, economic development, employment opportunities, the quality of life, and the physical landscape of West Philadelphia and Philadelphia as well as to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth throughout the region.

One way that Pennsylvania University does this is through academically based service learning where community service is embedded in units of study all of which promote better health and educational outcomes for local schoolchildren and their families. In the autumn of 2005, more than 850 students and 25 faculty members participated in service learning courses. Examples of units of study that have community based projects (University of Pennsylvania, 2006)

#### ***Prevention of Tobacco Smoking in Adolescents***

Students collaborate with teachers in West Philadelphia to prepare and deliver lesson plans to 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders. The undergraduates survey and evaluate middle school children to prevent addiction to tobacco smoke during adolescence. Course requirements include regular attendance at all lectures, a thorough comprehension of the course readings, participation in class discussion, application of the readings and lectures to a problem-oriented research project.

#### ***Community Math Teaching Project***

Students teach a series of hands-on activities in math classes at secondary schools. The semester starts with an introduction to successful approaches for teaching math in urban high schools. The rest of the semester is devoted to a series of weekly hands-on activities designed to teach fundamental aspects of geometry. During the first class students review the relevant mathematical background, during the second class students teach the hands-on activity to a small group of high school students.

An example of an Australian University who has embraced the challenge of developing this sort of curriculum is the University of Western Sydney. In this university program, “*Learning through Community Service*,” students can choose to join one of 12 cohorts undertaking a 20 credit point elective. The units involve a compulsory three day symposium, online learning and two face to face tutorials over the course of the semester. During the semester students are expected to undertake a total of 100 hours work with clients or in service agencies. The units also involve five assessment tasks (University of Western Sydney, 2007) School are a natural community partner in this program.

### ***Youth Leadership Model – curriculum-based model***

These programs can often also be extra curricula but involve university students and secondary school students in leadership programs and community projects that do lend themselves to inclusion in assessable curriculum.

In the Student Leadership Program (SALP) program at Melbourne University students undertake the work voluntarily with non-for-profit community organisations. This work is listed on transcripts but not given credit (University of Melbourne, 2008).

In Western Sydney, the *Maximising Potential in Macarthur (MPN) Youth Leadership Development* project (University of Western Sydney, 2006) was developed by a partnership between the University of Western Sydney and Future Achievement Australia Pty Ltd and involved university staff and students, and industry and community members as accredited volunteer leadership coaches for secondary students. The program included individual training for coaches and collaborative training for coaches and secondary students. Secondary schools selected student participants based on their own leadership criteria. The program, highly evaluated by participants, identified key focus areas of self-knowledge, personal skills/attributes and program skills. Most students subsequently became school leaders and over 98% indicated that they would not have done so without the program (University of Western Sydney, 2007).

### **Peer Tutors/mentors – curriculum based model**

The most common model is the Peer Tutor/peer mentor model. Good examples of this type of program can be found at Flinders University, the INSPIRE program (Koerner, 2006) and University of South Australia. In 2002 a pilot peer tutoring program was initiated where 92 UniSA students peer tutored in a range of year eleven subjects at an R-12 school located in a low socio-economic area. The secondary school hosting the peer tutors had traditional low rates of transition to university. The program is now established in the university curriculum (University of South Australia (2008).

Peer tutoring models, usually one university student to one secondary school student or small group of secondary school students, are very successful but labour intensive and usually require at least one full time co-ordinator as well as a training program for the tutors/mentors

These models were presented for discussion at the first “*Enhancing School to University Engagement*” forum/workshop in 2006 and ongoing discussions distilled preferential project models which were developed into active pilot projects within five secondary colleges in 2007.

### **Pilot School Projects 2007**

#### **Making a Difference**

A cluster of three geographically aligned schools, Emerald Secondary College, Monbulk College and Upwey High School in partnership with the University developed a collaborative model for a single shared project with a focus on raising student aspirations.

The *Making a Difference* project challenged secondary school students to think about something they would like to change about their world. School students in partnership with Swinburne students as ‘learning coaches’ researched their chosen topic and conceptualised ways in which they might focus their ideas into some action plan for *making a difference*. The focus of the student work was on developing a presentation for the final forum.

Thirty-six Year 9 students (twelve students from each of the participating schools) were selected by their schools to participate in this program. Different criteria were used by each school in the selection process but generally these students tended to be seen as students who were not achieving their potential. Swinburne students, nominated by academics, were invited to apply for volunteer positions as ‘student coaches’ for this pilot project. These students were then interviewed and twelve applicants were selected to participate in the program. At the completion of the project Swinburne students received a letter of commendation and a Dean’s Award for their participation.

Project stages included: a project launch held at Swinburne University of Technology Lilydale on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007; structured student activities with Swinburne students as coaches; and participation in a final project forum held at Swinburne University of Technology Lilydale on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

### **Multimedia and “Connexions”**

A single school project model was developed for Mooroolbark College based on the school's interest in multimedia. Swinburne University students and school students collaborated in the process of writing feature articles for publication, and creating an online weblog/blog. Leader newspaper group agreed to publish a selection of the writings and host the online forum.

Twenty-five year nine students from a 'Connexions' class at Mooroolbark College and five students from a third year Media and Communications unit (LSM302 Information Society) participated in the pilot project. University students' work was recognised as part of their formal assessment.

Project stages included: structured classroom activities at Mooroolbark College; an on-campus experience at Swinburne University Lilydale; and participation in a final project forum held at Swinburne University of Technology Lilydale on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

Like the *Making a Difference* project, the student groups focussed on issues pertinent to young people, for example, bullying, body image, depression and youth suicide. Not surprisingly, the media students demonstrated an emphasis on representing a problem. From their perspective lack of transport and accessible youth entertainment were important issues. In contrast to the social justice focus of the *Making a Difference* group, they tended not to focus on what they could do personally about the problem.

### **Tertiary Orientation**

Project planning with Upper Yarra Secondary College (UYSC) identified the possibility of developing a project which focused on student motivation and aspirations within the subject unit of “Civic and Work Education”.

UYSC staff selected fifteen students to participate in the project. Five Swinburne staff (3 academics and 2 project steering committee members) and one volunteer Swinburne student provided a program of activities for UYSC.

The project aimed to provide information about university education and included an on campus orientation day at Swinburne University of Technology Lilydale campus. The underlying intent was to develop an ongoing rapport/relationship with University staff and students.

This project was delivered in four stages: a university staff presentation/workshop at UYSC; an on campus 'University experience' day; and a second university staff presentation/workshop at UYSC. The final project forum at Swinburne University of Technology Lilydale on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2007 was the final project activity. This final forum brought together all those involved in the pilot projects and was designed to continue the learning experience and celebrate the achievements of the project.

Students from this group also developed presentations for the forum. These presentations focused on career paths and opportunities to go on to further study.

Planning for additional pilot programs with three schools where projects were related to marketing and business curriculum for both university and school students stalled in 2007. These schools were invited and participated in the final project forum. Although still notionally possible for second semester 2008, continuation of these projects is not confirmed.

## Evaluation

Project evaluation had four major components:

Secondary school student feedback based on an initial brief survey completed at the initial forum for the *Making a Difference* pilot and in class for the other two projects and a second brief survey completed by students at the final project forum;

University student evaluation focus groups that investigated in depth student learning and wider perceptions of the benefits and limitations of the pilot projects; and

Staff evaluation gathered through project meetings and a final evaluation session held at the university in November 2007.

## Student perspective

Response to the program from secondary school students was overwhelmingly positive in terms of their rating of the forum and project overall although it should be noted that the food provided at the university events was most commented upon. Not all attending students completed the evaluation survey for which responses tended to be brief but enthusiastic. All but one of the students completing the survey indicated an intention to attend university.

The university student learning evaluation is part of an ongoing process for which ethics approval (SUHREC Project 0708/123 Enhancing School to University Engagement (ESUE): Assessing Student Learning) has been obtained and for which future papers will explore in more detail. However, focus group transcripts are revealing powerful learning and personal growth and change in involved students.

*I found overall it really, really worked well, a worthwhile thing for me to do. I thought they were beautiful and I actually really enjoyed that challenge ... it's such a hard time in your life as well when you're fifteen and I'd love to be able to get in there and talk to kids who were underachieving and don't feel like they're worth much and be able to help them make a difference, to feel that they can have an impact. I thought that was .... huge benefits in that.*

Students were able to see that they made university seem more accessible to school students:

*I'm just a normal person, I don't look like a geek, and I'm at university. And they're like, 'and what are you going to do after this year?' and I'm like well I'm going to go and do more and they're like, 'wow, I don't think I'd ever do that', but ... they were starting to talk about what they want to do.*

The university students developed an appreciation of the talents and abilities of the schools students with whom they worked, impressed with their skills abilities and enthusiasm

*I couldn't believe how well they all did. At that age in front of all those people. You just sat there with your mouth open and like oh my god, these kids have achieved so much and looking at some of the presentations, you were like, I don't think I could have done that when I was 15 at school... it's amazing.*

The university students were able to identify that they had developed skills in time management, project management, group facilitation and leadership during the project the project. They were also able to analyse benefits and constraints relating to organisational issues especially relating to their orientation in schools. It was clear students felt much more comfortable running sessions in the university where they had knowledge of and to a certain degree control of access to technology and resources, for example. They also felt that school students were much more focussed and enthusiastic away from the distractions in the school situation.

Reflecting on the stated university graduate attributes, the students identified that the project particularly enhanced being adaptable and managing change, awareness of environmental diversity and operating effectively in working situations. Thinking about the attribute of being entrepreneurial and contributing to innovation and development within their business, workplace or community, one student commented ... *I think*

*we all have rather big ideas, ourselves. And rather than just implementing our ideas and putting out our ideas, it's kind of been creative in sculpting their ideas.*

Students were able to identify ways in which their behaviour has changed since being involved in the project:

*I'm more patient*

*I'm less of a control freak, 'cause I can get pretty strict on what I want to do. It was good to learn how not to take over their work. I had to sit back and go I'm not going to take over everything.*

*...so now, this semester especially, I'm doing more group assignments, I guess I've noticed, I'm a bit more attentive. I listen a bit more, don't just focus on myself because that's what I used to do, just focus on myself and now I'm a bit more watching what everyone else does ... I never would have put my hand up to be a leader, but both times lately I have.*

They were also able to identify changes in their peers:

*Yeah, I mean, you've had a class with him? He used to talk and argue with the teachers every five minutes, you're wrong and like. After that he stopped because I think he realised that you can't always win and like to have 15 year olds prove that to you....*

Students were able to identify that the project allowed them the opportunity to apply theory and test their learning in practice. This was particularly relevant for Social Science students

*Doing a psych major, you're not actually allowed to have contact with any people. You're not actually; they're so strict about those things. ...*

*I'm not saying I was applying psychology; I wasn't being a psychologist, but just in your degree, getting out and doing something practical...*

*getting out of the books and going, well, why am I learning this...and talking to people with all their complexities and difficulties and wonderful attributes is I think really worthwhile.*

For students, being recommended to be part of the program was particularly important they felt special and empowered... *It was a confidence boost for me actually.*

### **Staff perspective**

The benefits identified by staff in the evaluation meeting held in November 2007 fell into two main categories: the strength/positive nature of the relationships built by staff and students from Swinburne University with the staff and students from the Schools; and the raised motivation aspiration and learning of the students involved.

Staff highlighted the raised aspirations for participating students and increased motivation, enthusiasm and self belief amongst the students as observed by school staff, for example: a "can do" attitude; a belief that "it is possible" *[to achieve project outcomes and/or make a difference]*, "belief in themselves" *[raised confidence]* and the belief that they "had a voice" and that they were "listened to".

Staff noted that the mentoring role undertaken by the University students provided a new model of learning – "not a typical classroom"; and the importance of raised awareness of 'University life' for school students whose family have no previous experience of, or family culture that encourages students to aspire to, University education.

The process of being selected as part of a 'special group' increased motivation to achieve. The students seemed to be encouraged by the selection process that encouraged a belief that "you've got what it takes". This also encouraged leadership and commitment to issues of importance.

Improved skills noted by school and university staff included skills in: time management, team building; project management; collaboration; communication; goal setting; problem solving; and social interaction. Staff felt that school students demonstrated improved maturity in thinking about future aspirations and were making more realistic choices.

Features of the overall pilot project deemed to be essential elements were:

Student selection (to engage students on a voluntary basis who would benefit from the project but who would also have the capacity to undertake and complete the project activities or to develop a compulsory program for "at risk" students);

The on campus experience which was a highlight of the project for all groups involved, helped to demystify University life; and seemed to change perceptions about future study options;

The Forum which provided an important formal conclusion to the project; a focus for project deadlines and preparation of presentations; valuable networking opportunities; and an opportunity for students to see how other students, from different schools, had developed their projects; and

Embedding learning and teaching outcomes into project activities in both the University and School curricula in order to ensure the ongoing viability of the project; this is considered to be an essential structural element of the project to ensure project continuity over a number of years.

## Conclusion

The university school pilot projects were deemed by all participants to have both significant benefits and opportunities for further development and thus the project steering committee decided that the pilot phase should be extended into 2008.

Work with four of the five schools continues embedded in the third year media and work integrated learning subjects.

Although still notionally possible for new projects to be run in second semester 2008 with the involved schools that had no projects in 2007, continuation of these projects is hampered by university constraints including: staff workload; the need to obtain subject accreditation; and issues related to funding, co-ordination and student supervision. Investigation into the development of a sustainable model continues.

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## Indicators for effective partnerships: Organisational implications for measuring service to international, national and local communities

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**KEY WORDS:** measurement, evaluation, organisational policy development

### ABSTRACT

*Substantive university-community engagement activity is transformative. Within this activity, members of each organisation come to deepen their understanding of their and their partner's work. The consequences of this activity often include reshaping organisational policy environments to support engagement.*

*Deakin University's next Strategic Plan 2008-2012 will be titled 'Delivering Effective Partnerships'. In 2007 we conducted research to develop and test measures that could be used to assess the effectiveness of Deakin's partnerships. Potential measures were explored through scoping interviews with key informants, an on-line survey completed by Deakin partnership coordinators, and partnership case studies.*

*In addition to exploring a range of potential measures, our research also documented a high degree of organisational commitment to delivering effective partnerships. However findings also suggested that there were some gaps in relation to defining the nature and scope of partnership activity, and in adequately supporting the level of deep collaboration required for mutual reciprocity and transformation. Importantly, however, we also identified a range of contingent organisational issues that need to be considered when developing the Strategic Plan:*

- 1. How to include the values and scholarship of engagement into policy and practice about partnerships;*
- 2. How best to define what 'partnerships' can be, how they fulfil community engagement, and what an effective partnership would look like in various contexts;*
- 3. How to ensure that Deakin's corporate culture and practices support the notion that effective engagement is a two-way process that can – and must – result in transformation not only for the university's partners, but also the university;*
- 4. How best to ensure that the University's governance, management and administrative processes support effective engagement:*
  - How best to organise Deakin's policy environment and activity across the university to support the delivery of effective partnerships;*
  - How best to establish a coordinated knowledge management system across the university to support staff in their efforts to establish, monitor, evaluate and report on their partnership activity*
  - How to ensure that community engagement is built into staff performance planning and review cycles, work plans, and promotion assessment criteria.*
- 5. The resources that will need to be allocated to assist all staff to deliver effective partnerships*

*This paper will describe our research, and discuss the implications of these findings for all universities seeking to achieve substantive engagement with their partners.*



## INTRODUCTION

Universities have long been identified as settings for promoting health, wellbeing and a holistic notion of people as members of a civic society. Healthy partnerships are a critical mechanism for achieving cultural aspirations about the contributions that universities can make in shaping future societies. Partnerships are critical to the representation of the university as an active community member, engaged with its civic responsibilities (Tsouros, 1998). The 'scholarship of engagement' is an emerging field for universities and their communities that is paying attention to the maintenance and sustainability of partnerships through learning and engaging with communities.

During her time with Deakin University in 2006 as a Fulbright visiting senior specialist, Prof Judith Ramaley noted that university-community engagement has expression across multiple levels of analysis. At an individual level, engagement refers to how actively we are involved in learning and contributing. At an organizational level, engagement relates to how we work together and the extent to which we share expectations, goals, resources, risks and benefits with other participants. Across institutions, engagement denotes the extent of reciprocity, mutual benefit, shared agenda and goals, and generation of social, human, intellectual capital (Ramaley, 2006). Authentic engagement is transformational: it requires both the university and partnering communities to do things differently. Ramaley argued that deep engagement must require the establishment of transformational goals that are: intentional; deep; pervasive; consistent over time; and 'institution-shaping'. Whilst working towards achieving deeper levels of university-community engagement might be transformative, it need not be overwhelming: 'Engagement is simply a different way of doing familiar things: learning differently, working together differently and making a difference' (Ramaley, 2006, p. 14). Prof Ramaley encouraged Deakin and personnel from partnering agencies to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to show the extent to which our partnerships are meaningful, substantive, generating 'currency' that is useful to each organisation and the wider community, adequately leveraging resources, and ultimately enhancing community capacity.

### **Deakin University: 'Delivering effective partnerships'**

During 2007, consultation for Deakin's new Strategic Plan (Deakin University, 2008) identified that Deakin plays a leading role in the arena of community engagement and partnerships. Titled 'Delivering effective partnerships', the new plan signifies that Deakin is part of an international trend for universities to find new ways to engage meaningfully with the local geographical communities in which their campuses are based, and also to engage with the communities of interest they comprise and serve – be they students, academics, general university staff, research participants, funding bodies, industry, business, philanthropy, art and culture, and local, state and national governments.

Our research aimed to assist the University to assess its efforts to fulfil its aspiration to be a 'catalyst for positive change for the individuals and communities it serves', and the outcomes and impacts of those efforts. The research was undertaken to:

- Develop and test measures that can be used across Deakin University to assess the effectiveness of its partnerships;
- Help develop tools to assist Faculties to report meaningfully and systematically against their community engagement targets in the next Strategic Plan; and
- Develop resources to assist staff to manage their partnerships more effectively, in terms of planning, resourcing and reporting.

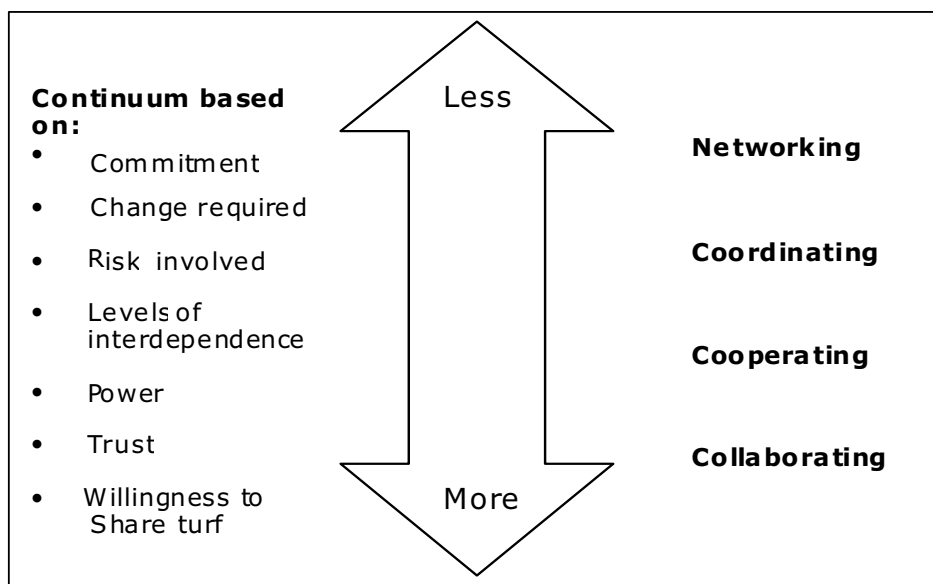
In particular, our research aimed to explore the following issues:

- How can we include the values and scholarship of engagement into policy and practice about partnerships?
- How do we know an 'effective partnership' when we see one?
- How can partnerships become more reciprocal?
- How can we ensure supportive governance, management and administration
- What resources will need to be allocated to make this happen?

Given that our university was embarking on a quest to 'deliver effective partnerships', we first needed to engage Deakin personnel in a reflection on what a partnership is, and how to recognise an effective one. In their review and redevelopment of the Deakin University + Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) Partnership, Butterworth and Austin (2007) drew strongly on the Partnership Analysis Tool developed by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth, 2005a,b). A number of other frameworks were utilised to inform the variables of interest in this study. These included Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification Community Engagement Documentation Framework (2008), Talloires Network criteria (Talloires Network, 2008), as well as the AUCEA benchmarking framework.

VicHealth (2005a) noted that partnerships can range across a continuum of engagement, from informal networking through to formal collaboration with shared resourcing. Drawing on the work of Himmelman (2001), VicHealth's Partnership Analysis Tool describes four levels that are descriptive of the level of collaboration in a partnership. Figure 1 illustrates the various levels. *Networking* is characterised by minimal involvement between parties, as well as minimal time and trust between partners. Only information is exchanged, and this information provides benefit to both partners. At the next level of engagement, *Coordinating* requires slightly more involvement, and involves both the exchange of information and mutual activities to work towards a common goal or purpose. *Cooperating* involves the sharing of resources in addition to exchanging information and modifying mutual activities. This type of partnership is based on a high degree of trust between partners. The deepest level of engagement, *Collaborating*, involves the highest level of information and resource sharing as well as the greatest time commitment. Collaboration also includes enhancing the capacity of the other partner for mutual benefit or a common purpose. One partner must give some of their resources to the other partner for the benefit of the partnership and the service they are providing.

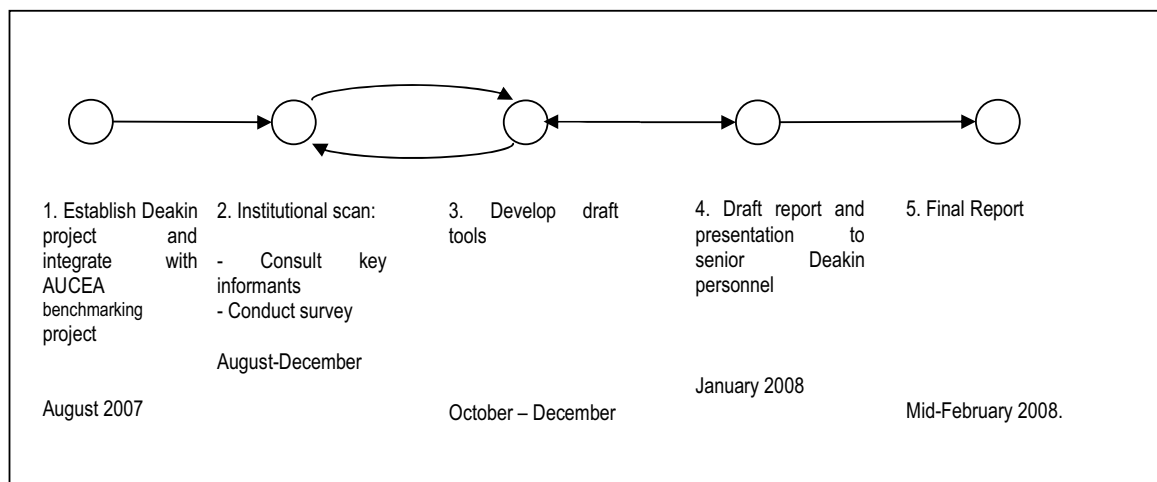
It is at the level of collaboration that the deepest level of engagement and transformation occurs. Through collaboration, members of each organisation come to deepen their understanding of their and their partner's work. The consequences of this activity often include reshaping organisational policy environments to support engagement.



**Figure 1 Partnership continuum (VicHealth, 2005a)**

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The research process was designed to gather information on partnerships based on AUCEA's national community engagement goals, in time for the adoption of the University Strategic Plan in early 2008. The approach taken is depicted in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2 Methodological approach**

A Project Steering Group was established by the University, comprising the Director of Policy and Planning, key academic staff, senior executive, and members of the research team.

The research team worked to generate a substantive database of the various existing partnerships at Deakin. To enable this, the project team developed an on-line survey instrument and the necessary database for collecting the required information. The survey comprised 16 questions that sought information about a range of matters that are summarized in Figure 3 below. To ensure that survey responses would be representative of the university's CE profile, a request to Heads of Schools and Directors of other areas to complete the survey was issued by the Vice-Chancellor's office. Personal approaches were also made by the research team.

1. The partnership's name, key parties and reason for being established;
2. The partnership's main activities (e.g. research, consultancy, teaching, etc);
3. The geographical scale of the partnership;
4. How long the partnership had been in existence;
5. The temporal nature of the partnership (did it operate all year or only during semester, etc);
6. The level of planning that had occurred, based on the Australian Institute for Primary Care's tool for assessing the level of planning (AIPC, 2005);
7. The depth of partnership engagement, based on the Partnerships Analysis Tool developed by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth, 2005b);
8. Information about governance and management arrangements;
9. Perceptions of the benefits of the partnership to both Deakin and the partnering organisation, in the short, medium and longer term;
10. Perceptions of the level of current progress in achieving these benefits to both Deakin and to the partnering organisation;
11. How progress was measured and to whom this was communicated;
12. The level of resourcing that Coordinators felt they were receiving from Deakin University and other external organisations;
13. The number of different types of members involved in the partnership (eg university staff, university students, members of the partnership organisation, members of the community)

**Figure 3 Summary of on-line survey questions**

The request for support from the Vice-Chancellor's office served to generate a consultative dialogue with key senior stakeholders across the university that lasted throughout the research. Informal interviews, discussions and email communication with key informants across the University served to provide a rich source of qualitative information about the current status of the University, and ideas for improving the capacity of the University to deliver effective partnerships.

Survey respondents represented 40 partnerships comprising local, regional and international partnerships. The sample comprised partnerships from all faculties within Deakin University. Some partnerships were identified with one external partner, whereas others were more descriptive of clusters of alliances within one partnership umbrella.

## **RESULTS**

### **1 Nature of Partnership Activity**

Partnership coordinators were asked to nominate the proportion of activity in which their partnership was engaged, for example research teaching and learning, community building, commercial activities, strategic alliance activities, student / staff exchange and other (i.e. mainly described by participants as recruitment and branding activities). Many partnerships were identified by staff as operating in multiple spheres of activity. This is an important consideration, particularly when we are attempting to define what partnership activity is, and what should be counted as partnership activity. Therefore, for example, we cannot assume that a 'research partnership' is not also engaged in other spheres of activity, such as teaching or community development. Participants' responses suggest that the categories used to describe partnership activity are not mutually exclusive. This reinforces the view of the Carnegie Framework for the Advancement of Teaching (2007), which suggests that an engaged university is one where core functions such as teaching and learning and research have community engagement components, integral to the conduct of these functions rather than separate to them. Nevertheless, many participants did not emphasise or acknowledge the role of community building in the partnership activity. Only one partnership coordinator reported that 50% of partnership activity was related to community building.

### **2 Benefits of Partnership**

#### *Benefits of Partnership to Partners*

Participants were asked to identify, from their perspective, what the benefits of their partnership might be for their actual partner. For Deakin personnel, partner organisations benefited through the increase of professional capacity (eg in terms of research capacity or better graduate entry employees); and improvement in quality of teaching and learning provision.

#### *Benefits of Partnership to Deakin*

The same question in relation to benefits to Deakin elicited different responses. Responses were more focused on direct increases in inputs and outputs achievable by Deakin, and their community impact (e.g., more students, better graduate employability, increased research profile, etc). Whilst these are important indicators that are indeed linked to Deakin's strategic directions, they do not refer to any increased professional or organisational capacity that might be gained through a mutually reciprocal relationship with the partner. One is thus led to ask: Why do Deakin partnership coordinators not acknowledge or identify the improvement in the quality of research, teaching or learning that might be gained through their partnership?

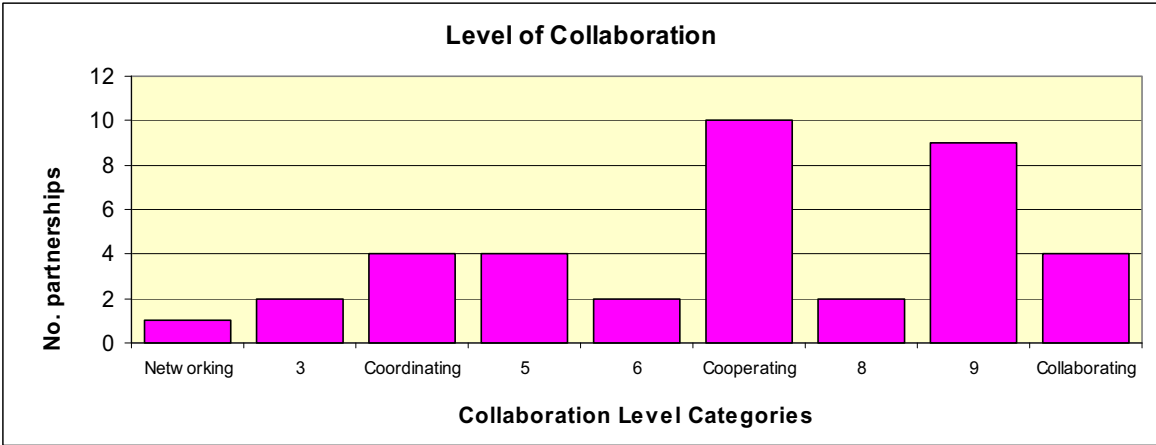
### **3 Lead Indicators for measuring progress**

Frameworks of partnership and community engagement used in this study suggested that Levels of Collaboration, Planning, and Resourcing might have application as lead indicators when applied to partnership activity. Findings for each measure are outlined below.

**Level of Collaboration**

Level of collaboration appeared to be a useful continuum for differentiating the nature of the partnership. Figure 4 below displays the number of partnerships that were indicated along the collaboration continuum. It suggests that a majority of partnerships appear to be placed at the upper levels of this continuum, between 'cooperating' and 'collaborating'.

**Figure 4. Number of partnerships by level of collaboration**



Level of collaboration did not appear to be correlated with tenure of the partnership. It appeared that some respondents assessed their level of collaboration by the number of activities in which they engaged with their partners, and depth of communication with their partners.

**Level of Planning**

Participants identified how 'planned' their partnership was on a continuum from 'opportunistic/organic', to 'strategic', and on to 'sustained routine activity'. As outlined in Figure 5 below, 32 partnership coordinators reported that their relationships were at least 'strategic', with 14 of these tending towards sustained routine planned activity. Only eight respondents, or 20% of the survey sample, indicated that their partnerships were tending towards opportunistic. Most respondents reported they had some form of agreement or contract in



place.

**Figure 5 Level of Planning conducted by partnerships**

## Effective resources and marketing

Participants rated the level at which they perceived their partnership to be adequately resourced and emphasized in marketing materials. Whilst less than half of the partnerships surveyed believed their partnership was emphasised in marketing materials, more than half perceived their partnership to be adequately resourced.

## Relationships between lead indicators and partnership outcomes

Partnership coordinators were asked to indicate progress to date from their perspective (Progress-Deakin) and from the perspective of the partner (Progress-Partner). These responses were then correlated with lead indicators using Spearman's bivariate correlation analysis. Table 1 displays significant correlations between the variables of interest.

**Table 1. Statistically significant relationships between lead indicators and perceptions of partnership outcomes**

Lead Indicators	Level of planning	Level of collaboration	Progress - benefits for Deakin	Progress - benefits for partner	Adequate resources to support partnership
Level of planning					
Level of collaboration	0.34				
Progress - benefits for Deakin	0.53				
Progress - benefits for partner	0.36	0.31	0.73		
Adequate resources to support partnership	0.29	0.31	0.26	0.38	
Partnership emphasized in marketing materials	0.41	0.21	0.53	0.42	0.28
Spearman Correlation Coefficients					

*Note: 'Progress' = perceived level of current progress towards achieving stated benefits.  
Only significant Spearman's Rho coefficients are included in the table  $p < .05$*

Results showed that, as expected, respondents' estimations of partners' progress were significantly and positively correlated with level of collaboration and level of planning. Thus, respondents' perceptions of progress for their partners increased both as the level of planning increases and as the level of collaboration increased.

In contrast to perceptions of progress for their partners, Deakin coordinators' perceived progress for Deakin was only significantly and positively correlated with level of planning. It was not significantly correlated with level of Collaboration. In other words, for Deakin partnership coordinators, perceptions of progress increase as level of planning increases. However, levels of collaboration have no bearing on perceptions of progress within the partnership for Deakin.

## How do we know an 'effective partnership' when we see one?

Partnerships that had indicated a score of greater than 5 on the Planning Continuum and 7 on the Collaboration Continuum were explored in more detail due to their potential as exemplars of more 'successful' partnerships. Nine partnerships met these criteria. They were in diverse areas of science and health sciences and included international partnerships. They also comprised both research and teaching and learning activities.

In performing this analysis, partnership coordinators' responses to questions about how they measured progress in their partnership were analysed according to measurement categories identified in the draft AUCEA Benchmarking Framework. Relevant examples of responses are provided after each AUCEA criterion.

- Number of forums, workshops or other events or issues of community importance that are product of joint planning and implementation between the university and the community (AUCEA 1.1)  
*"This partnership has research, training and service provision and establishment of the clinic means that there is a functional joint service all year around."*
- Institutional strategic plans and their derivative plans including implementation and functional plans and reporting (AUCEA 1.2).  
*"The progress of partnership is measured by whether partnership is achieving the plans."*
- Percentage of community leaders on university council and committees (AUCEA 2.1)  
*"A steering committee exists between [our School] and each [service provider] network/organisation."*
- University community engagement is a criterion in course accreditation and review (AUCEA 2.2)  
*"Signed credit transfer agreement in 2005."*
- Existence of a dedicated strategic manager and integrated community relationship manager (AUCEA 2.5)  
*"Three people ... are collaborative appointments between the School and [the partnering organisation]."*
- Existence of engagement in communication (AUCEA 3.2).  
*"Visits each other frequently to ensure the program is done properly."*
- Number of publications (AUCEA 4.1)  
*"In the next 12 months, this partnership allows the analysis of existing data out of which several reports and publications will arise."*
- Number of grants and consultancy funds received for projects undertaken in collaboration with industry and community partners as a percentage of all funded projects (AUCEA 4.2)  
*"Partnership's progress is measured by number of grants gained."*
- Number and type of courses providing experiential learning in the community (e.g. practical placement) (AUCEA 5.2)  
*"[Our industry partner] collaborates on experiential learning for Deakin students"*
- Number of formal agreements with other educational providers relating to facilitating learning pathways (AUCEA 5.3)  
*"A formal agreement where Chinese university students come to study at Deakin."*

The range of responses to the AUCEA benchmarking framework suggests that successful partnerships reflect many of the measures of the AUCEA framework. In addition to AUCEA measures, partnership coordinators in this study also identified frequency of contact and communication as evidence for progress within a partnership. These measures do not appear within the current AUCEA Benchmarking Framework:

- "Visits each other frequently to ensure the program is done properly."*
- "One formal meeting is planned for each year regarding to the management of the project."*
- "Meetings are held twice annually with a review cycle consistent with University partnership review requirements."*
- "Regular visits and check of progress."*

## DISCUSSION

Our research produced important findings that are pertinent to the development of Deakin University's new strategic plan. In particular, interviews, discussions and email communication with key informants across the University served to provide a rich source of qualitative information about the current status of the University, and ideas for improving the capacity of the University to deliver effective partnerships based on the scholarship of engagement.

*How to include the values and scholarship of engagement into policy and practice about partnerships?*

Inspection of consultation documents developed during the development of Deakin's new Strategic Plan revealed a diversity of definitions of key concepts such as 'partnerships'. Our research suggested that consensus had not yet been reached for an operational definition for what a partnership is and how to define it. The need for widely accepted operational definitions becomes more pressing when one considers the many issues that were raised during our consultations. For example, we cannot assume that partnerships defined primarily as 'research' are not also involved in other spheres of activity, such as teaching or service. A point was made during our consultations that 'not all relationships are partnerships', which suggests that further discussion is required to arrive at a conceptual framework that enables definition, description and comparison.

Some key informants challenged the theoretical validity of the types and levels of partnership outlined by VicHealth (2005a, b). However, to the best of our knowledge, this may be the first time that such a conceptual framework has been used across the university as a springboard for discussion. Certainly, our consultations suggested that many Deakin personnel were working from an expectation of partnerships based primarily on low-risk, low-engagement notions of networking, whilst others only see a partnership as being 'real' if it complies with deep levels of collaboration and shared risks and benefits. This is perfectly acceptable, of course, so long as the degree of engagement matches the purpose of the partnership and meets the expectations of all parties. We believe that the tools we have adapted for use in our survey (such as AUCEA's benchmarking framework and VicHealth's Partnership Analysis Tool) provide an opportunity for discussion, workforce development and adoption into a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Our on-line survey revealed the interesting finding that Deakin respondents were more likely to identify a range of transformational benefits for their partnering organisation than for Deakin. For Deakin personnel, partner organisations were seen to benefit through the increase of professional capacity (eg in terms of research capacity or better graduate-entry employees, and improvement in quality of teaching and learning provision). In contrast, benefits identified for Deakin did not refer to any increased professional or organisational capacity that might be gained through a mutually reciprocal relationship with the Partner. Levels of collaboration had no bearing on perceptions of progress within the partnership for Deakin.

These responses suggest that Deakin staff perceive partnerships more as a form of transactional exchange. In its crudest form, this might be expressed as: "what we can do 'for them' for which we can get a return?" However, Deakin survey respondents seemed to show awareness that for the community or industry partner, there is more of a transformational element to partnership activity, in that the benefits relate to increased professional learning and development of organisational capacity.

Of course, in practice, benefits to the partner would be likely to be felt ultimately by Deakin personnel. However, the clear emphasis given by Deakin staff was on exchange or transaction, rather than how engaging with partnering organisations might be able to transform their experience at Deakin. This finding confirms qualitative results that suggest that benefits for Deakin are not being seen in terms of deeper collaboration.

Given the wide range of views we observed about what a partnership is, and concerns that additional resources would be needed to support engagement activity seen as 'additional' to university core business, one perhaps can understand more readily why Deakin personnel have not yet embraced the notion that partnerships can be a mechanism for mutual capacity building – not just one way transfer of capacity.

We were then led to ask: Why do Deakin partnership coordinators not acknowledge or identify the improvement in the quality of Deakin research, teaching, learning or other capacity building that might be gained through their partnership? One possible explanation for this finding is that Deakin partnership coordinators may not see the mutual transformational benefit, or that because Deakin does not yet have a language for it, they identify with existing outputs in use to measure and monitor performance.

Perhaps, because of historical corporate values, or the limited resources historically provided to support mutually transformative engagement, Deakin staff members may consider that it is not important. In the



absence of a supportive organisational culture, with attendant language, symbolism and reward structure, staff simply may not be seeing it. Alternatively, they may be telling Deakin personnel what they think the University directors want to hear.

With current Deakin corporate rhetoric giving heavy emphasis to planning and outputs, it is possible that Deakin personnel may not feel free to discuss benefits and progress in terms of level of deep collaboration and mutual reciprocity / transformation. We suggest that if Deakin were to include some of this type of language in the Strategic Plan, with appropriate measures built into staff performance and promotional opportunities, then we might find that Deakin staff would be more likely to focus on ensuring transformative outcomes of their partnerships for themselves and the University, as well as their partners.

#### *How do we know an 'effective partnership' when we see one?*

Our research recommended that the university's Strategic Plan needs to include appropriate language that reflects the intent of partnership development as reciprocal and collaborative (in the deeper sense) in the Strategic Plan is recommended to ensure transformative outcomes: (i) for partnership itself; (ii) for the University and (iii) for the partnering organisation.

Participants were able to articulate performance measures used to indicate the success of partnership activity, which were descriptive of indicators that are used in outcomes related to teaching and learning and research in general. However these outputs and outcomes tended to acknowledge 'joint' activity, such as 'joint' research publications and grant submissions, or 'joint' curriculum development. For new partnerships, the quality of relationships seemed to be a proxy of success. The level of commitment and cooperation within those relationships was critical to achieving longer-term goals. Many of the partnership coordinators described indicators of success that were derived from planning processes related to measuring outcomes. These findings may indicate that in relation to outcome measures, general measures currently used to indicate progress across core activities could also be used to measure progress in relation to 'engaged' core activities.

Frameworks of partnership and community engagement used in this study suggested that *Level of Collaboration, Planning, and Resourcing* might have application as lead indicators when applied to partnership activity. Level of collaboration and level of planning in particular appeared to be useful continua for differentiating the nature of the partnership.

Results appear to suggest that successful partnerships mainly reflect many of the measure of AUCEA framework. In addition to AUCEA measures, partnership coordinators in this study also identified frequency of contact and communication as evidence for progress within a partnership. These measures do not appear within the current AUCEA Benchmarking Framework. We encourage Deakin colleagues to continue working with AUCEA to align Deakin's monitoring and evaluation framework with this emerging national framework. We also suggest that Deakin has much to offer AUCEA by virtue of the conversations happening across the university about partnership development and its measurement.

#### ***How to ensure supportive governance, management and administration?***

Our research recommended that: (i) university divisions and faculties need to work together to improve communication of the policy framework for partnerships for all staff; (ii) heads of schools formally recognise partnership coordination role; (iii) that the overall policy framework of the university acknowledge and involve partnership coordinators in improving policy and procedures to facilitate partnership activity – for example more flexible student administration systems, faster contract development that recognises due diligence by partner organisations etc.

Our research also revealed that the management and coordination of information across universities needs attention if universities are to deliver effective partnerships. The research indicated that, as with other universities participating in AUCEA's national benchmarking project, partnership records management systems across the university were uncoordinated; data typically could be compared or shared, and was thus of limited utility. Some kind of central coordinating mechanism and relational database, with an interactive user-interface, could be very

helpful to enable university staff to enter details of new or existing partnerships, and obtain real-time guidance about protocol.

We also observed that due to workloads, there was a lack of internal capacity to respond to knowledge management requirements. Deakin personnel variously have widely differing capacities even to enter data. This may reflect an overload of requests by central administration to provide process and output data. Our research may have been seen as too time-intensive for the time that staff had available. Many staff members were managing dozens of partnerships and did not have the capacity to provide survey data on each one. Again, having participated with a dozen other universities in the AUCEA national benchmarking project, we know that Deakin is not alone in this regard.

In tandem with the call for a centralised knowledge management system was a strong recommendation that the university not seek to impose central control on partnership development. Deakin participants stressed that to deliver effective partnerships, it is important to get the balance right between centralised support and centralised control (with attendant knowledge management implications). We are aware that as part of the development of the new Strategic Plan, there has been discussion of centralising some aspects of the management of the many partnerships across Deakin University. In order to lead the delivery of effective partnerships, Deakin needs to be seen to encourage a flourishing culture of partnership development that is seen as core to all aspects of university core business, where diversity and creativity in partnership development is encouraged. Here, a centralised, intuitive database can be used to support, monitor, evaluate and reward staff activity. Our research indicated that this is indeed possible: that a great deal of the goodwill exists to help Deakin deliver effective partnerships as part of a deeper commitment to substantive community engagement.

Therefore, we recommended that: (i) a knowledge management system for supporting partnership development and tracking effective partnerships (across all Divisions) be established as an ITS major infrastructure project; (ii) that Faculties consider ways of supporting partnership development and activity; (iii) that partnership coordination is recognised in workload calculations at the School level.

## CONCLUSION

The experience of conducting action research often proves to be far more complex than originally anticipated. This research proved to be no exception. Although we had planned our research trajectory carefully, the research process was affected by several factors, including:

- Unavoidable delays in commencing the research;
- Delays experienced by AUCEA in developing draft performance measures (this process has been extended into 2008);
- The divergence of views and perspectives expressed by key informants across the university;
- The complexity of gathering and comparing data from different sources across Deakin University;
- The logistical challenge to Deakin University staff in completing the on-line survey.

Innes and Booher (1999) noted that indicator projects often focus on developing the numbers instead of considering how they will be used. Producing the indicator report is often made a priority, as opposed to considering how the report may be used, or how the community can learn from the process of developing indicators in the first place. They argued that it is the joint learning that can occur among stakeholders, and the changes in practices that can occur, that is considered more important than the indicators themselves. However what is learned and how practices may change depends on the way information is developed and who is involved. If it is collaborative and iterative, then the indicators can become part of the players' meaning systems. "They act on the indicators because the ideas the indicators represent have become second nature to them and part of what they take for granted" (p. 7).

One informant volunteered that this action research project has helped to encourage discussion and reflection about questions such as 'what is a partnership' and how to assess their quality. We agreed that our survey instrument would never be perfect, but that the process of developing it and sharing it with key personnel has helped to build Deakin's organisational capacity (awareness, knowledge, policies, procedures, performance

measures) to promote, sustain and evaluate partnerships and community engagement. We agreed that rather than focusing on 'counting widgets', the research is helping to focus collective thinking on 'What are widgets?' and 'Why are we using them?'

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# **SUSTAINABLE FUTURES BY DESIGN: ENRICHING THE BALANCE BETWEEN ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Design projects by engagement develop innovative responses to the needs of communities seeking direction toward sustainable futures. The quality of an engagement partnership between community and university plays an important role in the efficacy of this response. Quality partnerships draw on the knowledge and capacities of all partners, and also contribute something to all partners. Thus an appropriate balance is needed between engagement processes and outcomes.*

*In design engagement projects, there is danger of a pattern forming whereby communities provide opportunity, resources and consultation only at the commencement of a project, with the university providing completed designs at the end. While design academics are primarily interested in the processes of student learning (Smith, Sanders, Demirbilek and Scott 2005), communities understandably prioritise project outcomes, and there is potential for the design teams (students) to feel uncertain about their role. In this scenario, community partners' involvement in the design engagement process need to be enriched in order to better produce innovative and responsive outcomes, both in terms of their sustainable futures, and the pedagogical needs of the university partners.*

*Queensland University of Technology Schools of Design and Urban Development are undertaking a series of engagement projects designing for sustainable futures in response to the needs of communities in sensitive Queensland regional environments. Our projects perform an 'integrative and innovative role in the cultivation of equitable and sustainable regions' (Forrant and Silka 2006), with senior students developing innovative design outcomes focused on sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental futures.*

*In this paper, we examine the balance between design engagement processes and outcomes through the trajectory of these projects. Lessons learned from past projects informed the planning of our current 'Port of Bundaberg' project, in which we prioritise enrichment of the process-outcomes balance. It builds on projects at nearby coastal Poona and Bargara, having the potential to develop existing and new quality partnerships and further our contribution to the sustainable future of the globally significant Great Sandy Marine Park.*

*In responding to the needs of communities seeking direction toward sustainable futures, student designers require a rich understanding of the community and region. We find this is best achieved through an ongoing conversational process between the differing forms of knowledge and capacities embedded within both community (Armstrong 1999, Thomas 2006) and university partners. As our projects demonstrate, innovative design for sustainable futures needs quality partnerships based on an enriched balance between engagement processes and outcomes.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

A series of engagement projects designing for sustainable future growth in response to the needs of communities in sensitive Queensland regional environments have been undertaken by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Schools of Design and Urban Development staff and students. These projects embrace the change and complexity inherent to sites at the juncture of the urban, the rural, cultural values, and sites of environmental sensitivity. Drawing on processes of community engagement coupled with the framework of the design studio, these projects provide exemplary models for making a substantial and valuable contribution to the management of future development and conservation in Queensland's regional environments. All of these

projects draw equally on design theory, environmental design technology, and importantly, on community knowledge and experience.

Each of the projects engages with partners whose priorities include managing the complex challenges of rapid urban development, sustainable industries, expanding tourism, and a sensitive environment. Planning, design and management of these areas need to be addressed in an integrated manner, and QUT is in a unique position to be able to offer this new partnership approach. This capacity results from a strong history of successful design-based community engagement projects in diverse real world contexts (Thomas 2006), including the 'Poona Futures' project, 'Charleville Educational Tourism Centre' project and 'Pasturage Reserve' project at Bargara. In all cases it was considered imperative that the design teams (students) visit the sites in order to appreciate the context of the site, immerse themselves in the local environment, gain a better appreciation of community values and develop a greater understanding of the location-based constraints. Lessons learnt from these three projects regarding the balance between engagement processes and outcomes have been applied in our current *Port of Bundaberg* project.

The role of universities to engage with community networks, and their potential to enhance new knowledge creation through the integration of 'discovery, integration, application and teaching' (Boyer 1990) is also gaining momentum in Australia. The importance of innovation and learning in contributing to the economic, social and cultural foundation of local communities is also recognised. University and regional community engagement is premised on certain values and principles that are said to foster dialogue, innovation, mutual participation and learning critical to the success of engagement (Garlick and Palmer 2007). Importantly, the engaged design studio is a learning environment within which students, academics and community can explore ideas in an open and inquiring manner without commitment to the implementation of outcomes. In this way universities can play a role in supporting local creativity and enterprises and help embed learning in the wider community (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003).

This paper briefly outlines our method of teaching design by engagement and our reflective approach to learning from each engagement project. After an initial description of the four projects, the lessons learnt from the first three are discussed in terms of process and outcomes. The application of these lessons to the planning of the fourth project is then outlined, and some initial findings on the efficacy of this process are reported.

## **METHODS: A REFLECTIVE APPROACH**

The first two projects in the series were evaluated using the mode of 'reflective practice' referred to by Rudd (2007), with evaluation by academics and students, followed in the third and fourth projects by further evaluation from project partners, and an iterative processes of developing improved approaches which are then implemented, evaluated, and so on. By iteratively reflecting on the planned processes of each of the projects, we have identified what seems to academics, students, partners, including the community to have worked satisfactorily, and what could be improved.

This particular model of design teaching by engagement commonly involves the following standard processes:

- a need is identified within a community relating to a place that specific groups and/or the wider community consider to be of concern, for which design disciplines may offer new directions;
- project partnerships are established, and a project brief devised;
- students visit the project place, and meet partners and community;
- sometimes such meetings are able to occur throughout the project; sometimes not;
- students produce design work which is presented to the project partners for discussion about possible futures for the local place and its relationship to the regional, and sometimes global context;
- teaching academics publish findings regarding pedagogical aspects of the project.

Reflective evaluation of these projects began with *Poona Futures*, which built on over a decade of engagement projects by the Design School. Subsequent engagements have been strengthened by drawing on the experience of staff, reflective evaluation of the project process and outcomes, as well as feedback from students and a community survey (Thomas 2006).

In 2006, the *Charleville Educational Tourism Centre* project built on work from a 2004 student visit. Studio Intensive workshop sessions were supplemented with daily briefing and debriefing sessions. Social activities with local community were also part of the learning context. An open and enthusiastic working environment stimulated engagement and productivity and was crucial in developing an in-depth knowledge of the community and their needs. Student reflective journals and photographic records were analysed to understand student learning experiences and levels of engagement.

In the *Pasturage Reserve* project, our reflective practice was formalised by the gathering of student evaluations of the engagement process through structured surveys, structured reflective diaries, semi-formal discussions and university-based surveys. Each academic provided reflective feedback on the successes and challenges of the project. Community responses to the final project outcomes were gathered in the form of a written survey. Emergent themes were identified, analysed, and recommendations made for future improvement.

In the current *Port of Bundaberg* project lessons from the previous projects have been applied, and evaluation continued by undertaking student and community surveys at both the halfway and end points of the process. Survey data has been gathered from an additional site visit midway through semester by students and staff to showcase work-in-progress at the “Futures Workshop.” In this workshop students and stakeholders developed a list of priorities for the future growth of the area. Students are also engaged in writing structured diaries reflecting on their experience and practices of design *and* engagement.

At the Futures workshop the views of 12 students and 14 external stakeholders on the value of the engagement process and perceptions of the quality of student work were surveyed, and will be evaluated at the end of the project.

#### **FOUR ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS: SUSTAINABLE FUTURES BY DESIGN**

##### **Poona Futures (2005)**

The village of Poona is located on the coast of Queensland's Great Sandy Strait: one of Australia's 68 listed Ramsar wetland sites. Poona has no industry, reticulated water, sewerage treatment, or expectation of changes to these attributes. Residential subdivisions approved in the early 90s had been partially constructed in 2005, expanding the population from 200 to around 1600, resulting in a spreading of the urban fabric to the edge of the sensitive wetlands and threatening the local subtropical lifestyle (Thomas, 2006).

The brief to landscape architecture and urban design students was to engage with the community, government and developer to explore sustainable futures for the village. A key learning component was to expose students to a creative environment in which to undertake site and community appraisal. Engaging both formally and informally lead to greater collaboration and mutual ownership of the final design outcomes. A final exhibition of student work was displayed in the Community Hall.

##### **Charleville Educational Tourism Centre (2006)**

This project was initiated by not-for profit organisation Save the Bilby Fund who became partners along with Murweh Shire Council. The project team consisted of students, academics and practitioners from architecture, engineering, interior design, industrial design, and landscape architecture who worked over an intensive fortnight in Charleville. The project brief involved designing an Underground Tourism and Educational Facility for the display of endangered species at Charleville, and focussed on a number of community needs in regional Australia including the plight of Australia's endangered species, the education of the general community about ecosystems and their relevance to sustainable lifestyles, and providing knowledge concerning design for arid and semi arid physical environments.

The structure of this project consisted of an orientation and briefing session, preliminary research by students, a series of staff or expert presentations providing base knowledge about the community, the disciplines, the context, and possible approaches to tackling the project. Student presentations of progress to date were made to community and partners at the end of week one and week two as a consultative process. Data was collected

from the students' via their reflective diaries, their design-process drawings, and from staff through their reflections on the photographic record of the workshop.

### **Access and Interpretative Plan for Pasturage Reserve, Bargara (2007)**

The Bargara Pasturage Reserve on the central Queensland coast contains ephemeral wetlands and is the only bio-filter and meeting point between intensive farming runoff, stormwater, urban development and the Mon Repos Conservation Park (home of the sensitive Loggerhead Turtles). The broad project brief given to landscape architecture and environmental engineering students was to prepare a range of strategic planning/management options for the long term development of access to and interpretation of the natural and cultural resource values of the Pasturage Reserve.

An initial visit included a briefing session held with representatives of Burnett Shire Council, Landcare, and the Burnett-Mary Regional Group to discuss project issues, and to initiate and foster the ongoing engagement process. Evenings were spent socialising, chatting with locals to gain a better understanding of community values. The views of the Bargara community were surveyed regarding the potential of the exhibited work, and the perceived value of the engagement process.

### **Integrated Solutions to Sustainable Growth in Coastal Queensland - Port of Bundaberg (2008)**

Our current project is supported by a QUT grant of \$20,000 to support design and engineering teaching and learning through 'engagement' by working with external partners, Port of Brisbane Corporation, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Queensland Department of Local Government and Planning and the local community. These partners provide input and project support and act as a client group, while the students provide a set of planning, management and design options for the project site that can be used for continued negotiation.

The Port of Bundaberg project site on the central Queensland coast is a mix of port, residential, conservation, recreation and agricultural land uses and forms. The project brief identifies the need for a strategic and sustainable approach to intended future urban development, infrastructure and environmental planning to manage future growth in the area. The project process involves three visits to the site by landscape architecture and engineering students and staff. The first site visit involved informal community engagement, and allowed students to gather site data and initiate and foster engagement with stakeholders (partners and wider community) and gain a better understanding of local values.

A second visit in April (a new addition to the teaching program in 2008) involved a "Futures Workshop" onsite with students and stakeholders. This gave the students a chance to gain the benefit of knowledge and experience of local community and other stakeholders to establish priorities to create the best possible integrated solution for the future of all in Port of Bundaberg. Concurrently a Futures Workshop was held in Brisbane with design professionals critiquing and reviewing the same work-in-progress presented in Port of Bundaberg. Through these two activities, students benefited from both community and industry engagement, leading to enriched partnerships. A final exhibition, 'Future Visions for the Port of Bundaberg' will be held in early June, with the community and partners invited to view and discuss the work with the students.

## **LESSONS LEARNED: ENRICHING PARTNERSHIPS IS KEY TO HIGH QUALITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Balancing Engagement Process and Outcomes**

The lesson we have learnt through our process of reflective practice to date is that enriching partnerships is key to both a successful engagement process and to high quality project outcomes. Recent literature (Collins, Curtis, Curtis and Stevenson 2007, Ramaley 2001, Rudd 2007) supports the view that engagement is 'not just about ensuring that our consequences provide a good outcome, the processes by which outcomes are achieved also count' (Garlick & Palmer 2007). Contemporary university community engagement scholarship is concerned with how to evaluate the performance of engagement projects (Rudd 2007, Collins, Curtis, Curtis and Stevenson 2007). However, our definition of a 'successful' engagement *process* is one in which our students begin to identify with the complex and variable values embedded in a place-based community; and this is reflected in their

work. High quality project outcomes include: planning, design, and management options that ultimately benefit the project region and community across the spectrum of economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability; and expanded experience and scholarship in the processes of engagement that build the strength of the university partners.

Our experience in design engagement shows there is a danger of a pattern forming whereby communities and partners provide opportunity, resources and consultation only at the commencement of a project, with the university providing completed designs at the end. While design academics are primarily interested in the processes of student learning (Smith, Sanders, Demirbilek and Scott 2005), communities understandably prioritise project outcomes, and there is potential for students to feel uncertain about their role. Our notion of engagement is about more than the provision of funds and facilities at one end and project deliverables at the other; it is about the generation of 'human capital, research and innovation ... powerful tools that can simultaneously generate ethical processes and community outcomes of substance, as well as enhance viability outcomes for the institution itself' (Garlick and Palmer 2007). Indeed, Strom (2006) supports the ideal of moving away from engagement that is 'one-way'.

One definition of engagement is that it 'involves working with external partners, applying the University's intellectual, virtual and physical assets to local and global issues and priorities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes' (Hatherell 2007). Research throughout our projects demonstrates that effective engagement draws on and applies the knowledge and capacities of *all* partners: in our case the project area community, other stakeholders and project-specific partners, QUT students, academic staff teaching in the project, and our academic colleagues. In this scenario, community partners' involvement in the design engagement *process* needs to be enriched, in order to better produce innovative and responsive outcomes both in terms of their sustainable futures, and the pedagogical needs of the university partners. Both project communities *and* our students need to experience the engagement process as valuable, as well as the final outcomes. '... the campus is in the world and the world is in the campus' (Forrant and Silka 2006).

In the *Poona Futures* project, a great deal of social contact occurred, but was substantially unstructured after the first site visit. The students themselves then repeatedly made the 6 hour round trip in order to continue the engagement. Thomas (2006) argues that the projects' 'successful outcomes have resulted from an outstanding commitment by the students involved, an enthusiastic community "client" and the guidance given by accumulated experience of negotiating and structuring both the projects and the processes by which the students are encouraged to learn through direct engagement with communities'.

An aim of the *Charleville Educational Tourism Centre* project was to enable students to develop an awareness of the value of community engagement as an integral aspect of their professional development. Along with presentations, engagement was limited to unstructured and informal socialising. Structured reflections from student diaries identified that these informal connections with the community enhanced student engagement and changed their original perceptions of arid regions, community values and how the design process would unfold (Demirbilek, Smith, Scott, Dawes and Sanders, 2007).

In the *Pasturage Reserve* project, we undertook less community engagement than was desired. An initial visit was made to Bargara with a briefing session and two days of field work supplemented with evenings spent socialising with locals about their ideas and feelings regarding the Pasturage Reserve. This visit enabled the QUT group to gain a sense of the complexity and sensitivity of this coastal place. However, for budgetary reasons this was the limit of student contact with the community until the end of our design process.

### **Innovative Design Outcomes for Sustainable Futures**

Our projects perform an 'integrative and innovative role in the cultivation of equitable and sustainable regions' (Forrant and Silka 2006), and the students are charged with developing innovative design outcomes focused on sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental futures. Thomas (2006) encapsulates our studio pedagogy as based on the idea that design 'which seeks to focus on place and is an integral part of place making can intersect with what might be broadly termed learning communities ... [This] offers opportunities for



communities to develop innovative design solutions for sustainable livelihoods in the context of local distinctiveness and local capacity; a space to speculate on place making.'

Landscape architects and environmental engineers operate within the highly complex and globalising contemporary environment, responding to the needs of sensitive changing landscapes. In these design studios, students were expected to strive to achieve the best balance possible amongst, but not limited to, ecological health, enhancement of cultural heritage, manifestation of cultural values (particularly acknowledgement of the place of traditional owners of land), and the sustainability of urban development, local economic health, and the promotion of local distinctiveness (Satherley and Dawes 2007).

What follows is a summary of community and project partner perceptions of the quality of the final design outcomes from each project.

*Poona Futures:* Prior to the final project presentation, a meeting was held with partners and council. 'This meeting closed with the developer's undertaking to instruct his consultants to re-examine how the remaining subdivisions might be constructed in the light of the student work. This undertaking was reiterated to the students at the exhibition and included an undertaking to take appropriate measures to retrofit stormwater drainage infrastructure already in place to provide additional protection to the wetlands' (Thomas 2006). The project resulted in a commitment by the developer to seek environmentally sensitive outcomes for the remainder of the development process, and led to local government and community resolve to embed sustainable practices into future management of Poona's social and environmental values. These outcomes were perceived by stakeholders to be innovative, high quality options for a more sustainable future for Poona.

*Charleville Educational Tourism Centre:* This project indicated the value of engaging students in learning and demonstrated how individual, social and professional dimensions of this interaction are embedded in the way a design project is understood, undertaken and resolved. As a result of this project, Murweh Shire Council received a \$5.7 million Federal Government Sustainable Regions Grant to build a new Bilby and Endangered Species Conservation and Tourism Centre based on the designs of QUT students. QUT staff are involved as part of the Design Review Team.

*Pasturage Reserve:* The *Pasturage Reserve* exhibition was a success, with approximately 150 community members ranging from local residents to government representatives attending and discussing the students' proposals. Burnett Shire Council Manager of Environmental Health Geordie Lascelles enthused: 'While I was initially blown away by the quality and professionalism of the (project) presentations - it is the unique workable ideas that have stayed in my memory and offer real value to our community.' A Bundaberg Landcare representative and member of the Pasturage Reserve Steering Committee, was 'greatly impressed that the work addressed not only environmental aspects of the Reserve and its context, but also 'social, cultural and economic aspects.'

Survey feedback from the local community (response rate 33%) was predominately positive, with comments such as 'very creative and innovative design with melding of the history and other pertinent aspects of the area'. Some visitors suggested more community consultation was necessary, and many wished to view the exhibition over a longer period than the single day available. Council amalgamations have delayed the process begun late in 2007 to investigate on-ground implementation of options this project offered.

## **LESSONS APPLIED: CURRENT PORT OF BUNDABERG PROJECT**

### **Engagement Process**

In the planning of our current project in the Port of Bundaberg, we prioritised enrichment of the process-outcomes balance, increasing and formalising knowledge-sharing between university, partners and the community. At the time of writing, we have undertaken all stages of the project program up to the completion of Strategic Plans, including the 'Futures Workshop' held midway through the project. New strategies implemented include the following:

1. Preparing students specifically for community engagement
2. Recognising possible limitations to our understanding of engagement processes, we drew on the expertise of a research fellow specialising in community engagement strategies to assist us to plan our Futures Workshops, and engaged her services for future projects.
3. Realising the Poona level of access to a project community is not always possible for students (the Port of Bundaberg is an 11 hour round trip from QUT), we tried to increase the formal opportunities for community participation. In the Poona project, students undertook an informal survey of ratepayers' preferences for the area: in PoB we formalised this into a 'Futures Workshop'. An exhibition was held in Poona to great success, and we successfully adopted this strategy in Bargara and will do so in the Port of Bundaberg.

In order to reflect on the balance of process and outcomes in this project we have itemised what each party contributes to the engagement process as follows:

Partners and community contribute:

- expert and tacit knowledge;
- real, unvarnished opinions and values;
- resources;
- teaching and learning opportunities.

QUT staff and students contribute:

- various levels of professional expertise;
- resources;
- fresh approaches from different disciplines.

The benefit of engaging partners and the community in the teaching and learning process has proved successful, judging by the enthusiasm of both partners and community along with feedback from student and stakeholder surveys. Evaluation of the process of engagement in this project to date has been gained from the surveys of 14 stakeholders and 12 students at the Futures Workshop held in April at Port of Bundaberg.

When asked to rate the importance (on a continuum from 'very important' to 'not important') of 'the process of engaging with students and the project,' all 14 stakeholders responded that it was 'very important.' 'The educational value of the workshop' was rated 'very important' by 13, and between 'very important' and 'neutral' by 1. Their written comments also reflected this high valuing of the engagement process, including: 'Good process for building local support and ownership for change'; 'Good to see students involved in regional/local community issues'; 'The workshop was informative and interesting. I think the student participation helps us locals to focus on the spread of issues. I hope we see more of this activity in future.'; 'I would like to commend those who have the foresight to facilitate such a workshop 1) for students' practical experience of engaging in consultation with stakeholders, 2) for providing community input into potential plans, 3) for potential knowledge sharing between stakeholders'.

Constructive criticism of the informal approach to community involvement on the initial site visit was provided by one stakeholder: 'The first round of input to students ... lacked sufficient community input – it was more expert-based and some of it a bit broad in scope.' We will revisit this issue for our next project.

The 12 students were asked to rate how they felt about 'spending your class time in this type of educational activity' (on a continuum from 'very positive' to 'negative'): 10 responded 'very positive' and 2 between 'very positive' and 'neutral'. Asked to rate the importance (on a continuum from 'very important' to 'not important') of 'the process of engagement between students and community members': all 12 responded 'very important'. 'The educational value of the workshop': was rated 'very important' by 8, between 'very important' and 'neutral' by 3, and 'neutral' by 1. These responses and their written comments revealed the students also highly valued the engagement process, especially as a provider of 'real' input into their design thinking: 'It is great to have 'real world' interaction with real stakeholders, clients, partners on a real project'; 'It brings to the surface issues that would otherwise be left untouched. Gives a perspective of local ideals and the passion felt towards their

landscape'; 'I gained a greater appreciation for regional context – need to understand potential conflicts/mediums for growth.'

Constructive criticism was provided by five students concerning the structure of the workshop with one issue in particular identified: that 'a better method of general decision making would improve the outcomes/results.' As well as revisiting our approach to synthesising workshop results, an improvement would also be to give the same survey to students before workshop with a code to anonymously identify the respondent, asking them how valuable they *think* the workshop will be, then surveying them again afterwards. Creating '... ways of linking academic endeavour and the world are critical for students, the university and for the community in these times of change where connectedness and experience are valued overtly alongside discipline specific skills' (Collins, Curtis, Curtis and Stevenson 2007). This project demonstrates this connectedness, importance of discipline specific skills and linkage across all spheres.

### **Engagement Outcomes**

At the time of writing, students are just over halfway through the design process. In order to reflect on the balance between process and outcomes in this project, we have itemised what each party receives as engagement outcomes as follows:

#### Partners and community receive:

- the opportunity to extend their existing partnership models into an expanded or new relationship of engagement amongst the tertiary, government, NGO and business sectors;
- the opportunity to contribute to the future direction of substantial new development in sensitive coastal environments;
- the opportunity to contribute to the education of future built environment professionals;
- a variety of diverse options for future urban development and environmental planning that they can be used for ongoing consultation with communities, local, state and national governments;
- a perspective on their own place through fresh eyes.

#### QUT staff and students receive:

- outstanding real world teaching and learning experience;
- the opportunity to build cross-institutional teaching and learning;
- the opportunity to extend existing partnership models into expanded and new relationships of external engagement.

Through their contribution to the engagement process, both partners and the community have developed a strong sense of ownership based on their involvement throughout the project and are eagerly looking forward to the student design outcomes. Evaluation of the engagement outcomes from this project to date has been gained from the surveys of students and stakeholders undertaken at the Futures Workshop in April at Port of Bundaberg.

When asked to rate the importance (on a continuum from 'very important' to 'not important') of 'the final project outcomes': 12 stakeholders responded 'very important', and 2 responded between 'very important' and 'neutral'. Asked to rate their perceptions 'of the quality of student work' (on a continuum from 'excellent' to 'poor'): 13 responded 'excellent' and 1 between 'excellent' and 'neutral'. Similarly, when asked to rate the 'importance of the final project outcomes' 9 students rated them as 'very important', 2 as 'important', and 1 as 'neutral'. These figures show that similar value is placed on the design outcomes as on the engagement process by both groups, strengthening our belief that the balance between both should be enriched to ensure high quality engagement.

Written comments from students included the notion that it was very important 'to understand the perspectives of those benefiting from the project. To get experience in communicating and interacting with the people'; and: 'I struggled as I had to adjust my language to suit everyday locals. I learnt a big lesson from this experience.' In a design engagement relationship these students have to transcend their own idealism and address a range of values and conflicting priorities. Writing of how student engagement might be measured, Rudd (2007) suggests

that 'a value, such as connectedness to the local environment, might be realised through student involvement if not leadership in stimulating public debate on contemporary issues. If the values have meaning to the students and the engagement of students is authentic, then such an approach has potential to reflect the institutional leadership and in turn see a major following of students and graduates subscribing to the values and perhaps related lifelong learning.'

Collins, Curtis, Curtis and Stevenson (2007) comment that engagement provides a means for students to 'gain competence and confidence in delivery of their knowledge and skills through a living laboratory', which supports our belief that in the Built Environment professions, our students need to develop these skills along with critical and creative thinking and practice. Our student feedback attests to the value they find in this. A good engagement relationship can provide for the 'production of socially robust knowledge that has relevance and application beyond the higher education sector [and] can provide the community ... with the opportunity to shape research and program development ...' (Strom 2006).

## CONCLUSIONS

The projects discussed in this paper are of significance because they not only indicate the value of such projects in fully engaging students in learning, but also amplify a series of assumptions and modes of operating that are inherent in design practice. Importantly the projects demonstrate how the individual, social, and professional dimensions of university-community interaction are embedded in the way a design project is understood, undertaken, and resolved.

A lot of the success of these projects can be attributed to the enthusiasm and passion with which students, university staff and the community engaged both formally and informally throughout the semester-long process. This was undoubtedly engendered by the nature of the places themselves and wide community acceptance of the contribution the students could make to empowering them to influence future lifestyle. Just as importantly, acceptance by the students that local knowledge, including that of the community and partners, had a lot to contribute to their design explorations and growth as future professionals contributed its own momentum. Together, they creatively demonstrate why we engage in community engagement as an effective design teaching and learning vehicle (Ramaley 2001).

In responding to the needs of communities seeking direction toward sustainable futures, student designers require a rich understanding of the community and region. We have found this is best achieved through an ongoing conversational process between the differing forms of knowledge and capacities embedded within both community (Armstrong 1999, Thomas 2006) and university partners. As our projects demonstrate, innovative design for sustainable futures needs quality partnerships based on an enriched balance between engagement processes and outcomes.

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## Desert Settlement Sustainability: a perspective on collaborative, community based research.

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**Keywords:** Settlement, community, university, Aboriginal, participatory

### Abstract:

*This paper discusses a multi-university partnership in the context of a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) project to study the sustainability of desert settlements in Australia. Whilst telling the research story, the paper identifies the opportunities of the research and the constraints and struggles, from the particular perspective of one team member. The opportunities for the CRC, the university, the researcher and the community are examined and strategies are discussed for managing the tensions and ensuring the region's needs are prioritised. The constraints discussed include ethical constraints of community based research, both generally, and in terms of research involving Aboriginal People, and the challenges of meeting diverse outcomes and expectations. A particular emphasis is place on how universities can support this kind of work.*

### UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AUCEA (2006) identifies that “engaged communities are essential for Australia’s economic and social future” and that university – community collaboration over the production and utilisation of knowledge has benefits for university, community and wider society. Community engagement, along with research based learning and work integrated learning are increasingly part of university audit requirements, and academics are encouraged to move more into line with these activities (Buys & Bursnall, 2007). Universities do not have an untarnished record of engagement with communities (Sullivan, Kone, Senturia, Chrisman, Ciske & Krieger, 2001). Researchers are likely to encounter the effects of either community cynicism because of past disappointments (Sullivan et al, 2001) or community expectations that are unrealistic about the levels of expertise that universities can bring and what can be achieved in complicated social, political, economic and cultural contexts (Flicker et al, 2008). The academic, trying to be responsive to community with all its politics and history, whilst maintaining research integrity, within a multi-layered context of institutional expectations, can feel precariously positioned.

This paper discusses a current project with a view to examining opportunities and challenges. Comments are limited to contexts where researchers engage with people in everyday settings around external agendas. This is quite distinct from research with industry partners who are familiar with the research process. Both approaches fall into the context of university-community research, both seek better utilization of knowledge via collaboration, but this paper is about the former and I call it community-based research to distinguish it from industry-based research. Combining an external agenda with intent to engage collaboratively with community members in ways that *they* find meaningful, poses particular challenges.

Community Based Research (CBR) according to Flicker, Savan, McGrath, Kolenda and Mildenberger (2008, p239) marries community development and knowledge generation. It holds twin aims of advancing understanding and ensuring knowledge makes a difference in the community. Rationales for choosing it include: 1) enhancing utilization through incorporating local knowledge, theory and practices 2) producing change, mobilizing groups, building capacity and opening new possibilities (partnerships, funding, employment opportunities), and 3) improving community-university relationships by building trust and through the sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise (Flicker et al 2008, 242).

Several papers report challenges or barriers to optimizing this potential. Flicker et al (2008) and Sullivan et al (2001) both identify problems with: a) partnership issues, b) methodological issues, and c) broader social, political, economic, institutional and cultural issues. Ahmed, Beck, Maurana & Newton (2004) identify lack of respect for community knowledge, treating community members as research objects, fear that collaborative

research lacks rigour, misunderstandings about the benefits of collaboration, lack of mentors for such research, and lack of incentives for academics. Hoben (1995) discusses the limiting narratives of development which characterize much institutional- community engagement. De Ishtar (2005) raises an issue of particular concern to this project, which is that important research challenges exist where the research occurs between members of a colonizing society and members of the colonized society. A conscious effort has been made to address such challenges in the current project, and this is reflected upon throughout the paper.

Firstly, the research project is introduced, so as to provide the reader with enough information to make sense of examples along the way. Then, the paper discusses how theory and research are drawn on to maximise potential and minimise barriers to research with communities in everyday settings and research collaboration between non Aboriginal and Aboriginal People, within the multi-layered demands of university-community research.

### **The Research: Sustainable Desert Settlements**

Desert Knowledge Co-operative Research Centre (CRC) has 6 Core Projects, each of which has a different research focus (<http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au>). The Sustainable Desert Settlements project is charged with building a knowledge base about the thresholds of sustainability and vulnerability in desert settlements of varying sizes.

Desert settlements will be examined along 5 dimensions:

- Asset stocks and resource flows,
- Mobility, economy and livelihood activity,
- Governance, functionality and aspirations,
- External factors,
- Capabilities and functional resilience,

Teams researching different communities around the central desert will come together to analyse and synthesise across these and communicate findings to a wider public.

Desert communities in Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory and Western Australia will be studied and researchers in this project are located in universities in all of the above states plus ACT and NSW.

Griffith University, as one of these partners, agreed to the participation of approximately 25% of a staff member's time over 3 years to participate in the study, with a view to researching two small towns on the Queensland side of the Simpson Desert. This paper is specifically about the Griffith University component of the research.

### **CONSTRUCTING DESERT KNOWLEDGE: RESEARCH IN EVERYDAY SETTINGS**

This section begins the account of the research project, as experienced by one research team leader and examines how some of the above barriers have been negotiated.

#### **Research is Political**

Sullivan et al (2001) report that respondents across a number of research projects saw the researchers as holding a negative construction of the community. Community members said that researchers misread the context, especially the cultural and socio economic context, and interpreted data through biased frames. Conventional paradigms of research as apolitical and objective can produce such barriers. If researchers do not take account of the politics, both the framing of the question, and the research processes, are likely to reinforce dominant asymmetrical relations and perspectives.

At the beginning of this project, a significant amount of intellectual work had already been done to develop a conceptual framework for the analysis of desert settlement sustainability, and the resulting frame located the research sensitively with regard to contemporary politics.

Given recent media coverage, it would be easy for Australia's urban populations to imagine that their taxes are supporting non-viable, dysfunctional desert settlements with government funded income security, health, housing

and education services. Research conducted within such a frame, would see only deficit, and would be likely to inform a call for generic policies which treat remote desert populations the same as any other population (Hughes & Warin, 2005, Hughes, 2005), Desert Knowledge CRC research to date has identified that desert settlements must be differently valued and responded to (Pleshet, 2006; Wand & Stafford Smith, 2005). Not only do desert settlements exist in marginally productive country, long distances from markets, with highly variable conditions, but also, much of their productive activity is not valued by, or even visible to, mainstream Australia. This has less to do with intrinsic worth and everything to do with larger populations valuing (and supporting government investment in) those things that are pertinent to their own livelihoods and lifestyles. Looking through a different frame Desert Knowledge CRC research to date contends: "Desert science is demonstrating with increasing clarity that the desert contributes far beyond the scale of its population to national wellbeing" (Desert Knowledge CRC, 2008). Indeed a large percentage of the income and resources generated through desert activities (pastoralism, tourism, art and culture, conservation) flow into state, national and global economies.

This raises the question of how to recognize, make visible, measure and promote value in the desert and how to frame it so that it adds to the livelihoods of desert people as well as inviting helpful policy and investment responses. This is not to ignore that there will be problems within any community, but a research focus on the problems is debilitating for communities. Proactive engagement will focus strengths and opportunities and address problems along the way.

Gibbons et al (1994) identify that a shift is occurring from traditional forms of academic research to more engaged forms. The former, which they call Mode 1, are assumed to be independent, objective and apolitical undertaken in ways which control for the chaotic influences of the real world. The latter, which they call Mode 2, is undertaken within those chaotic real world influences, in close association with users or subjects of the research, via complex chains of inquiry that include community, academic, government, and which have a much closer loop between knowledge production and utilization.

Mode 2 inquiry requires a set of skills that are not conventionally part of the research repertoire. Entering the complex dynamics of community, a researcher is likely to feel as disempowered as any community member. One research response is to assert the authority of discipline, method and analysis, and impose order, where order does not exist. Another possible response is to stay with the uncertainty and see how the community makes sense of it. The former can re-open old wounds for those communities who have been negatively framed by research in the past, the latter can produce learning for everyone. Each new occasion for research then is a new opportunity to redress the harms and build trustworthy, reciprocal modes of inquiry.

Alvesson & Skjoldberg (2000) propose that research reflexivity is crucial to inquiry in community settings. Reflexivity is the skill of seeing one's own positioning and all of the research decisions made (question, methods, interpretive frames), as situated in and contributing to, a broader field of relations which are politically and discursively organized. It is difficult to imagine successful Mode 2 research without reflexivity.

Desert Knowledge CRC, for research purposes, separated settlement and community, with settlement as physical space and infrastructure, and community as an enduring set of relationships. How communities use settlements and move between them, the resource patterns established in these processes and the ways in which aspirations change as a result of exposure and contact with urban centers and mainstream consumerism, could all be viewed with the settlement as the focus, not the community. This means the people (communities) of the settlement can be invited to engage as co-researchers, agents and subjects, rather than objects or focus of the research. This is a significant shift away from the gaze of the researcher being focused on the community, or the anthropological focus on "researching down". It opens a space for community and researcher together to research out and up. It facilitates mutual capacity building of co-researchers, as people identify settlement issues of significance to them.

"Community" is often misrepresented as singular, rather than as comprised of many groups with different interests, histories and political relations (Guerin & Guerin, 2007). Community narratives permit and discourage certain kinds of inquiry. Defenses against change can be colluded with, or insensitively disturbed, by researchers (Maru & Woodford, 2007). Stakeholders will be watching to see where the research positions itself in relation to these existing patterns. Universities often welcome partnerships with powerful agencies, and ethics processes rarely unpack what this means in terms of power and respect in engagement with less powerful community



members. Yet, as Foucault (1982,1984) would argue, what we are prepared to do to ourselves and others in order to achieve outcomes is precisely an issue of ethics.

### **Holding the Research Lightly**

A moment should be given here to discussing the pressure community based researchers are under to produce, upfront, an articulation of the research methodology, methods and frames of analysis which are to be used. Whilst confusion about methods could waste the community's time and fail to deliver anything meaningful, the same could be said about clear methods and frames which are too narrow to capture the diverse factors impacting on, and within, the various groups of the community.

Sullivan et al (2001) said respondents often found research to be inflexible and rigid, designed before the community was engaged and non-inclusive of community expertise.

Taking seriously our brief to engage in ways that are reciprocal and useful, we needed to enter the settlement both well prepared and informed yet open in mind, heart and method. It sounds trite to say 'no assumptions', but by the time one has fully engaged the external funding body's research brief, submitted an ethics proposal, done the secondary research, and contacted some community leaders and members to make appointments, it is no easy task to empty the mind and enter the community with an openness to hear and see from the perspectives, and within the frames of reference, of the people for whom it is home, and respond accordingly.

We introduced the study, invited participation, offered to work with groups (as part of the study) on things of interest to them, and used a very simple tool of prompts (your history with the town, what you like and don't like, its achievements and challenges, where you think it sustainable or not, who is or should be doing what). We acknowledged and appreciated achievements, registered the tensions and challenges, and checked out the emerging picture. We used a conventional informed consent process for the first stages.

Significant here, is that rather than invite people as co-researchers to the external agenda, we invited them to add their aspirations for their settlement to the research agenda. This enlivened the research significantly, and whilst it could have produced unrealistic expectations, this has not been the case to date.

Community based researchers are best served by a familiarity with many tools and strategies and the flexibility to employ them as required. Some would disparage this as too eclectic, others would give it the more legitimising title of 'bricolage'. Bricolage refers to a "handy man or handywoman who makes use of the tools available to complete a task" (Kincheloe, 2001, p680).

Finally, as Sullivan et al (2001) point out, communities can feel judged and misjudged by researchers using preconceived frames of reference. The determinates for the research project already existed, as outlined above, and these could be construed as scalar indicators or a toolkit for assessing viability and sustainability (Fisher, 2004). Their use will be significant to cross-site comparison. Our preliminary desktop research organised material according to these categories, however, entering the community, we hold lightly such analysis, for it may turn out that sustainability turns on quite different determinates. To enter a community intent on measuring sustainability via preconceived indicators may privilege the research aims above the collaborative aims and produce a distorted picture.

Conversation was our most important research tool, and we learned as much from conversations resident to resident, and residents to institutions, as we did from our own conversations with residents. We encouraged dialogue as a form of engagement where people open themselves to listening to each other and hearing in new ways, beyond the usual patterns of communication. At best, dialogue facilitates listening in a way which allows listeners to be affected by what they hear (Freire, 2004).

### **Cross Cultural Research**

This section discusses one of the ways in which contemporary theory informed the research. Thirty per cent of the population in the two towns is Aboriginal. For the critically aware researcher colonialism has produced a crisis of signification and representation (Bhabha, 1994). Sensitised white researchers are wary of representing or

speaking for Aboriginal People (Brewster and Probyn-Rapsey, 2007). We could not anticipate how the legacy of colonialism affects lived experience, cultural expression or relations with settler society in a particular setting, yet, the project could create a space for this to emerge. Coming to the encounter informed by literature of Indigenous people (Tuhuwai Smith, 1999, Moreton Robertson, 2001), we wanted to invite Aboriginal People to speak of their settlement and engage in knowledge construction processes about its sustainability, on their own terms. This was an opportunity for the research team to redress rather than repeat past colonial transgressions (de Ishtar, 2005). As a white female academic with a critical theory and deconstructive bent, I was alerted to what Spivak (1992) calls “the politics of translation”, for there is more than language being translated between cultures.

My assumption was that an Aboriginal researcher would engage differently from me, produce different outcomes, add value to the community in ways that I could not. Working with an Aboriginal team member was a way of ensuring both that Aboriginal People felt invited to fully participate on their own terms and that issues of translation would be made visible in the project (and perhaps in the community). There was not an Aboriginal academic at Griffith University who was free to participate (Aboriginal People are too thin on the ground and much in demand in Universities). Fortunately, another Aboriginal colleague indicated interest in the project. She and I became the team that would do all field visits together.

Engaging together with Aboriginal and Non Aboriginal communities, my colleague and I found that the relationships, dialogue, and contributions were richer for having an Aboriginal researcher involved. It increased the potential for recognition of two quite distinct symbolic systems which share a difficult history and politics, and it puts the issue of translation between the two onto the agenda. Her account of entering the community and engaging around sustainability is quite different from mine, begins with introductions to each other as Aboriginal people from different kinship systems, with different totems, but linked by a shared affinity to, and responsibility for, land (Wall, 2008). Her research tools were different from mine and, in this instance, at the request of community members, included engagement around cultural heritage and the painting of cultural stories as a medium for exchange. This established quite different conversations and produced different research outcomes.

### **Relationships, Reciprocities and Research**

The two settlements of our research were historically settled by pioneers who recognised the potential of Channel Country grazing. Aboriginal People and settler families live in the towns, side by side. This is the traditional country of the Aboriginal People, and it stretches away to the west across the great sand hills of the Simpson Desert. Aboriginal People point out that whilst they helped establish the pastoral stations, working long hours for little pay, the pastoralists are now wealthy and they are not.

Nevertheless, there is a high level of social, economic and political organization and indeed, cohesion, which everyone benefits from. Four industries, pastoralism, tourism, construction and administration, mean everyone has a job. Everyone has a well-constructed, well-maintained, air conditioned home. There is no serious crime, no drugs, the children all go to school, and everyone accesses healthcare at well-equipped clinics. There is a store, a pub, pool, playground, tennis courts, a community hall, and a racecourse in each town. This level of infrastructure and social organization, unusual in remote towns of 100 people, can be attributed to a very active local government. The source of revenue that enables local government to do so much in this remote community, is an economic venture which takes advantage of the physical isolation of the Shire. Because the roads are unsealed and since distance is too great for state governments to maintain them, Council has established a roads construction business. It has invested in heavy plant, so that it can both hire plant to state government and contract for maintenance of state government roads. With its construction business and its administration functions, Council is a significant employer of local labour, offering apprenticeships and a range of opportunities.

We began Round 2 of the research by re-visiting people to discuss the collated data of the first round. It was at this stage of the research that conversations began to approach dialogue. Firstly, Aboriginal People could not see themselves in the collated data. Their responses were there, but made invisible through collation – assimilated! It was a gusty, cool day, we were sitting around the table with Aboriginal People, they were carefully going through our feedback sheets, line by line, word by word. What they were doing was ensuring their voice, their perspectives were clear and visible.

Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people both believe life is good in this settlement, better than elsewhere, but, Aboriginal people said: "it could be better". For them it would be better if their culture was more visible in the community. They said: "time to get around the table together, work it out together, move forward". "Making culture visible" – is proposed as an aim which carries no blame, but a sense that the local narrative about people being equal is stopping forward movement. Can the issues be raised in safe ways? This is the challenge of dialogue. Whilst some Aboriginal people wanted to talk about these issues with other (white) people in the community, others approached the task of making culture visible through art.

This latter group were engaging around their desire to reconnect with stories, songs, artefacts, foods and medicines, sites, practices of culture, both for present enrichment and for transmission to younger generations. One expression of this was a desire to paint, and soon several artists were busy painting local stories with the Elder watching on, guiding, singing, and weeping. Painting became a tool for facilitating dialogue horizontally between community members, as well as with the researchers. Desert Knowledge CRC commissioned a poster, representing the project's research cycle in relation to their settlement. The emerging poster expressed celebration and healing, and depicted the move from traditional to contemporary life, from community amongst their group, to building community with settlers, from bush food and humpies to stores, houses, electricity and cattle stations, within a landscape of vibrant desert colours. The meeting of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal takes place in an outer circle which is green - both the colour Europeans imported into the desert, and the colour of healing. The artists took the emerging painting to a local government council meeting, confident in a positive response, and trusting that their emerging aspirations for more visible culture would be seen as enhancing sustainability of the settlement.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with Council, another colleague and I undertook a cost of living study and Healthy Food Basket study with a view also to considering food accessibility and security. To this, the Aboriginal women added a comparison of what they buy at the store (transported in by truck every three weeks) and what they provide from the Desert's natural store of traditional foods and medicines (cheaper, fresher, always readily available, and healthier). This gives new meaning to food security.

Conversations with diverse local people about tourism were beginning to produce some clear challenges from what had been a fuzzy issue. On our next visit a colleague with tourism expertise will accompany us and engage alongside us all as we explore the issues and extend the dialogue. So far, 4WD travellers have sought the settlement out, now the community contemplates seeking the tourist through co-ordinating a package tour. This shared aspiration faces some local barriers. Will pastoralists make sites on their land available, will the community recognise and support local Aboriginal tour operations in the desert?

The future of the community, its relations and livelihoods are being constructed here, out of people's present responses to each other. Residents are leading the way, they are building their community and their settlement simultaneously, what is best for settlement may not always be best for community. We are outsiders, moving at their pace, lending extra resources at times, facilitating some conversations, and being rewarded with first hand insight into how sustainability is wrested again and again from the resources of this desert landscape and its small communities.

### **Multiple Layers to Negotiate**

There are multiple layers to this university-community engagement and the researcher must respond to them all on-goingly. Luckily in our project, collaboration and support crossed all layers, but this is perhaps more the exception than the norm. Nevertheless, for researchers, there are questions of sustainability in juggling so many requirements.

The university releases staff time to work on this project as part of its commitment to research, community engagement and public scholarship. Outcomes, such as funds and publications are expected. However, those are not the only returns anticipated. Increasingly the new institutional environment of universities requires students to be engaged wherever possible in academics' research. Each expectation, should I aspire to meet it, increases the workload multifold.

At another level, Desert Knowledge CRC require that our research enhance settlement livelihoods and sustainability, contribute to a science of desert living, and produce a range of associated outputs. The contract requires the production of a set of outputs or products which signal the achievements of the engagement. This includes working papers, journal articles, conference presentations, and materials which are valuable to the settlements themselves. It also necessitates the work of team building across a national project. This requires monthly teleconferences, regular contributions to an e-forum and annual workshops. Additionally are three monthly reporting and ongoing record keeping.

When we enter a community, different groups of that community ask how their aspirations can be served through the project. Our commitments to the local government, the Aboriginal people and the community members developing tourism take us in several directions. Yet these activities must be accompanied by ongoing validation with community of the emerging research findings. When in the community, we work non stop, to ensure that we maintain relationships and address all emerging research/action tasks. When not in the community, we are constantly in touch with various community members through phone and email.

In our efforts to progress the engagements around settlement sustainability, we have engaged various other institutional bodies. Each contributes however as part of meeting some agenda of its own. Whilst the research is strengthened by their involvement there are costs to the researchers who must manage both the reciprocities incurred and the ongoing articulation of the research focus through the resulting dynamics.

University-community research then may be understood less as a linear approach to addressing a research problem, and more a process of bringing different interests together in a dynamic field of force, which, if skillfully negotiated will produce something for everyone. New knowledge will be generated and utilized in iterative ways, by diverse people. The research skill of gathering and documenting such multi-dimensional knowledge, sifting knowledge from practice, generalisable fact from particular insight, so as to contribute to archival as well as living knowledge, are skills rarely taught in research courses. Nor can the ethics of such interactive dynamics be fully anticipated by formal processes.

Our use of contemporary theory and research, combined with personal interest, passion and goodwill, have thus far enabled us to steer a way through the potential pitfalls of community engagement to create some very sound research/action relationships and produce some very interesting data. But the acid tests are still to come. If the new relationships and activities change power relations within the community, conflict may emerge. Can we assist the community to address such issues through civic and democratic processes? Can we sustain our engagement long enough to maintain the dialogues across two symbolic systems about livelihood, recognition and respect? We can dialogue with Aboriginal People about culture, painting and tourism, but can we sustain that dialogue to address the risks of appropriation and commodification. Can we participate in the processes through which data is aggregated upwards, in a nation wide research project, in a way which holds the integrity of what people have shared with us? Can we, for example, maintain that integrity of enabling Aboriginal People to speak from the cultural symbolic within which meaning is found for them, without freezing or objectifying culture, patronizing or privileging again the western symbolic?

## **CONCLUSION**

Following one current project this paper has identified that there are skills associated with the politics and ethics of community based research which are not conventionally part of the research repertoire. It has established, although not yet fully justified, an argument that research construed within the dominant symbolic frame will miss much of importance to Aboriginal People and may not enliven their aspirations. Combining research and action or closing the loop between knowledge production and utilization does have benefits for communities and does open up many new opportunities for research and partnership. Sustained collaboration is highly desirable but opportunities may be lost because the funding structures are not sufficiently flexible to assure continuity.

Working with communities in very small settlements is a rare and delightful opportunity for university researchers. It signals how very valuable university-community collaboration can be. Making the needs of the community a research/action priority, enabled this small study to go some way to creating and/or restoring trust between university and community. Even such a small study can contribute insights to bigger questions, such as the

question of how relations between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal Australians can be strengthened. Above, all perhaps, such engagements restore creativity and conviviality to the research, and indeed, human, endeavour.

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## Measuring the Impacts of Community-based Learning Experiences on Business Students Comparing Multiple Methods of Data Collection

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### Abstract

*The demands of increased global competition and the expansion of the knowledge economy have placed pressure on universities to change the pedagogy of teaching business students. Experiential learning is a well-established pedagogy for providing a student-centred approach to deep learning, where students learn by doing. One category of experiential learning is scholarly community engagement through work-based student placements that provide the connection of theory-to-practice. Placements offer advantages to student learning in a dynamic real-world environment, where relationships between students, faculty and community are enhanced. Whilst internships are common practice in business education, they often stand independent of core curriculum with research in scholarly community engagement in its infancy.*

*This study describes student learning outcomes from a community-based work-based project using multiple methods of data collection. The project was a complex community-based initiative to assist the small business community in developing financial skills. Thirty-five students from accounting, communications, computer science, information technology, management, marketing and visual design disciplines worked in student teams to produce an interactive website called SMExcellence. Students worked with businesses and industry associations to research, develop and deploy the online initiative. Student learning objectives included industry experience, increased knowledge and skills, improved teamwork skills and personal development.*

*Three methods of qualitative data collection were employed to assess the learning outcomes: projective testing through cartoon bubble completions, reflective journals and traditional surveys. A grounded theory approach was used to analyse the data through pattern matching to identify attributes and themes. The data from the three methods were used to measure the impact on learning outcomes and compare to the literature.*

*The findings suggest all three methods of data collection were similar in their ability to identify learning outcomes that matched the learning objectives evidenced in the literature. All three instruments support the notion that work-based placements are a valuable experiential pedagogy in business schools. However, the cartoon completion tests uncovered a greater range and frequency of positive outcomes than the other two techniques. Cartoon tests singularly identified that the learning experience was better than traditional university teaching methods and that the experience connected theory to practice. The findings of this research suggest that projective tests may offer an alternative and perhaps more insightful technique to assess student learning outcomes.*

### Introduction

Although some academics believe that community-based learning (CBL) is appropriate mostly for social sciences and the humanities, engaged learning activities in business courses have been widely adopted (Kenworthy-U'ren and Peterson, 2005). At least two studies have suggested that community-based learning has positive effects on students in business courses, especially in regard to recognition of need, sense of personal satisfaction and professionalism, and sense of positive impact on communities (Vega and McHugh, 2003; Wittmer, 2004). These studies use short surveys to collect self-reported data on questions related to attitudes, an approach that is common in research on experiential learning and raises questions about the validity and generalisability of the findings.

This new study looks at the impact of community-based learning on specific academic learning outcomes for business students participating in a complex research and community-based project. Thirty-five students worked for seven weeks on the project SMEexcellence. Students were responsible for developing financial literacy content, deploying a platform to deliver interactive web based tutorials, and producing complementary audio-visual material to help small business owners improve their financial skills. Students worked with businesses to ensure that the material and applications met the needs of small business owners. Students had specific learning objectives based around team work, cooperation, time management, writing skills, interdependent learning and project management.

The study employed three types of data collection instruments to gain insight into student perceptions of their community-based learning experience and to assess their reactions and attitudes at the completion of the project: projective testing through cartoon bubble completions, reflective journals and conventional survey.

### Research questions

This paper addresses three research objectives:

- Measure the learning outcomes of community-based learning (CBL) through an experiential work-based project using multiple methods of qualitative data collection.
- Compare the targeted student learning outcomes with the reported learning outcomes using multiple methods of qualitative data collection.
- Identify appropriate data collection methods in context-specific situations.

This paper focuses on the use of three assessment methods to evaluate student learning outcomes in a CBL project and as such, the de-limitations of this paper include the effects of payment for student as interns, partner and other stakeholder views, and wider benefit to the community of the project.

### Literature review

Increased global competition and the expansion of the knowledge economy have emerged as drivers to reforming key features of education (Rossin and Hyland, 2003). A growing body of literature suggests that traditional pre-determined academic curricula are too prescriptive, dated, ungrounded and inaccessible to some students, and they use inappropriate assessment criteria (Johnson, 2000). Experiential learning as a pedagogy is established in the literature as an alternative, effective and appropriate methodology for education in business schools to link theory and practice (Govekar and Rishi, 2007). Some suggest the challenge for higher education is to move from an imposed curriculum to realise the opportunities facilitated by the nexus of university and work organisation (Rossin and Hyland, 2003), which will benefit both students and community.

Experiential learning is recognised as a learner-centric approach that makes possible deep-learning (Johnson, 2000), where students learn-by-doing (Rossin and Hyland, 2003). Cusins (1984) suggests experiential learning involves a series of sequenced processes, involving problem definition, analysis and understanding of the problem, identification of the options to solve the problem, selection of the most appropriate option, implementation of the chosen solution and evaluation of the result. Cusins (1994) further describes this as *action learning*, a pedagogy that involves deep-learning through activities such as experiential learning, creative problem-solving, organisation of relevant knowledge and co-learner group support (Johnson, 2000). Categories of experiential learning include case study, problem solving, action research and scholarly engagement

Scholarly engagement brings academics and practitioner together to bridge the gap between theory and practice by overcoming the problems of knowledge transfer (Van De Ven, 2007). Engaged scholarship includes the integrated activities of discovery, teaching, application and integration (Boyer, 1990, 1996). Some suggest that engaged scholarship aligns universities to their tradition missions of teaching, research and service to their communities (Van De Van, 2007).

CBL as a pedagogy has various methods of delivery: work-based learning, group work-based-learning, engaged curricular engagement and academic service learning. Work-based learning (WBL) is described as independent learning *through work* (Johnson, 2000) or *at work* (Rossin and Hyland, 2003). WBL as a form of experiential learning supports the notion that students gain skills and knowledge from the classroom and then apply them



(Schon, 1995; Dall’Alba and Sandberg, 1996; Reeders, 2000). One form of work-based learning is cooperative placements, where students work with organisations on set projects, sometimes for academic credit. Cooperative placements allow students to build knowledge through relationships, emotion, subjectivity and multiplicity through real-life experiences (Jones, 2007). Group work-based learning (GWBL) is a subset of WBL where teams of students are given a project brief and are required to plan, organise and deliver certain outcomes as agreed with the client organisation (Rossin and Hyland, 2003). GWBL utilises teams of students to enhance their skill base, and provides opportunities for social and personal development in the work place (Rossin and Hyland, 2003).

Curricular engagement involves students, teaching staff and the community being connected through learning, teaching and scholarship to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. The outcomes address identified community needs, enhance students’ civic and academic development, improve institutional scholarship and advance community well-being (Carnegie Foundation, 2008). Curricular engagement is a growing area of research and is being adopted as a pedagogy that provides an alternative methodology to traditional university delivery models using pre-determined academic curricula.

CBL simultaneously benefits students and the community through an equal focus on student learning outcomes and gains for the community (Furco, 1996; Govekar and Rishi, 2007). Service learning is recognised as enhancing student competencies through providing theory–real-world linkages, with the ability to change with the environment and foster innovation (Govekar and Rishi, 2007). CBL has the specific benefits of enhancing cognitive and technical capabilities, developing a sense of responsibilities, promoting self efficacy, and improving relations between students, school and community. Despite these benefits, business schools have been criticised as being slow to adopt service learning models (Gujarathi and McQuade, 2002). CBL differs from volunteerism (where the main beneficiary is the community) and internships (where the main beneficiary is the student), as both the student and the community are beneficiaries of the process (Johnson, 2000).

### **Project description**

In 2007, the University of Western Sydney (UWS), together with the Financial Literacy Foundation, undertook to develop an interactive website to assist owners and managers of small businesses develop their financial skills. The importance of small business to the Australian economy is identified by the Council of Small Business Organisation of Australia that reports 30% of economic activity is generated by 1.2 million small business generating \$3.3m or 47% of the private sector, non-agriculture employment. In 2005–2006, small business with 1–4 employees had relatively higher exit rates than medium-sized business with 20–199 staff, at 12.2% and 6.1%, respectively. Industry research attributes business failures to lack of business ability (12%), lack of capital (10%), excessive interest commitments (7%) and excessive drawings (4%).

SMEexcellence seeks to improve the viability of the business community through equipping small business owners and managers with financial skills to reduce the failure rates and improve their financial performance. The SMEexcellence project provides the business community with a portal to simplify searching the internet for Australian financial content and ‘crowd-sourced’ financial management content, and it offers free online financial skills tutorials supported by technical assistance services.

Community engagement links universities to communities in shared work that provides mutual and reciprocal benefits. The benefit of SMEexcellence to the business community is twofold: individual or sector clusters of small business gain financial skills that may improve their sustainability, and the regional economy benefits from stronger small business sector and social capital. Using available student resources to enhance social and financial capital leverages limited university resources whilst providing student learning opportunities.

Community partners who assisted in the development of SMEexcellence can be classified into four generic categories:

- industry associations who provided support for development and validation of content through their members
- individual companies who provided input and validation of content
- individual companies who provided interviews for video

- individual business people who provided feedback on student progress in the forums.

The SMExcellence initiative serves to improve students' knowledge and skills by 'learning by doing' in the context of a real-world project. In addition, the project enhances the reputation of UWS by making it known to small business as a source of learning and advice. Prior to commencing work placement, students attended a compulsory briefing session that detailed the learning objectives as follows:

- industrial experience: providing relevant industry experience through application of theory to practice in a real-world setting
- knowledge: developing new knowledge such as business management, project management and financial concepts
- skills: enhancing skills such as communications, writing and time management
- teamwork: promoting inter-dependent group learning and the ability to work within a team
- personal development: encouraging personal development such as leadership and self-efficiency.

SMExcellence engaged 35 students for an average of seven weeks as part of the UWS cooperative work-based placement program. This work-based program places students within organisations during the summer holiday period to complete a specific project. Organisations pay UWS for the cooperative placement students and, in turn, students receive a stipend of approximately \$400 per week for their work.

The 35 students from a range of disciplines (accounting, communications, computer science, visual design, information technology, management and marketing) were recruited and placed into functional teams consisting of website designers (n=5), website programmers (n=8), content developers (n=13), content editors (n=4) and multi-media developers (n=5). Website programmers wrote and integrated code for the content management system and user functionality. Designers created the 'look and feel' of the website. Content developers researched and wrote tutorials and generic financial information. Content editors checked and corrected content for syntax and spelling errors and ensured the overall format was consistent. Multi-media students generated audio and video that complemented the content.

The requirement to deliver the finished SMExcellence website by the end of the summer period dictated that the development activities (software, content and multi-media) were completed simultaneously. Whilst there was an initial conceptual model of the platform, website functionality and content structure continually evolved to meet challenges as they arose. The continuous weekly evolution of the platform's functionality, 'look and feel', and content management system necessitated constant changes to the projects scope and guidelines.

A review forum was held each week to assess progress and provide overall direction for the project. Students reported their progress to the management team, academic supervisors and industry partners. It was a requirement that all students attend the weekly review to facilitate a shared vision and understanding of the project. The review forums included feedback and discussion, with praise and constructive advice encouraged through open and frank debate.

## **Methodology**

This study used a single case of the development of the SMExcellence initiative. The qualitative research method was selected because it explores 'how' and 'why' in real-life situations where little previous research has been conducted (Perry, Riege and Brown, 1999). Qualitative research is used by social scientists to explore actions and behaviours that are governed by the participants' own frame of reference (Creswell 1998), and is commonly used in complex studies of real-life settings and naturally occurring events (Miles and Huberman 1994). Qualitative researchers rely on few cases with many variables (Creswell 1998) and are concerned with the 'sensitive dynamic interactions' between the case study organisations and their environment (Hussey and Hussey 1997).

A convenience sample was selected based upon the researcher's access to the respondents as an academic supervisor of the project. Data were collected from the respondents using three methods: projective tests using a cartoon completion instrument, comments extracted from student reflective reports, and a conventional survey at

the completion of their internship. Projective tests were administered in the final two weeks of the program, whilst the reflective journals and survey instrument were administered within two weeks of the program's completion.

Projective techniques are appropriate to explore respondents' views, in their own words, and uncover feelings and beliefs that may be hidden from others or themselves (Zikmund, 2003). Projective tests generate valuable insights and understanding that cannot be obtained by more direct methods (Malhotra, Hall, Shaw and Oppenheim, 2002) through the participants 'projecting' their personality, opinions and self-concept to give the situation structure (Donoghue, 2000). The projective tests used a cartoon drawing for which the respondents suggest a dialogue between two characters (Zikmund, 2003). Cartoon tests are commonly used by practitioners conducting marketing research (see Donoghue, 2000) and have been successfully deployed in educational studies (see Catterall and Ibbotson, 2000; Pearce and Lee, 2006, 2007).

In the cartoon test, students were asked why they applied for the cooperative program and were then asked to fill in the bubble in the cartoon by answering two questions: *"I hear you worked with the SMExcellence project. As a way of learning and working at the same time ...1). How did your time with SMExcellence compare with other university learning activities? 2). What are your views about the way the project was run?"* This test was conducted in their final weeks of working on the project. Students were encouraged to give their honest opinions and allowed as much time as required to complete the test. In addition, demographic data were collected, including gender, year of study, grade average, key study discipline and reason for applying for the program. Participation in the projective test was both voluntary and anonymous.

Cooperative students were required to produce a reflective journal and complete a survey at the conclusion of the work placement. Open-ended questions required students to identify what they had learned from their experience and how this could enhance their future personal, academic and career development, and they were asked to provide recommendations for improvement of future programs. The survey collected demographic and attitudinal information on their work experience. Both positive and negative comments were extracted from the journals and survey responses, and these formed the basis of the analysis.

A grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) was adopted as the researcher was unfamiliar with the experiential learning literature specifically related to work-based experiential learning prior to undertaking data analysis. Themes or categories were developed inline with the procedures recommended by Creswell (1998) for phenomenological analysis. Following the recommendations of Richards (1999) and Bazeley and Richards (2000), transcripts were analysed using QSR NVivo. NVivo is a formal approach to qualitative data analysis (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). The use of NVivo reduces the loss of data richness that is often associated with single-dimensioned computer searches (Richards, 1999). It allows data manipulation so tentative themes and patterns in the case material can be developed. As various attributes emerged during the search process, new nodes were developed. Richards (2001) describes this ability to incorporate the results of questions into the subsequent analysis as 'system closure'.

Data were initially classified into positive and negative themes with attributes emerging from the coding process (see Pearce and Lee, 2006, 2007 for the use of similar dichotomous classification methods). Attributes were identified using pattern matching to explore student perceptions and opinions of their experience. The relative importance of attributes was assessed by clustering responses into one of three groups based on how frequently attributes were identified. Positive attributes were identified by star symbols and negative attributes by crosses. Three symbols indicated a strong cluster, two symbols a medium cluster and one symbol a weak cluster. Numbers in brackets indicated attribute frequency and, while this was not a statistical test, the results revealed patterns in the data. Summation of frequency of occurrence of individual attributes was greater than the sum of the total responses, as students often reported multiple attributes within their response.

## Findings

The cartoon completion test generated 26 responses from a sample size of 35, with 14 males and 10 females (two students did not identify their gender). Respondents were in their second (n=1), third (n=10) or fourth year (n=10) year of study, or had graduated (n=5); all respondents are referred to as students in this paper. Those students who had graduated were in the process of looking for full-time paid employment in their chosen

discipline. Students were from business, computing or communications disciplines and reported a credit or distinction average, with the exception of two students who reported their average marks were pass grades. The roles of students included content developer (n=6), content editor (n=2), website programmer (n=6), website designer (n=5) and multi-media developer (n=4). The majority of students (n=14) were involved in the project for 6–10 weeks, with fewer students involved for periods of 1–5 weeks (n=7) and 11–15 weeks (n=5).

When asked why they applied for the position, most students (n=24) hoped to *gain industry experience*. Others remarked that the position allowed opportunity to *improve their resume* (n=4) or that they were *seeking work* over the summer period (n=5). The following quotations illustrate the motivation to participate SMExcellence.

*I realised that potential future employers would look at people with some experience in the industry, and I saw this is a great opportunity to gain some experience.*

*This project was the only university project that allowed me to actually learn hands-on experience in an environment which was close to an actual working environment*

The learning experience response data are thematically summarised into positive and negative attributes in Table 1. The table compares three methods of data collection instruments by frequency of reported attribute to identify strong, medium and weak clusters.

Classifying responses by positive or negative dimensions revealed differences in the reporting by instrument. Both cartoon completions (n=22) and traditional surveys (n=20) showed similar patterns in overall positive responses rates. In contrast, student reflective reports (n=10) identified approximately half the number of positive responses. Reflective reports (n=15) and the surveys (n=14) reported similar patterns of overall negative responses, with cartoon completion identifying fewer negative responses (n=7).

Research dimensions	Attributes identified through NVivo thematic coding	Cartoon completion	Reflective journals	Traditional survey
<b>Positive attributes</b>	<b>Overall positive responses</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>
	Better learning experience than traditional university activities	★ ★ ★ (11)		
	Personal development	★ ★ ★ (10)	★ (4)	★ ★ ★ (11)
	Well managed project	★ ★ (8)		
	Provided industry experience	★ ★ (8)	★ ★ (5)	★ ★ (7)
	Good environment for teamwork	★ ★ (6)		★ (3)
	Enhanced skills and knowledge	★ ★ (6)	★ ★ (6)	★ ★ ★ (11)
	Facilitated social networking	★ ★ (5)		★ ★ (6)
	Apply skills learnt at university	★ (4)		
	Demonstrate creativity	★ (1)		
	Financial gain of getting a job			★ (1)
<b>Negative attributes</b>	<b>Overall negative responses</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
	Communication needs improving	⊗ (3)	⊗ (2)	⊗ (2)
	Organisation needs improving	⊗ (3)	⊗ (4)	⊗ ⊗ ⊗ (11)
	Too many changes throughout the project	⊗ (2)	⊗ ⊗ (7)	⊗ (3)
	Initial planning of the project	⊗ (2)	⊗ ⊗ (7)	
	Supervision of the project		⊗ (3)	
	Personal disappointment		⊗ (2)	

Table 1

#### Positive and negative attributes by cluster

**Key:**    ★ ★ ★ Strong cluster – positive attribute                      ⊗ ⊗ ⊗ Strong cluster – negative attribute  
              ★ ★ Medium cluster – positive attribute                      ⊗ ⊗ Medium cluster – negative attribute  
              ★ Weak cluster – positive attribute                                      ⊗ Weak cluster – negative attribute

Thematic coding identified comparable attributes across the three instruments. Common positive attributes included *personal development, providing industry experience, enhanced skills and knowledge, providing a good environment for teamwork and facilitating social networking*. Common negative attributes included *the need to improve organisation throughout the project, the need to improve communications between management and student groups, the need to reduce the many changes that were constantly being made throughout the project that created additional work and the need to improve initial planning of the project*.

Strong clusters (attributes with frequency of reporting at 10 or above) were identified in *providing a better learning experience than traditional university learning activities, personal development, the cooperative placement enhanced their skills and knowledge and improvement to the organisation of the project would be advantageous*. The following quotation is indicative of the general feeling towards the cooperative program providing a better learning experience.

*Usually other university units feel a lot like studying. It feels as if I'm bound to do this in order to accomplish something valuable in the future! But working at SMExcellence was different. For the first time it felt as if I have already accomplished something valuable, while I'm still learning. It's a great way of learning. SMExcellence allowed me a very dynamic, vibrant, real world instance of learning and working at the same time. I was working in the IT industry as I was learning and gaining priceless knowledge. Other university activities offered me only one door to learning. Sometimes this seemed tedious. SMExcellence was always refreshing. It boosted my confidence a long way.*

*The many things I have gained from this project will be brought with me to my future employment. The skills learnt from this project could not have been taught simply through university studies.*

A strong cluster of the *personal development* attribute was identified in both cartoon completion and traditional survey instruments, with the reflective reports identifying this attribute at a weak cluster (attributes with frequency of reporting less than 5). The following quotation represents the general feeling amongst respondents for the attribute of personal development.

*SMExcellence was the most wonderful thing that had happened to me in the student life. All the learning activated and assignments and tutorial works were chapter-oriented and had a goal of having a good mark for it. On the other hand, working as a programmer at SMExcellence taught us thinking out of the box, learning new skills, the focus was getting the task done and that persuaded us to learn more than what we would have imagined. It showed us a glimpse of professional life ahead of us where you never know what you need and one has to be on his toes.*

Traditional surveys identified a strong cluster for the attribute of *enhanced skills and knowledge*, with cartoon completion and reflective reports reporting the attribute as a medium cluster. The following student comment is reflective of the sentiment of this cluster.

*I enjoyed working with SMExcellence as I got to know the workplace, learning new things about businesses and learning new presentation skills and team work. There were a few changes along the way and we had to redo our work but overall it was an enjoyable experience for me and I'm willing to do more work with the cooperative program.*

All instruments reported a medium cluster (attributes with frequency of reporting between 5 and 9 inclusive) for the *industry experience* attribute. The following quotation sums up the general feeling of respondents.

*I have been given many opportunities to develop managerial and teamwork skills. I have also vastly improved my skills in terms of work ethic, workplace etiquette and communicating with supervisors and managers. I have greatly enhanced my public speaking and presentation skills, through our Friday presentations, as well as hosting the Student Showcase. I have also improved skills such as research, writing, computer literacy and multimedia understanding. My skills to work in a team and meet common goals have also improved, as well as my work ethic and determination to apply myself to tasks at hand.*

Medium clusters were reported in SMExcellence's ability to provide a *good environment for teamwork and facilitating social networking*. The attributes of teamwork and socialising are illustrated in the quotations below.

*Working with SMExcellence was an enjoyable experience and I enjoyed it much more than I have enjoyed other experiences at university. I found it good working with people who are actually committed to the project in a well-organised team environment. Communication was much better than what I've experienced in university group projects, and it led to a better finished product.*

*The project required us to do regular presentations which helped with confidence and communication skills. The project was an extremely enjoyable experience - I met great people (friends and potential future employees), I gained some work experience that would hopefully help me get a job after I finish uni and it was also good financially.*

In contrast to the diverse portfolio positive attributes, three areas of concern were identified by the respondents: *management/organisational attributes, uncertain and constantly changing nature of the project and personal disappointment* with the outcome. The need for *improved organisation of the project* was identified as a strong cluster in the traditional surveys and as a weak cluster by cartoon completion and reflective reports. The following quotation incorporates the views of several respondents in this cluster.

*I was disappointed overall with this project. I have spent days and hours within a day doing no work as none was assigned to us. There were days in which I did not go to work because I knew and so did my peers that there would be no work. I was meant to do five weeks, equalling 175 hours, but because I missed days and left early I had to stay an extra two weeks, which was a waste. I discussed this with the manager and he told me to come in and just do anything. I'm sorry but I will not and can not stand to waste my time sitting in front of a computer screen hoping for work. We were not allowed to work from home, because they could not count the number of hours we did. This was a mistake and if I had known then what I do now I would have fought to work at home.*

The attribute of too many changes throughout the project was reported as a medium cluster for reflective reports and weak clusters for cartoon completions and traditional surveys. The quotation below illustrates the student feelings.

*I feel the project should be more organised and structured. This is because there were several stages in the project which were uncertain. I did not know that the requirements had changed until after I had delivered the functionality.*

Two students reported the negative attribute of *personal disappointment* with their cooperative placement as illustrated in their responses below.

*When I was told I had been accepted to do the project I was excited, I thought I would be able to propose my web designs and hope that they might be chosen to be incorporated into a professional website. On completing this project I have discovered that I didn't fulfil any of my personal objectives and that I am disappointed that I didn't get the opportunity to prove myself.*

The cartoon completion test produced a greater range of attributes than reflective reports and traditional survey techniques. Overall, the cartoon completion instrument reported higher frequencies and richness in terms of detail for the positive attributes. Further, cartoon testing was the only instrument to identify the positive attributes of *a better learning experience than traditional university learning activities* (n=11), *SMExcellence was a well managed project* (n=8) and *the opportunity for application of skills learnt at university* (n=4).

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The first question that this research sought to address was to *measure the learning outcomes of an experiential work-based project using multiple methods of qualitative data collection*. For the most part, cartoon completion tests, reflective reports and conventional survey techniques identified similar positive and negative attributes in student learning experiences. However, cartoon completion tests uncovered both a greater range and a higher frequency of positive attributes than the other two techniques. In contrast, the reflective reports and traditional surveys tended to be more critical of the work-based learning experience.

Two reasons for the greater number and higher frequency of positive attributes using projective testing are hypothesised. First, timing of the implementation of the instruments affected response; the cartoon tests were completed in the final weeks of the internship with the reflective reports and conventional surveys administered within two weeks after the completion of the internships. It is possible that students exhibited *interviewer bias* (Zikmond, 2003) in the cartoon tests, with respondents wanting to please the management team by responding positively rather than telling their true feelings. Second, the use of cartoon completion tests offers an alternative and perhaps a more insightful technique to understand the student experience. The greater range and frequency of positive attributes supports the notion that in certain circumstances, projective tests may be a better method for understanding a student's attitudes, opinions and self-concept than reflective journals and traditional survey techniques.

An analysis of data suggests that reflective reports and conventional surveys detail a higher frequency of negative attributes. However, it is suggested that *acquiescence bias* (Zikmond, 2003:195) influenced the respondents, as both techniques specifically asked for recommendations on the improvement of the program. Therefore, the frequency of reported negative attributes may not be a reliable measure for comparing the three instruments. Nevertheless, all three instruments reported similar negative attributes, indicating that these issues were of concern.

The second research question was to *compare the targeted student learning outcomes with the reported learning outcomes using multiple methods of qualitative data collection*. A comparison of the learning objectives, learning outcomes and literature is reported in Table 2.

Learning objectives	Self-reported learning outcomes			Examples in the literature
	Cartoon completion	Reflective journals	Traditional surveys	
Industry experience				
Hands-on experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Schon (1995)
Better learning experience than university	Yes	No	No	Govekar and Rishi (2007)
Coping with complexity and uncertainty	Yes	Yes	Yes	Cusins (1984)
Knowledge				
Enhanced knowledge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Johnson (2000)
Skills				
Enhanced skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Reeders (2000)
Connection of theory to practice	Yes	No	No	Govekar and Rishi (2007)
Teamwork				
Good environment to work in teams	Yes	No	Yes	Jones (2007)
Social networking	Yes	No	Yes	Rossin and Hyland (2003)
Personal development				
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Johnson (2000)

**Table 2**

#### **Learning objective, outcomes and literature**

An analysis comparing learning objectives, student learning outcomes and evidence in the literature reveals that commonly reported themes include hands-on experience (Rossin and Hyland, 2003), difficulty with coping with

complexity and uncertainty (Jones, 2007), enhanced knowledge and skills (Schon, 1995; Reeders, 2000), and personal development (Jones, 2007). Despite reflective journals and traditional open-ended surveys allowing students to self-identify their learning outcomes, neither technique identified that the experience was better than learning at university and provided connected learning of theory to practice. Furthermore, the response data from journals did not identify advantages of an environment that facilitates collaborative teamwork or social networking opportunities as identified in the literature (Johnson, 2000).

The findings suggest that the learning outcomes from students involved in the work-based learning project *SMExcellence* matched the learning objectives of the program. However, the projective technique was superior in its ability to identify a wider range of learning outcomes. Both the reflective journal and traditional survey failed to identify key learning outcomes. Further research is required to understand the differences in reporting behaviours between instruments.

Interestingly, despite the occurrence of attributes for the need to improve communication, organisation and planning, the cartoon tests singularly identified a cluster of respondents who regarded *SMExcellence* as a *well managed project*. Despite all instruments identifying the need for improved management, the projective test was able to uncover a positive cluster that was not evident through reflective reports or conventional surveys.

The third research question was to *identify appropriate data collection methods in context-specific situations*. The findings from the use of projective testing demonstrated the benefits and reliability of the technique compared with traditional reflective journals and survey reports in this project. Projective testing uncovered a greater range of attributes that could be matched to the literature. Future assessment of cartoon completion tests on other work-based learning programs would help establish the validity of the technique across the variety of experiential learning methods and situations.

## **Implications**

The literature (Boyer, 1990, 1996) suggest that a critical component of scholarly engagement is teaching and thus it is argued that understanding student learning outcomes through CBL projects is important to educators. On the balance of evidence, cartoon tests may provide an alternative and enhanced technique for understanding the student learning experience. The analysis supports the notion that projective testing methods have the potential to uncover a greater range of positive learning outcomes, compared with reflective journals and conventional survey techniques. Student learning outcomes identified from all three techniques are consistent with experiential learning literature that recognises the importance of work-based learning as a valuable pedagogy. Practitioners and academics alike should consider projective techniques (such as cartoon tests) as an alternative method to reliably assess student learning outcomes. This study makes a contribution to CBL pedagogy by offering insight into students' perceptions of their learning outcomes. In doing so it reminds us there are alternative, potent and complementary ways of assessing student learning that are underutilised. Thus, it is recommended that cartoon tests should be considered for use by educators in assessing student learning outcomes.

## **Limitations**

This research is descriptive and exploratory and does not attempt to establish causality. The research investigates whether the inferences from the literature are valid and, where appropriate, it suggests alternative explanations. Single cases are criticised for their poor ability to generalise; however, the same criticism could be applied to quantitative survey research. Surveys rely on statistical generalisations (for example, whether to use a significance level of  $p < 0.05$  or  $p < 0.01$  is a discretionary judgement). Case studies, on the other hand, use analytical generalisation, where the investigator aims to generalise a particular set of results to a broader theory. Replication of future case studies involving large and complex problems becomes the analogy to probability.



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# VOICES FROM THE FIELD: PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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**Key words:** preceptorship; experiential learning; supervision; partnership; rural

## ABSTRACT

### **Aims**

*This paper focuses on the development of a partnership between the Nursing and Rural Health Unit of a regional university campus and regional health agencies that provide placement opportunities for students. It explores the collaboration that transpired in order to meet the educational needs of the partner organisations, undergraduate students, program and course requirements, and new health agency staff. The paper outlines the lessons learnt in building quality and sustainable partnerships over the last five years, and reports on the evaluation of the conduct of preceptorship workshops, which was a major initiative that resulted from the partnership.*

### **Background**

*In 2002, a partnership between local rural health services across South Australia and the regional university campus was formalised with the primary goal of maximising experiential learning opportunities and outcomes for nursing students and new health agency staff, through the implementation of a preceptor/supervisor workshop. The workshop program was devised by both health agency and university staff and included previous evaluations of nursing students' clinical placement experiences, and graduate nurses' experiences of their transitional year.*

### **Evaluation**

*Critical reflection was used to evaluate the partnership that was built. The partners reflected on their roles and contribution to the partnership, its impact on the students, industry partners, and faculty members. A survey approach using the Harvard One Minute questionnaire was used to evaluate the workshops. This was administered to all workshop participants between 2003 and 2007.*

### **Findings**

*Our reflections indicate that this partnership model is an excellent way of responding to the educational needs of students, new graduates, and clinicians. Moreover, the preceptor/supervisor workshops have been received positively, with 201 nurses participating. Valuable learning has transpired, including a better understanding of each other's perspectives of teaching and learning, the role of the preceptor/supervisor, and strategies as to how students and new graduates might be appropriately supported and objectively assessed.*

### **Concluding Reflections**

*While the workshops were found to be beneficial for students, industry partners and university lecturers, the partnership with hospitals and health services should be extended to include the supervision and nurturing of all health services staff. Continued development of the partnership will seek out other avenues for collaborative learning in the future.*

## INTRODUCTION

Clinical experience is a significant component of Bachelor of Nursing (BN) programs, as it provides experiential opportunities for students. During clinical experience, students are encouraged to actively learn from their individual experiences and to use this time to integrate practice and theory, to reflect on practice outcomes, to

develop practice knowledge and to identify learning needs. Experience within a clinical facility is valuable to nursing students and each experience can be treated as a unique learning episode.

Rural clinical experience is valuable for nursing students, not only does it provide unique experiences which challenges their understanding and abilities, but it also aids health services in attracting and retaining staff. Penman, Oliver and Petkov (2003) found that if students live within a rural area, and attend a rural university or campus, the number of students who take up employment within rural areas upon graduation is approximately 60%. This compares to 19% of students who do not live within rural areas, but who obtain some rural experience within their undergraduate degree (Playford, Larson & Wheatland 2006).

The value of clinical placement experiences cannot be overemphasised. It is imperative that the University of South Australia, Centre For Regional Engagement (CRE) and the health services which provide the clinical learning environments are supportive and capable of nurturing meaningful learning and optimal performance in students. Students are consumers or customers, rightfully demanding the highest quality of education and experiences available to them. It is essential therefore, to establish that the clinical venues are able to extend students' theoretical knowledge and practical skills, and provide continual, timely and appropriate feedback to students regarding their clinical performance.

The aims of this paper are to discuss the development of a partner relationship between the Nursing and Rural Health Unit and regional and rural health services, and to suggest ways of improving and enhancing the learning environment that health services provide learners through an evaluation of the Preceptor Workshops.

## BACKGROUND

The Centre For Regional Engagement is situated approximately 400 Km from the main campus in Adelaide and, at the time of the study, students enrolled into the rural campus either internally or externally. The BN program included a range of clinical practice courses, and clinical experience was achieved in a variety of health services. Students spent varying lengths of time in each health service, and had the chance to choose the venue. Multiple rural venues were used for placement at any one time, and this proved to be an insurmountable task for the lecturer to closely follow students' progress, necessitating the health service staff to take on some of this role.

During each clinical experience, students were 'buddied' with a Registered Nurse (RN) for each shift, with students electing which shift they worked. In some regional health services, a staff member was chosen to supervise students' progress; in others, students were supported by a lecturer who telephoned students and the service twice weekly. Occasionally, and if there were issues which impacted on student learning, a visit to the health service by the lecturer was necessary, but generally, facilitation of students and support for the health service staff was done from a distance.

Anecdotal reports from students and health agency staff demonstrated significant issues with the way the campus was conducting, organising and supervising undergraduate nursing students' clinical experiences. Students felt unsupported by their lecturer, and they could not identify placement issues over the phone. In addition, working with different RNs on a daily basis inhibited their progression to develop nursing competence. Staff in busy wards had problems having nursing students without highly organised supervision and felt that students were, at times, being left to do menial tasks. Some of the concerns of the students and health service staff are listed in the table below. The reports identified that more structure to the students' clinical experiences was necessary in order for students to gain as much as possible from this valuable learning tool, without placing additional workload on the health service staff.

Table1: Student and health service staff concerns of the model of clinical placement used prior to the implementation of preceptorship.

Student	Health service
Not progressing in that they spent a considerable length of time refreshing skills	Too busy to allow student to learn do tasks or to supervise them appropriately
Not knowing staff; not being expected or made to	Not knowing what students need to learn or

feel welcome	their past experiences
Staff too busy to take time to ensure learning and to supervise students	Staff being unfamiliar with how to assess using the ANMC* competency standards
Working with different people each shift and sometimes coping with changed supervisor during shifts	Having to move wards during a shift due to staff shortages, or skills required in another area of the health agency
Having their assessment done by staff who, they felt, had not worked with them long enough to make a judgement of their knowledge and abilities	Increasing acuity of clients, and students not prepared for the depth of holistic nursing required for each client
Feedback was not across the placement, and students did not know if their nursing abilities and knowledge were improving	Not knowing what to do if there was a problem with students, and what the university staff would think of them
Many 'buddies' telling students to do things differently than they were taught or shown by health agency staff previously	

\*ANMC Australia Nursing and Midwifery Council

## UNIVERSITY AND HEALTH SERVICE INITIATIVES

### Development of Partnership

A Clinical Practice Group consisting of staff from the Nursing and Rural Health Unit, rural health services and undergraduate nursing students and recent graduates formed to review the evidence and to develop experiential learning strategies that were more suited to the rural context. The goal was to develop a model of clinical support and teaching which would improve student outcomes through collaboration and shared responsibility. It was necessary, therefore, to ensure that the outcomes met the aims of all partners, so each partner identified their major objectives and expectations of the model. These are listed in appendix 1.

### Development of Preceptorship Model

Research and review of the literature provided the group with the evidence necessary to recommend the implementation of the preceptorship model of experiential learning. Preceptorship, states Charleston and Happell (2005, p.303), is 'an educational relationship, with the purpose of providing access to a competent, supportive role model'. It was felt that this model would expose nursing students to the world of nursing, and provide the most appropriate support for students and graduate nurses during their transition from student to RN. This model provided continuity of supervision, support, consistency of learning and feedback for students. Because this model was supported by health service and ward nursing teams, it had the potential to build collaborative learning relationships which encouraged questioning, clarification and reflection and increased critical thinking, problem solving and organisational capacity of the learner (Myrick & Yonge 2004). With students working within a clinical team, preceptorship also has the 'ability to influence nursing students' attitude' (Charleston & Goodwin 2004, p.225) towards different areas of nursing.

In order for the preceptor model of student clinical supervision to be successful, there was a need for infrastructure to be developed to support its implementation. This provided a foundation on which the model could be built. Health services were to ensure that there were adequate preceptors for the number of students attending for placement, but services had control over the number of students attending at any one time. Students would prepare appropriate objectives, and they were to work the same roster as their preceptor. The university would implement preceptor workshops across the CRE student catchment area to introduce the model to health service staff. These workshops were to include information on using the ANMC Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse and be flexible to include health service's specific needs if required. Because the health services gave priority to CRE nursing students, there was no charge for the workshops.

The workshops became the focus of the partnership and a development approach to decision-making processes was used. Chapman, Francis and Hoare (2007, p.101-102) outlines this 'grassroots approach' as having the following essential components; '(1) A framework to define the community; (2) shared awareness by members of

the community; and (3) mechanisms to mobilize the community to recognize its needs and develop a culture of participation'. The Clinical Practice Group believed that if education was to build understanding, nurses and students need to be empowered, enabling them to build healthy relationships, and to develop shared problem solving and decision-making capabilities. The essential components to achieve goals and to maintain the partnership, according to Taylor, Wilkinson and Cheers (2008, p.189) are 'communication, maintaining motivation and organizational and policy context'. These were achieved through diligent communication, shared responsibilities and involvement and the support of nursing administration in health services and the university.

An eight-hour workshop approved by participating health services was implemented. Staff of the health services assisted with the teaching which proved to be an advantage as issues that arose were discussed and solutions which met the health service's and university's policies, procedures and goals were then consistent. The workshop used varying teaching methodologies which included identification of personal learning objectives, question and answer sessions, role plays, scenarios, and group work. Preceptor Workbook & Notes was developed to complement sessions.

The content and implementation of the Preceptor Workshops for regional health agencies aimed at providing health service staff with greater understanding and practical knowledge of students' and new staff's learning needs. While there was a degree of flexibility according to individual health services, the main topics were; the value of supported clinical experiences for learners; the preceptorship model; supporting learners; the teaching role; using the ANMC competencies to assess nursing abilities; giving regular feedback, and trouble shooting. A typical program is included in appendix 2.

The program was delivered across rural South Australia for four years and 201 nurses participated. Generally the program was delivered once a year to various health agencies. It was open to registered (Division 1) and enrolled (Division 2) nurses. Participants ranged from Directors of Nursing, Nurse Unit Managers, Clinical Consultants, Community nurses, Mental Health Nurses, and Registered and Enrolled nurses working in the hospital or aged care. Most worked in public health agencies, mental health and aged care. Areas where the workshops were delivered included: Whyalla, Port Augusta (participants from Quorn, Cooper Pedy and Roxby Downs), Port Pirie (including participants from Crystal Brook and Jamestown), Ceduna (including participants, from Wudinna, Streaky Bay and Elliston), Cowell (including participants from Port Lincoln, Tumby Bay, Cleve, Kimba and Cummins), and Mount Gambier (including participants from Narracourt, Millicent, Keith and Penola).

## EVALUATIONS

Critical reflection was used to evaluate the partnership that was built and the major outcomes of this partnership, the Preceptor Workshops. The partners reflected on their roles and contributions to the partnership, as well as its impact on the students and health service staff. Evaluation outcomes of the workshops were reported back to the health service for discussion and comment as well as to the Clinical Placement Group.

A survey approach using a one-minute evaluation often called the Harvard One-Minute questionnaire was used to evaluate the workshops. This was administered to all workshop participants between 2003 and 2007. Names were not requested on the survey which strengthened confidentiality, and accomplishing and submitting the tool was taken as consenting to participate in the study. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which contained four questions:

- (1) In your view, what was the most important information you gained from the workshop?
- (2) List the best aspects of the workshop.
- (3) What information could be included or expanded upon for future groups?
- (4) Other comments.

This form of evaluation has a high completion rates (Stead 2005). It can be adapted to most contexts, is simple to prepare and administer, is relatively quick to execute, and is generally well received (Stead 2005), thus making it ideal for participants who may have travelled quite considerable distances, to attend the workshop. It has been credited with being an effective learning technique, in that it asks questions which stimulate reflection and critique of content immediately after the event (Chizmar & Ostrosky 1998, cited in Drummond 2007). However, if multiple responses to questions were used, it may make the analysis difficult.

## FINDINGS

### Partnership

A number of positive outcomes arose through regular contact with the Clinical Placement Group. For instance, joint marketing initiatives, invitations to seminars or lectures, shared role in providing information to local work experience students, and regular contact enabled staff from both institutions to remain current. The Nursing and Rural Health Unit also conducted annual nursing career expos to allow students to meet face-to-face with industry employers as well as learn about the numerous employment opportunities in rural areas. Another direct outcome of partnership was the development of the Clinical Facilitator Manual which has been a valuable resource folder for all clinical staff hosting students. This manual contained additional information about, preceptorship, supervision and teaching, university contact details, and the BN program.

### Preceptor Workshops

A total of 187 of a possible 201 participants completed the one-minute questionnaire and feedback, overall, was positive. Participants of the workshops thought the content was relevant, and they better understood what it must be like to be a learner in busy and stressful environments. Health service staff concerns about their own knowledge and capabilities to 'teach' were ameliorated once they understood the role of the preceptor. The category that scored highest was the use of the ANMC competency as the assessment tool. The initiative to develop these workshops provided an opportunity for collaboration between health and education faculty members, benefitting the students in the long run.

Table 2: Major categories of responses per question using the one-minute evaluation questionnaire. Categories are in order of priority (N=187)

Question:	Categories
1. In your view what was the most important information you gained from the workshop	1. Clinical assessment using ANMC competencies 2. Being an effective preceptor, and the preceptorship model 3. Teaching role of the preceptor
2. List the best aspects of the workshop	1. Assessing students 2. Role of Preceptor
3. What information could be included or expanded upon for future groups	1. Understanding approaches to student learning 2. Assessment
4. Other comments	1. Increased understanding of competencies and assessment 2. Greater confidence as teacher and preceptor

NB: participants made multiple responses

## DISCUSSION

As early as the eighties, Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989, p. 32) asserted that 'knowledge is situated', meaning knowledge is a product of the activity, context and culture in which it is developed and applied, and not limited to conventional schooling. Knowledge must be presented in context. These authors proposed the cognitive apprenticeship model which puts the transfer of knowledge through concrete situations. Lave (1988) agrees, stating that treating knowledge as self-sufficient and independent is limiting, and the way forward is to acknowledge that social interaction is a critical component of situated learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) refers to the process of legitimate peripheral participation, while others further developed the theory of situated learning. Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) emphasise the idea of cognitive apprenticeship, which aims to support learning by enabling students to acquire, develop and use cognitive tools in authentic domain activity. According to these authors, learning outside and inside educational facilities, advances through collaborative social interaction, and social construction of knowledge, and this was made possible by the renewed knowledge and understanding of nurse clinicians.

Adequate clinical supervision through preceptorship programs has received much attention in the literature. The collaborative partnership between preceptor (tutor) or supervisor (official advisor with regards to work performance) or mentor (an experienced person) and student, is valuable for student support, knowledge transfer and problem solving (LeGris & Cote 1997; MacLeod & Farrel 1994). Teasdale, Brocklehurst and Thom (2001) highlight the significance of both formal and informal support for nurses. Additionally, the characteristics and attributes as well as duties of a clinical teacher have been identified and reported. Clinicians and practitioners, in assuming their new clinical role, however, need to be prepared for the role (Charleston & Goodwin 2004; Hinchcliff 1999) in order for them to understand the concepts upon which clinical supervision are based. Clinical venues should be informed of the underpinnings, process and structure of the model of clinical supervision that is being used (Draper et al. 1999; Gallinagh & Campbell 2000; van Ooijen 2000). The Nursing and Rural Health Unit addressed these issues by conducting regular workshops on preceptorship for clinicians.

Advantages of this partnership have been that learners have noticed a higher quality of awareness of preceptors surrounding their need to learn, and a greater involvement of health service staff in establishing a working and sustainable culture of clinical learning. Learners feel valued and generally meet their learning objectives and expectations, and staff have become more involved in the learning and support of learners. Learners too have identified the narrowing of the gap between academia and the work of nurses, and they feel that the identification of issues early in the relationship challenges them to learn and to improve their practice. For preceptors, professional growth has given them a different perspective of learners and has made them more aware of their role in the experiential learning cycle. Both students and preceptors feel that they have grown professionally and developed new skills that will assist them in their future career and employment, and they feel that they have build personal and professional capacity and the ability to network to further develop their professionalism.

Building the partnership between rural health services and the nursing education came out of necessity and Bringle and Hatcher (2002) have identified this as a legitimate reason for partnership development. The university wanted quality clinical experiences for students and health services wanted graduates who were more developed in the fundamental skills of nursing and knew, at beginning level, the work of the registered nurse. Implementation of the preceptor model to enhance experiential learning provided the means by which the partnership could develop, be sustained and evolve to a relationship that was more responsive and collaborative.

However, building a sustainable relationship requires purposeful planning, identification of mutual goals, advanced communication skills and trust. Bringle and Hatcher (2002, p.507) recommend that 'a clear sense of identity and purpose, procedures, and resources need to exist and be effectively communicated'. The common purpose, and the shared knowledge about what is expected of learners during their education and upon graduation, and what is expected of the RN in rural health services, enabled the partnership to develop and to be maintained. This partnership had what Bringle and Hatcher (2002) call, the 'implications for practice'. These are a clear mission, compatibility, effective communication and skilled staff.

Sustainable outcomes can be achieved when local people are committed to working together as a community to find solutions by building on the community's strengths and assets. The preceptorship workshop initiative developed to provide quality clinical learning and support to students attending a rural campus, and it demonstrates how collaboration and common goals can work to improve educational and professional outcomes. Cavaye (2000, cited in Zivkovic 2002, p.1) asserts that 'one cannot build community capacity, only local people can' and this has been seen in this initiative. Bringle and Hatcher (2002, p.509) asserts that partnerships become stronger when they are able to do a variety of things to sustain the interest and the motivation of the partners, and this was true of this initiative.

## **CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**

As a provincial university campus, there is a heavy reliance on rural and remote health services to provide nursing students with the necessary clinical experience. Through the partnership, clinical staff, the university and students have benefited from the close ties, the shared responsibility and seamless progression of learning, and this has the possibility of enhancing students' transition into the role of the Registered Nurse. The University helped to create the environment in which capacity building can occur, but the major benefit learned was that by sharing problems and solutions, learning communities can develop, and be sustained.



It has been recommended that partnerships with rural health service be maintained and continued, and that formalisation of the partnership needs to progress. The partnership has brought the university and the community it serves closer together, and continued exploration of the mechanisms and processes by which the relationship can be further improved and developed needs to continue. This innovation shows the successful, creative and appropriate approach taken by the University in responding to educational needs of clinicians, albeit to achieve an objective that also benefited the university nursing students.

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## Appendix 1

Main objectives and expectation of clinical placement from the university, health service and students (these are not listed in priority)

University	Health Service	Student
To familiarise students to the work of the RN and to clinical areas of nursing	To provide high quality experiences to undergraduate nursing student to prepare them for practice	To learn how to be a competent nurse
To enable students to apply theoretical concepts to practice and to relate practice to theory	To gain knowledge of what students learn across the curriculum	To put into practice the theory learned during the degree
To ensure that students are assessed by nursing staff who are familiar with the assessment strategies using the ANMC competency standards.	Through learning more about the BN curriculum in order to prepare the graduate year program and provide better opportunities for the new graduates	To experience nursing in the 'real world' in order to determine career pathways, eg working on different wards and allied health areas
To provide experience for students which require them to communicate and work with all levels of staff	To be involved in the education of student nurses, through providing quality clinical experiences	To achieve all identified learning objectives at a high level of competence
To more closely provide clinical experiences which represent the work and role of the RN	To gain knowledge of student capabilities and their level of understanding and ability to practice ethically and legally (especially for 3 <sup>rd</sup> year nursing students)	To experience the work of the Registered Nurses eg coping with responsibility, shift work, working with people who are sick and their family
To engage with the nursing staff within clinical facilities to understand nursing from their perspective	To work with university staff to prepare and nurture future recruits to attract nurses for employment upon graduation	To obtain an 'insider' view of the health care facility for future employment

## Appendix 2

### THE CENTRE FOR REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND ...

Invite you to:

#### Preceptor Workshop

##### Program

0815 – 0830	Registration and welcome
0830 - 0845	Purpose
0845 – 0945	<p>The value of clinical experience to the development of professional practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Similarities and differences between preceptors, supervisors, and mentors</li><li>• Who should precept/supervise</li><li>• Role of preceptor/supervisor</li><li>• Learner perceptions of preceptorship/supervision</li><li>• Process of preceptorship/supervision</li><li>• Practice-theory integration</li><li>• University objectives for each clinical placement</li></ul>
0945 – 1015	<p>The art of teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building learning environments</li><li>• Adult education principles</li><li>• The teaching role of the preceptor/supervisor</li><li>• Setting learner-preceptor expectations</li><li>• 6 steps to quick effective clinical teaching</li></ul>
1015 - 1040	<b>Morning tea</b>
1040 – 1115	<p>Using leadership strategies to enhance clinical learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Valuing experience</li><li>• Setting expectations</li><li>• Leadership/Preceptorship styles</li><li>• Characteristics of effective leader/preceptor</li></ul>
1115 – 1215	Group Work, group feedback & discussion
1215 – 1250	<b>Lunch</b>
1250 – 1400	<p>Assessment – Why assess?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using the ANMC Competency Standards to assess students</li><li>• Giving learners a chance to meet criteria</li><li>• Using debriefing techniques to increase learning</li><li>• How to ensure positive outcomes (trouble-shooting)</li></ul>
1400 – 1500	The power of effective feedback
1500 – 1600	Role plays & discussion
1600 – 1615	Have we met the objectives and where to from here?
1615 – 1630	Evaluation and close

## Going to Scale: Regional Engagement and the Creative Economy

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### ABSTRACT

*The changing nature of knowledge production and international competition and collaboration will affect the organization, working relationships, educational strategies and societal roles and expectations that we attribute to our universities as well as how our educational system prepares its students for the workplace, for citizenship and for postsecondary education. Our educational institutions will begin to work together and interact in different ways to create research and educational environments that are easy to traverse and responsive to the changing knowledge and skill needs of a global, multidisciplinary, collaborative and open business and community landscape and to address the daily challenges of life in the regions we serve. The core premise of this paper is that the key capacity needed to ensure that a region will be able to compete effectively in a global marketplace is the development of a readily accessible, high quality system of education from the primary grades through advanced education and the availability of a strong locally accessible community of excellent researchers. A number of states within the United States are moving to ensure that every region has access to a strong educational system and a research base. What follows is a discussion of this policy perspective as it is being advanced in the United States. No attempt is made to analyze or critique the emerging scholarly literature on this topic. It is too soon to tell how effective this strategy will be and what we might expect from this investment of public funds in research and access to advanced education attuned to the regional social and economic environment.*

### THE CREATIVE ECONOMY: GLOBAL, MULTIDISCIPLINARY, COLLABORATIVE AND OPEN

The nature of innovation is changing as business, technology and society increasingly intersect and influence each other. These new forms of interactions and new opportunities for collaboration are changing some of the fundamental concepts that have driven our approach to education, knowledge transfer and the management of human capital, intellectual capital and social capital.

In 2006, IBM Corporation brought together 248 thought leaders from nearly three dozen countries and regions representing 178 organizations on four continents and asked them to explore the evolving nature of innovation. The first conversation about the Global Innovation Outlook (referred to as GIO 1.0), conducted in 2004, concluded that innovation is increasingly *global, multidisciplinary, collaborative and open* (summarized in IBM Monograph GIO 2.0 2006).

**Global:** New ideas are driven by interactions made possible by networked technology and open standards that are removing geographic barriers to interaction and moving the economy from a reliance on natural resources to people resources. In this environment, people can work together across both time and space but location still matters because the quality of life in a particular region affects who will choose to live there. No longer, however, are the options open to a particular geographic area bounded by or limited by the people and ideas and natural resources found there.

**Multidisciplinary:** A number of years ago, Michael Gibbons et al (1994) developed the concept of *transdisciplinary* to describe the remarkable changes that are taking place in how and where knowledge is generated and how and where it is put to use. The GIO conception is very closely related to the concept of transdisciplinary. GIO 2.0 is based on the observation that the challenges and opportunities we now experience are complex. If we are to respond to them in an innovative way, we need a “diverse mix of talent and expertise (p.2).”

**Collaborative and Open:** GIO 2.0 argues that increasingly, “innovation results from people working together in new and integrated ways (p.2).” This is occurring both within our more traditionally organized enterprises, both

public and for-profit and in modes that bring shifting networks of people and organizations together, shaped by common interests rather than by unique institutional affiliations or identities. In these environments, we need new definitions of such classic concepts as enterprise, intellectual property, risk and benefit, trust and responsibility and brand. As we shall see, we also need fresh interpretations of the classic university functions of research, teaching and service that embrace new ways of working together, new standards of proof and warrants for action and new participants. We will explore this further when we discuss new ways in which knowledge is being generated and utilized.

It is becoming clear that changes in the very nature of business and how it develops will have significant implications for how we organize and operate our societal institutions both public and private, how the field of competition changes, what individual and collective behaviors will be rewarded, and how the workings of industry will be judged in the broader context of the social and environmental impacts of their operations. GIO 2.0 offers some tantalizing glimpses of a new reality that will be earth-shaking. The impact of these changes also will shake the foundations of our social systems---how we organize and deliver health care, how we act as stewards of the natural environment and work together to ensure that we leave sufficient resources for coming generations, how we educate, how we work together and how we learn. In this paper, we will explore primarily one of these sectors---the nature of tertiary education and the role of research universities as creative hubs for regional development.

## THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL INNOVATION

Last year, the National Governors Association (NGA) in the United States undertook an exploration of the concept of regional innovation and the ways in which the emerging creative economy might change the roles and responsibilities of universities and colleges. According to its website,

“the National Governors Association (NGA), founded in 1908, is the collective voice of the nation's governors and one of Washington, D.C.'s, most respected public policy organizations. NGA provides governors and their senior staff members with services that range from representing states on Capitol Hill and before the Administration on [key federal issues](#) to developing [policy reports](#) on innovative state programs and hosting networking seminars for state government executive branch officials. The [NGA Center for Best Practices](#) focuses on state innovations and best practices on issues that range from education and health to technology, welfare reform, and the environment. NGA also provides management and technical assistance to both new and incumbent governors.”

In today's economy, competition between nations is less relevant than competition between regions of innovation made possible within “creative centers” (NGA Center for Best Practices, final report of Innovation America 2007). Creative centers are characterized as healthy, diverse and sustainable communities that offer historical context, engaging physical and cultural environments, opportunities for exchange and exploration across diverse perspectives and deep understanding and appreciation of human diversity. As Richard Florida (2002, p. 283) explains it, “cities need a *people climate* even more than they need a business climate.”

A region of innovation has “groups of high wage, rapidly growing businesses that are closely linked through collaboration, research efforts, common products and services,” (NGA Center for Best Practices, final report of Innovation America 2007); that is, a region of innovation is shaped by clusters of related and interacting businesses that create a local high skilled labor pool, attract new talent to the region and retain local talent. Regions that have a strong educational environment and a research university as a creative hub will have a large advantage in the emerging creative economy that is supported by regional economic strategies ( Richard Florida, 2002 p. 291-292.) In Florida's view, “the presence of a major research university is a basic infrastructure component of the Creative Economy---more important than the canals, railroads and freeway systems of past epochs---and a huge source of competitive advantage.” For this advantage to be realized, however, a region needs to develop an entire ecosystem of interacting and collaborative educational entities that provide access to excellent educational resources throughout life. The institutions within this network also must work with each other and with local partners to construct creative and effective solutions to rapidly emerging and often unexpected challenges and questions for which there are no well-researched and thoroughly tested answers. In this future, a typical institutional response will be to provide collaborative solutions rather than to design and deliver self-contained educational programs.

It has been argued by the National Governors Association that government policy and programs must support conditions that generate creative centers around which a region of innovation can form and grow. Government policy and institutional practices also must address the realities of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education--the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) knowledge that can support this new growth strategy as well as the skill sets that promote creativity, innovation and the transfer of knowledge into the process of innovation and solution funding. Unlike entrepreneurship which tends to involve individuals with creative ideas or particular working models that link a college or university to a particular company or agency, the concept of regional innovation requires a larger collaborative environment and new kinds of working relationships to facilitate the generation of knowledge and its effective use both in education and in regional advancement.

The pivotal change required to make a regional innovation strategy work is to have well-placed, distinctive colleges and universities that work well together and that are equipped and able to engage in meaningful, sustainable and effective collaborations across all sectors. Through establishing a regional presence and local access to advanced education and research, these investments can set up the conditions necessary for regional innovation and economic competitiveness. An excellent example of this kind of investment designed to help revitalize a regional economy can be found in the State of Virginia, in an economically depressed region called the "Southside." The economy of this region of Virginia began to decline a decade ago when the tobacco industry began to falter and as the textile industry began to relocate to other countries. To rebuild a healthy economy and create opportunity, Virginia Tech University established an Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, Virginia (Institute for Advanced Learning and Research 2008). Drawing from the experience of the region, the Institute has selected four areas of research that can benefit the region and stimulate the revival of its economy, while, at the same time, offering workforce education and remedial education in order to prepare citizens of the region to be competitive for the jobs being created as the research conducted by the institute is translated into enterprise. Through centers focused on polymers, performance engineering and motorsports, high-value crops in horticulture and forestry, and unmanned systems and robotics, IALR research plays an integral role in the economic revitalization of Southside Virginia. For example, by generating research, education, and commercialization activities necessary to transform the existing regional tobacco base into viable new horticulture and forestry industries, the Institute for Sustainable and Renewable Resources merges Southside's rich natural resources with high-tech innovations. Similar expansions and outreach, either in the form of actual physical infrastructure or in the form of distance education and research consultations made possible by technology, are being undertaken across the United States. Many of these models and experiments are described in the reports of the Innovation American Task Force (National Governors Association 2008).

Meanwhile, the structure of the world economy continues to evolve. Many previously well-paying middle class jobs contain significant components of work that can be modeled in an expert system and thus automated. It is becoming much less expensive and therefore more attractive to automate those functions that used to be performed by people, changing what we mean by basic and advanced skills (Murnane and Levy 1996). To compete in this climate, "producing the most important new products and services depends on maintaining the worldwide technological lead, year in and year out, in (existing industries) and in the new industries that new technologies generate. But that kind of leadership does not depend upon technology alone. It depends on a deep vein of creativity that is constantly renewing itself." (National Center on Education and the Economy 2004, p. 5-6). As Murnane and Levy (1996, P. xv) make clear, "the major issue, however, is that the education system is undergoing incremental improvement in an environment of exponential change." The only way to speed things up is to expand the environment in which innovation can take place beyond the bounds of individual institutions and to embrace the same kind of open, global, collaborative and innovative model that major transnational corporations are not establishing. Our educational environments must take on the characteristics of the world around us if we are to prepare our students for a creative economy and if we are to serve as hubs for building a network of regional collaboration and creative centers that attracts the kind of people who can compete in a rapidly changing world order. This is what is meant by **regional engagement**.

High levels of education will be the source of the only real personal security there is in this new economy. It can be argued that such an education requires that students apply what they are learning in real world settings and that they explore their learning in ways that have personal meaning to them. According to the recent report by the National Center on Education and the Economy, "the core problem is that our education and training systems

were built for another era, an era in which most workers needed only a rudimentary education (p. 8). A 21<sup>st</sup> century education must prepare all of our students to be creative, innovative solution-finders who can deal with problems they have never seen before while working with people they have never met before, many of whom are very different in values, culture, experience and expertise from themselves, while the problem itself continues to change as they work on it. They also must be able to find and effectively use resources that are available to them in their communities. This cannot be modeled easily in a classroom but it can be experienced by participating in engaged forms of scholarship and learning in community settings with the appropriate guidance and encouragement from academic staff as well as community mentors (Ramaley 2007).

To create regions of innovation, we need to link our educational systems (both K-12 and postsecondary) to resources in the community to address both workforce development and economic and community development. This will open up an avenue to design new approaches to collaboration and partnership that create the capacity to innovate in all of these related systems and thus to create new approaches to education, workforce development, environmental sustainability and diversification and growth of our economy. These new working relationships can create a vital and innovative infrastructure for regional development.

## **THE CHANGING NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION**

The changing nature of knowledge production and international competition and collaboration will affect the organization, working relationships, educational strategies and societal roles and expectations that we attribute to our nation's colleges and universities as well as the functions of K-12 and how our educational system prepares its students for the workplace, for citizenship and for postsecondary education. As we change what we do at the college level, our definition of what it means to be "college ready" will also have to change. It will expand from an emphasis on content knowledge to a more comprehensive conception of what students will need to know and be able to do and how they can respond to changing conditions and needs innovatively and creatively.

The changes captured in GIO 2.0 are also taking place within the academy and are reflected in the portfolios of the Federal agencies that support research and education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The early signs are promising but we have a long way to go to match our environments, habits and expectations to the realities of the growing number of enterprises that are working in global, multidisciplinary, collaborative and open modes. We will only see an alignment between the realities of the creative economy and the goals and aspirations of higher education when these realities are reflected in the policy environments that govern and assess the quality and productivity of postsecondary institutions and in the policies and expectations of most governing boards that oversee public and private higher education. In these environments today, enterprises are still considered as self-contained and solely responsible for whether their students learn and progress successfully to graduation and for whether and how intellectual capital is distributed and used. Within public educational systems in the United States, resources are generally distributed according to the student credit hours generated (that is, according to enrollments) and attributed to individual institutions. Assessments of productivity such as retention and graduation rates of students are still measured within the context of individual institutions even though increasingly students move through a complex pattern of participation in K-12 and postsecondary education and enroll in multiple institutions, often concurrently. Intellectual capital is still regarded as intellectual property to be owned and protected and treated as a means for institutions and their employees (usually academic staff) to generate much-needed revenues. It is rarely considered to be "open source" to be used by a social network of interactive and creative people. With some exceptions, knowledge production by such social networks takes place beyond the bounds of higher education.

Measures of learning are still being approached as a means to assess quality and mete out rewards or punishments rather than as a mechanism to gauge the overall intellectual assets of a state or a region and to guide further investment in the human, social and intellectual capital that will allow a community to thrive in a networked and global environment. According to Paul Lingenfelter (2007) "meaningful, collective, self-disciplined accountability requires evidence---monitoring results and working for improvement." Note especially the mention of the concept of *collective*. It is the introduction of the concept of shared responsibility that will most characterize the educational environment of the future, both within the context of individual institutions and across the educational sector.

The production and use of knowledge is changing in dramatic ways that will challenge the traditional organization of the disciplines and their reflection in the typical undergraduate and graduate/professional curriculum. A decade ago, Michael Gibbons et al (1994) foreshadowed these developments in *The New Production of Knowledge*. He argued that a second form of knowledge production that he called Mode 2 was emerging from within the classic research model (Mode 1) and that both how knowledge was being developed and where the work was being done were starting to change. The interactive space made up of many institutions and sites, knowledge cannot be said to move linearly from the lab bench or basic investigator to application and the marketplace of ideas and technology. Donald Stokes captured the essence of this new model in *Pasteur's Quadrant* (Stokes, 1997). In his conception of knowledge transfer, Stokes argues that the original linear model in which basic research leads to applied research which leads to development and then application on a large-scale offer only a limited understanding of how knowledge is generated and put to use in contemporary ways. He developed the concept of Pasteur's Quadrant to describe a model in which theoretical research and practical research and application come together, as they did in the career of Louis Pasteur, to create a continuously turning *cycle of innovation* driven by changing environmental conditions and the competitive landscape.

Research and learning as well as innovation and invention are becoming concurrent, iterative and ever-shifting in their focus and their participants. As Gibbons et al (1994) explain, a new mode of knowledge production is emerging alongside the traditional one "affecting the context in which knowledge is being produced, the very way it is organized, the reward system it uses and the mechanism of quality control (p. 1)" used to validate the work. This new mode is not approached in the frame of a particular discipline. It is not vetted through the usual hierarchical, discipline-based set of warrants for validity. It is not conducted primarily within research universities or their associated laboratories and it is heavily interactive within a community of investigators and experimenters drawn from a variety of fields and representing multiple interests. These interactions are supported by the networking capabilities of cyberspace as well as by new and more innovative mindsets and institutional models that foster collaboration.

In this new mode, disciplinary warrants are no longer the basis for deciding what counts as a significant problem, who should be allowed to conduct experimentation and innovation and what constitutes "good science (Gibbons et al, p. 3)" Similar in concept to the way we now talk about engaged universities and engaged scholarship and learning, Mode 2 problems are set in the context of application. Insights and methods are drawn from many disciplines. We are starting to see a gradual blending of models and methods to create a different, more integrated approach that Gibbons et al call "transdisciplinary" to distinguish the phenomenon from "interdisciplinary" where a common problem is studied from several angles but the different perspectives do not co-mingle.

## **TRANSDISCIPLINARY WORK AND ENGAGEMENT**

What might this new mode of inquiry and application mean for the intellectual and structural organization of a university and how its intellectual resources are applied to regional innovation? The question is critical because the emerging Mode 2 models appear to hold great promise for supporting the kind of outreach and engagement that will best utilize the resources that society has underwritten in public universities to support the formation of creative centers and competitive regions in a creative economy.

Transdisciplinary work employs a distinct but evolving framework to guide problem-solving. Inquiry is shaped continuously by what is being learned in the investigation. The core questions of how observations will be collected, how evidence will be marshaled, how arguments will be drawn and how the results will be evaluated and interpreted, remain unsettled within transdisciplinary work. These core concepts, all of which are pre-set by consensus within a discipline (Shulman 1988), remain uncertain when knowledge is generated outside a single disciplinary framework because there is no single arbiter of validity. As a result, the knowledge generated by transdisciplinary work is not structured in a particular disciplinary mode but rather within "its own distinct theoretical structures, research methods and modes of practice (Gibbons et al 1994, p. 5)

The results are diffused through a network of participants and their colleagues and carried forward as knowledge into a next set of projects and activities. The transmission is via social networks rather than through approved



and refereed channels maintained by the authority of a single discipline. The knowledge is, as a result, cumulative, since it is integrated into the other things that the participants know. The process of validation, integration and interpretation is tacit and not codified or visible to others who were not on the scene. It becomes part of the intellectual assets of a network of people held together by “persisting and highly mobile communication networks” (Gibbons et al 1994, p. 5) or communities of practice (Brown and Duguid 1991). Finally, transdisciplinary work is dynamic and can be described as “problem-solving capacity on the move” (Gibbons et al 1994, p. 5) marked by “the ever closer interaction of knowledge production with a succession of problem contexts” (Gibbons et al 1994, p. 5). In other words, the approach evolves as people gain experience and as the value of their work is tested within contexts. Knowledge is increasingly transmitted not by formal, peer-reviewed channels but through contact and relationships within a network of interacting people.

Consider how very different Mode 2 work is from the structure of universities with their departments and carefully codified disciplines. In this environment, even interdisciplinary work is often difficult. In universities, the unit of measure is the individual, not a group or team. It is necessary to distinguish the contributions of a particular person or department to either the generation of intellectual capital or the attraction of prestige and recognition. Meanwhile, in society at large, knowledge workers and their inclination to experimentation and intentional learning continue to spread throughout the professions and organizations, both for-profit and non-profit and the locus of research within the research university continues to shift. Much intellectual work and innovation occurs in situations often quite remote from universities. In fact, knowledge and capacity for innovation are increasingly being seen by economists as a valuable, if hard to measure, commodity whose movement and trading resembles a marketplace (Foray 2004.) Gibbons et al (1994, p. 14) calls this “socially distributed knowledge production.” Increasingly, new ideas and knowledge are being generated in many places, involving many types of people and organizations interacting with each other in a variety of ways. With the opening of cyberspace, these relationships appear to be expanding endlessly. What will be the role of the disciplines in providing quality assurance for ideas and “facts” or observations generated by such a distributed system of people working in increasingly different settings on complicated, multi-dimensional problems? How must we prepare our students to function as professionals and knowledge workers in a genuine learning society? What should our educational objectives be? How will we deal with the fact that we are no longer the primary or dominant arbiter of what is true and valid and what is not? What will be the role of higher education in the knowledge-based economy and society of the future? What will we do as technological solutions cease to derive from previous experience or existing science but instead represent adaptive solutions to previously unforeseen problems and opportunities? How in fact can we cope with adaptive problems in the first place?

According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002), an adaptive challenge requires

“experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways---changing attitudes, values and behaviors---people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment. The sustainability of change depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself. (p. 13)”

They distinguish a challenge of this kind from the much more familiar **and comfortable** technical problem. For problems like those, we already know the solutions or we can draw upon existing knowledge to solve them without having to change ourselves, our ways of thinking or our interactions with each other. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) devote an entire book to the basic issue of how to lead when the challenges facing a group of people or an organization are adaptive ones, not technical ones. The problem is captured in the title of their text *Leadership on the Line. Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading.* Adaptive challenges do not have easy answers and they require Mode 2 knowledge production. People often find these situations upsetting and it is important to prepare for the likely unleashing of difficult emotions that can threaten both leadership and effective application of adaptive expertise.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD**

The IBM exploration of global innovation (IBM 2006) offers several core observations that point the way to the competitive/collaborative environment of the future. This new landscape will be the ground upon which different, ever-changing institutional collaborations and educational models will be built. All of these adaptations of our

current approach to tertiary education will require a reexamination of our approach to our core functions of teaching and research. The implications of regionalization for our educational institutions have been explored in considerable depth by scholars of the emerging field of engagement and will not be considered here. For examples of this burgeoning literature, the reader is referred to Holland (2005) and Ramaley (2005, 2006, 2007).

Powerful new social structures are evolving that transcend physical and geographical borders more easily and that open up new forms of interaction and collaboration in which individuals can exert a different and more powerful influence over networks of people. This influence is exerted by “their ability to tap into and sometimes transform a larger network of people and ideas”( IBM, 2006, p. 9).” These new patterns of interaction and exchange will place some pressure upon the often relatively self-contained structure of the Academy which will need to open up in order to support forms of knowledge generation and application that more closely model the patterns emerging in regional economies and in large multi-national corporations such as IBM.

The development of networks organized according to working relationships rather than organizational affiliation will change what we mean by an *endeavor* or an *enterprise* as well as *employer* and *employee*. The focus around which we may organize our work in the future may be a “common set of interests, goals or values” rather than our affiliation with a particular institution or community of interest. People may move freely from one focal point or endeavor to another and may never be permanently attached to any one organization or discipline or program.

Our current forms of quality assurance are institutionally based, both in education and in industry where we have various forms of accreditation or certifications. In the future, we may, instead, operate according to principles of *reputation capital*, “a kind of accumulated trust, a standard of accountability that enables diverse, and often virtual, networks of people to confidently strike partnerships with one another (IBM, 2006, p. 10). We can see this now in the way that open source software is designed by large loosely coupled networks of people that become self-organizing, held together by tangible results and trust rather than by structures and regulations.

Our approach to decision-making will surely change as leaders are offered a much more comprehensive *line of sight* (IBM, 2006, p. 10) through their relationships, partnerships and virtual networks into the world in which their efforts will be judged, adopted or rejected and put to use. In other words, we will be given more insight into the full consequences of our actions. This in turn may inspire us to examine a wider range of choices and to explore more dimensions of the world in which we are operating in a world made up of shifting networks of other people and places.

A different set of experiences and a different line of sight may lead to a process that GIO 2.0 (IBM 2006) calls “flipping the equation.” In this mode, we may start looking at things in new ways. For example, we may focus not only on how to build something but also on its eventual decomposition and recycling. This would mean a different approach to assessing the qualities of composite materials and designs. Similar reversals of thinking could apply to issues in transportation (for example the dispersal of people rather than the concentration of people) or any other aspect of life today that would benefit from a fresh perspective. To do this, we must move beyond either/or thinking and embrace the ability to link economic progress, environmental protection and societal enhancement into one larger, complex and multi-dimensional enterprise. Just as our organizations are less and less self-contained, so must our thinking grow to be more expansive and inclusive.

Management models will have “to contend with how to orchestrate a complex and changing network of individuals within and outside the boundaries that previously defined ‘the enterprise (IBM, 2006, p. 16).” This will surely include the ability to embrace self-organizing networks, new forms of outsourcing and shared responsibility, customer-driven design and new forms of trusted interactions with people and organizations over which we have little, if any, control. We will organize ourselves into ever-changing patterns expanding, contracting and reconfiguring (IBM, 2006, p. 17) as needs change or a project advances and requires different expertise or as the marketplace changes. What will hold these shifting working models together will be a common vision, shared principles and a common purpose rather than rules and regulations or company or institutional autonomy and culture.

In this environment, intellectual capital will cease to be property to be controlled and protected but instead will become an asset or capital to be invested. Continued learning will take place as an integrated component of the collaborations that now increasingly characterize innovation, rather than in separate and often heavily funded education and training programs. The linear model of knowledge production and transfer that has long defined our approach to sharing the results of our research enterprise will be replaced by a concurrent model or *cycle of innovation* in which people will learn, apply what they learn, validate that knowledge and incorporate it into a shared community of practice as a continuous and integrated process. Within higher education, early examples of this can be seen in setting where research, education and the improvement of practice are being approached as aspects of a single comprehensive cycle and where the experiences that higher education has traditionally kept relatively separate and called research, teaching and service, become facets of a single form of engaged scholarship.

Our approach to education will change. Today, we tend to think that education occurs in classrooms, fostered by interactions between teachers and students. Anything that happens outside the classroom is considered, at best, extracurricular and while valued, these activities (e.g. band or choir, sports, science fairs, theatre, fine arts, community service) are not thought of as part of a more comprehensive approach to growth and development. Under financial pressure, many K-12 schools are limiting these activities or relying on community support to continue them for those students who can afford them. They are not considered part of a *structured and publicly funded space*<sup>1</sup> that advances our educational agenda and prepares our young people for life and work in a new, global and networked age.

The experience of students mirrors the shifting relationships of people in the networks that are forming in the business community today. There is a great deal of churning and mobility, produced by instabilities in family life and social challenges rather than primarily by opportunity. These mobile and largely underserved young people are the least likely either to have competent instruction or meaningful co-curricular activities or to be active in their communities. We need to examine better uses of after school and weekend time and make it possible for students, many of whom work at least part-time, to participate in programs that can stimulate their interests in STEM and in entrepreneurship and innovation through interesting and hands-on activities.

Like their industry counterparts, educational institutions spanning our current K-12 and postsecondary systems will begin to work together and interact in different ways. We will need to encourage institutions to be distinctive (our equivalent to a region of innovation) and to work together well to create educational environments that are easy to traverse and responsive to the changing knowledge and skill needs of a *global, multidisciplinary, collaborative* and *open* business and community landscape. Workers of the future will need to be able to navigate these competitive and collaborative spaces. In order to prepare their students for a GIO 2.0 world, educational and research institutions will need to adapt in order to operate in ways that reflect the properties of a 21<sup>st</sup> century organization and its working relationships, both internal to its own structure and external to its boundaries.

## SUMMARY

The premise of this paper is that the pivotal change required to create regions of innovation is to have well-placed colleges and universities that are equipped and able to engage in meaningful, sustainable and effective collaborations across all sectors. Government policy and investment can create conditions that will allow a network of institutions to develop that can collaborate and, in conjunction with community-based partners, create the knowledge and people infrastructure---the social, intellectual and human capital---that a region of innovation will require. Many governmental units within the United States are investing in the development of educational access throughout a geographic region and a number of states have begun to experiment with new forms of education and research linked to regional economic and social development. While the value of these

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<sup>1</sup> This idea emerged in a discussion of innovation held at IBM-Rochester on February 1, 2007 with Walt Ling, Vice President and Senior State Executive, and members of the IBM leadership team. The conversation was wide-ranging. Much of this document is influenced by both the IBM-sponsored Global Innovation Outlook, 2.0 Report and the experiences described by Team IBM as they explained what the GIO 2.0 ideas look like in practice.

investments remains to be convincingly demonstrated, early evidence suggests that these investments will result in better jobs, more stable communities and a healthier economic future.

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## Can Regional Campuses Lead? Leveraging Engagement for Leadership

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### Abstract

*This paper challenges common assumptions about the nature and role of regional campuses in Australia and their engagement activities. Though university–community engagement principles posit that engagement should create ‘mutual benefit’ for universities and communities, in practice engagement approaches are nearly always university-centric. This is related to the way in which regional campuses are still seen largely as mechanisms for the outreach and extension of teaching and research services to regional communities. Regional university campuses thus continue to define ‘success’ according to traditional university indicators. Yet regional campuses have the potential to leverage knowledge-creation and knowledge-transfer activities in new and innovative ways to benefit regional communities and industries. In this paper, we posit that regional university campuses have the opportunity to significantly redefine their policy role. We illustrate this with reference to the experience of the University of Tasmania’s Cradle Coast Campus (UTAS – Cradle Coast) as it has consolidated learnings from a decade of regional engagement into a new regional development approach. This model not only posits a regional development leadership role for a regional university campus, but it also suggests that regional campuses can take on a unique strategic leadership role within larger university institutions.*

### 1. Introduction: Regional Engagement as ‘Outreach and Extension’

In the Australian university sector, we are still in many ways working within models of regional engagement that severely limit the scope and impact of our work. While writings on university–community engagement emphasise principles such as respectful partnerships, inclusivity, and mutual benefit for universities and communities (see e.g. AUCEA 2008), real-life examples of relationships between universities and regional communities are most typically fragmented, opportunistic, and university-centric. The obstacles to realising the ideals of engagement are tied up in both cultural assumptions and institutional structures which privilege university interests over community needs and mitigate against regional campuses becoming truly embedded in their region. The purpose of this paper is to suggest an alternative: one which leverages university ‘engagement’ activities into a region-centric approach – opening up groundbreaking new directions for the contemporary Australian university, and for regional campuses in particular.

Our particular focus is the ‘regional campus’. We define as ‘regional campus’ any university campus with a mandate to serve a particular geographic region. Typically, large Australian university campuses in major metropolitan centres have not had this kind of mandate: they are generalist institutions drawing their student body from a large national and international base. On the other hand, ‘regional’ campuses established in outer metropolitan suburbs, regional cities and rural towns are generally located there (and not in the metropolitan centre) as the result of a particular effort to extend or build a university presence into those areas. As a category, ‘regional campus’ is useful despite the great range in the size, nature, history, mission and structure of regional campuses, as it highlights certain commonalities that these diverse institutions share.

First, by virtue of not being located in the metropolitan centres, such campuses attract the label ‘regional’ and the implied value judgements contained therein: specifically, they tend to be viewed as lower-status institutions. There are several reasons for this. One is the metropolitan bias of settlement and investment in Australia, where activity, population, and infrastructure are concentrated in metropolitan centres. Another is the funding structure of regional universities, which has de-emphasised high-status research activity in favour of less-glamorous teaching and service work (see e.g. Charles 2007:4). The net result is that regional university campuses tend to be smaller, less ‘prestigious’, and often not the destination of choice for ambitious students and staff.

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Campuses trying to challenge this status may find it necessary to contest the 'regional' label altogether (see e.g. Harding 2007). The marginal cultural position that regional campuses occupy places them in a position to identify with (but not necessarily satisfy) their regional communities: for these communities, the university is, indeed 'theirs' – but is it good enough?

Second, and related to the often marginal cultural status of regional campuses, is that to a greater or lesser degree they tend to struggle with structural and operational issues linked to their smaller size, less central locations, and lower status vis-à-vis their counterparts in the metropolitan centres. These factors influence their ability to attract students, to attract and retain talented staff, and to offer courses and research programs with both range and substance. Obviously, these problems are more acute for some regional campuses than others. For satellite campuses of larger metropolitan universities, such issues are exacerbated by isolation, communication difficulties, and the frequent centralisation of decision-making away from the campus itself, adding governance issues to the mix. Such campuses are both culturally and structurally marginalised. Finally, and most importantly for the argument presented in this paper, regional campuses for the most part tend to make a virtue of their location and to invest considerable effort in 'regional and community engagement' activities. Often, these reflect their specific mandate to serve their particular region. Active regional and community engagement is also encouraged by the fact that university campuses are more visible in communities with fewer institutions overall, and by the sense of ownership with which members of these communities may approach 'their' university. Community and regional engagement activities are also, in many ways, a key survival strategy for campuses operating in more challenging environments: because they provide a way to build student numbers and increase research income. The latter point is vital because, while these incentives may provide a logical stimulus for regional campuses' engagement activities, there is the danger of engagement becoming merely instrumental: a tool for getting where the campus, as campus, needs to go.

Clearly, good practice engagement ensures that the region benefits from working with the university – and there are many examples in practice of regions benefitting. But this begs the question of whether the benefits are marginal or central; whether these are the *best* initiatives for the region, or simply better than nothing. Designing engagement activities from a university perspective to support student attraction and generate research income is not wrong – indeed, many good and useful initiatives do result – but it is a university-centric approach. Such engagement is not about regions and communities; rather, it is about regions and communities *as seen through the lens of campus*. It is thus intrinsically limited in terms of leveraging real change for the region, because its centre of reference is the university: both *culturally* and *structurally*.

Arguably, the greatest challenge to mutual, respectful, power-sharing partnerships between universities and communities is cultural: specifically, the persisting notion that universities alone create and transfer knowledge, and that communities simply consume it. Challenges to such a unilateral portrayal of knowledge are numerous: practitioner knowledge, local knowledge, tacit knowledge and other forms of 'nonexpert' knowledge held by individuals and communities are increasingly recognised as valid (see e.g. Gertler 2003, Amin and Cohendit 2004), but these insights permeate university systems and academic cultures with difficulty. Thus, much regional engagement practice follows an implicit 'outreach and extension' model: the university, as the holder of knowledge resources, offers these *out* into the regional community. The region is on the receiving end of university expertise, which is delivered according to established university systems. There is little flexibility in the terms of engagement, and the knowledge flow is still mostly one-way.

The structural challenges are similar. Universities, for instance, offer opportunities to engage through participation in courses – though the courses on offer are usually shelf products from specific disciplines: narrow in range, supply-driven in content, and often of limited relevance to the real problems and opportunities facing regional communities. Universities also offer opportunities to engage through research projects and programs – though most typically, with university staff cast as experts and regional organisations as funders and/or participants. There are exceptions of course: responsive courses designed in consultation with industry and community; participatory research models that recognise and work with expertise from outside the university. But these are clearly the exception rather than the rule. Even universities' service-oriented engagement activities are, in the end, frequently designed either to increase student numbers or to enhance the university's own reputation and visibility. Service to the community and region are important, but necessity frames the shape of engagement.

Together, cultural and structural challenges combine to produce an approach to regional engagement in which community and region are seen slant: they are seen through the lens of university and campus, limiting effective engagement. The region becomes the object of an outreach and extension effort: in which the university offers its services out, and regions are expected to accept gratefully, or not at all. As Langworthy and Garlick (2008:22) recently observed when reflecting on the AUCEA community engagement benchmarking process, 'Universities are not accustomed to seeking feedback from community partners in the same way they seek student feedback and data related to graduate and research outcomes.' There is a clear difficulty in reconciling community engagement principles around reciprocity with 'university-centric systems and thinking.'

University-centric 'outreach and extension' approaches can be subtle. A study of university-regional engagement by Gunasekara (2006:157) observed that 'even the best intentions (by academics in his study) to participate in addressing regional issues and opportunities were stymied' – and what by? '...By a lack of capacity to pay in the region, as well as a lack of interest in university knowledge.' This observation highlights two things: first, the structural assumptions that working with universities requires a traditional research-funding arrangement (in which regional partners fund university research); and second, the cultural assumption that the role of universities is to deliver academic knowledge ('university knowledge') out into communities.

The problem facing regional campuses and the value that is assigned to their 'engagement' activities are, in the end, deeply bound up with the way universities see themselves, and how they are seen by policy makers. Is universities' core business (teaching, research, and service) ultimately about generating knowledge and sending it out in a one-way flow from university to community or industry? This is the way that universities most commonly see themselves: as creators and providers of knowledge. Engagement therefore becomes a way to communicate with different groups so as to target university products effectively to the places where they will be most useful and needed. The product attempts to be responsive – but in the end it is a pre-set product. It is supply driven rather than demand driven.

## **2. Regional Engagement in the Knowledge Economy**

Regional university campuses have often been established intentionally as a regional development strategy. These campuses thus have a policy mandate, to enable or even drive regional development (see e.g. OECD 1999, Garlick and Pryor 2002). They are encouraged to be embedded in the region with a broad an ongoing commitment to working with their regional communities over the long term (Chatterton and Goddard 2000). Yet research on how university managers and academics see their role in regional engagement and regional development (Gunasekara 2006) reveals, not surprisingly, a number of dilemmas and contradictions which limit universities' regional engagement efforts. There is a clear disjuncture between the academic work that is most valued by universities and government grant schemes, and the rhetoric that seats universities as regionally embedded drivers of regional development. For regional campuses in particular, these incongruities are particularly striking, and easily cripple their ability to leverage engagement into real and long-lived regional development outcomes.

In the Australian context, Steve Garlick's work on the role of universities in regional development has brought the connection between regional engagement and regional development to the attention of policymakers, in the broader context of universities' role in helping regions compete in a global 'knowledge economy'. Making explicit a link between regional engagement and regional development has contributed, at least in theory, to a deeper respect for 'engagement' activities, and a broader policy recognition of their potential import. Garlick's insights on the ways that universities' and campuses' knowledge-mobilising activities can contribute to regional economic development outcomes such as employment, exports, and investment growth (see e.g. Garlick 1998, 2000) have underlined an important role that universities, as knowledge-driven institutions in knowledge-based economies, can play in their regions. Yet even here, university products on offer are still largely supply driven; and, it is recognised that most campuses' engagement is opportunistic, driven by funding opportunities, detached from regional priorities, and limited by internal operational and performance factors (Garlick 2000:xiii-xiv).

These observations raise bigger questions. How are universities to work with regional communities to produce regional development that is truly centred on the needs of the region – including, but certainly not limited to,

forwarding traditional economic development goals? And particularly, how are *regional campuses* to do so, given their intrinsic disadvantages (in research and student funding base), and their often marginal positions in the larger university sector? Regardless of how skilled regional campuses are at engaging community partners, their 'success', as defined by student numbers and research dollars, will always be moderate at best. Yet these indicators are designed to measure the successful outreach and extension of university teaching and research services, *not* their relevance, their usefulness, or their ultimate impact. They are not adequate indicators when the stated goal is *regional development*.

The scope of action for universities is no longer just about creating technical advances or educating the workforce. These activities are part of their role – but only part. Universities at heart are knowledge institutions, with broad and deep activity embracing a wide range of disciplines and specialisations.

Realising the full potential of universities in regions means stepping beyond cultural and structural assumptions about universities – and particularly, about regional university campuses – to re-imagine what kind of role this knowledge-based institution could play in regions. In the UK, David Charles' recent work on the role of universities in regional innovation systems (2006, 2007) extends insights about the potential knowledge-economy role of university campuses into the cutting edge of literature on innovation. Charles argues that universities and their campuses have a key role to play in regional innovation systems and regional development, and suggests a role for university campuses as knowledge-mobilising institutions that can stimulate *many different kinds of regional development outcomes* in the places where they are located. Importantly, the focus on innovation places the lens on the role of different forms of knowledge – not just academic knowledge – and the role that a university campus might play in bringing different forms of knowledge together.

The point is central, because it begins to move us away from cultural and structural assumptions that privilege the delivery of codified knowledge through pre-set, supply-driven structures. A focus on innovation moves away from simple links of knowledge and resource flow from the university out into different sectors of the regional community (outreach and extension) to an approach that intentionally brings different sectors together to create new kinds of knowledge – innovating through these intersections. As Charles writes:

Universities all too often see communities as in need of enlightenment...when often we need to see science and the university learning to understand the public. The kinds of problems and challenges faced by communities are rarely easily addressed by existing academic knowledge or services ... hence *new knowledge should be created based on experiences and knowledge of both academic and community partners*. (Charles 2007:16, emphasis added)

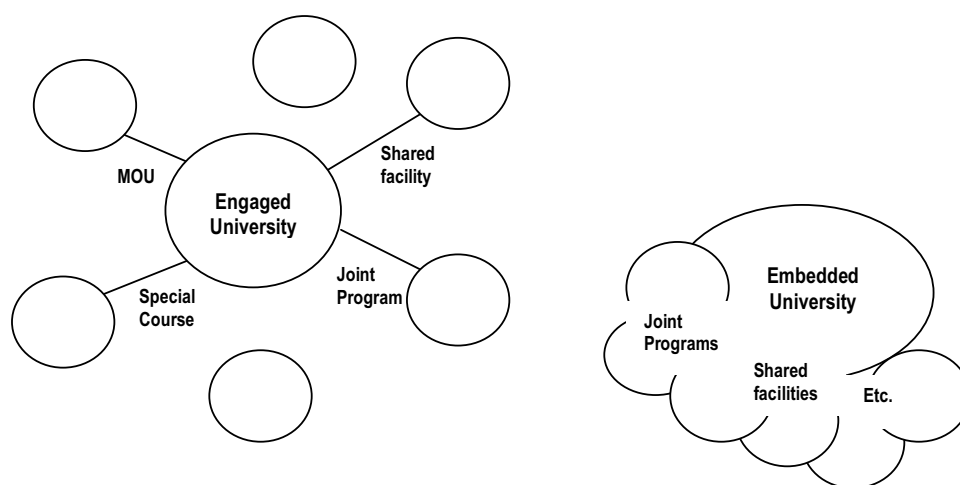
Barbara Holland's (2001) analysis of case studies of university–community engagement noted that 'a constant challenge is the creation of a climate of trust and respect that allows us (in the university) to open up and sustain authentic dialogue with community voices', and that there was (and is) a real need to create opportunities for university academics to 'discover for themselves the new sources of knowledge and expertise that exist in the community' (2001:27).

While some community engagement activities begin to enter this space and co-create knowledge with community partners – Holland gives the example of the Free State University of South Africa as an 'extraordinarily advanced example of shared power and shared planning between campus and community' – this cannot be assumed for most efforts. How often, in research partnerships or course development consultations, are non-university perspectives seriously given weight and influence? Even when they are, they are individual relationships developed for particular purposes, in a kind of hub-and-spoke model with the university at the centre. Thus a campus may partner with one group for one purpose, with another group for another purpose: some strategic, some opportunistic. No larger rationale guides the choice of partners or activities, and no mechanism brings knowledge together across projects and sectors.

The alternative to hub-and-spoke engagement is to adopt a strategy of an *embedded* regional campus. Here, the campus works with multiple partners across sectors in an intentional strategy to coordinate and catalyse action from within the region. Though this represents a very different way of conceptualising a regional campus' role – as regional development catalyst mobilising knowledge in place – it is at the same time the logical 'next



step' for a regionally engaged campus. As a campus's ties with the region strengthen and deepen over time, staff begin to see interrelationships and larger strategic opportunities. Rather than continuing as just one more sectoral player on the landscape (filed under Higher Education), it is possible for the regional campus to reposition itself as a catalyst among institutions and communities, a mobiliser of many different kinds of knowledge for the benefit of the people in its place. The campus, in short, creates *a new kind of space* that sits outside the boundaries of purpose-built institutions – an innovative space where knowledges meet. To do this, however, a campus' way of working, and its indicators of success, must change accordingly. This may well be why, in the latest wave of innovation and development policy in the UK, attention has returned to the role of small rural and regional campuses – with the goal of funding a suite of new campuses. Importantly, however, the policy paper emphasises that the impetus for a new campus must originate directly from the community itself (DIUS 2008)



### 3. From Engaged to Embedded : A Case Study

Theoretical insights about the potential role of universities in regional development and innovation are important for regional campuses, because they challenge prevailing assumptions about the nature and limitations of regional campuses' role – a role most typically portrayed as outreach and extension of university services. These insights also give regional university campuses a clear policy position from which to argue that, if they are to truly serve as regional development drivers, the indicators of their success need to be focused on the *region*, and their engagement activities deeply embedded in it. As an institution capable of understanding 'big picture' issues and interrelationships, regional university campuses are ideally suited to catalyse innovative regional development outcomes. A regional campus's activities can therefore potentially 'engage' with the entire landscape: influencing the health of the economy, the quality of life in communities, the efficiency and fairness of governance arrangements, the sustainability of physical landscapes, and so forth.

For regional campuses wishing to move beyond service delivery to a more results-driven approach to working with their regions, and for the institutional players who fund them, we propose that three features distinguish an embedded university campus capable of driving regional innovation and regional development. First, as a basic starting point, it must have *strong and diverse regional engagement*. Then, it must consciously position itself within these engaged relationships as a *listening institution*, responsive, flexible, and strategic. Finally, the campus must be *empowered* to act creatively and strategically: to experiment, to develop new models and ways of creating and mobilising knowledge, to work across boundaries and try new things. The campus must be allowed to be entrepreneurial (as per Clark's 1998 discussion of entrepreneurial universities) – but not just on behalf of itself, also on behalf of its region. This is a significant shift, and it raises serious questions about the nature and role of the university itself. If universities are to become more 'entrepreneurial', then they must

necessarily focus on building the relationships that are required to recognise and mobilise opportunities in particular places. This means reorienting the way universities see their core business, and the way they measure success.

Engagement is about good relationships, broadly; embeddedness is about deep, wide, strong relationships that facilitate the flow and creation of knowledge in many different ways. Strong regional engagement is the necessary starting point for embeddedness. Importantly, however, these relationships must exist throughout the region, not just in selected areas or with selected groups. Beyond the obvious engagement targets – big industries that might fund big-ticket research, university-bound school leavers to bulk up student numbers – are a myriad of other institutions and communities in a region. Charles (2007:15) notes:

'Universities are subject to many demands, and those that are shouted loudest tend to be heard. Organisations that are well equipped to argue for support and resources can often get them ... University outreach staff have to prioritise their time and will usually focus on those bodies and places where returns are greatest in terms of revenue for services, access to grant income, numbers of students etc. ... In a market driven higher education economy ... sparse populations are easily overlooked. But inner city areas are just as easily overlooked when there are more lucrative opportunities in adjacent suburbs.'

The starting point for embeddedness is to have relationships with a *diverse mix of institutions and communities*, which in turn provide a mix of different kinds of knowledge and perspectives. To be effective in the knowledge economy, university campuses must not only develop 'network knowledge' in their graduates (Charles 2006: 120); they need to develop it *in themselves*. Learning that privileges certain perspectives and knowledge bases while excluding others will always be incomplete.

Second, an embedded campus is one which intentionally positions itself within these relationships to become an attentive and responsive listener. A *listening institution* is responsive and demand driven rather than rigid and supply-driven. It asks what others want and truly hears the responses. This includes asking hard questions about how its own systems and practices may alienate and exclude those it wishes to engage with.

Finally, and perhaps the most difficult to operationalise in practice, a regional campus must be *empowered* to do things differently: to be creative and strategic in carrying out its core business. This requires both having the *ability* to develop strategic responses (problem solving and creative thinking skills, dispersed leadership), and having the institutional *freedom and encouragement* to do so (strategic investment, incentives, distributed governance, institutional flexibility). A change of orientation is of no effect if established funding streams, university systems, governance structures and indicators of success discourage new ways of doing things.

At minimum, university systems (e.g. course approvals, research contracts) must become agile enough to enable innovation, and the measures of success must match the on-the-ground outcomes sought. Currently, there is a deep disconnect. As Jim Collins writes in his monograph on *Good to Great and the Social Sectors* (2005), it is vital to name and understand what the real outputs of an organisation are intended to be, and track progress toward achieving them – while recognising that these outputs may not be financial. Refocusing on *outputs* (not inputs like research funds or student numbers) means inevitable shifts in universities' larger institutional strategies, success indicators, and funding streams. It represents an opportunity to shift away from the old 'outreach and extension' model of university engagement, to recognise and reward campuses that succeed as regional development catalysts.

A campus which can successfully embed itself in its region has the potential to succeed by a different set of rulers: those which measure, not the successful outreach and extension of existing university services; but rather, the relevance, usefulness, and ultimate impact of the campus' activities at a range of levels, from (to borrow some of Charles' [2007] categories) cultural development to business development, environmental sustainability to increased social equity. At the moment, however, the metrics are all wrong. New rulers to measure success must be about the region, with indicators that capture what these university campuses are meant to be about: bringing universities' knowledge-creating and knowledge-mobilising activities to the service of regions and their people. Doing this effectively requires a new approach.

The case of University of Tasmania's Cradle Coast Campus suggests how the three features of an embedded campus – engaged relationships, responsive services, and empowered strategy – may begin to look in practice. This campus has begun to move from a typical example of a regionally 'engaged' campus (providing effective

outreach and extension to an educationally disadvantaged and isolated region), to an 'embedded' campus – one which is increasingly focused on driving regional development outcomes from within. The experience of the Cradle Coast Campus is one that is very much in process, yet it provides a concrete example to other institutions of how it is possible to build engagement activities, then reorient them to 'regional rulers': realigning and redefining the mission of a regional campus.

The Cradle Coast Campus has worked in Northwest Tasmania for the past ten years. During that time it has developed a student base of about 650, and has also led or joined in a range of community-based partnerships focused around enhancing the participation of different groups in educational activities. Thus, for instance, the campus has partnered with several organisations in the region to establish a mentoring program for university students from an isolated municipality (Bower and Cavanagh-Russell 2006). The campus has developed another project with schools in the region and inter-state, to encourage young people to study science (Russell *et al* 2007; Stone and Coutts 2007:147-156), and has been closely involved in a local-government based project focusing on young people 'at risk' of disengaging from education, training and employment (Stone and Coutts 2007:142-146). At the same time, the campus has also founded a network of Young Professionals aimed at encouraging skilled professionals to remain in the region (Hawkins 2007). Senior campus staff sit on task forces, boards, and committees on topics such as skills development, education, and regional development. Public lecture series and exhibitions encourage the broader community to 'engage' with the university and learn. And an innovative University Preparation Program for mature-aged students returning to university has been rolled out across the university and won a national award (Cavanagh-Russell and Oakley 2006).

What is particularly interesting about this series of engagement activities is where they have led: to an increasingly in-depth awareness of the dynamics of the region and its needs. Particularly, this has meant an awareness that while some of the region's needs are being met by the existing campus model, *many others have not been*. This realisation, driven by senior staff on the campus, evolved into a program proposal for 'Renewing the Region' (funded by DEST in 2005). A tertiary education needs assessment and other consultations were conducted around the region, which led to the development of a series of new, tailored initiatives focused on forwarding regional development outcomes. They include to date:

- A dedicated undergraduate course, the Bachelor of Regional Resource Management, developing generic applied research, management, problem-solving and creative-thinking skills for work in 'regional' organisations, in the North West or elsewhere.
- An Institute for Regional Development, established to further explore the regional development leadership potential of the campus.
- Early pilot projects run out of the Institute for Regional Development, including: a Regional Atlas (piloting a participatory model of regional data analysis and interpretation); a capacity-building approach strategic planning for local government (via a Framework For Settlement and Investment developed and implemented jointly with Local Government councillors and staff), and a multiple-pathway demand-driven Participation Strategy (to facilitate access to workplace-relevant postgraduate qualifications in the region).
- Other relevant campus initiatives include the offering of a full undergraduate program in education, developed to have a particular focus on rural education.

With increased attention to the *region* and the role of the university *for* (and not just *in*) the region, has come the need to explore how a University's role can be played out in a particular place – to question many of the assumptions that underpin regional campuses, and begin to re-imagine the significant regional development policy role that regional campuses might potentially play. The launch of the Institute for Regional Development has highlighted the role of *place*, *region*, *local knowledge*, *local assets*, and *local networks* in development processes; this in turn has begun to illuminate what the particular role of a regional university campus might be in facilitating regional development in a particular place. We are focusing on building, consolidating and strategically mobilising the skills and knowledge assets of this particular place – North West Tasmania – while conscious that this process has implications that reach much further afield. This is very much a work in progress, and one which we intend to document and explore in ongoing research.

#### **4. Toward the Future: Can Regional Campuses Lead?**

A convergence of theories around regional development and innovation suggests a real opportunity for regional campuses to leverage and deepen their engagement activities to act as catalysts for the development and self-determination of their home regions. Building on their core knowledge-based business (teaching, research and service), there is an opportunity now to *recreate* the Regional Campus – no longer as a poor cousin dedicated to outreach and extension of existing university services into less-served areas, but rather as a knowledge-based catalyst and driver of regional-development-from-within.

This approach is directly in line with contemporary regional development theory, which emphasises place-based, cross-sectoral approaches (see e.g. OECD 2006). Importantly for university campuses with a track record of community engagement, contemporary regional development approaches recognise the deep value of *relationships* (partnerships, collaboration, networks, etc.). Engaged university campuses are thus in a key strategic position to deepen, broaden, and reorient these relationships to respond to regional needs and opportunities. Universities, as knowledge-based institutions, can offer more than a simple response to regional needs (giving people what they say they want); they can offer tools for information gathering and transfer, analysis, interpretation, application and so forth. And they have the potential to do this in a way that is inclusive of different kinds of knowledge and sectoral interests.

Thus, to answer the question posed in the title, regional campus are potentially in a key position to lead at two levels. First, embedded regional campuses, through their relationships and knowledge-mobilising activities, are in an ideal position to lead innovative and coordinated knowledge-based solutions within the regions where they are based. Second, regional campuses are in a position to lead the university sector as a whole as it comes to terms with the need to re-examine its role and demonstrate its broader relevance. Within a single institution such as the University of Tasmania, this may take the form of a regional campus acting as a pilot site to tackle bigger issues (for instance, through the Cradle Coast Campus' initial work with university preparation for mature-aged students). As a pilot site, regional campuses have a number of advantages: their community relationships are often quite strong, providing a good environment for innovation; and their generally smaller size means that new initiatives can be tested relatively easily. By generating new ideas, and by trying them out, regional satellite campuses can provide leadership and learning to their larger institution. Meanwhile, for the university sector as a whole, watch this space: regionally engaged campuses have started down a path; if they can mobilise their potential, their future promises to be bright.

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## **Universities and their regional communities: A theory of engagement based on human capital, ethics and the public good**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*The popularisation of the engagement relations between universities and their local and regional communities over the past decade runs the risk of being a 'top-down' funding-conditional formulaic model of rules rather than a means for more acutely addressing the big issues of the world through principles framed around a relational ethic where context and the dynamic of entity-free 'enterprising' human capital are central.*

*In this paper we agree with arguments about the importance of 'place' in providing a context for building a relational ethic (Smith 2001). Elsewhere, we have termed this 'sp-ethics'. We also agree with arguments that a relational ethic is important in sustaining values for community cohesion in a globalising world where fragmentation appears to be the chief outcome (Bauman 1995, 2001, 2007).*

*In this paper, we suggest a relational ethic of 'place' offers a theoretical framework for university-based human capital, free of structural constraints, to address community concerns of global importance. In so doing this would provide two benefits. First, it offers a way beyond the transcendental for those seeking the practical implementation of moral principles in their communities in a world dominated by neo-liberal rules of institutionalism and individualism that do not offer solutions to global concerns. Second, it offers university-community engagement process and practice a theoretical underpinning to its current unguided and consequential ethical focus and a tighter connection between knowledge and the public good. In this regard we are keen to see a progression of the discipline beyond the interesting 'good practice' case study and a 'good faith' approach to addressing the public good by universities.*

*In implementing such an approach we suggest the vehicle is a stronger connection in the role of 'enterprising' human capital in university-community engagement with a focus on unambiguous pathways across education sectors and stronger connections to community priorities of global concern in the design and delivery of university programs. We suggest this role for universities and their communities because the ethics of 'enterprising' human capital is not yet constrained by the structural arrangements of corporate and institutional entities. An embedded relational ethic of this kind also calls for changes in university practice (management support, programs) and a re-balancing of funding arrangements at a policy level that support such practice.*

### **UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES: A THEORY OF ENGAGEMENT BASED ON HUMAN CAPITAL, ETHICS AND THE PUBLIC GOOD**

*"Do you know, I always thought Unicorns were fabulous monsters, too? I never saw one alive before!"*

*"Well, now that we have seen each other," said the Unicorn, "if you believe in me, I'll believe in you. Is that a bargain?"*

*Alice's Adventures Through the Looking-glass – Lewis Carroll*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is an assumption that the engaged relations between a university and its regional and local community is about creating something that is good for society and the environment in the traditional Dewey (1956) and Boyer (1996) way. In a heavily dominated neo-liberal world this public good perspective is a hopeful generalisation as, despite well publicised individual engagement good news stories, we know (however unfortunate or unfair that it sounds) that many universities engage only consequentially for recognition, prestige and power.

For many universities knowledge creation and distribution is commoditised to fit the immediate market needs of corporate business, the political policy needs of government, and the consumer-oriented needs of a throw-away society. Current engagement relationships of universities and governments have given preference largely to the utilitarian benefits and self-interested gains that can be made through working with communities, rather than achieving public and common good aspirations. Partnership has become a coopted term used strategically by many institutions and organisations to capitalise on their ability to apply for funds according to the rules and criteria set-down by governments and other non-government bodies (Garlick and Palmer 2007, 2008).

If universities are to make a worthwhile contribution to creating a better world through scholarship and community engagement practices, then, the question of an underlying theoretical framework for engagement needs to be discussed. One could argue that at present there is no such framework, only a suite of loosely formed concepts based on narrow qualitative assessment that promotes a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. That approach risks being labelled instrumental institutionalism, where what is considered 'right' or 'wrong' depends on which organisation or person is saying it and for what underlying motive, rather than there being a public good outcome. Likewise, the formulation of principles for community engagement might set out some criteria by which engagement can proceed, but these alone do not assure that university-community engagement is practiced according to ethical criteria. In this paper we propose that a relational ethic (Bauman 1995) that can incorporate place (Smith 2002) offers this theoretical framework for university-regional-community engagement. Elsewhere we have termed this integrated approach to engagement 'sp-ethics' (Garlick and Palmer 2008) which we explain in following sections.

At one level the ethics of engagement that we suggest comprises university generated human capital underpinned by ethically-based learning being let loose in enterprising ways to engage within a community free of institutional and other entity-based strictures. At another level it requires an understanding of 'otherness', context, and the diversity (Bauman 2007) peculiar to each community or place. At a third level, a public good relational ethic between universities and their regional communities requires a connection with global priorities where there is a regional or local resonance. Contextual factors and the embedded conditions affecting regional communities need to be understood first for engagement to achieve ethical outcomes.

All combined, the theoretical framework this paper puts forward for university-community engagement comprises a point of intersection among the above three dimensions. This intersection occurs between university created enterprising human capital, global priorities impacting on human and non-human existence, and a responsive community or place of sufficient diversity to enable knowledge transfer from a range of experiences and positions to address regional priorities. Presently, an unwillingness to learn new skills (human capital), understand and respect otherness in its particular place, and a predilection for local parochialism, poses a challenge for community engagement relationships and practices. In addition to this, a dominance of economic values characterised by competition, efficiency and individualism over social and more humanistic (and animalistic) oriented ones complicates these matters further. These are also the reasons why nearly a quarter of century of 'bottom-up' local and regional economic development initiatives have had limited success (Garlick, Taylor and Plummer, 2007).

According to Boyer (1996: 20) universities should have a "...larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction in the national life." Issues such as poverty, social inclusion, affordable housing, climate change, biodiversity, wildlife destruction, demography and an ageing society, disease prevention, child welfare, and peace, among many ought to be a focus for the international scholarship of universities. Indeed, this focus needs to be at the institutional level of university leadership that provides and strives for ethical visions for the future. It must also be at the scholarship level of teaching and learning where the links between critical global issues need to be integrated within the design and delivery of educational programs. This means that all

academic disciplines from the sciences to humanities ought to be engaged in taking up these challenges and working together cooperatively to respond.

Universities and communities can move to mutually engaged positions based on a relational ethic of place that, as indicated above, we have termed sp-ethics (Garlick & Palmer 2008). Sp-ethics presents an avenue by which universities and communities can move beyond the constraints of the neo-liberal paradigm because it acknowledges the unique identities found within particular locations and the ways in which these shape the needs of communities. Sp-ethics suggests that spaces are created through engagement processes where the place-located needs of constituents are accounted for and an ethical response is developed in relation with this. This is a shift to specificity and attention to details that are important for individual constituents and communities as a whole, rather than an attempt to implement a one-size fits all response that is largely based on a greater good to which many are excluded.

The scholarship of university engagement with communities that is being discussed here embraces Boyer's (1996) concepts of discovery, integration, knowledge sharing, and on-the-ground application. Ethical engagement represents an ideal of university-community engagement that is premised on universities not only contributing to a public good but also actively critiquing and shaping a public good that is commonly shared and agreed upon.

## **2. UNIVERSITIES, ENGAGEMENT, ENTERPRISING HUMAN CAPITAL AND THE PUBLIC GOOD**

Local and regional development policy has long claimed its basis as addressing spatial economic disparities. However, recent research (Garlick, Taylor and Plummer 2007; Plummer and Taylor 2003; Taylor, Plummer, Bryson and Garlick 2008), using extensive time-series Australian data suggests such disparity has widened and become more entrenched. The research shows that stocks and flows in human capital are the most significant positive determinant of this entrenched increase in disparity. Using econometric modelling across 94 regions and intensive qualitative case study work, 'enterprising' human capital, in addition to the more usual 'creative' human capital, was identified as the kind of human capital that was most lacking in many relatively low growth regions. The role of enterprising human capital is a significant element in the generation of outcomes through university-community engagement.

By 'enterprising' human capital we are referring to the skills and knowledge acquired through learning that can take a new idea or opportunity (i.e. creative human capital) and turn it into an on-the-ground outcome that addresses an important regional or local community concern or priority. Some examples of enterprising human capital can be found in the recent social enterprise and cooperative movements in Australia and other international settings. Such case examples illustrate how creative capital, having a good idea, is harnessed and generates practical economic, social and environmental outcomes. While there has been some criticism of the increased emphasis on enterprising features of cooperatives and social activities in the neo-liberal climate (Cf. Palmer 2001; 2006; 2008) the ethical underpinnings of these organisational forms and practices strongly positions them to facilitate contributions to a commonly agreed upon public good. In this respect, these activities are distinguishable from solely business or enterprise oriented ones because they uphold, embody and deliver on a vision of an ethical alternative to the current dominant utility based system.

It's argued that in the neo-liberal knowledge world, 'creative' capital is increasingly being concentrated into larger corporate and metropolitan centres and a few isolated hot-spot locations where universities have little influence (Gibbons et al 1994, Mowery and Sampat 2005). There is, however, much more scope for enterprising human capital to play an equilibrating role in other regions and local communities (Garlick, Taylor and Plummer 2007). In saying this, we do not advocate for communities and individuals to be solely responsible for meeting their own needs. Neither do we see this notion of enterprising human capital as a form of social capital or other forms of economic capital that have already been heavily critiqued (Cf. Palmer 2006). Enterprising human capital is distinct from creative capital, as it is distinguishable from social capital; it is a relational concept in communities where there are complementary skills and knowledge that include particular spatial concerns.

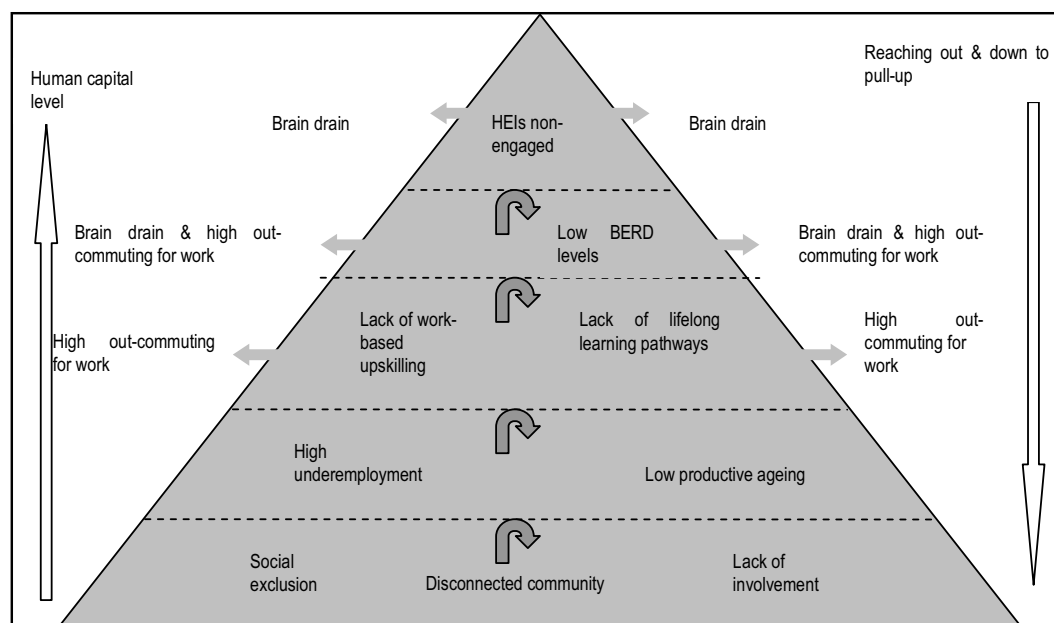
Universities are seen as having multiple roles in contributing to the kind of enterprising human capital outcomes important in addressing spatial economic disparity. On the supply-side they can through their teaching and



learning programs, at least theoretically, embed enterprising skills as well as more traditional creative (curiosity) skills in students by engaging them in the concerns of the regional and global community, and the human and natural worlds. This represents an ethical goal concerned with the university achieving quality in its human capital provision. In order to achieve this in practice, however, universities will need to be engaged with their local communities in ways that enable them to know what is important and what needs to be addressed. The top-down approach to engagement, for example, coming with preconceived ideas about what a community may need in terms of economic or social development will not result in engaged ethical relations. Ownership of engagement processes and practices is critical to the task of ethical outcomes. The delivery of educational programs that lack locally specific relevance will only continue to foster the outward flow of human capital from regional communities to metropolitan locations and centres.

Too often universities simply design and deliver teaching and learning programs that foster a 'drive-thru' approach (Sunderland and Graham 1997) to capture student numbers in identified national areas of shortage. However, the demand for numbers can also be captured by having a relational approach to place in the creation of enterprising human capital outcomes. By reaching out and pulling in those at the margins (including those with no prior family exposure to higher education, the underemployed, and the productive ageing), by strengthening the flows through education sector pathways, and by removing structural and behavioural barriers to higher education participation, the numbers moving through to the upper ends of the human capital pyramid (Figure 1) can be increased.

**FIGURE 1: THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY HUMAN CAPITAL PYRAMID – OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO LOW SKILL EQUILIBRIUM**



Source: Garlick and Palmer 2008

In addition, by focusing on particular regional priorities that are of global concern (i.e. demand side) universities can attract potential enterprising human capital from elsewhere (i.e. a brain gain). From a regional development perspective this is significant as it adds to the richness of the enterprising human capital that can contribute to achieving regional priorities. As a final comment on the interrelationship that is required there is a much needed policy role for universities in addressing the problem of human capital leakage in regions and communities through graduate brain drain, out-commuting for employment and the non-engagement of the productive ageing (Garlick and Palmer, 2008). This policy role is only made relevant, however, if the analysis that underpins the advice is theoretically informed by mixed-method research design that triangulates quantitative and qualitative evidence.

In a world of ever changing spatial and temporal diversity and human capital flows, the one-size-fits-all guru policy prescription that promise much but deliver little more than a mass of overlapping and confused contingency, has little place. University-community engagement needs a strong relational ethic to underpin processes and practices. This will ensure that universities remain committed to not only contributing toward the public good, but shaping this public good according to the local needs of communities and individuals. Indeed, the role of university-community engagement in revitalising commitment to the public good is particularly important in a “world in which a sense of the public good is severely diluted” (Preston 2000: 10).

One way to reinvigorate relationships founded on mutually beneficial outcomes, which also have a public good effect, is to translate local needs into educational programs in regional university settings. Critical to this challenge, however, is the development of a relational ethic premised on spatial concerns and identity issues of contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> Century life. These considerations need to be made in light of community fractures and fragmentation (Bauman 2001) that are the result of a declining commitment by many to the modernist project of progress irrespective of economic, social or environmental costs.

### **3. SPACE, CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY FRAGMENTATION**

Elsewhere we have argued that place provides the context where enterprising human capital can realise the full engagement benefits of university scholarship (Garlick and Palmer 2007). Universities were once considered institutions where contribution to a common and public good was considered integral to scholarship. An era of educational reforms and increased participation of public institutions with private funding arrangements has made dissent of the majority viewpoint slightly less possible. In particular, contestation is limited for those with contract based employment, decreased security for the future, and for public institutions the expectation to adopt operational principles derived from the private sector is problematic (Preston 2000).

Universities need to be institutional places that not only foster creativity in their human capital – a conscience of ‘being’ in a social and economic world – but they should also be places that encourage a purpose for ‘doing’ (enterprising). This does not mean that this doing is solely economically focussed or is as easy as generating high-levels of social capital to achieve civic engagement and henceforth civil society (Palmer 2006). Our deployment of the term ‘enterprising human capital’ might infer relationships with some of what we see as more problematic and complex terms, however, it should be clear that we are discussing the translation of creative ideas into practical outcomes at the level of community.

A major difference is that these outcomes are not predicated by particular kinds of activities, suggested networks, or associations and memberships, rather these are events and happenings that are occurring in a world where the original modernist agenda of progress is slowly in decline and deterioration (Esteva and Prakash 1998). The forms of enterprising human capital referred to are those which develop from the bottom-up and in response to the direct and local needs in communities. The translation from ideas (creative capital) to outcomes (enterprising capital) has a public good effect that is beyond the measure of the almighty dollar. Importantly, the public good is not a predefined idea established at a distance by others who are not spatially located within the communities in question, it is a public good that is commonly shared and agreed upon. Here, a brief discussion of the development of a recycled bicycle cooperative business can illustrate the interactions between enterprising human capital, spatial concerns and ethical relationships. The integration of these dimensions creates the foundation of a theory of engagement for universities in their regions with their local communities.

Bicycle Revolution in the inner city metropolitan location of West End, Brisbane developed in direct response to global environmental issues and as part of the broader Friends of the Earth environmental movement. Friends of the Earth have since established an additional two sustainable businesses since the formation of the Bicycle Revolution and its successful running as a cooperative. Bicycle Revolution was premised on the idea of recycling unused or unwanted bikes to foster better resource usage within communities. The cooperative encouraged people to think about public transport use in metropolitan regions, and their impact on the environment and it was supported by the local and surrounding communities. Bicycle Revolution is ultimately an example of enterprising human capital that has provided not only environmental outcomes, but unintended health consequences as more people engage in physical activity as part of their daily travel routine. Bicycle Revolution shows the successful interaction of enterprising human capital with spatial considerations and is premised on

relational ethics underpinned by ethical learning. The cooperative has a commitment to the flow-on effects of their activities being shared in a communal sense through the cooperative principle of training and education. Bicycle Revolution holds workshop days where people are taught the skills to repair their own bicycles and, in turn, awareness of environmental issues is raised. The cooperative's formation was in the words of one founding member:

*"To do good things environmentally but also [to] provide an income for Friends of the Earth so that people would not need to volunteer their time to do their work with the peak body. They could actually get paid, and therefore their work would be acknowledged and meaningful within societal terms"* (Interview Co-operator Two 2002).

Universities have the potential to foster commonly shared public goods through the processes and practices of ethical engagement. They can learn from activities occurring within communities in their local areas, explore visions of ethical engagement for the future and put forward social justice as a foundation of regional development. The integration of all three dimensions of engagement rests on further consideration of three forms of togetherness articulated by Zygmunt Bauman (1995). Bauman's notion of an ideal form of togetherness acknowledges the post modern fragmentation of communal life and the fluidity of contemporary existence. His suggestion was that three forms of togetherness are observable in communities, the final of which is an ideal: 'being-aside', 'being-with' and 'being-for'. 'Being-aside' and 'being-with' represented two forms of togetherness that can be said to be characteristic of contemporary community life.

To explain, in the first instance 'being-aside' may be better described as a non-relationship where individuals remain to the side of each other, unrecognisable (e.g. a contractual relationship of the purchaser/ provider type). In the second, once individuals come to another's attention they are recognised as entities that matter to the person in some capacity (e.g. a partnership). The final form of togetherness for Bauman (1995) was the concept of 'being-for' and it is here that entities no longer stand to the side but they make a leap from isolation to unity:

*"[y]et not towards fusion that mystics' dream of shedding the burden of identity, but to an alloy whose precious qualities depend fully on the preservation of its ingredients' alterity and identity, being-for is the act of transcendence of being-with"* (Bauman 1995, p.51).

For Bauman (1995) 'being-for' is an ideal that cannot be predicted and is largely an inconsequential occurrence. In our view 'being-for' is as an essential ideal for the formation of ethical engagement even though there is the possibility that it remains an ideal. The first step toward the development of a theory of engagement is to have the ideal of 'being-for' at the centre because this enables one to imagine other people with whom we live and work as beings with particular identities and to see their preciousness in full.

Smith's (2001) work around space and place also provides a context to mould the proximity of humans and non-humans into communities with moral and ethical values. His position gives humans the tools and the space to engage in a genuine dialectic, not only with each other but with the physical environment, rather than have their values determined by outside institutional forces. On the other hand, Bauman notes the forces of societal fragmentation fostered by liquid neo-liberal institutionalism make the notion of community, and hence the relationship of 'being-for', more elusive (Bauman 2001, 2005). Bauman argues:

*"If there is to be a community in the world of individuals, it can only be (and needs to be) a community woven together from sharing and mutual care; a community of concern and responsibility for the equal right to be human and the equal ability to act on that right."* (2001, pp149-150).

This means we need to imagine ourselves in relationships with others and think about other beings as equally entitled to just treatment and access to resources as we ourselves are. The tendency here would be to see our argument as purely a deontological one where irrespective of the consequences we continue to apply the same criteria to our actions every time, in reality however both the consequences of our actions and our intention to be ethical will matter.

Bauman (2007) notes the trend to community homogeneity and a distrust of diversity and 'otherness' in a liquid neo-liberal world, giving rise to 'mixophobia' in communities. In such fragmented places all that can be expected are 'being-aside' and 'being-with' forms of togetherness (Bauman 1995). Such forms of togetherness are limited to episodic and usually competitive encounters of individuals, where they are viewed more as objects or entities than as humans or non-human animals with respected intrinsic qualities built around modes of external institutional conformity.

#### 4. TRANSMISSION TO A 'BEING-FOR' FORM OF TOGETHERNESS IN ENGAGEMENT

There must be an acknowledgement here that Bauman's (1995) initial work on the movement between 'being-with' and 'being-for' emphasised the unpredictable and uncertain nature within which this transition occurred. In saying this, Bauman meant there is no social setting or organisation, no elective affinity that, for him, privileges 'being-for', but importantly none of them ward it off either. There is always the possibility of the ideal and there is always the potential for this to be transmitted through engagement processes and practices. A case in point is cooperative activities which provide an example of where the ideal of 'being-for' might well be embodied in both spirit and through intentional social practices. The idea of a social practice according to Isaacs (1998: 5) is that:

*"[s]ocial practices are not natural phenomena independent of persons...social practices are both constructed by, and constituted by, persons...in social practices persons enter into a collaborative engagement to achieve a common goal, or to approximate a desired good which would be unreasonable at the purely individual level."*

Isaacs (1998) notion of social practice is particularly important to developing a theory of ethical engagement where ethical values can be woven and embedded into the creation of human capital. Social practice fits with Boyer's (1996) and Bensen and Harkavy's (2002) scholarship of engagement ideas and it fits with the grounded example of enterprising human capital outlined above in the Bicycle Revolution example. 'Being-for' is transmitted through social practices where creative capital is taken and turned into social, economic and environmental consequences with potential far beyond those intended at the outset. In the act of transmission, being-for engagement relationships foster and facilitate enterprising practices which put ethical theory into practice.

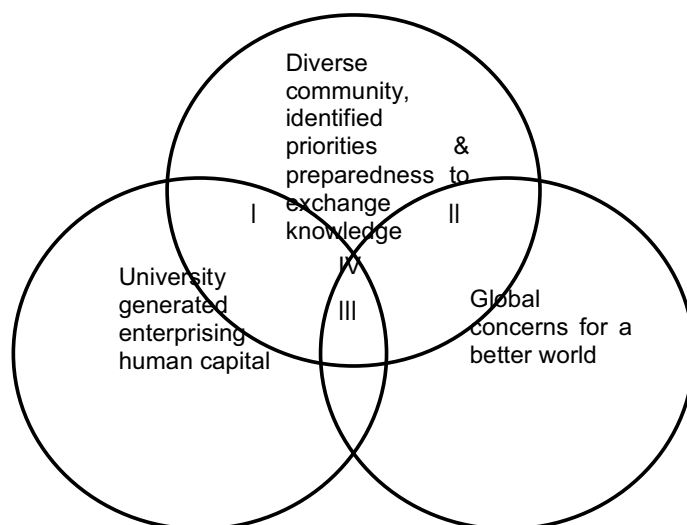
In recent work Bauman (2007: 82) has noted that politics in a globalising world tends increasingly to be local. While 'being-for' represents the embodiment of a commitment to ethical relations that transcends place and space, the importance of local identities in engagement practices cannot and should not be ignored. Indeed, to acknowledge identity means incorporating the spatial nature in which it forms. These factors become all the more important in a regionalised higher education system.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS A THEORY OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

In this paper we have suggested that a theory for university regional community engagement occurs at a point where there is an intersection of university action generating enterprising human capital; the context of human and non-human community diversity; and the big global public good issues of the day that have their regional presence. At the heart of this intersection is the 'being-for' ideal of togetherness put forward by Bauman (1995). It provides the basis for the underlying relational ethic we regard as necessary to achieving an ethics of engagement. This focus on addressing broader community concern through a relational approach suggests enterprising human capital can be an ethical rather than a neo-liberal tool to generate regional community and global outcomes. As Esteva & Prakesh (1998: 21) have noted though, the idea that 'global action' is possible is a falsehood in a context where 'ordinary people lack the centralised power for global action...to make a "difference," actions should not be grandiosely global, but humbly local'. University-community engagement needs to locate itself firmly in this context.

Figure 2 provides a schematic of the university-community relationships we have suggested can underpin a theory of engagement where there is a relational ethic of 'being-for' togetherness that contributes to the public good. Segments I, II and III are one to one relations between universities, communities and the wider public good. We argue there cannot be a 'being-for' relational ethic of university-community engagement in these segments. Segment IV provides a theoretical basis for a relational ethic for engagement between university generated enterprising human capital and diverse communities with agreed local priorities that address public good concerns of a wider scale where a 'being-for' togetherness can occur.

**FIGURE 2: UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THEORY SCHEMATIC**



As stated earlier, our view is that theory needs to stand the test of analysis both quantitatively and quantitatively through mixed-method design and analysis. In the present context it should be possible. This testing will remain a future project. Moving from a typical 'being-alongside' or 'being-with' paradigm to a relational ethic based on 'being-for' remains the goal of ideal togetherness. If this kind of togetherness between universities and their communities is the basis of engagement, then, there is a possibility of developing an ethics of engagement that is embodied in process and practice. The broader outcome of this can be the ideal goal of ethical communities for the future.

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## COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE:UNIVERSITY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

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### ABSTRACT

*Fruitful relationships, developed over time among higher education, local government and other stakeholders in South Australia's second-largest regional city, have been mutually beneficial. The Centre for Regional Engagement at the University of South Australia (UniSA) campus has provided educational and research programs to meet the needs of local commerce and industry and of a range of government, non-government, and community organisations. Business and industry have offered guidance concerning University research directions and new study programs, and have made available student placement opportunities and subsequent graduate employment. The support given to the campus has been invaluable for its development.*

*Community engagement has become a mantra of local government, industry, and higher education, as evidenced by Local Government Act requirements and current mission statements. Collaboration by UniSA, through its Centre for Rural Health and Community Development, with the Whyalla City Council in producing the Whyalla 2022 Community Plan provides a recent example of such links. A detailed, well-publicised process was formulated, the input of community members and stakeholder groups being an essential component.*

*From this process there are lessons to be learned by all stakeholders that could improve future engagement, and these are explored in the paper. Collaboration, cooperation and continued engagement will nurture current links, thereby ensuring a sustainable future for these relationships and also for the community in which these stakeholders live and work.*

### INTRODUCTION

The time in which we live is often called 'a new stakeholder era', where different entities need to engage much more with community, as all impact on community and on each other. This is as true for private enterprise as for public sector entities. Mission statements reflect this, as do 'triple bottom line' reporting practices, where social and environmental outcomes are included along with a company's financial profits (Dept. of the Environment and Heritage, 2003). For example, OneSteel's *Annual Review 2007* includes, for the first time, a Sustainability Report (pp 23-27), in which is found the company's Sustainability Objective:

By recognising and valuing the interdependence of economic, social and environmental considerations in our decision-making and balancing these with the needs of stakeholders, we seek to derive further opportunities to improve long-term (sustainable) business performance and risk management. (OneSteel, 2007, p. 24)

OneSteel's seven Sustainability Principles include 'respect for the people and communities associated with our business' and a commitment to achieving sustainability through engaging 'in constructive dialogue' (OneSteel, 2007, p. 24).

Community engagement has become a priority rather than a peripheral concern. This imperative was recognised in the staging in August 2005 of the first International Conference on Engaging Communities by the

Queensland Government, supported by the United Nations (Queensland Government, 2005b). This conference produced the Brisbane Declaration, which included affirmation that 'community engagement is critical to effective, transparent and accountable governance in the public, community and private sectors' and recognition of the two-way process involved, 'by which the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of citizens and communities are incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment; and by which governments and other business and civil society organisations involve citizens, clients, communities and other stakeholders in these processes' (Queensland Government, 2005a). The same year a 'Celebrating Community Engagement' conference was held in Victoria and a Regional Engagement Forum in South Australia (Institute for Regional Studies, 2006; BHERT, 2005). The new federal government is making obvious efforts to seek citizens' input, with events such as the April 2008 Australia 2020 Summit. In the case of local government, community consultation is a requirement of South Australia's *Local Government Act 1999* (Section 50, pp 8-9). AUCEA's existence, of course, demonstrates the significance of higher education's engagement with the community.

Whyalla, South Australia's second-largest regional city, 400 kilometres from the capital, provides but one example of stakeholder interdependency. Once very much a company town, Whyalla no longer has a one-industry focus, the range of stakeholders in its present and future prosperity having increased in recent years. Nevertheless, the steelworks remain an important part of the city's economy and identity, despite employing only a fraction of previous numbers. 'Where the outback meets the sea' is Whyalla's current slogan, linked with its tourism and recreational attractions, and its connections with mining, pastoralism and aquaculture.

Over the years mutually beneficial relationships have developed among education sectors, local government, commerce, industry, and government, non-government and community organisations. The University of South Australia (UniSA) campus, now part of and headquarters for the Centre for Regional Engagement, has responded to local needs for educational and research programs. Diverse stakeholders have made available student placement and graduate employment opportunities, and have also provided invaluable support for the development of the campus.

Before examining a recent example of such links – UniSA's collaboration with the Whyalla City Council in producing a community plan – let us briefly survey university–local government engagement, local government–community engagement, and issues concerning public participation.

## **UNIVERSITY – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT**

Cooperation and mutual support of universities and local government are not new, but increasingly recognised as vital and mutually beneficial (Harloe & Perry, 2004).

Over the years such mutual cooperation and support has been in evidence between UniSA's Whyalla Campus and the Whyalla City Council (WCC). The Council has commissioned research by UniSA and has been very supportive of UniSA endeavours. In 1996, a time of federal funding cuts to higher education, when the existence of the Campus was in question, the Council added its voice to those concerned for the retention of the Campus, and hosted a meeting at which was initiated a 'Friends of the Whyalla Campus of the University of South Australia' group to promote the value of the Campus. In 2003 the Council provided an undergraduate scholarship to enable a financially disadvantaged Whyalla student to undertake a degree program (UniSA, 2003). The Campus, located in the city's educational and cultural precinct, has been an important part of the 'Whyalla – Education City' concept, promoted by the Council and others. University and local government leaders from Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie, along with TAFE and development board representation, have been involved in the Upper Spencer Gulf Common Purpose Group (Cheers, Harvey & Clarke, 2002), in which the three cities work together rather than competing.

In Mount Gambier, where UniSA's Mount Gambier Regional Centre, also part of the Centre for Regional Engagement, is located, Grant Council and UniSA, along with other stakeholders, worked together toward the establishment of this UniSA presence (Peate, 2005; Peate & Strickland, 2005).



State, local government, and university collaboration has been in evidence in the northern areas of Adelaide. An Office of the North was established by the South Australian Government in 2002 to coordinate activities in three socioeconomically disadvantaged local government areas. At the same time UniSA established UniSA Northern Adelaide Partnerships (UNAP) for the same area, with the intention of improving educational and employment prospects. Collaboration leading to 'shared visions and agreed planning frameworks' was the obvious approach to take, bringing benefits to all involved (Sandeman & Elliott, 2006). This is all part of UniSA's Regional Industry and Community Engagement (RICE) strategy.

Farther afield, examples of university partnerships with the community include a number of United States examples of university civic engagement in the area of social work – Community Outreach Partnership Center programs were sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (Cox, 2000; Soska & Butterfield, 2004). The United Kingdom multi-agency Health Action Zones gave scope for university–community partnerships, and trans-national partnerships in the area of health have been developed (Kearney & Candy, 2004). Levels of engagement by universities in European regional development are discussed by Boucher, Conway and Van der Meer (2003).

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT–COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Local government is commonly acknowledged as being the sphere of government closest to the 'grass roots'. Reactions from community can be overwhelmingly negative to Council decisions or they can provide an opportunity, if properly planned and undertaken, to engage with the community to identify and advocate for their needs and aspirations. Indeed, in South Australia, as in other states, the *Local Government Act 1999* requires Councils to be more transparent and enhance their consultative processes to ensure good governance. Guidelines have been produced to assist in this, for example in communication and consultation relating Council rates (Gould & Heylen, 2005). Such concerns to foster more effective community engagement have been evident for some time. The Local Government Association of South Australia in 2007 showcased leading examples in local government (Heylen, 2007a); this publication was based on a survey of Councils' community engagement (Heylen, 2007b). More recently a *Community Engagement Handbook* has been produced (Chappell, 2008). Adapting a Western Australian Government Department's definition, the *Handbook* states that:

*Community engagement is about involving the community in decision making processes, which is critical in the successful development of acceptable policies and decisions in government, the private sector and the community. (Chappell, 2008, p 1)*

The *Handbook's* primary purpose is 'to provide Councils with a model framework to adapt to local circumstances for effective planning and implementation of community engagement processes for small and large projects'. Secondary aims relate to legislative requirements (*Local Government Act* and *Development Act 1993*); alignment with Council and stakeholders' expectations; feedback; and implementing decisions (Chappell, 2008, p iii).

Although considering mainly the role of state government agencies in building community capacity, consisting of 'the networks, organisation, attitudes, leadership and skills that allow communities to manage change and sustain community-led development' (p 1), Cavaye (1999) outlines principles that can be applied by other levels of government. One principle underlines the need for a way for people to voice and act on their concerns; another stresses the need for community and government to escape the mindset of thinking of government as simply a provider. Mannion (1996), too, refers to capacity building as 'a key factor in local development' (p 2). 'Bottom-up' approaches and strategies can bring 'a new dynamism', achieving success 'through harnessing community spirit, idealism and pragmatism towards what is necessary and possible to achieve locally, in partnership with national and local government agencies and the private/business sector' (Mannion, 1996, p 4).

The type of community engagement undertaken by the Whyalla City Council, and examined in this paper, is happening in many other councils as they plan for the future. Like Whyalla, others, including Toowoomba (Queensland) and Gosford (New South Wales), are using elements drawn from the *Oregon Model of Community Visioning*, for example the questions: '1. Where are we now? 2. Where are we going? 3. Where do we want to be? 4. How do we get from here to there? 5. How do we measure our progress?' (Toowoomba City Council, 2007; Martin, 2005).

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Engaging community and other stakeholders such as State and Federal government agencies, private enterprise, non-government organisations, and community groups in the decision-making processes should ensure greater sustainability in outcomes. Whether it is a question of a planning, environmental, financial, cultural or social policy issue, public participation should be sought by councils. However, accomplishing this is not always straightforward, nor are the levels of possible public participation always well understood. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) outlines a 'public participation spectrum', which describes five categories of public participation: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower, and sets out core values for this (LGASA, 2008; IAP2, 2007) – the highest level, 'empower', may not be practically possible in many situations, for example where local government legal and financial constraints may not permit all that citizens feel empowered to do. One barrier to participation is people's readiness to leave matters up to their elected representatives, but this is changing and concepts of active citizenship are more prominent (Marinetto, 2003). Partnerships may not achieve their potential if those involved are familiar with only their own area of expertise; hence a multidisciplinary approach, with partners learning together, can have distinct advantages (Lasker & Weiss, 2003). Optimal participation may require of its promoters upskilling in public interaction skills (Inglis, 2007).

United Kingdom researchers into local government practice and attitudes have discerned 'fundamental change...which is addressed as much towards altering cultures and attitudes within local government as it is towards creating new opportunities for democratic participation' (Lowndes, Pratchett & Stoker, 2001a, p 205), and have looked at five categories of participation: consumerist methods (e.g. relating to perceptions of service delivery), traditional methods, forums, consultative innovations (relating to specific issues), and deliberative innovations (encouraging reflection by citizens on issues of concern to them). They identify various barriers and drawbacks, from the point of view of local government, such as lack of interest, raising unrealistic expectations, and slowing down decision-making processes. The same researchers have also examined citizens' perspectives, looking at their motivation for participating, their preferred participation contexts (e.g. public meeting or small discussion group), and identifying reasons for lack of participation, including negative opinions of their local authority, not knowing the availability of opportunities to participate, perceiving that they were not really listened to, and feeling that participation opportunities were for people from other age or social groups (Lowndes, Pratchett & Stoker, 2001b).

## **THE NEED FOR A COMMUNITY PLAN**

In 2007, consultation by the Whyalla Council for the city's strategic plan review was due. The Council took the decision to open up the planning process so that the document produced would be a community plan, the *Whyalla 2022 Community Plan*, rather than a Council plan (Corporation of the City of Whyalla, 2007). This was in line with its *Public Consultation Policy* which includes as part of its philosophy that the Council will 'aim to listen and respond to community views in a balanced way, taking into account all submissions made by various stakeholders' (WCC, 2007). It had also been realised that Council, like most Councils at some time, had not always gone about things in the best way; some community members had got 'off-side' and 'switched off', perceiving that projects, such as a new library or foreshore developments, were being presented as a 'fait accompli' and feeling that their input was not listened to. On the other hand, Council often felt that the community was not really interested, apart from the vocal minority. Elected members and Council staff had suffered through some public meetings that occasioned expressions of frustrations within the chamber as well as from the community outside. It was felt that there had to be a better way to engage community so as not to elicit 'knee-jerk' negativity. UniSA's Whyalla-based funded research Centre for Rural Health and Community Development (CRHaCD), a partnership of the Centre for Regional Engagement and the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School, was approached for guidance. This led to careful analysis and planning so as to arrive at a multi-faceted engagement process in which the involvement of individual community members and stakeholder groups would be an essential component, hence achieving as broad as possible community input into Whyalla's future vision and strategies. As well, IAP2 training was undertaken by a Council staff member. In particular, the Council, UniSA through CRHaCD, and the Whyalla Economic Development Board (WEDB) would work closely together in steering and facilitating the process. The aims were to formulate a vision for Whyalla in fifteen years'

time, and identify the strategies needed to fulfil this vision. Links would also be made with the *State Strategic Plan* (Government of South Australia, 2007), and wider emerging issues would be borne in mind.

## THE COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS

A rigorous process was developed, the whole methodology being very carefully thought through. It was to be a multi-method process, following the principles of participatory action research (PAR). In PAR, 'some of the people in the organization or community under study participate actively with the professional researcher throughout the research process from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of their action implications' (Whyte, Greenwood & Lazes 1991, p 20). Practitioners are both 'subjects and co-researchers' (Argyris & Schön, 1991). Good PAR exhibits both rigor and relevance (Argyris & Schön, 1991); researchers are forced 'to go through a rigorous process of checking the facts with those with first hand knowledge before any reports are written' (Whyte, Greenwood & Lazes, 1991, p 41). The model of engagement espoused by the IAP2, and on which the *LGA Community Engagement Handbook* (Chappell, 2008) was based, also underpinned the process.

Focus group methodology was selected for part of the process, as focus groups provide 'a permissive environment ... that encourages participants to share perceptions and points of view, without pressuring participants to vote or reach consensus' (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p 4). People with particular common characteristics are invited to join in a focused discussion on a topic of interest, providing qualitative data that will add to the researchers' understanding of the participants' perceptions (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In the community planning process, focus groups were convened for representatives of the Indigenous community, community health and welfare organisations, government and non-government agencies, business, service clubs, and education institutions.

Before beginning the process, Council staff and elected members held a retreat at Port Lincoln to explore needs and steps in the planning. The process involved two stages: a visioning process followed by the community plan formulation. Components included: examining other communities' planning processes; wide consultation through focus groups, community surveys, and at community events; writing 'emerging issues' papers as a stimulus to discussion; and holding public meetings to develop and later ratify the plan. External consultants were involved in parts of the process: Natalie Fuller and Associates facilitated early stages until other commitments intervened; Futureye, whose work is 'to develop proactive organisations that will succeed in the new stakeholder era' (Futureye, 2005), were engaged to facilitate the later public meetings. Whilst Melbourne-based, Futureye were familiar with Whyalla through work with residents about steelworks dust concerns. The whole process was well publicised through local media, the Council's website and quarterly *Whyalla Council News*, networking, and word-of-mouth. The process is summarised in Table 1, with further details following.

Stage	Task/event	Time	Participants
Stage 1: Visioning Process (July – December 2007)	<i>Whyalla Council News</i> special edition (details of process; copy of survey)	July/August 2007	10,000 dwellings targeted
	Community workshops, round 1 (4 workshops, 2 morning and 2 evening)	July/August	Consultants 72 participants in all
	Whyalla Show display (booth)	August	Council staff, elected members
	Westland Shopping Centre displays	August	
	Council employee consultation (2 groups)	August 28	80
	Focus group consultations: Indigenous people (UniSA) Community welfare (UniSA) Government agencies/NGOs (WEDB) Business (WEDB) Service Clubs (Council) Education (Council)	September – November	1 5 12 20 17 4 (key people)
	Tanderra (craft market) display	September	Council staff, elected members
	Labour Day Picnic display	October	

	Community workshops, round 2 (3)	October	90
	Questionnaires (long form)	July – October	82 received
	Questionnaires (short form)	September – October	Group responses, and individual (>100 responses from schools:)
	DIY engagement kits for schools and groups, e.g. Advancing Whyalla, Probus, Lions, NGOs	September – October	
	Community Plan web page design	October	Council
	<i>Statistical overview of Whyalla LGA</i> (UniSA) and emerging issues papers written and posted on Council website	October	UniSA's CRHaCD Council WEDB
Stage 2: Community Plan Formulation	Data collection and theme identification	November	Council
	Vision document drafted	November	Council
	Public validation meeting/workshops – action plan themes identified	December 2	Consultants 30-40 attendees
	Draft vision document disseminated	December	Council
	Emerging issues papers disseminated	December	Council
	Vision document finalised	February	Council
	Action plans drafted for inclusion in the strategic plan	February – May 2008	Council
	Meeting to workshop vision final draft and action plans	May 2008	Elected members
	Adoption of community plan	June 2008	Council

**Table 1: The Whyalla 2022 Community Plan – Process**

### **The people involved and the parts they played**

A broad-based steering committee was set up by Council and regular meetings held to keep the process on track. Members included representatives of Council, including two elected members, the Director of CRHaCD and other UniSA staff, the Whyalla Economic Development Board (WEDB), and the Youth Council. Together the committee identified issues and mapped out a Gantt chart for a nine months' engagement process to formulate a community (strategic) plan. This ensured that there were equitable opportunities for all stakeholders to influence how Whyalla envisions itself 15 years hence. A decision statement was carefully crafted to ensure that as many values and views would be solicited as possible.

While the intention was for this to be very much a community plan, the Council was the driving force and organiser, co-opting other bodies to be involved in the process. Schools, for example, played a big part in eliciting youth input. As well as facilitating many of the meetings and focus groups, Council staff had responsibility for an issues paper on governance, and another on environmental issues. Data gathered from the community survey and public displays were collated and summarised.

UniSA's CRHaCD was consulted for guidance on the planning process and participatory action research methodology employed. Its Applied Statistics Unit compiled for reference purposes a statistical overview of relevant aspects of the Whyalla Local Government Area (Ellis, Petkov & Cheers, 2007), updating the statistical information available in the *Whyalla Social Profile* produced earlier (McGregor Tan Research, 2006). CRHaCD also wrote a Community Well-being emerging issues paper (CRHaCD, 2007), one of four papers planned to stimulate discussion and prompt community members' comments on key areas for which action plans would be developed. Both of these documents, and also a short version of the issues paper, were published on the Council's website along with other plan-related papers. CRHaCD staff, using the contacts and relationships already developed, arranged the invitations to participants in the Indigenous and community sector focus group. The University was thus able to help contact the 'silent majority', some of the community groups such as youth,

Indigenous groups, the less affluent, and those with health and in particular mental health issues, as well as men's issues.

WEDB similarly was able to assist with contacts for government agencies, NGOs, and business groups, and so encourage focus group and survey participation. WEDB staff also compiled an issues paper relating to economic issues.

In this way, Council was able to access those groups not normally in touch with local government, and draw into the process as many stakeholders, demographic, cultural and economically diverse cohorts as possible. A contacts database was established and various techniques identified to ensure all stakeholders had opportunity to become involved.

## **Survey**

A long-form questionnaire, circulated to all households as the back page of a special edition of the *Whyalla Council News (WCN)*, July 2007), which could be folded and posted free of charge, drew 80 responses. The *WCN* was also available on the Council website (as is each issue), at the Council's Civic Building and in both public libraries. After suggestions that its length might discourage people, the following shorter version was widely disseminated.

## **HAVE YOUR SAY ON WHYALLA'S FUTURE – WHYALLA 2022**

### **QUICK QUESTIONNAIRE**

Have Your Say: If you haven't already completed a Community Plan Engagement Questionnaire, please complete this quick questionnaire and return to the reply paid address below by 31 October 2007.

1. What do you most like about Whyalla?
2. What do you least like about Whyalla that you would like changed or eliminated in the future?
3. What do you think are the biggest challenges facing Whyalla in the future?
4. Imagine Whyalla in 15-20 years time. What would make Whyalla a great place and how would it look?

Thank you for your thoughts and ideas. They will become part of the **WHYALLA 2022 COMMUNITY PLAN**.

The longer questionnaire included, along with questions 1, 3 and 4 above, the opportunity to rate particular aspects of Whyalla and trends facing the long-term future of the city, and to comment in more detail on specific aspects. (Question 2 replaced one with less easily understood wording.) Demographic data were also collected: year of birth, gender, size of household, and whether a Whyalla resident (if yes, length of residence in Whyalla and suburb; if no, nature of interest, e.g. business owner or visitor). In addition to these city-wide surveys, information from a pre-budget survey (on Council services, projects and initiatives) run through the quarterly *WCN* was taken into account, as were data gathered from later surveys on specific topics, such as the Whyalla Leisure Centre. Do-it-yourself kits included a discussion guide and survey form and were available to various groups and schools to enable them to run their own forum. These resulted in group responses; however, individual responses came from students in some schools where teachers allowed them to use class time.

## **Other data-gathering**

Workshop input was recorded on butcher's paper, and displayed for participants to check that their meanings were captured. At the booths operated at community events – Whyalla Show, Labour Day Picnic, and the monthly craft market – and in the shopping mall (*WCN*, Spring 2007, p 4), Council staff and elected members had the opportunity to interact with community members, including with people less likely to come to the workshops. The data-gathering mechanism was to encourage people to put up 'post-it' comments (yellow for positives and blue for negatives), which were later grouped under themes. The prompting questions were:

'Where are we going?' 'Where do we want to be?' and 'How do we get there?' Balloons and competitions were used to attract visitors to the booth. Focus groups sought to ensure wide community participation; while attendance varied considerably from group to group, much valuable input was given. When it was apparent that attendance at public meetings and workshops was often poor, other means of reaching people were adopted, such as the 'do-it-yourself' kits. 'World Café' ideas and principles were also incorporated into public meetings (World Café, 2008).

### **Overall reach and outcome so far**

Analysis of survey and other data is ongoing, Council staff availability limiting the pace. It is estimated that the whole process gave six to seven per cent of residents the opportunity for input into the plan, but this required hard work. A planned survey of a randomly chosen 'barometer group' of 400 residents surveyed on three previous occasions did not take place because of time and personnel constraints. The last of the public meetings provided validation for the draft vision document: there was consensus among those attending, with some suggested amendments, including aspirational goals (e.g. to exceed the national average in some areas). This group provided input into action plans on economic development, environmental care, and community well-being, that is, actions needed over the next few years and beyond to fulfil the vision:

Our aim is to be a vibrant, growing City offering people a diverse range of sustainable economic, environmental and community opportunities. Our City is to have access to quality services and facilities, capitalising on (whilst also protecting) our attractive coastal and outback landscape. Our City is to be home to an energetic, harmonious, integrated community actively involved in shaping Whyalla for current and future generations.

A fourth action plan on council governance is to be driven by the audit committee. These action plans, produced by Council in the early months of 2008, correspond to the topics of the emerging issues papers. Council members' input into the community plan led to the addition in of a glossary and the decision to have three versions available, including a short brochure that could be distributed to all Whyalla households with a return slip.

To date community awareness of the engagement process is growing. Comments by groups and participants and on formal evaluation sheets have been positive. We are aware that Whyalla's culture is gradually changing in this respect. Elected Members are highly supportive and two members have proven to be champions of this culture change. (Westbrook, 2008)

### **LEARNINGS**

A wealth of information about residents' perceptions and ideas for the future was provided by the process. The last public meeting demonstrated the concern of participants for local action related to climate change, water recycling, skills development for Whyalla's unemployed, and the provision of medical and related services (WCN, Summer 2008, p. 5), and highlighted their wish to be more involved. Much has been learned from this community planning process itself from the point of view of both the University research centre and the Council that will improve future engagement with each other and with the other stakeholders involved. The partners learned more about each other and how they could work together for the benefit of the community. For all concerned, the need for flexibility and adaptability was found to be essential, with initial plans and undertakings needing to be modified in the light of contingencies and community response.

While CRHaCD's part, which drew on its prior experience in community engagement, was assessed by the Council as useful and effective, the participation by the Centre in this community planning process enabled it to identify as an issue the need for appropriate resources to be available to enable full engagement by a university research centre in such processes. Restrictions on availability of personnel meant that input was sometimes not possible at the optimal time, nor as extensive as it could otherwise have been.

For local government, there is the ongoing concern to develop techniques to engage effectively with further groups, particularly the marginalised, and to elicit input from the 'silent majority', people within the community that

have appeared unwilling to be involved in this recent planning process. Adjustments needed to cater for some groups have been learned during the process; for example, in meetings using small groups where people were asked to move to another group, it was found that older people were less willing to move, perhaps for reasons of mobility or not wanting to leave their acquaintances, and so the facilitators reduced the number of moves. Ways are being investigated to make Council–community consultation a continuing reality, now that community expectations for engagement have been raised. This will be a continuing challenge for Council to meet in the future. A change to Council culture has been evident, including changes to meeting processes. A City Strategic and Policy Committee has been established, with a task force that includes members of the public, to drive each of the action plans. A Community Panel is being established ‘as a way of enhancing the engagement of the local community in the decision-making process of the Council’ (WCC, 2008). This initiative is being conducted as a pilot project in partnership with UniSA’s Ehrenberg-Bass Institute of Marketing Science and three other South Australian Councils. (For a description of an eastern states Council’s establishment of a residents’ panel, see Franey and Clark, 2005.)

As IAP2 points out, ‘public participation can be seen as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make decisions’ (IAP2, 2005, p 8). The lesson that Whyalla Council learned is that, while there is an element of dispute resolution in all public participation, it is essential to begin a participatory process before disputes arise. Too frequently in the past Council has been on the defensive in the face of NIMBY (‘Not in my backyard’) attitudes and protesters. It is now looking to review and revise its project management procedures to ensure the identification of public participation needs; these are to be analysed and addressed at the earliest project definition stage. It will also seek to train relevant staff and elected members in community engagement techniques, with the help of the relevant handbook, and write a Community Engagement Policy to complement its Consultation Policy (WCC, 2007).

## CONCLUSION

The links built and/or reinforced through this community planning process, which involved considerable learning and culture change for some participants, will be nurtured by continued collaboration, cooperation and engagement, and reinforced by the existence of a dedicated engagement unit in the Council, resourced to extend the community engagement process. In this way we will ensure a sustainable future for these relationships among stakeholders, and for the community in which they live and work. In the course of seeking to identify the needs, perceptions and aspirations of the community, and to respond to these, the partners involved have strengthened the foundations for further sustainable, collaborative action. While such community planning is happening in many different localities, the university involvement in the Whyalla Community Plan has added a worthwhile dimension. The current air of optimism in Whyalla, with a turnaround in population decline, building development, and mining boom opportunities, augurs well for the fulfilment of Whyalla’s vision for a great, exciting future.

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## Community Engagement Research: A Question of Partnership

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**Keywords:** community, engagement, partnership, collaboration, participation

### ABSTRACT

This paper puts forward a research framework within which future community engagement initiatives can be delivered and evaluated. The framework, known as the 'methodology of engagement', has been developed from reviews of and research within a number of community engagement projects that have been carried out by Australian Catholic University, and recently by the university's new Institute for Advancing Community Engagement. Within the Institute's community engagement research methodology, the participants in an initiative are active collaborators in the research process; they are not subjects to be studied and examined. The participants work with university investigators to shape the direction of evaluations and to formulate research questions. They share ownership of the research and make crucial contributions to the way in which it is conducted and documented. The methodology of engagement was developed in order to address the need for community members to feel genuinely engaged in the research carried out in their communities, and to feel respected and dignified in the process. The methodology ensures that community members are partners not only in the implementation of community projects but in their evaluation as well. The present paper reports on the origins and nature of this research methodology, and how it has been employed within the Institute's recent projects. The paper suggests principles by which to address the issues that arise in the utilisation of the methodology, and discusses what lies ahead as the methodology continues to expand and evolve.

In recent years, the importance of community engagement has been increasingly recognised by universities throughout the world. A substantial amount of work has already been done with regard to illuminating the nature of community engagement and how to implement it, but there is much that remains to be examined with respect to its nature and effective implementation. The present paper presents a partnership model for planning, implementing, and researching or reviewing community engagement initiatives. The model aims to guide future practitioners and community workers while also facilitating a fuller understanding of community engagement and its various dimensions. For the sake of conciseness, this paper focuses primarily on community engagement initiatives in which universities and their staff and students engage and work with community members. Nonetheless, it is argued that the partnership model of community engagement advanced in this paper can be employed with regard to any community engagement initiative, such as those developed by community organisations, welfare agencies, and other not for profit community based organisations.

### Community Engagement Defined

Australian Catholic University (ACU National) defines community engagement as:

...the process through which ACU National brings the capabilities of its staff and students to work collaboratively with community groups and organisations to achieve mutually agreed goals that build capacity, improve wellbeing, and produce just and sustainable outcomes in the interests of people, communities, and the University (Australian Catholic University, 2007).

From this definition, it is clear that ACU views community engagement in terms of collaboration and mutuality, that is in terms of *partnership*. In the following sections, it is argued that partnership is the key component of any successful community engagement initiative. Partnership sets genuine community engagement efforts apart from other work carried out in communities, as well as providing a basis for enhancing community engagement's effectiveness and sustainability.

## Service and Engagement: A Key Distinction

To illustrate the crucial role of partnership in community engagement, it is useful to look at the difference between community *service* and community *engagement*. A key difference between the two lies in community being transactional and community engagement being transformative.

Community service is *transactional*. Within the university context, community service would involve the staff or students of a university performing some service for a given community, in order to benefit the community members in some way. The community members would be passive recipients of this service, consuming it to the extent that they are willing or able to do so. By the same token, the staff or students would be service providers, dispensing their prescribed services to the community (Howard, Butcher, & Labone, 2003).

In contrast, community engagement is *transformative* (Howard, Cooke, & Butcher, 2007). Within the university context, community engagement brings about change not only in the lives of community members, but in the lives of staff and students from the university. The direction of influence is not one-way: both the university and the community are transformed, and the benefits of this process are mutual (Jobling & Nanere, 2007). How is this bidirectionality of influence accomplished? Through *partnership*; through the extensive collaboration that takes place between university and community, whereby community members are active agents rather than passive recipients, and university staff and students acquire knowledge from and are transformed by the engagement.

For a community-based initiative to be truly one of engagement, the collaboration must extend beyond the planning and implementation of the initiative into its evaluation phase. That is, community members need to be active partners in the process of devising and implementing a research strategy for assessing the impact of a given initiative. Just as, in the delivery phase, the community members are agents rather than recipients, in the evaluation phase, they are active, engaged collaborators rather than mere subjects to be studied and tested. They are participants in the fullest sense of the word: they participate not only in the data-gathering procedures but in their planning and development as well. This inclusiveness allows the evaluation phase to be valuably informed by the insights and perspectives of community members, to be tailored to their needs, sensitivities, and circumstances, and to offer them the dignity and respect that are often felt to be lacking in program evaluations.

## The Benefits of Partnership

The following discussion presents the findings from a range of community-based initiatives, to illustrate that community engagement is preferable in practice as well as in principle. When an initiative forges an authentic partnership between university and community, rather than simply building a one-way, transactional conduit for services, the benefits – for both community and university – are clear.

In a trial of two forms of community-based education, Kristina, Majoor, and van der Vleuten (2006) tested the importance of active community involvement. The trial compared two groups of sixth-year medical students, both of which were posted to rural areas of Indonesia for two-weeks, in order to help identify and treat community health problems. The control group performed their community-based education duties in accordance with the established protocols, which did not emphasise consultation or collaboration with community members. The experimental group followed a set of newly designed objectives, which stressed the importance of listening to and co-operating with the community, and provided a framework for working collaboratively with community members. Unlike the experimental group, the control group delivered their health interventions without discussion with the community, and the results of their interventions were not communicated to the community.

As predicted, significantly different outcomes were observed for the two groups. The interventions delivered by the experimental group were met with high levels of community compliance (65-80%), while the control group measured compliance for only one of their activities, and in this case the compliance was low (28%). In other words, it seems likely that the community members were more willing to follow the health advice provided by the medical students from the experimental group. Community perceptions were also measured, and it was found that the proportion of community representatives who agreed that the students had responded to community-perceived needs, and who expressed satisfaction with the students' activities, was significantly higher for the experimental group. Most of the community representatives who received interventions from the control group

expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the students' activities, while the representatives who had been engaged by the experimental group were prepared to recommend the group's activities for future groups of students. In all, the evidence suggested that community health needs were more likely to be met by the students from the experimental group, whose objectives emphasised community consultation and involvement.

On numerous measures of the students' satisfaction with their experiences in the community, with their teamwork experiences, and with the community-based education program as a whole, the experimental group scored higher than the control group. Thus, not only were the activities of the experimental group more satisfactory for the community, but they were more satisfactory for the students themselves. These results point to the mutually beneficial nature of community engagement, and explain why community-based initiatives are more successful and sustainable when they emphasise engagement: when community workers are more satisfied with their activities, they are more likely to work with dedication and commitment, and to remain in their roles for a greater length of time. By the same token, when community members are more satisfied with the initiatives delivered within their communities, they are more likely to recommend that the initiatives be continued, and that similar initiatives be implemented in other communities. Indeed, without the endorsement, support, and involvement of the community, it is, at best, very difficult for a community initiative to be implemented, maintained, or expanded. Hence it is quite important for such initiatives to be based upon community participation and engagement. While Kristina et al. (2006) were not able to control for all possible confounds, their findings point to numerous ways in which community involvement could crucially impact upon the success, appreciation, and sustainability of community-based initiatives.

Gallacher et al. (2007) investigated the learning cultures of two community learning centres. The centres were attached to two of Scotland's Further Education colleges, and each offered community-based further education. Their research methodology was characterised by engagement with a member of the teaching staff from each college being included in the team of investigators. As such, the team no longer consisted wholly of 'outsiders', and was able to benefit from the perspectives of those who worked within further education environments. The two teaching staff members were fully included in the process of analysing and interpreting the data, and drawing conclusions from it.

In studying the learning culture of each centre, Gallacher et al. (2007) identified some of the features that made the centres successful in engaging community members – who were often underprivileged, suffering health problems, or in some other way disadvantaged – in further education. Specifically, it was found that the boundaries between the centres and the other dimensions of the learners' lives were more 'permeable' than was the case with the main college campuses. In other words, the learners were not required to "leave the complexity of their lives at the door" (Gallacher et al., 2007, p. 506) when attending the community learning centres. Complementing this, the teaching staff at the centres were less formal in their approach to teaching and in their relationships with the learners. Thus, the learners felt comfortable in attending the centres, and were able to engage with their teachers on more or less an equal level, rather than as subordinates to authoritative lecturers (indeed, the teaching staff at the centres did not even refer to themselves as lecturers, but rather as tutors). Gallacher et al. (2007) described the relationships between the learners and tutors in terms of 'horizontality', in order to capture the non-hierarchical structure of the relationships amongst the staff and learners at the centres. Horizontality is a key feature of community engagement: community members are active participants, working with universities as collaborators, rather than being service recipients. The benefits of this feature were clear in Gallacher et al.'s (2007) study: the learners at each centre were observed to develop increased self-confidence and to achieve "measurable success in learning outcomes" (p. 514).

Further evidence of the importance of engagement, over and above the effects of mere service provision, comes from Lafuente and Lane's (1995) study of homelessness. The investigators interviewed 10 homeless men about their experiences of social disaffiliation. The interviewees described their lack of stable social ties and their resultant powerlessness. Their struggles with poverty and social isolation meant that they were unable to contribute to the community in mainstream ways, such as by voting or paying taxes. This disenfranchisement is part of the vicious cycle of homelessness and disengagement: the more disaffiliated a person becomes, the less they are able to contribute and connect to society, and so they become even more disengaged.

By examining society's responses to this vicious cycle of disaffiliation, the distinction between community engagement and community service becomes even clearer. The homeless men interviewed for Lafuente and

Lane's (1995) study were highly withdrawn from society, and expressed no desire to develop or rebuild social ties. And yet, paradoxically, as they became increasingly disaffiliated, they became increasingly dependent on others for assistance in meeting their basic needs. In this way, greater disengagement from others led to a greater reliance upon others. The implication is that the homeless men's receipt of services was not sufficient to allow them to exit the cycle of homelessness. Indeed, their consumption of services correlated with increases in disaffiliation. Clearly, they were not benefiting as passive service/welfare recipients, beyond having their basic needs met.

Genuine community engagement promotes the development of relationships founded on interdependence, rather than dependence. Within the framework of community engagement, the solution to disaffiliation and other forms of disadvantage is not a one-way relationship of service provision. Instead, the solution is to empower disadvantaged people by giving them opportunities to contribute as well as to receive. When provided with opportunities to contribute to and engage with society, disadvantaged people are able to feel more confident about their ability to reengage with mainstream society and achieve a greater level of social inclusion.

So, as we have seen, disaffiliation and social contributions are linked; as one increases the other decreases (Lafuente & Lane, 1995). Efforts to reduce disaffiliation that do not also promote greater social contributions are less likely to be successful, because as long as social contributions are low, disaffiliation will be, to some extent, entrenched. Community engagement establishes genuine, mutually beneficial relationships with disadvantaged people: community workers do not provide community *service* 'to' disadvantaged people; they are involved in community *engagement* 'with' them; investigators do not do research 'on' disadvantaged people; they do research 'with' them. Thus, disadvantaged people are active participants in the engagement process during not only program delivery, but also program evaluation, and their sense of powerlessness and dependency is thus more fully mitigated. They are not people to be pitied as alienated from society; they are to be respected and dignified as capable agents who make crucial contributions within an interdependent, collaborative relationship.

The mutually beneficial nature of community engagement was observed by Hocking and Lawrence (2000), who conducted an experiment in which nineteen university students each performed 15 hours of volunteer work at a local homeless shelter. Their work involved prosocial communication with the homeless people at the shelter, rather than merely providing material assistance or performing other such tasks. In a subsequent questionnaire, the shelter workers indicated a number of positive changes in their attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural intentions towards homeless people, which were not expressed by the control participants who did not work at the shelter. The shelter workers found their experience to be rewarding, and were more likely to express an intention to engage in relatively demanding activities to help homeless people in the future. This finding represents the flipside of community engagement: it is beneficial not only for the community, but for the workers who collaborate with community members. Indeed, this collaboration strengthens the workers' motivation to engage with others in the community, which in turn enhances the sustainability of the community engagement movement.

Stewart and Bhagwanjee (1999) reported on a self-help group for people with spinal cord injuries, and how the empowerment of the group members was evaluated. The evaluation was carried out within a 'participatory research' framework, whereby the group members were involved at every stage of the evaluation process, and took responsibility for directing the research and acting on its outcomes. The participatory research framework was selected because it was highly congruous with the goal of empowering the group members to become more self-reliant, independent, and self-confident. Stewart and Bhagwanjee (1999) argued that the emphasis on and employment of an empowerment paradigm represented:

...a shift from traditional individualist top-down therapeutic approaches to participatory modes of intervention. Rehabilitation 'services', therefore, need to be regarded as a process in which people with disabilities are intimately involved, rather than a product to be dispensed (p. 339).

Thus, the evaluation described by Stewart and Bhagwanjee (1999) was directly in keeping with the aforementioned principles of authentic community engagement, whereby community members are involved and active throughout every phase of a given initiative, including the evaluation phase.

Stewart and Bhagwanjee (1999) discuss the significant transitions that took place within the spinal cord injury self-help group, as a result of the process of empowerment in which they participated (exemplified by the

participatory research in which they were involved). The therapist who had initially led the group moved from the role of expert and leader to the role of 'invited consultant', and then was no longer needed at the group, because it eventually became fully self-reliant and self-governing. In other words, the group moved from being professionally-led to being independent and peer-led. The group members acquired a sense of ownership over both the group activities and the evaluation research, and as they became more empowered, they developed increased feelings of self-worth and independence, and a better sense of personal identity. They also demonstrated increased self-confidence, personal strength, and resourcefulness. The mutual benefits of community engagement, for both the community members and the researchers, were also evident in the outcomes of Stewart and Bhagwanjee's (1999) study: the evaluation "served the needs of both parties and represented a pooling of their collective skills, experiences and perspectives" (p. 342). In all, the way in which the group activities were evaluated not only provided valuable data to the researchers, it also contributed to the group members' process of empowerment, as they helped each other to cope with the difficulties of having a spinal cord injury. Participatory research of this kind is a key element of community engagement.

### **Partnership in Practice: ACU in the Community**

In recent years, ACU National, along with its Institute for Advancing Community Engagement (IACE), has implemented and evaluated a range of initiatives, in partnership with numerous communities and community organisations. Through surveys, structured interviews, and focus-group discussions, the impact and influence of these initiatives have been assessed, and they have been found to serve as clear and powerful examples of the importance and value of partnership in community engagement work.

Butcher, Howard, Dockett, and Perry (1999) reported on three education-related initiatives implemented in New South Wales, Australia, and how these projects were built upon genuine partnerships between universities and community agencies (see Butcher et al., 1999, for a detailed discussion of the research methodology employed). The first project, titled 'Starting School', was focused on the issues surrounding the 'school readiness' of children who are about to commence primary school. This project forged partnerships through the formation of an "interactive consortium" (Butcher et al., 1999, p. 5) in which major stakeholders concerned with early childhood and early childhood education (such as policy organisations and parent groups) were able to collaborate with one another and with university researchers. The consortium proved to be highly useful for the involved stakeholders, especially in the areas of developing data gathering instruments and discussing methodological issues. In less than two years (1997-99), the consortium expanded to include a further six organisations in addition to the founding members of the alliance. This was a testament to the benefits and fruitfulness of the collaboration, as perceived by all of the partner organisations and universities.

The second project, known as the Teaching and Learning Consortium (TLC), was a teacher education program for student teachers from ACU. The project brought together student teachers, classroom teachers, and academic staff to form a learning community in which each participant could learn from the others. Specifically, the consortium allowed the student teachers to reflect on their learnings, both in the classroom and at university, and receive mentoring from the classroom teachers. Of course, the benefits were mutual, as the classroom teachers were able to share in the latest knowledge being acquired by the student teachers at university. The academic staff also benefited from and contributed to the consortium: they shared their educational theories with the teachers, and in return were able to observe their theories being put into practice within actual schools. In 1997, the TLC encompassed nine primary and four secondary schools, and by 1999 it had expanded to include 38 primary and thirteen secondary schools.

The third project discussed by Butcher et al. (1999) was a collaboration between ACU, the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education (ERC), and the Australian telecommunications company Optus Communications (Optus). The three organisations worked together to plan and produce two educational TV series for Optus's education channel, and to conduct joint research into the applications of information technology, particularly broadband internet technology, for the delivery of flexible learning opportunities to students. This was a significant collaboration, given that it brought together organisations from the university, business, and community sectors. After the agreed research, Optus, facilitated the entrance of a new partner into the alliance: the School of Media and Communication at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). This allowed the partnership forged between ACU and ERC to continue, and they were able to collaborate with UWS on a

subsequent TV-based initiative. At all stages of the collaboration, there was a focus on ensuring that the project would benefit all of the partners.

Butcher, Labone, and Howard (2001) evaluated ACU's Community Outreach/Social Analysis & Action Program, whereby teacher education students were placed with social justice agencies and community organisations (such as Centacare and Amnesty International) in order to work with communities of disadvantaged people. The students recorded and evaluated their experiences within the program. It was found that the partnership between university and community was mutually beneficial. The students were able to reinforce the lessons learned from their university studies by putting the lessons into practice during their community engagement work, and the communities benefited from the students' knowledge and assistance. Thus, both the students and the communities in which they worked were transformed by community engagement. Indeed, the students indicated that not only were they able to help make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged people, they also developed their own knowledge, interpersonal skills, self-concepts, self-efficacy, and knowledge of social justice issues. Howard et al. (2003) reported that in 2002, three hundred teacher education students, placed with over 140 agencies, each completed 80 hours of community work within the outreach program, totalling 24,000 hours of volunteer work. This fact points to the substantial impact that can be made when community engagement is carried out on the foundation of genuine, mutually beneficial partnerships.

In a project that focused on community volunteers, rather than disadvantaged people, ACU partnered with three community organisations – the NSW Rural Fire Service, The Benevolent Society, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society – to conduct a three year research project titled “V21 – Enhancing volunteering for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. The goal of the project was to study the changing nature of volunteering behaviours, the volunteer base of the three community organisations, and the ways in which this base and its capacities could be maximised. Each of the organisations involved in the V21 project was committed to learning from the others, and each was able to develop and enhance its research capabilities throughout the joint initiative. The community volunteers and organisation members were surveyed using questionnaires, interviews, and focus-groups. Howard et al. (2005) reported that the community organisations involved in V21 were satisfied with the outcomes of the project and with the way in which it was implemented, and this satisfaction, along with the success of the project, was attributed to the interactions between stakeholders that were made possible by the partnership amongst them.

## Conclusion

From the community engagement initiatives explored in this paper, it is clear that the principle of partnership is important on numerous levels. By forging partnerships between university and community, the dignity and perspectives of community members are acknowledged and respected, and the university is able to benefit from the valuable insights offered by the community. Furthermore, partnerships *work*; they enhance the impact, quality and sustainability of community initiatives. Evaluations or reviews become partnership based and are integral to the initiatives themselves. Community members become key participants in all phases of community projects, including reviews and research. When the viewpoints, contributions, and capacities of community members are fully integral to such reviews and research the projects are more likely to generate positive outcomes for all stakeholders.

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## Mapping disadvantage: creating pathways

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**Key Words** Adelaide, education-participation, low- socioeconomic, collaboration, engagement

### Abstract

*Northern Adelaide is an area where 50% of new jobs will require a university degree, but where participation in higher education is low. In 2007 the University of South Australia (UniSA), through its flagship northern Adelaide engagement unit, University of South Australia Northern Adelaide Partnerships (UNAP), commissioned a project to collect, collate and analyse base data relevant to tertiary education access and success rates for the northern Adelaide community. The purpose was to identify trends in access and success, and to examine comparative results between and within the local government areas. The resulting information would help focus resources on strategies to increase pathways and access to higher education for students in the northern Adelaide region, a recognised area of high socio-economic disadvantage.*

*Data from a range of sources was collected: the University; the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC); South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS); South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST); and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The study covered Australian students only, for a five year period. In addition, UNAP analysed current engagement activities between the University and northern Adelaide state schools.*

*The data highlighted a critical point: that the rate of northern Adelaide students completing their secondary school with a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER), which is the basis on which universities in South Australia offer places to school leavers, is less than half the average rate for metropolitan Adelaide.*

*Information from the study was provided to UNAP's management and advisory groups, including the UNAP Advisory Group which includes key members of the northern Adelaide community. The information and feedback from management and advisory groups enabled UNAP to make informed decisions about the critical points that impact on student access to higher education and to identify potential areas for collaborative action to achieve improved access. In this way, the mapping study provided new direction and dimensions to revitalise existing relationships and generated ideas for specific partnership activities.*

*UNAP has presented the findings to DECS, northern Adelaide state secondary school principals, District Directors and other key stakeholders. Collaborative groups and partnerships have been formed to develop new strategies directly relevant to the findings. UniSA is using the mapping study to renew its commitment to the community and establish purposeful links with DECS and schools to improve access to higher education.*

### CONTEXT

The goal of this paper is to outline educational disadvantage in the northern Adelaide area; describe the process for engagement with stakeholders; and, how UniSA community engagement can make a difference in developing pathways to higher education and participation in the workforce for the future.

#### **UniSA Equity and Community Engagement Strategy.**

**The University of South Australia (UniSA) is committed to addressing educational disadvantage. The University of South Australia Act 1990 states that a function of the University is:**

**to provide such tertiary education programmes as the University thinks appropriate to meet the needs of groups within the community that the University considers have suffered disadvantages in education ...**

**(University of South Australia 1990)**

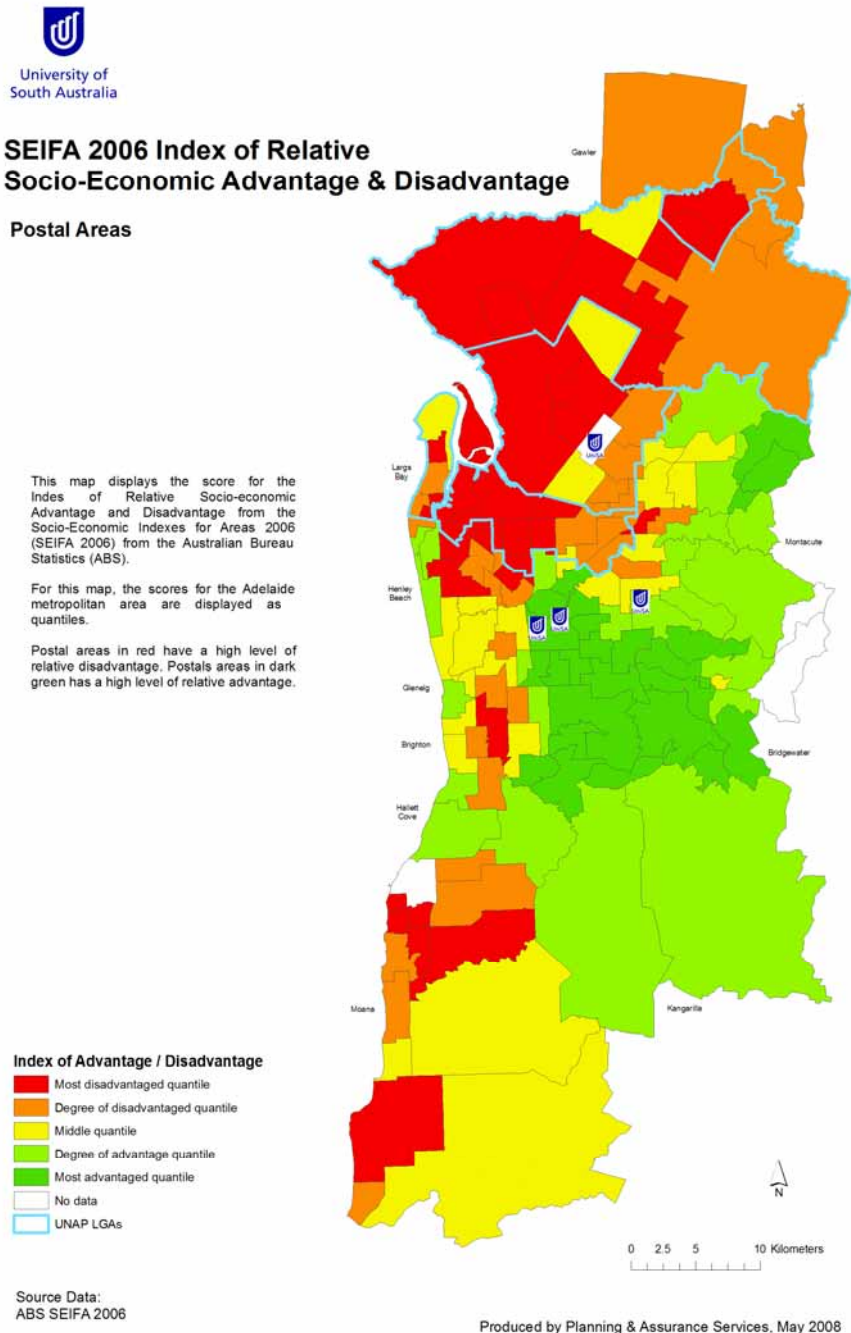
**The Equity section of the University of South Australia Strategic Plan states that the University will provide higher education opportunities and will support success for people who have experienced education disadvantage. A Key Result Area is effective entry pathways for designated equity groups (University of South Australia 2006).**

UniSA has established a range of initiatives that aim to increase access for students from low socio-economic schools including USANET, UniSA-PAL, SMS@MawsonLakes, Peer Tutoring, University Orientation Program, Portfolio Entry and UniSA Northern Adelaide Partnerships (UNAP). For further details of these programs see Tranter 2005.

#### **UniSA Northern Adelaide Partnerships (UNAP)**

The focus of UNAP activities is northern Adelaide which includes Local Government Areas of Port Adelaide-Enfield, Salisbury, Playford and Gawler. The following map highlights the region contains areas of relative socio-economic disadvantage.

Figure 1: SEIFA 2006 Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage



UNAP was formed in 2002 to facilitate partnerships of mutual benefit to develop sustainable projects that positively impact on those living in this community. UNAP was set up to be UniSA's first point of contact on matters relating to northern Adelaide (Elliott and Winchester 2005). Through UNAP, UniSA works in partnership with the community, all levels of government, businesses, government agencies, and other education institutions in the northern Adelaide region to effect real change in the longer term. The way UNAP was established ensures that UNAP activities are embedded within the structures of the region (Elliott, Sandeman and Winchester 2005).

The principles of engagement UNAP seeks to apply are reflected in the literature on community engagement. Engagement involves mutual learning and knowledge exchange, connecting resources and strengths of the university and community to identify and implement collaborative solutions for the benefit of the community (Garlick and Pryor 2003, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health 2008, Holland 2001). University engagement also involves teaching and learning and research activities that are productively involved in the community and engage the community as genuine partners (National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges 1999, Wallis 2006).

UNAP aligns with the South Australian Government's Social Inclusion Board description of collaborating partnerships:

Collaborating occurs when...organisations are willing to focus time, energy and resources to strengthen the capacity of the other partners for mutual benefit and common purpose.  
(Government of South Australia 2008)

The UNAP case study in the PhillipsKPA report (2006) highlights UniSA's commitment to community engagement:

...the University decided to collaborate to achieve its community engagement mission in a more focused and more sustainable way. The result was University of South Australia Northern Adelaide Partnerships (UNAP) – a model which incorporates the best practice characteristics of community engagement identified by the University.

UNAP activities seek to achieve four main goals :

1. Increase educational participation and promote pathways into further education and training
2. Address social disadvantage and increase the physical and mental wellbeing of the community
3. Enhance sustainable community development
4. Support UniSA Regional, Industry and Community Engagement

Of these goals, the first one is a key priority for UNAP and this paper reports on a targeted approach to achieve this.

### **Partnership Structures with Schools in Northern Adelaide**

To support facilitating partnerships UNAP engages in existing regional structures. In the area of education UNAP is a member of two important boards which have broad community membership drawn from industry, non-government organisations, DECS and private secondary schools, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), registered training organisations and local and state government. They are the Northern Futures Board and the Northern Adelaide State Secondary Schools Alliance Board.

UNAP has also been involved in establishing and providing ongoing support in partnership structures to meet identified need. The Middle Schooling Oversight Committee with representation from the DECS districts in northern Adelaide and UniSA's School of Education is one example. This Committee progresses the areas for collaboration identified in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by these groups in 2005. The Committee with UNAP's assistance has set up subcommittees that focus on particular matters, for example, practicum placements, research and professional development.

Through representation on these groups, networking, and collaborative activities, UniSA has become a key member of the community, an institution with a regional presence that is sustainable, accessible and collaborative. Brendyn Semmens, District Director of Kumangka Para DECS District has described the University's standing in the community:

The ongoing commitment of UniSA to education in the northern suburbs is highly regarded by district and site leaders. By working collaboratively with DECS districts and sites, UniSA has manifested its commitment to furthering the agenda of public education through the development of alternative entry programs, the placement of a range of university students at school sites, and through highly innovative research and curriculum development programs....

(University of South Australia, 2007)

### **Significance of Higher Education for the Region**

The difficulty of access to higher education for people from low socio-economic backgrounds and the growing divide on socio-economic lines are well documented (Black 2006, Tranter 2005). Teese and Polesel (2003) state that young people from backgrounds of low socio-economic status have about half as much chance of completing school, proceeding to university or TAFE, and graduating with a degree or diploma as those from high-status backgrounds. Gillard (2007) highlights the fact that school completion rates among low socio-economic groups in Australia are far too low and that to compete with other nations more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds need to complete twelve years of schooling and go on to further education and training.

Impacts for individuals who do not access higher education, and the compounding factors for a community with low tertiary participation rates, include lower employment rates, lower average salaries, decreased economic security and marginalisation (George et al 2005, Gillard 2008, James 2002).

In northern Adelaide future projections show that eighty percent of the new jobs created to 2015 will require a post school qualification and half of those will require a bachelor degree or higher qualification (Blandy and Hagan 2006).

Improving access and participation to higher education in low socio-economic areas is a local and national priority. To develop further knowledge of the local situation UNAP worked in collaboration with the UniSA Planning and Assurance Services (PAS) Unit to develop data on access and participation in higher education for northern Adelaide residents.

### **SECONDARY AND TERTIARY PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS**

Statistics from a range of sources were collected to provide baseline information on the educational participation in the northern area compared to the rest of the metropolitan area. Sources included UniSA, South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre (SATAC), South Australia Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS), South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

For 30 percent of the population in the total metropolitan area the highest level of schooling was Year 10 or lower. For people in UNAP Local Government Areas (LGAs) the low levels of educational achievement are more extreme, from 33 percent (Port Adelaide / Enfield) to 40 percent (Playford). The UNAP LGAs also had a lower proportion of people who completed Year 12 than the total metropolitan area, ranging from 27 percent in Playford to 37 percent in Port Adelaide / Enfield compared to 43 percent for the total metropolitan area. Table 2 shows the highest level of schooling for people not at school from the 2006 Census.

**Table 2: Highest level of schooling for people not at school, 2006**

	Adelaide metropolitan area	Gawler LGA	Playford LGA	Salisbury LGA	Port Adelaide / Enfield LGA
Year 8 or below	65,853	1,372	4,114	7,216	8,869
	7.6%	9.4%	8.0%	8.0%	10.8%
Year 9 or equivalent	45,951	1,053	4,426	6,200	5,232
	5.3%	7.2%	8.7%	6.9%	6.4%
Year 10 or equivalent	145,191	3,102	11,891	18,452	13,327
	16.7%	21.3%	23.3%	20.6%	16.2%
Year 11 or equivalent	155,194	3,119	10,806	18,443	13,250
	17.8%	21.5%	21.1%	20.5%	16.1%
Year 12 or equivalent	376,478	4,669	14,021	30,015	30,362
	43.2%	32.1%	27.4%	33.4%	37.0%
Did not go to school	8,056	59	413	1,284	1,484
	0.9%	0.4%	0.8%	1.4%	1.8%
Not stated	72,808	1,156	5,448	8,160	9,607
	8.4%	8.0%	10.7%	9.1%	11.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>869,531</b>	<b>14,530</b>	<b>51,119</b>	<b>89,770</b>	<b>82,131</b>

The Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia (SSABSA) provided information on the number of students in both public and private South Australian schools who completed either part time studies in SACE (less than 10 Stage 2 units) or full time studies in SACE (10 or more Stage 2 units) in 2006. The data was provided for each school. The results for each school were allocated to the LGA in which it was located.

Figure 2 shows the number of Year 12 students who attended public or private secondary schools receiving a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) in 2006, by the LGA of the school, as a proportion of the 15 – 24 year old population in the LGA. For the total metropolitan area the rate was 6.7 percent. Within the UNAP area the rate varied from 10.6 percent for Gawler, to 1.4 percent for Playford. This higher rate for Gawler suggests that students who reside outside the Gawler LGA are travelling to schools in that LGA for their Year 12 studies, most probably to a large private college that is located there. A high rate is also apparent for the Adelaide LGA, which is probably reflecting students travelling to schools in the CBD for their studies.

Figure 3 shows the number of students receiving a TER as a proportion of the total number of students who completed part time or full time Stage 2 Year 12 in 2006. Students may complete Stage 2 Year 12 and not qualify for a TER due to their combination of subjects. For the total metropolitan area 62 percent of these students received a TER. Within the UNAP area the rate varied from 31 percent for Playford to 66 percent for Gawler.

The combination of the above two analyses indicates that a low proportion of students from the UNAP area received a TER, and that even when they completed Year 12, they were not undertaking studies that led to a TER.

Table 3 shows the number of students receiving a TER as a proportion of the total number of students who completed part time or full time Stage 2 Year 12 in 2006 displaying government and non-government schools separately. For all schools the rate was 62 percent. The rate for government schools was 51 percent, and for non-government schools it was 74 percent.

The proportion of students receiving a TER was lower in the UNAP area, at 45 percent for all schools, 69 percent for non-government schools and critically 29 percent for government schools.

**Table 3: Proportion of Student Completing Stage 2 Year 12 Receiving a TER, 2006 – Government and Non-government schools**

	All Schools	Government	Non-government
Total Adelaide	62.0%	51.1%	74.4%
UNAP	45.4%	28.9%	68.5%
Other	65.9%	57.0%	75.7%

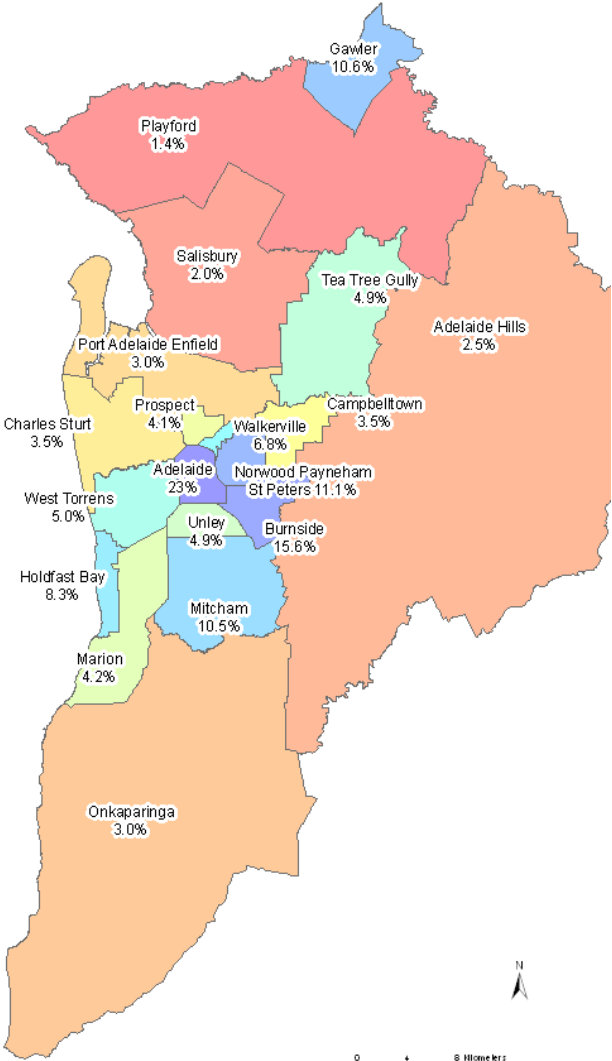
Note: 'Other' is the total Adelaide area excluding the UNAP areas

Figure 2: Proportion of 15 – 24 year old Population Receiving a TER, 2006



Proportion of 15 - 24 year old Population Receiving a TER, 2006

This map displays the number of people who received a TER in 2006 as a proportion of the 2006 population aged 15 - 24 years . The results are allocated to the LGA in which the school is located. The map shows the result for each of the LGAs that include the metropolitan area.



Source Data:  
2006 Census data  
2006 Year 12 data from SSABSA

Produced by Planning & Assurance Services July 2007



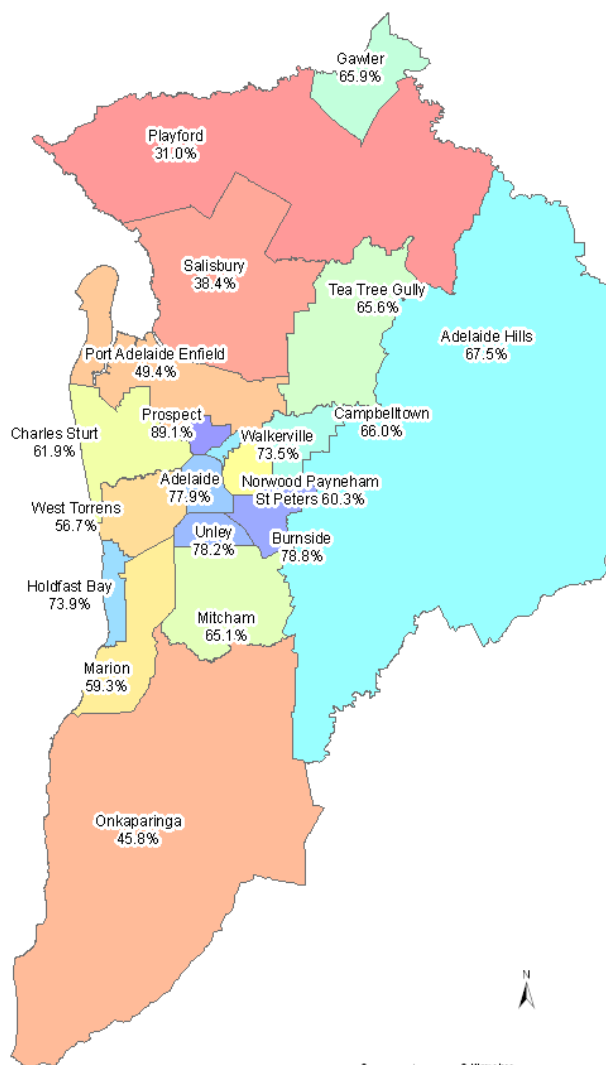
**Figure 3: Proportion of Student Completing Stage 2 Year 12 Receiving a TER, 2006**



University of South Australia

### Proportion of Students Completing Part-time or Full-time Stage 2 Year 12 Receiving a TER, 2006

This map displays the number of people who received a TER in 2006 as a proportion of the total number of students who completed part-time or full-time Stage 2 Year 12. The results are allocated to the LGA in which the school is located. The map shows the result for each of the LGAs that include the metropolitan area.



Source Data:  
2006 Census data  
2006 Year 12 data from SSABSA

Produced by Planning & Assurance Services July 2007

This low level of completion of secondary school and TER rate translates into a significantly lower proportion of the population in northern Adelaide holding, in particular, Bachelor and higher level qualifications. Table 3 shows that only 3.2% in Playford to 8.4% in Port Adelaide / Enfield of the population hold a Bachelor Degree compared with 11.2% across the Adelaide metropolitan area.

**Table 3: 2006 Census - Population 15 years or over – level of qualification**

	Adelaide Metropolitan Area	Gawler LGA	Playford LGA	Salisbury LGA	Port Adelaide / Enfield LGA
Postgraduate Degree	2.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.7%	1.5%
Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate	1.5%	1.1%	0.4%	0.5%	1.1%
Bachelor Degree	11.2%	6.4%	3.2%	5.1%	8.4%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	6.9%	6.1%	3.9%	4.7%	5.5%
Certificate I - IV	16.8%	18.7%	17.6%	18.8%	16.2%
Other - Not stated or inadequately described	11.3%	11.2%	13.0%	11.8%	14.3%
Without Post School Qualification	50.0%	55.7%	61.7%	58.4%	53.1%
	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Even though only a small proportion of students from the northern Adelaide area went on to attend university, those that did had comparable success and retention in the university as students from other areas of Adelaide. Analysis shows there was no significant difference in the success and retention of students attending UniSA with a home residence in the UNAP area and those from the rest of metropolitan Adelaide.

Success is measured as the proportion passed of the load assessed. Table 4 displays the success rate for all students attending UniSA for 2002 – 2006. While students from the UNAP area had a slightly lower success rate than the rest of the metropolitan area for all years, the difference is not statistically significant.

**Table 4: Success rate of UniSA students, 2001- 2006 by home residence LGA**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>UNAP area</b>	81.8%	83.7%	83.8%	85.5%	86.1%
<i>Gawler</i>	86.5%	89.7%	87.6%	88.1%	88.0%
<i>Playford</i>	83.1%	82.6%	83.0%	86.7%	86.3%
<i>Salisbury</i>	81.4%	84.0%	83.7%	85.3%	85.9%
<i>Port Adelaide / Enfield</i>	80.8%	82.6%	83.5%	84.7%	85.9%
<b>Other</b>	85.8%	87.0%	87.0%	87.9%	88.0%
<b>Adelaide Total</b>	84.9%	86.3%	86.3%	87.3%	87.6%

Retention is calculated as the number of continuing students enrolled in a year divided by the number of total students enrolled the previous year, less students who completed in the previous year. It is a "one-year" snapshot of student enrolment flow.

Table 5 displays the retention rate for all UniSA students for 2002 – 2006. The retention rate for the UNAP area and the rest of metropolitan Adelaide are very similar.

**Table 5: Retention rate of UniSA students, 2001- 2006 by home residence LGA**

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>UNAP area</b>	78.9%	78.7%	82.7%	81.7%	82.1%
<i>Gawler</i>	78.7%	80.7%	88.1%	76.9%	86.3%
<i>Playford</i>	76.3%	77.5%	82.6%	77.8%	82.9%
<i>Salisbury</i>	80.3%	81.4%	83.0%	83.3%	83.7%
<i>Port Adelaide / Enfield</i>	78.3%	75.6%	81.3%	82.5%	79.0%
<b>Other</b>	78.8%	79.6%	82.1%	82.5%	82.7%
<b>Adelaide Total</b>	78.8%	79.4%	82.3%	82.3%	82.6%

The analysis shows that students from areas of high disadvantage in northern Adelaide who continue their studies at university are just as successful as students from other areas.

The data developed by UNAP was used as a basis for consultation with a range of groups with a focus on northern Adelaide. Feedback from these consultations informed analysis of current activities and identifying future action.

## CONSULTATION

The information about access and participation developed from the Planning and Assurance Services (PAS) Unit was presented to:

- UNAP Steering Group (members consist of UniSA senior level staff)
- UNAP Advisory Group (members consist of senior UniSA and external members from a range of organisations in northern Adelaide including all levels of government)
- Northern Adelaide State Secondary Schools Principals Network
- Northern Economic Leaders Group (provides a coordinated response from industry to government about significant regional issues, a current focus is career and workforce development)
- Northern Futures Board (provides advice and facilitates collaboration between organisations, industry and the northern secondary schools; hosts the Australian Government funded Career Advice Australia Local Community Partnership)
- DECS Chief Executive and Director Policy and Strategy

The presentations were well received with praise for the development of data that identified the current situation. The leadership of UniSA in developing the data-set was viewed by the groups as a positive contribution to the region in developing an accurate description of the northern Adelaide region's rates of access and participation in higher education.

The data generated great interest and acted as a catalyst for highlighting the importance of developing a regional response for further action. By having the data, strategic action could be planned from a regional perspective. Common points raised from discussion were: pathways to enable access to higher education; and, improving the cultural beliefs about accessing higher education.

## Planning for future engagement with Northern Adelaide Schools and UniSA

Following the feedback received, the UNAP team identified current initiatives and structures operating in northern Adelaide schools. UNAP collected and collated existing information about UniSA engagement activities including

practicum placement data, Marketing and Development Unit (MDU) activities, research projects, UNAP activities and consulted with UniSA staff involved in pathway activities.

This information was then categorised as information available to students; student support activities; and, entry pathway activities. The collation allowed UNAP to analyse UniSA's current activities with northern Adelaide secondary schools.

The information that has been amassed from the data-set developed by PAS, confidential data for each school, and, current activities is now being used to develop individual school profiles. The profiles include rates of students' access to higher education, school engagement with UniSA activities, reasons related to engagement/non-engagement in activities, and, recommendations for future action.

In parallel to the data analysis the UNAP Strategic Plan was reviewed. A priority of the Plan for 2008 is Key Result Area 1: Increase educational participation and promote pathways into further education and training. Based on analysis of the data, goals and activities that develop strategies and partnerships with schools and the Northern Adelaide State Secondary School Alliance (NASSSA) for tertiary pathways have been developed. This focus aligns to the Equity section of the UniSA Strategic Plan as well as to three targets set by the South Australian Government State Strategic Plan:

[T6.15 Learning or earning](#): by 2010 increase the number of 15-19 year olds

engaged fulltime in school, work or further education/training (or combination thereof) to 90%.

[T6.17 Science and maths](#): by 2010 increase by 15 percent the proportion of students receiving a Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) or equivalent with at least one of the follow subjects: mathematics, physics or chemistry.

[T6.20 Higher education](#): increase South Australia's proportion of higher education students to 7.5% of the national total by 2014.

(Government of South Australia 2007)

The alignment of the UNAP Key Result Area to UniSA and State Government plans strengthens UNAP's position in working across UniSA and relevant State Government agencies to collaborate to increase access to higher education for northern Adelaide residents.

The process of data gathering, consultation, school profiling and development of a sound strategic plan has enabled UNAP to move forward with its partners to achieve identified common objectives. This is critical to making a significant difference in the region. One organisation alone cannot address the scope of activities required.

### **The Regional Response**

Through existing structures, strong partnerships of action have been developed by UNAP between UniSA and agencies and organisations in northern Adelaide. These partnerships provide an environment where collaboration for future action, based on the issues identified in the data, can be planned, resourced, implemented and reviewed.

The regional groups who were consulted about the data have a common agenda on developing an integrated education, employment and workforce strategy. A central element is to develop a collaborative process for embedding in the secondary school curriculum clear pathways to higher education for secondary school young people and mature age students; and, to develop student and parent aspirations for access, participation and success in higher education.

Establishing pathways to higher education through the middle and senior school curriculums is essential in making university a real choice for students in northern Adelaide. A recent report in the local newspaper stated:

Northern suburbs students are more likely to drop out of high school than anywhere else in Adelaide.  
(Vasenszky 2008)

The importance of including parents in the development of aspirations to study in University was recently highlighted by the newly elected Federal Member for Makin and former Mayor of Salisbury, Tony Zappia MP:

The number of parents from the northern suburbs who have been to university has been very low, so therefore, children themselves aren't associating with people who have gone to university. They drop out because they have already made up their mind that they don't see themselves as going to university and therefore see no need to finish year 12. The impact clearly is that you start to repeat the same cycle over and we have to break that cycle.  
(Vasenszky 2008)

An associated regional priority is to develop a regional maths/ science strategy starting with an examination of the range of maths/ science activities being delivered to students and teachers in the region. The aim is to develop a collaborative model of delivery of programs to increase the uptake of maths/ science in schools that leads to higher education pathways and to increase skills in areas of high demand.

UNAP and key UniSA staff will be meeting with the northern state secondary school principals on an individual basis to discuss their needs, aspirations and the appropriateness of UniSA activities and to explore new interventions to support the development of students. Each school's profile is different in relation to students receiving a TER and rates of application to university.

By working in collaboration with regional structures, individual schools and across UniSA units, UNAP can facilitate the development of an intervention model based on embedded curriculum activities to increase access, participation and success in higher education for students in the northern Adelaide region. The embedded holistic curriculum model aims to enhance each school's ability to support students into pathways to higher education, rather than disconnected activities that are additional to the mainstream of schools.

These linked strategies and the leadership of the University in the region provide a sound platform for moving forward. UNAP will establish with key stakeholders agreements to deliver on each aspect of the regional strategy and underlying actions.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS/ WAY FORWARD**

The Northern Adelaide mapping project has highlighted some gaps in educational attainment which were previously known only anecdotally. The demonstrated need for intervention has occurred at a key moment in the public policy debate.

At the State level, the concern over school retention rates has led to a raising of the school leaving age to 17 so that all in that age group will be either 'learning or earning'. In northern Adelaide, under the program 'Education Works' a range of schools are to be closed, amalgamated and replaced with greenfield 'super-schools' which will provide greater scale, flexibility and curriculum choice for students.

The development of new schools provides a key opportunity to influence curriculum design and pathways to further education through collaboration. The proposed model of new schools includes hosting integrated health and family support services providing a range of opportunities for research and university student practice based learning. Discussions with the Chief Executive of DECS and the State Minister for Education have proved positive in developing collaborations such as student observation (e.g. of gross motor development) and student health clinics (e.g. for counselling and podiatry) for mutual benefit.

Discussions with the Chief Executive of DECS in April 2008 highlighted two further possibilities for effective intervention: firstly a co-operative approach to case managing Year 8s from particularly disadvantaged schools to successful achievement in Year 12; and secondly a renewed attempt to find a way through the vexed question of integrating University subjects into Year 12, without the problems of up-front payments for students or of schools losing funding.

At the Federal level, the clear focus on social inclusion and educational disadvantage links well to the UNAP and the State agenda. The Federal government has already announced new undergraduate places, a doubling of Commonwealth scholarships and has called for tenders for University interventions in schools below Year 10. The key to a skilled and productive workforce will be enhanced educational inclusion of those who have been previously disengaged. It is here that a difference can be made. The University in working with the community, the schools and with all levels of government is creating pathways not only for individual attainment but to a more productive and inclusive future.

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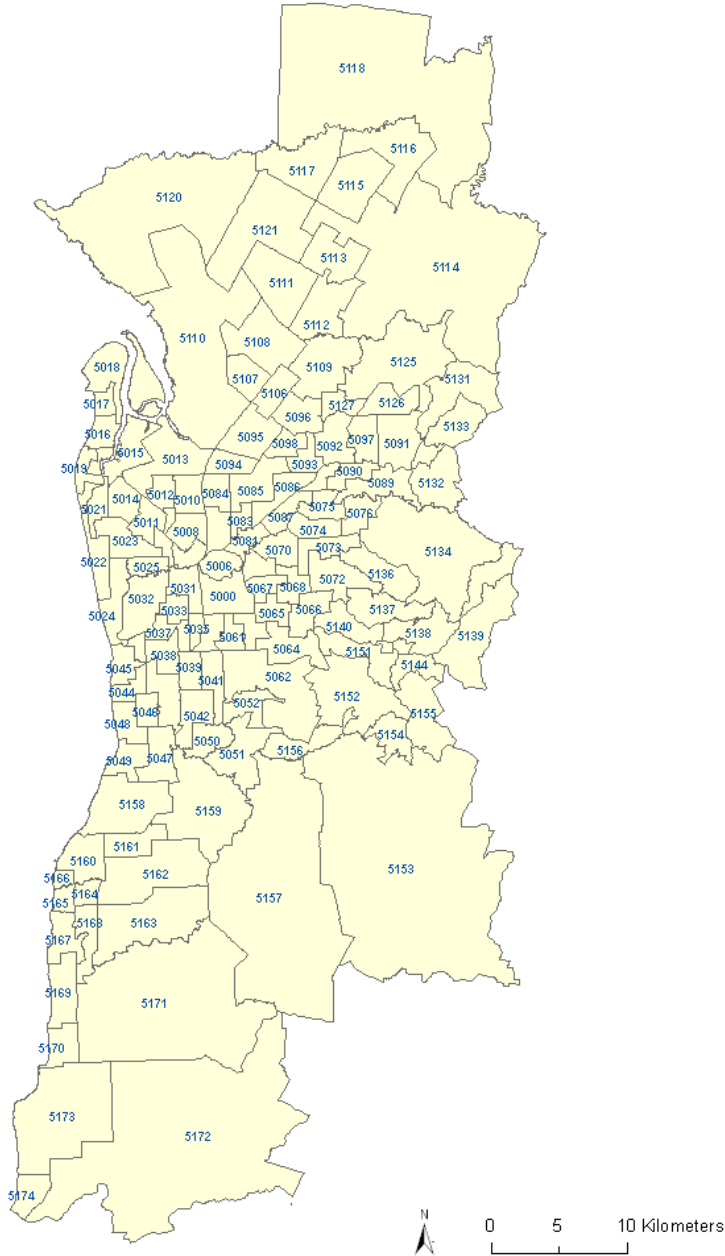
## Appendix 1

### Postcode of schools

2006				
School Name	Suburb	Postcode	LGA	System
Adelaide High School	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	G
Christian Brothers' College	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	C
Eynesbury Senior College	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	I
Muirden Senior Secondary College	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	I
Pulteney Grammar School	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	I
School For The German Language Inc	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	I
St Aloysius College	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	C
St Mary's College	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	C
University Senior College	Adelaide	5000	Adelaide	I
St Dominics' Priory College	North Adelaide	5006	Adelaide	C
Islamic College of South Australia	Croydon	5008	Charles Sturt	E
Woodville High School	Woodville	5011	Charles Sturt	G
St Joseph's School	Ottoway	5013	Port Adelaide / Enfield	C
Mount Carmel College	Rosewater	5013	Port Adelaide / Enfield	C
Ocean View College	Taperoo	5017	Port Adelaide / Enfield	G
Le Fevre High School	Semaphore South	5019	Port Adelaide / Enfield	G
Henley High School	Henley Beach	5022	Charles Sturt	G
St Michael's College	Henley Beach	5022	Charles Sturt	C
Findon High School	Findon	5023	Charles Sturt	G
Nazareth Catholic College	Findon	5023	Charles Sturt	C
Seaton High School	Seaton	5023	Charles Sturt	G
School of Languages	Mile End	5031	West Torrens	G
St George College	Mile End	5031	West Torrens	I
Temple Christian College	Mile End	5031	West Torrens	I
Thebarton Senior College	Torrensville	5031	West Torrens	G
Underdale High School	Underdale	5032	West Torrens	G
Warriappendi School	Marleston	5033	West Torrens	G
Tenison Woods College	Richmond	5033	West Torrens	C
Annesley College	Wayville	5034	Unley	I
William Light R-12 School	Plympton	5038	West Torrens	G
Tabor Christian College	South Plympton	5038	West Torrens	I
Immanuel College	Novar Gardens	5040	West Torrens	I
Cabra College	Cumberland Park	5041	Mitcham	C
Australian Science and Mathematics School	Bedford Park	5042	Mitcham	G
Pasadena High School	Pasadena	5042	Mitcham	G
Melrose Park School Inc	St Marys	5042	Mitcham	I
Westminster School	Marion	5043	Marion	I
Hamilton Secondary College	Mitchell Park	5043	Marion	G
Sacred Heart College	Somerton Park	5044	Holdfast Bay	C
Seaview High School	Seacombe Heights	5047	Holdfast Bay	G
Brighton Secondary School	North Brighton	5048	Holdfast Bay	G
Blackwood High School	Eden Hills	5050	Mitcham	G
St John's Grammar School	Belair	5052	Mitcham	I
Walford Anglican School For Girls	Hyde Park	5061	Unley	I
Mitcham Girls High School	Kingswood	5062	Mitcham	G
Unley High School	Netherby	5062	Mitcham	G
Urrbrae Agricultural High School	Netherby	5062	Mitcham	G
Mercedes College	Springfield	5062	Mitcham	C
Scotch College	Torrens Park	5062	Mitcham	I
Concordia College	Highgate	5063	Unley	I
Seymour College	Glen Osmond	5064	Burnside	I
Glenunga International High School	Glenunga	5064	Burnside	G
St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School	Stonyfell	5066	Burnside	I

2006				
School Name	Suburb	Postcode		System
Prince Alfred College	Kent Town	5067	Norwood Payneham	I
Mary Mackillop College	Kensington	5068	Burnside	C
Pembroke School	Kensington Park	5068	Burnside	I
Loreto College	Marryatville	5068	Burnside	C
Marryatville High School	Marryatville	5068	Burnside	G
St Peter's College	St Peters	5069	Norwood Payneham	I
Marden Senior College	Marden	5070	Norwood Payneham	G
Open Access College	Marden	5070	Norwood Payneham	G
Norwood Morialta High School	Magill	5072	Burnside	G
Rostrevor College	Woodforde	5072	Burnside	C
Charles Campbell Secondary School	Paradise	5075	Campbelltown	G
Saint Ignatius' College	Athelstone	5076	Campbelltown	C
Wilderness School	Medindie	5081	Walkerville	I
Blackfriars Priory School	Prospect	5082	Prospect	C
Prescott College	Prospect	5082	Prospect	I
Enfield High School	Enfield	5085	Port Adelaide / Enfield	G
Our Lady Of The Sacred Heart	Enfield	5085	Port Adelaide / Enfield	C
Ross Smith Secondary School	Northfield	5085	Port Adelaide / Enfield	G
St Paul's College	Gilles Plains	5086	Port Adelaide / Enfield	C
Heritage College	Oakden	5086	Port Adelaide / Enfield	I
Windsor Gardens Vocational College	Windsor Gardens	5087	Port Adelaide / Enfield	G
Kildare College	Holden Hill	5088	Tea Tree Gully	C
Banksia Park International High School	Banksia Park	5091	Tea Tree Gully	G
Modbury High School	Modbury	5092	Tea Tree Gully	G
The Heights School	Modbury Heights	5092	Tea Tree Gully	G
Valley View Secondary School	Para Vista	5093	Salisbury	G
Gepps Cross Girls High School	Gepps Cross	5094	Port Adelaide / Enfield	G
Endeavour College	Mawson Lakes	5095	Salisbury	I
Para Hills High School	Para Hills West	5096	Salisbury	G
Parafield Gardens High School	Parafield Gardens	5107	Salisbury	G
Paralowie School (R-12)	Paralowie	5108	Salisbury	G
Thomas More College	Salisbury Downs	5108	Salisbury	C
Salisbury High School	Salisbury North	5108	Salisbury	G
Salisbury East High School	Salisbury East	5109	Salisbury	G
Tyndale Christian School	Salisbury East	5109	Salisbury	I
Australian Technical College - Northern Adelaide	Elizabeth	5112	Playford	G
Fremont-Elizabeth City High School	Elizabeth	5112	Playford	G
Kaurna Plains School	Elizabeth	5112	Playford	G
Para West Adult Campus	Davoren Park	5113	Playford	G
St Columba College	Andrews Farm	5114	Playford	I
Craigmore High School Campus	Blakeview	5114	Playford	G
Craigmore Christian School	Craigmore	5114	Playford	I
Smithfield Plains High School	Smithfield Plains	5114	Playford	G
Gawler High School	Gawler	5118	Gawler	G
Trinity College	Gawler	5118	Gawler	I
Xavier College	Gawler Belt	5118	Gawler	C
Gleeson College	Golden Grove	5125	Tea Tree Gully	C
Golden Grove High School	Golden Grove	5125	Tea Tree Gully	G
Pedare Christian College	Golden Grove	5125	Tea Tree Gully	I
King's Baptist Grammar School	Wynn Vale	5127	Tea Tree Gully	I
Heathfield High School	Heathfield	5153	Adelaide Hills	G
Hallett Cove School	Hallett Cove	5158	Marion	G
Aberfoyle Park High School	Aberfoyle Park	5159	Onkaparinga	G
Torrens Valley Christian School	Happy Valley	5159	Onkaparinga	I
Reynella East High School	Reynella	5161	Onkaparinga	G
Southern Vales Christian College	Aldinga/Morphett Vale	5162	Onkaparinga	I
Morphett Vale High School	Morphett Vale	5162	Onkaparinga	G
Wirreanda High School	Morphett Vale	5162	Onkaparinga	G
Woodcroft College	Morphett Vale	5162	Onkaparinga	I
Christies Beach High & Southern Voc. College	Christies Downs	5164	Onkaparinga	G
Cardijn College	Noarlunga Downs	5168	Onkaparinga	C
Seaford 6-12 School	Seaford	5169	Onkaparinga	G
Tatachilla Lutheran College	McLaren Vale	5171	Onkaparinga	I
Willunga High School	Willunga	5172	Onkaparinga	G

**Adelaide Postal Areas**



## ARTS FACTORY INITIATIVES: A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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**Keywords** university community partnerships, Arts Indigenous

### Abstract

*The notion of university-community engagement may include building social capital, community partnerships and sustainability. Although there is considerable variation in the strategies used, there is growing evidence that strong community-based collaborative initiatives have the potential to enhance learning and promote the value of learning throughout life.*

*This paper reports on an initiative at an Australian university that reflects a strong commitment to purposeful community engagement and the achievement of mutually reciprocal educational outcomes. In 1995, the ARTS Factory was formed in Canberra, and now contributes substantially to the growing links between Australian Catholic University and the local and regional community. The paper provides an overview of the work of the ARTS Factory in bringing together a diverse range of people including practising artists, educators, students, government administrators, pre-service teachers and members of the wider community in the coordination of effective university-community projects. There is a preliminary discussion of the perceived impact and outputs of all ARTS Factory projects, including the Connecting Communities Project developed in collaboration with members of the local Indigenous community, and the evaluation results of one project are analysed.*

*The paper argues that effective and sustainable university-community partnerships are essential in building dynamic communities of practice that encourage the achievement of socially just and equitable educational outcomes for all.*

### INTRODUCTION

An increase in economic and political pressure by governments has impacted on the role and function of universities. This has led to the development of innovative strategies aimed to reduce reliance on government funding, improve the quality of learning and teaching, strengthen the relevance of research, and build stronger links to the broader educational community (Bourner, Katz, & Watson, 2000; Broadbent, 1998, 2000; Sunderland et al. 2004). As a consequence, new and innovative partnerships between universities and the wider community have emerged. Building partnerships in many forms and contexts, and innovation in forging relationships and interaction between stakeholders, is important if the potential benefits of 'enhanced creativity, personal fulfilment, and a capacity for enterprise and innovation in firms, communities, and education institutions' are to be realised (Kearns, 2005, p.5). Although considerable variation exists in regard to the strategies used, strong community-based initiatives that connect schools, universities, families, cultural institutions, and community organisations for collaboration and partnership have the potential to 'impact on the values of the community and build a culture where learning is valued and promoted throughout life' (Kearns, 2005, p.48).

A commitment to lifelong learning is now generally accepted and is 'vital to the individual, the community, the state and the nation if goals of economic advancement, social inclusion and personal fulfilment are to be achieved' (Kosky, 2006, p.ix). There is also widespread recognition that significant challenges exist in providing lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 1996; Field & Leicester, 2000; EAEA, 2004; Scottish Executive, 2005). Schuller et al. (2004) focus on the relationship between learning outcomes and the wider impact these

have on such areas as family, health and social capital. They identify three forms of capital: human, social and identity, and deploy these collectively in order to capture the multiple processes involved in an analysis of learning outcomes. As Schuller et al. explain:

'The simplest way to address our analysis is therefore to think of learning as a process whereby people build up, consciously or not, their assets in the shape of human, social, or identity capital, and then benefit from the returns on the investment in the shape of better health, stronger social networks, enhanced family life, and so on' (p12).

Although the development of all three forms of capital has always been important there is now a new imperative marked by the need for sustainability. Factors associated with identity definition, such as increasing confidence and self-esteem, are clear indicators of our effectiveness to sustain individuals, particularly those who might otherwise be disadvantaged; for example, people with disabilities, youth, and members of the Indigenous community. Utilising forms of learning that encourage not only cognitive but also emotional, creative, and spiritual aspects of development may best serve and empower these people to learn, and to remain engaged to continue as lifelong learners (Jackson, 2003, Longworth, 2003, Chapman et al. 2006; Crowe, 2006).

Beck (2006) argues that for partnerships to work, there needs to be agreement in terms of values, which are basically in accord with those articulated in the National Occupational Standards in Community Development Work (PAULO, 2003): 'commitment to social justice, encouragement of self-determination, working and learning together, developing sustainable communities, supporting participation and reflective practice' (p.97).

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ARTS FACTORY**

To advance these aims the ARTS Factory was formed in 1995 at Australian Catholic University, Canberra. This innovation emerged as a result of the enthusiasm generated from earlier coordination of the Commonwealth-funded National Professional Development Program (NPDP), for which substantial government funding was acquired over a three-year period to present sequential 'Arts Packages' to both primary and secondary teachers. Since 1995, the ARTS Factory has facilitated major art exhibitions and designed distinctive community education and professional development courses across the whole spectrum of the Arts from music and dance therapy, painting, and pottery to children's visual and performing arts workshops. It has also received government funding to develop innovative community-based projects including an Art Design and Technology program for youth in detention and the Connecting Communities Project for members of the Indigenous community. In response to emerging needs and a multiplicity of contexts, more recent ARTS Factory initiatives have focused on literacy, numeracy, science, special needs and the use of the information and communication technologies. These changes are reflected in the title ARTS (Adult, Recreation and Training Services) Factory.

Since its inception, the ARTS Factory has been proactive in strengthening partnerships between the University and the wider community through the development of projects that are multi-faceted and engage individuals in learning through the interaction of artists, educators, pre-service teachers, businesses, youth, children, community members, and members of the Indigenous community. As a result, links have been formed with national and local institutions and government instrumentalities in the development of projects, including the Australian Botanic Gardens, National Gallery of Australia, the National Film and Sound Archives, the ACT Department of Education and Training, the Hindmarsh Education Centre at the Quamby Youth Detention Centre, Canberra, Adult Learning Australia and the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector.

Underpinning all ARTS Factory initiatives is a strong commitment to purposeful engagement with the community and the achievement of reciprocal and socially just outcomes for all participants. The need for the adoption of new approaches to learning across all education sectors and within the wider community is also recognised (Florida, 2003; Kearns, 2005). A clear focus on the facets of process-learning, including community-based learning, collaborative and network-based learning, problem-based learning, and the development of professional communities of practice, has provided a useful framework through which to conduct research and projects.

Providing opportunities for such learning also necessitates new approaches to the preparation of pre-service teachers for classrooms of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Pre-service teachers now need to develop the ability to deal effectively, and ethically, with the increased complexity and diversity within their future work environments and to

appreciate more deeply that limited educational options for members of some communities, especially in rural, regional and disadvantaged areas, only reinforces their sense of alienation from mainstream education and militates against the development of essential knowledge, skills and resources for access to and participation in the new knowledge society.

Through ongoing ARTS Factory initiatives, the boundaries between formal and informal learning are spanned so creating a diverse range of opportunities for pre-service teachers and other higher education students to work with and learn from others, particularly those with different knowledge and cultural backgrounds and experiences, to stimulate higher order thinking, promote reflective practices and to challenge established beliefs and attitudes. The achievement of mutually reciprocal outcomes for all participants positioned at differing stages of the lifelong learning process is consistent with the mission of Australian Catholic University in its concern for socially just and equitable outcomes for all.

### **General Aims**

ARTS Factory initiatives are guided by the following aims:

- to establish mutually reciprocal partnerships and relationships between the University and the wider educational community that promote the concept of an inclusive learning society;
- to build a dynamic community of learners through the interaction of practising artists, educators, students, business, and community members that encourages learning across the lifespan;
- to develop new learning opportunities for members of the community, including adults, youth, children, educators, students, and families that respond to specific needs, build knowledge and skills, and focus on an holistic concept of learning; and
- to promote a sense of fun and enjoyment in learning through the development of innovative projects that enrich the lives of all participants.

Management of all projects is the responsibility of the Coordinator and expertise is drawn from university staff, consultants, artists, and well-respected members of the wider educational community for the development and facilitation of specific projects, which have expanded over the years.

### **Creating visual learning spaces**

A central element in the work of the ARTS Factory is The Cloister Gallery, situated in the cloister space of the University itself. The Gallery works in partnership with commercial and regional galleries to present major exhibitions that provide ongoing support for local and national artists. At least ten major exhibitions have been presented in the Gallery bringing together members of the University and wider community, including, for example, an exhibition comprising art works by 45 artists from every state and territory in Australia.

The exhibition 'My Land, My House, My Home' (1999) brought together a unique celebration of the social history of the Canberra region before development. The exhibition portrayed the major changes that had occurred in the national capital region from Aboriginal occupancy until the filling of the lake that is now its centrepiece. Many physical and social changes were associated with the location and construction of the Federal capital city of Canberra and this exhibition focused on the people who were associated with those changes: the Aboriginal community, the early pastoralists, and those at the economic centre of the region. This exhibition of photography, painting, sculpture and found objects brought together fine artists, historians, the local Aboriginal community, the National Trust, and the ACT Regional Studies Network and representatives from many more community groups.

Involvement in the DEST-funded Rural Education Forum Australia (REFA) (2004) *Country Pre-Service Teaching Experience Mapping Project* reinforced the need for more authentic engagement between universities, students and regional and rural communities. The ARTS Factory 2005 *Country and Cultural Connections* exhibition of Year 12 students' art work from Catholic High School, Griffith, NSW, sought to address this need and created a vehicle through which to increase the level of connectivity between the University and regional and rural communities. This remains a clear priority for future initiatives, given the often negative impact of contemporary society on the sustainability of many of these communities.

### *Learning in Different Ways*

In 1999, the ARTS Factory successfully collaborated with the local Youth Detention Centre to obtain an Adult and Community Education (ACE) ACT Government grant to coordinate an Art, Design and Technology Project for residents at the Centre. Although youth in detention are not characteristically highly motivated to participate in educational programs that demand concentrated effort, nor persistence with the task, the high levels of enthusiasm displayed during these arts workshops suggest a focus on the visual and kinaesthetic modes of learning has the potential to rekindle interest in learning and stimulate more meaningful connections to other forms of learning. The provision of opportunities for creative endeavour encourages the achievement of short-term goals and the development of positive attitudes towards learning (Broadbent, 2003). Comments by youth workers and educational staff at the Centre affirmed the value of the project to impact positively on more general behaviour and motivation. The success of this initiative resulted in further competitive funding to continue the program for a period of four years. The distinctiveness of these programs was the collaboration between University academics and well-known Canberra artists, to build an effective community of practice within a complex environment. The work commenced through these Projects has been sustained through the establishment of a designated art room at the Centre for a variety of arts activities that are now integral to the regular educational program.

### **Connecting communities**

Since 2003, the ARTS Factory has continued to secure Adult and Community Education (ACE) funding to coordinate community-based learning projects, including the *What's Up? Families Learning Together Program* developed in collaboration with members of the Canberra Indigenous community. In 2006, more substantial funding was secured through the ACT Government's Community Inclusion Fund to coordinate the *Connecting Communities Project*, which comprises two components: (a) *What's Up? Families Learning Together Program* (similar to previous programs); (b) *The Three Cs (Culture, Communication and Connectedness) Adult Education Course*. The Project utilises the expertise of respected members of the Indigenous community to stimulate learning that is deeply embedded in a culture of community ownership. Details of the components are as follows:

#### **(a) What's Up? Families Learning Together Program**

For over four years the ARTS Factory coordinated the *What's Up? Families Learning Together Program*, which brought together young people and their families, Learning Support Assistants, University academics and Student Services staff, the Wiradjuri Indigenous artists, and other members of the Indigenous community. Pre-service teachers also had opportunities to observe community learning in practice which, in turn, effectively built a supportive community of cross-generational learners through Indigenous arts-related workshops, such as dance, music and traditional crafts, while furthering improved literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Initially the 'Families Learning Together' program emerged from collaboration between the University, government and non-government agencies, educational institutions and others committed to the improvement of the social outcomes for individuals, families and communities, including the Indigenous community located within the northern and southern districts of Canberra. The program built on the strengths of earlier projects such as the Barnardos Homework Groups Project (Broadbent, Burgess, & Boyle, 2003). The development of stronger synergies between government and non-government providers through a focus on the development of a more holistic approach towards supporting individuals, families, and communities, who might otherwise experience disadvantage and social exclusion, was also of importance.

The program proved effective in that it responded to the specific needs of parents and students in Indigenous families and created a positive learning framework through which to build community (Wenger, et al. 2002). In written evaluations and ongoing discussions throughout the program, the participants identified the program's connections to Indigenous culture as a strong element in its success, while the focus on rich, learner-centred experiences built personal confidence and a sense of pride, as well as more positive educational achievements within the school environment. As highlighted by principals and teachers from participating schools, the program had encouraged Indigenous adults to become more fully involved in school activities and, as a result, there was now a greater awareness of the cultural diversity within the schools and their communities.

The Wiradjuri artists, who had played a vital role in the presentation of learning activities and workshops, believed the programs to be unique in that they provided young people and families with the necessary support and belief in academic achievement, while also modelling learning that affirms the value of Indigenous culture.

#### **(b) The Three Cs (Culture, Communication, and Connectedness) Adult Education Course**

This adult education course utilises multi-modal teaching and learning strategies to inspire and motivate adult learners to re-engage in learning. The course contributes to the process of reconciliation by facilitating interaction between adult members of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community in the development of new knowledge and skills, and builds confidence that enables more active leadership in the community. A key feature of the course is the use of national institutions, such as the National Gallery of Australia, Australian National Museum, National Botanic Gardens and the like, to create flexible learning spaces that motivate the participants to explore Indigenous culture through life stories, writing, film and the arts. The level of engagement and trust established through the *Connecting Communities Project* has resulted in:

- an increase in the confidence of the Indigenous community to participate in University programs, specifically, for example: involvement in professional development courses for Learning Support Assistants, teachers and students; respected Indigenous elders taking leadership in the welcome to country; guest presentations and story-telling related to undergraduate literacy units;
- strong support and involvement of Indigenous University academics and pre-service teachers;
- stronger links between the University and the Catholic Education Office (Canberra Goulburn) through the design of a new Indigenous teaching component for the Learning Support Assistants' course;
- the establishment of links between members of the local Indigenous community and Indigenous Learning Support Assistants at the Catholic School in Lake Cargelligo, NSW, through a Science, ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR) funded research project.

The high level of student disengagement from schooling continues to be of concern and provides sufficient argument for the strengthening of partnerships between all stakeholders within the community (Epstein, 2001) if students' achievement outcomes, level of engagement, and sense of self-efficacy are to be improved, especially within the Indigenous community. While there are numerous reasons why students disengage from the school classroom, projects that respond to the needs of the community develop trust and strengthen relevancy in terms of educational outcomes, thereby enabling young people to make more informed choices regarding the challenging issues that confront them in their everyday lives.

Of importance also is the provision of a creative and safe environment for the expression of self and culture. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, the 'Families Learning Together' and 'Connecting Communities' projects have aimed to encourage the development of new knowledge, skills and understandings that will result in positive learning outcomes for these young people and their families, while fostering an appreciation of learning that is contextual, cultural and sustainable across the lifespan. Documented evidence relating to the overall success of the projects has been maintained throughout the various workshops and activities and includes: observation records of participants' achievements in relation to specific learning outcomes and the work presented in students' learning portfolios; examples of art-work, photographs and video material; and ongoing discussions with parents, teachers, students and principals. Parents and teachers noted the distinct increase in the self-esteem and pride of the Indigenous students in the uniqueness of their own culture. Teachers also noted that students participating in the 'Families Learning Together' program were now approaching their classroom tasks with more confidence and interest and that the program had strengthened bonds and goodwill between students at the classroom level. The enthusiasm and support expressed by members of the Indigenous and wider community for the continuance of the projects highlights their value and success in building an effective community of practice that encourages a stronger sense of connectedness between the Indigenous students and their families, schools, teachers, the University, and other education agencies or centres.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The formation of the ARTS Factory has provided the catalyst for new University-community initiatives that have gained the support of colleagues and the wider community. Through its various programs and projects,



sustained over many years, new partnerships and relationships have formed across a broad range of instrumentalities and community groups. Such partnerships have shown their potential to enhance the sense of connectedness throughout the community and provide mechanisms that support those who might otherwise be marginalised or disadvantaged. New initiatives continue to emerge and new partnerships within the local community continue to form, ensuring these community-based projects will become self-sustaining should government funding no longer be available.

The collaborative effort commenced in early 1994 through the NPDP program and the later formation of the ARTS Factory at the Australian Catholic University in Canberra have created the groundswell for the establishment of a dynamic community of learners that brings together participants from a diverse range of contexts, including those in regional and rural communities, those in detention, and members of the Indigenous community. Collaboration in the development of all projects has been found to be most effective when there is deep engagement in the process, evidence of mutual trust and acceptance of mutual responsibility, a clear focus on quality learning outcomes for all participants, self-direction in terms of personal and professional goals, and a sense of fun and creativity in the generation of new ideas and visions for the future. Through its ability to stimulate the development of ever widening 'webs of connectedness', the ARTS Factory has an essential role in facilitating more sustainable outcomes for all participants within an equitable and inclusive environment.

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## UPBEATING UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT - through Virtuous Knowledge Sharing and systematic Academic Staff Development to a Modern Renaissance for Business and the Community

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**Keywords:** Higher Academic Enterprise, Reach-Out, Business and the Community, Knowledge Sharing, Modern Renaissance

### Abstract

*Over the last decade the University of Salford has responded to the national and global challenges in quite a unique way. This reflects the particular academic strength of its staff and the situation in which it found itself in the middle of the late nineties. This strategy, developed in the light of a changing environment, focuses in particular on its development of Academic Enterprise (Æ) as a means of promoting, not only better work with industry and commerce, but also with other stakeholders, such as those in civil and voluntary organizations, in the community at large, and, not least, those within the University itself. In particular, it has initiated a process for the development of truly 'enterprising academics', using a pioneering approach entitled UPBEAT, which it has led on behalf of 25 British universities under funding from the Leadership, Governance and Management Initiative of the Higher Education Funding Council for England. This keynote paper firstly reflects on that early start, but quickly focuses its attention on how, through better knowledge sharing and co-creation with business and community partners, universities might become real drivers of creative change in developing socially inclusive projects, which are truly fit for purpose in the global knowledge economy as the strive to become Universities for Modern Renaissance. In particular, the paper condenses findings relating to the development, and formative evaluation, of over 200 case studies into how universities have successfully built mutually beneficial relationships with their local businesses and communities, giving them the confidence to develop, for themselves, successful social and community enterprises. The studies were undertaken by the University Partnership for Benchmarking Enterprise and Associated Technologies, or UPBEAT for short – a consortium of Universities who were linked by a common belief that beyond economic benefits, enterprise ventures can, and should, have a social and cultural role which is equally important – spreading knowledge, developing communities and arousing confidence and skills of people who live and work in those communities. UPBEAT studies have shown the major elements which are consistently present in winning social and community focused academic ventures, in effect – a recipe for success in driving a Modern Renaissance for local citizens, communities and small businesses. The result is the UPBEAT matrix – a model, a progress charter, an inspiration and aspiration guide, which turns traditional academics into enterprising ones. The UPBEAT approach recognises the four underlying skills that are needed to fertilise a novel academic idea, enabling it to 'flower' in the knowledge economy: 'business acumen' and 'individual performance' are two key skills essential in making any social enterprise work effectively and efficiently; 'social networking intelligence' and 'foresight enabling skills' are also critical to success in today complex knowledge economy; as with the 'Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA)', through its other major axis, the matrix also recognises the importance of the 'quality and level of engagement' universities develop with their strategic external partners. The presentation will show how the UPBEAT approach acts as a driver for improved higher academic enterprise<sup>4</sup> project management, and in particular how matrix itself provides a flexible, yet all encompassing, guide to help academics develop, and continuously improves, these four skills in parallel, but within their own individualistic and creative ways of working. It also briefly shows how the tool has been used to achieve success in four quite different social enterprises: the Salford Film Festival; the development of 'community banks' in the UK; 'Contraception', the Board Game; 'Bouncing Higher', a balanced learning approach which helps small businesses become more innovative for wealth creation. Details of a further 150 successful case studies of*

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<sup>4</sup> Higher Academic Enterprise is the term used in this paper to reflect all University Outreach to their creative external partners which seeks to design, develop, implement and evaluate successful 'academic opportunities beyond means currently employed or available to the highest academic standards possible reflecting the mission of the university.

*academically supported social enterprise can be found on [www.upbeat.eu.com](http://www.upbeat.eu.com) I believe this has led Salford to become an 'Enterprising University' of the highest order, one fit for purpose in the global knowledge economy. It has also helped it grow socially inclusive wealth creation for its external partners and itself. It is hoped that this approach will be of interest to AUCEA since the approaches, independently developed, have much in common, are entirely complementary, and will undoubtedly benefit from being benchmarked against each other.*

### **Salford University's Unique Position in the development of Academic Enterprise**

These are exciting times in higher education (HE) as universities work closer with business and the community to harness the undoubted imagination and reason of formidable academics and combine it with the drive and daring of local entrepreneurs. Local universities in the UK have always reached out to develop best academic-enterprise practice. In the knowledge economy, they may well be the key to future wealth creation and improvement in the quality of all our lives, and Salford recognised the need to do this long before others and began to prepare itself to 'virtuously knowledge share' with all its partners. This keynote paper defines the unique form of enterprise developed at Salford University – known as Academic Enterprise (Powell 2000 and 2001 with Goldsmith and Harloe) - which particularly focuses on the development of 'socially inclusive wealth creation'. It then briefly describes an approach to develop its staff to become more enterprising and shows how Academic Enterprise has become a means by which cultural change can be achieved, (re)turning Salford to a position of strength as an 'enterprising university.'

In the late 90's Burton Clark's (1998) identified key characteristics that defined the entrepreneurial universities of the day. He focused on those universities which grew, not just their research and teaching income, but also developed working relationships with business and industry. Such universities were characterized by a conscious effort to innovate in how they went about their business and this meant a substantial shift in their organisational character in order that they might arrive at a more promising posture for the future. Salford decided to build on the best characteristic from this thinking, but then move forward for the requirements of a 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge economy, to establish its own distinctive identity as a leading enterprise university. To do this it made important changes to its entire academic and managerial organisation by establishing Academic Enterprise (Æ), as the third major strand of university activity, and then redirected resources to enable the sort of institution that Clark suggested was so necessary for a Modern Renaissance.

In order to bring about the necessary change processes of embedding Æ in the University, it was first necessary to develop an internal VISION that could be shared by everybody in the institution. A small Æ core team, under my leadership, felt that the real basis for achieving success in the new activity was a strong linkage between the words 'Academic' and 'Enterprise', then related joint actions, creating a new phrase and activity, suggesting an inseparable dipole for this new stream of University work. The team wanted academic colleagues to undertake bold new academic pursuits reflecting their clear academic values, knowledge and capabilities. The Greek ligature Æ was chosen as a short and simple means of representing this strong bond.



The Hallmark of Salford's Æ approach lay in opening up the formidable skills and imagination of its own staff, developed through rigorous evaluation and sound research, undertaken on the basis of the highest academic values, to form reasoned specifications for actions in the real world. Academic Enterprise is also about having the daring to work in creative enterprise partnerships to stage-manage novel yet robust ideas, innovations, approaches and technologies into actual improvements for all our partners, and beyond. The importance of the

four emboldened words in the above paragraph are also reflected diagrammatically our logo, shown above, top reinforce their importance in the Salford approach. Our ambition was for our staff to share this simple vision of **Æ**, thus enabling them to develop new **Æ** ways of working for themselves which would combine quite naturally with their own existing ways of working.

The deep partnerships we formed with local entrepreneurs would become the key focus of everything Salford now did, building on the drive and commercialism of our partners which complemented our own capabilities and strengths. I repeat, I believe in the knowledge economy, success will only arise from the right collaborations of those who truly have recognition of the rich systemic and global nature of all future enterprise – so team working and co-creation with the richest diversity of capabilities is key. And our partnerships with business, industry and the community would be those also at the leading edge in terms of practical applications. Together we would transfer necessary knowledge and technology between each other for the benefit of the university and its partners, and. We believed this would enable us both to flourish. Armed with this image, the **Æ** team sought to share its vision across the University so that all staff would directly own their view of the vision for themselves. Such ownership was seen as critical in embedding the process of social change within the institution deemed necessary if **Æ** was to develop fully. All too often new ways of working fail to develop because those involved do not understand their new roles, or find the objectives to be mutually incompatible with their existing ideas, or do not agree with the new vision – or what is even worse, actively disagree with the new vision and continually fight to overturn its implementation.

After almost a decade in full operation, **Æ** has secured significant changes and many real improvements. Almost 30% of our academics are fully enterprising<sup>5</sup>, engaging with business and the community in many new and different ways, and especially the university itself which has developed improved ways of working, with strategic partnerships in industry, commerce and the public and voluntary sectors. All staff have found the new **Æ** way of working have led to real rewards, not only in financial returns or progress in an enterprise itself, but also in their teaching and learning and research. Furthermore, our **Æ** approach has been seen by our own government ministries and their funding agency, as both pioneering and exemplary. There is also now increasing international recognition of the success of our approach, which is being mirrored in other university Reach-out developments across Europe, particularly in the Bulgaria and Czech Republic, and more recently in a global context by the PASCAL International Observatory for 'Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions, who have adopted our approach as a 'hot topic'. Some six British Universities now themselves use our phrase of 'Academic Enterprise' for their Reach-out activities, rather than the more limited one of 'third stream' and the 'Engaged Universities' of Australia are presently exploring our approaches in order to improve their own ways of relating to business and the community.

Academic Enterprise is fully integrated into all aspects of Salford university life. For our senior management soon realised if the university was not internationally recognised for enterprise, it would also fail to get research grants to keep itself at the leading edge and this would in turn lead it to fail to get Academic Enterprise work. A vicious downward spiral because no business/industry/or indeed community would want to become second best in the real world. So this university's T&L would soon fall behind those who could deliver at the leading edge globally because they did have a strong enterprise recognition. Rather, we sought to create real improvement and modern renaissance locally, nationally and globally.

### **The Importance of 'Virtuous Knowledge Sharing' and UPBEAT**

Key in Academic Enterprise is the way we share our academic insights with others and thus combine them with the daring insights of our practice partners. It is the caring way through which we knowledge share that brings mutual benefits to both sides. Such a concept of 'virtuous knowledge sharing' begins to recognise HE's obligation to broader society and also acknowledges that knowledge is also created in many social and economic practices outside of HEIs itself. It also suggests a new paradigm of understanding and action that Governments could champion and their policies reflect. 'Quality engagement with society, the community and business' in general should be the new paradigm, not technology or knowledge transfer. The former implies a genuine interchange, a genuine engagement; the latter implies a one-way movement of knowledge from academe to business and the professional world's external to us at Salford, and HEIs in general. I believe it is

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<sup>5</sup> A further 40% are on the path to becoming more enterprising, while the remainder, as expected, are keeping to their traditional ways; this is more than was ever

hoped for in the processes of cultural change in which we were engaged.

through genuine, sustained and quality 'engagement' with all its external partners that universities make their own contribution to knowledge production and delivery. It follows from this that the production, transfer and sharing of knowledge must be seen as iterative, rather than linear, processes and that practical and theoretical knowledge are simply subsets of 'knowledge as a whole'. This can be best understood through what I have previously referred to as the 'virtuous knowledge sharing cycle' (Powell, 2003); this is shown below in diagrammatic form (Figure 1 shown over)

The starting point for any workable co-creating relationship between a university and its external partners, as shown above, are the strengths that each side brings to the relationship. Traditionally, Higher Education provides the space and independence to think 'the unthinkable', to test ideas in a rigorous way, bringing reason to bear, to turn imagination into a sustainable theory; sometimes this is portrayed as 'ivory tower' thinking. But it also provides the necessary critical distance needed to be fore-sightful and truth-searching. On the other hand, time is of the essence in business, industry and the community; they already have a drive to be daring and need to confirm the possible, rather than agonise over the unlikely, and reject the improbable. Their approach is often characterised as the 'quick and dirty' look. However, both sides now need each other, and to work in a trans-disciplinary way, to develop innovative and cost effective future enabled technologies, products and processes that work in complex environments and systems, often by humans who continually change their wants and demands. So, in the global knowledge economy, co-creation will be absolutely necessary to enable sustainable success.

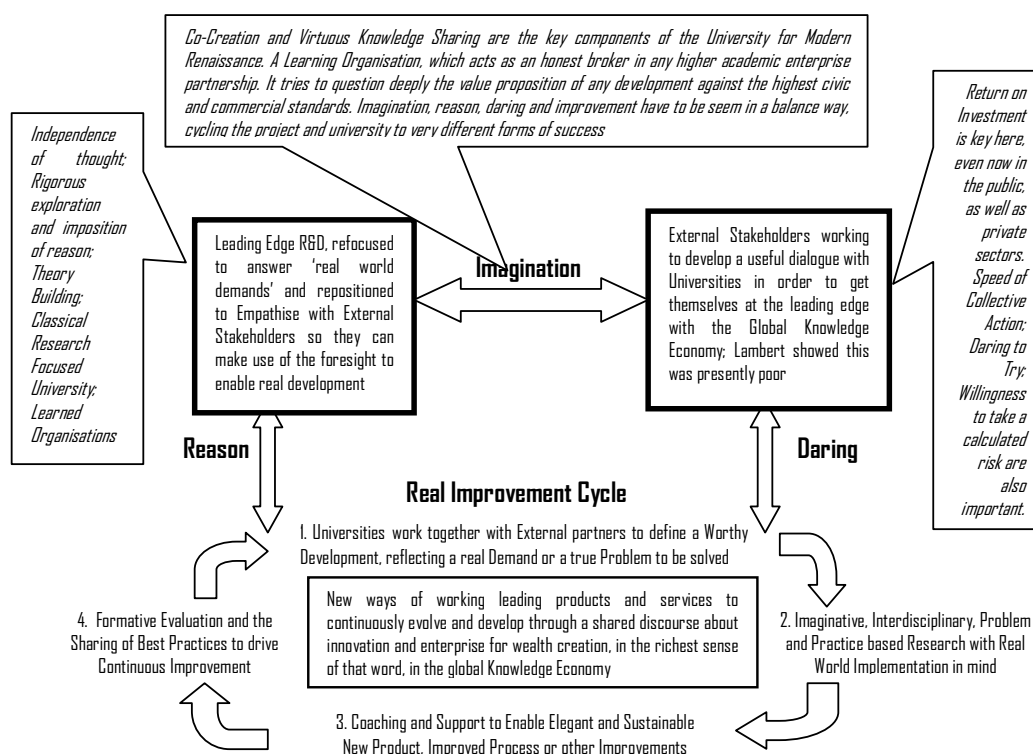


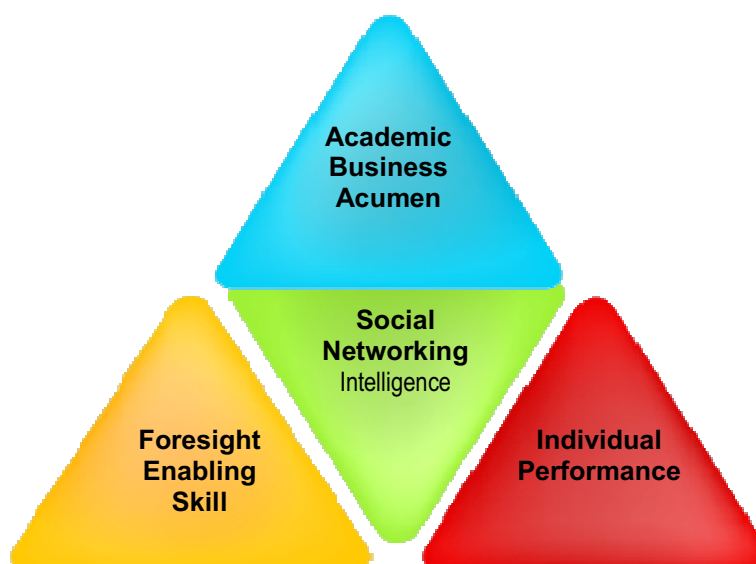
Figure 1: Virtuous Knowledge Sharing Cycle (Powell 2003, extended in 2007)

So, having got a basic process for improving our relationships with business and the community, how did we convince academics wanted to become more enterprising ones, to engage in Academic Enterprise? When I started Academic Enterprise a decade ago now, some of my academic colleagues thought I had sold out my intellect soul to business and commerce. They were not, initially, terribly keen to follow my lead, or the knowledge sharing principles I was commending them to accept as part of the necessary change process, to convince them, I had to create some exemplary major projects in each Faculty of the University. I will briefly case study one of these next, but collectively they showed what could be done and be an inspiration to other academics to become more enterprising. So, to get the ball rolling and to make it worthwhile for academics to engage in this new way of working, we sought funding to free up the time of early adopters to get involved in

Academic Enterprise. We then developed a careful rewards scheme to attract colleagues into developing their own new academic opportunities beyond the means they were currently employing. I then set about designing and testing, a new staff development process that would enable, and empower, the right kinds of academics to learn how to become more enterprising in the most appropriate ways. The approach I developed, with four other like minded universities, was called UPBEAT<sup>6</sup>. UPBEAT stands for University Partnership for Benchmarking Enterprise and Associated Technologies. Our hope was that these academics would develop their own more enterprising practices in fast acting ways.

So, what does the UPBEAT process focus on to improve the capacities of traditional academics who are already excellent teachers and researchers. In short, it attempts to empower them with four extra human skills that are complementary to their existing roles as academics. 150 cases of exemplary higher academic enterprise, developed using UPBEAT as the driving approach, confirms that there are, indeed, four critical human enterprise skills needed for successful enterprise project development, shown diagrammatically in figure 2. And these are not normally skills in high profile with traditional academics.

Figure 2 - The Enterprising Academic Model



While academics often develop research ideas that could lead to new products or processes which are meant to satisfy particular human needs or desires. Academics mainly do this, by undertaking rigorous experimental studies, to make sure they fully understand a particular situation or need. They rarely think further, as to how they can turn a theory they have built, into useful foresight that will actually enable a real improvement. So, for the development of enterprising academics, the first skill we try to engender, through UPBEAT, is what I call, foresight enabling skill. This only requires a small, but hugely important, change in mindset of academics, so they begin to re-formulate their often fairly abstract notions with respect to some findings or a theory development, into something useable that will actually lead to a practical reality or implementation. I have to say, I have found that academics can quickly learn how to turn such concept thought into a working reality, when they know what it is they have to explain differently in order to help their external partners understand better what these partners need to do.

However it is not sufficient for such academics to know how to express better what their external partners need to know. They also need to get a demand side view when developing any Higher Academic Enterprise. In particular, they have to learn more than what is needed, but, rather, what will be 'demanded by customers' in

<sup>6</sup> UPBEAT is the University Partnership to Benchmark Enterprise Activities and Technologies – a project by a consortium of the British Universities of Teesside, Westminster, Leeds Metropolitan, Lancaster and Salford with six overseas partner institutions (Twente (Holland, Salamanca (Spain), Deusto (Spain), Hochschule Wismar (Germany), Varna Free (Bulgaria), Budapest Business School (Hungary) funded by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, Higher Education Funding Council of England and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council; the consortium seeks to drive improved University Reach-out to business and the community or what the consortium prefers to call Higher Academic Enterprise



sufficient numbers so that their enterprise development will eventually become something that will be financially viable. For, in an enterprise context, it is no good just developing something that is needed, if people won't demand it sufficiently to pay a realistic cost to purchase it. It is my contention that all Higher Academic Enterprises have to "wash their faces" financially, at the

very least. And, ideally academic entrepreneurs should also strive to make a good return on the university investment, in terms of a profit or other relevant reward. I call this skill, **Academic Business Acumen**, and such a skill requires enterprising academics learning sufficient awareness of the demand side, and especially key aspects of business, to have reasoned conversations, and sensitive arguments, with creative partners from business, industry or the community. Academics need such a skill, not to become business people by themselves, but to be able to incorporate such business thinking into their developing enterprise, to ensure it eventually becomes a sustainable business.

Knowledge about product design, design for production and marketing are just three concepts from business academics need to embrace. However, I repeat, the UPBEAT ambition, with respect to Academic Business Acumen, is not to turn academics into business people, only to develop in them a language for meaningful discussion and conversation, so that there can be mutual understating of each others position in any joint enterprise. At Salford, we are careful as to how deeply we get our academics to embrace business knowledge. This is because of our bad experience with so called entrepreneurial professors and researchers of the 70s and 80s. This experience leads us to believe academics rarely become good business people, and if they attempt to be so, this often leads the university to loose much of their original academic value, while not at the same time creating profitable services for mutual benefit of the university and its partners. There are clearly exception to this rule, but do tread warily in this area of skill development.

UPBEAT's third enterprising skill development looks inward to the academics themselves and aims to ensure they become sufficiently stimulated to want to develop mighty personal individual performance to the highest levels, especially with respect to their particular individual talent. And further, we need to convince them of the need to hone their own skills to perfection. To help drive academic personal performance forward, the university needs to develop an appropriate rewards scheme to incentives continuous professional improvement in their academic performance. For most academics, this can often simply be in terms promotion, on the basis of Academic enterprise, up the traditional academic hierarchy. Even then, I believe academics of the right type, who want to become more 'enterprising', need to be supported in improving their enterprising performance and must be willing to work hard to become part of sustainable and creative teams, and ideally also want to eventually lead such teams. I simply call this enterprising academic skill developing mighty **Individual Performance**.

And finally, with respect to developing the four enterprising skills, academics also need to develop **Social Network Intelligence**, sop they ca make the most from their own enterprising capabilities by working in harness with other team members who have complementary skills. For, only through proper socialisation will the sum of a creative team's parts and add innovatively more than the value of the individual parts by themselves. Gone are the days when an individual, no matter how creative, can solve most problems by themselves. Social Networking Intelligence, as I call this skill, is initially about collaboration. It grows into creative team work. It then develops into growing interdisciplinary partnerships and, at the highest level it relates to the formation of strategic alliances which drive any innovation onto new heights. It is the binding force that ties all the other skills together.

So these four complementary enterprise skills need to be engendered in traditional academics, to ensure they become usefully enterprising. I call this model of entrepreneurial staff development, the 'Enterprising Academic Model', shown diagrammatically as figure 2. Having understood the need for the four new skills, it is also important to understand what qualities and levels of these skills need to be developed. Again from the UPBEAT case studies, it appears that it is the development of "Qualities and Levels of **Engagement**" with respect to these skills that is the most generally relevant and important to the progress of almost all forms of academic enterprise. This dimension was understood to be important by the UPBEAT core researchers, almost at the same time, but entirely independently from those Australian universities who had similarly come to recognise the importance of



this dimension in driving forward new qualities in academic institutions relationships with business and the community<sup>7</sup>.

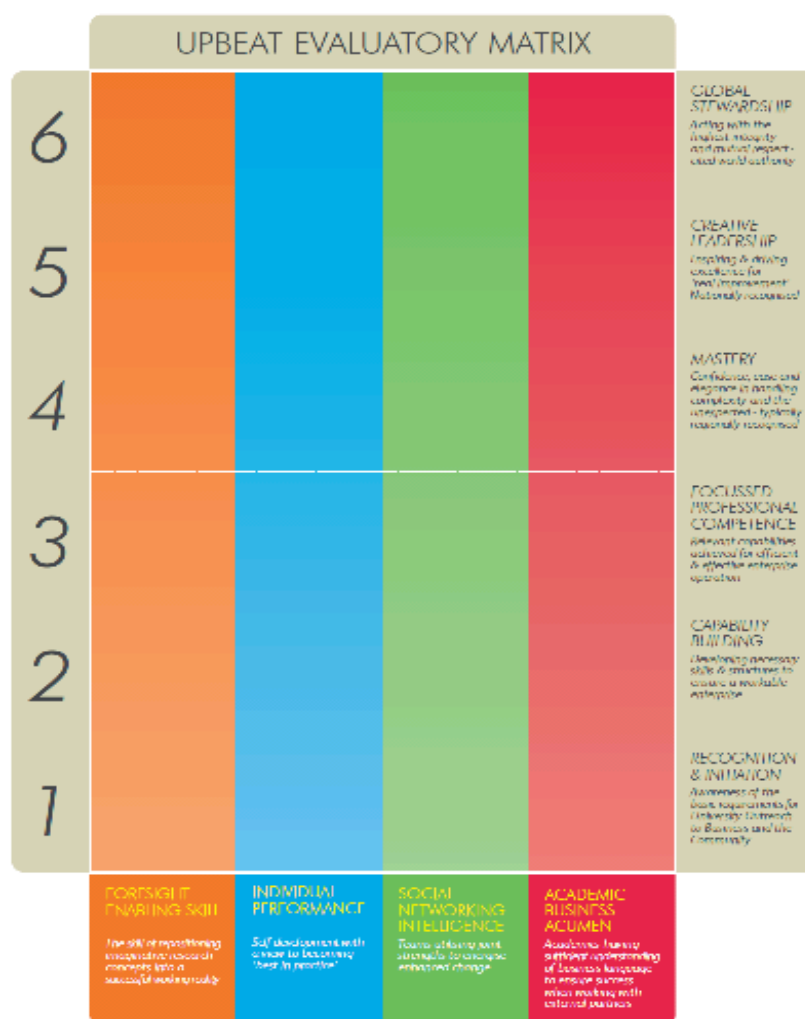
So, on the basis of this 'Engagement' dimension, it is necessary to create an engagement axis of what can now be seen as an evaluating matrix, see figure 3 on the next page for a visualisation. And this matrix can then be used for any traditional academics who want to continuously improve their own enterprising ability, helping them develop appropriate enterprise skills, gradually, continuously, consistently and sustainably for the good of any academic enterprise development. For any new project the developing academic entrepreneur would have to start by *recognising how, and with whom, they need to engage creatively* in order to initiate a sound, yet innovative, enterprise development. They would then need to start building necessary enterprise capacity to properly undertake a project from the broadest range of perspectives possible to ensure success in the knowledge economy. At engagement level 3 on this axes, in the processes of gradually improving a team's creative and systemic development, the immediate *enterprise project starts to be handled competently*, so the team begins to be 'on top' of its immediate job. However, it is not until the next level that team members have sufficient *mastering of their roles* that they can properly negotiate an overall solution from a position of strength, where each team members knows when to 'give and take' for the benefit of the overall team performance. At this stage they can also think about taking on higher level and even more complex enterprise projects.

The higher engagement levels on this model shows the development of the enterprise to be working really well, and is where the team, or at least some of its members, are seen to become *creative leaders in their own right*. Such leaders often extend the scope of any existing project, spin off new sub projects or perhaps even start completely new projects. At the top level of engagement the team, or some of its leaders, start to act as *stewards in a global context*, having respect from almost everyone, as they become – de facto - world authorities of their chosen enterprise topic or agenda. So, on this UPBEAT Matrix, and for enterprise skill development, there are six levels of engagement, having increasing qualities with respect to engagements within the creative team, between strategic alliances and, increasingly with others in the knowledge economy. Taken together, the development of our four underlying enterprise skills represents, in effect, a balanced score card approach to drive forward any enterprising academic development.

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<sup>7</sup> Readers will see the similarity of objectives with AUCEA's vision to be the leading inclusive national forum in Australia for the discussion and development of university community engagement, encouraging collaboration, innovation, the exchange of knowledge and the scholarship of engagement. AUCEA has a national leadership role to: raise awareness and dissemination of best practice in university community engagement; facilitate collaborative research in university community engagement between its members and their communities; promote the integration of engagement into the curriculum and student experience; promote the recognition of the scholarship of engagement as a valid pedagogy; collaboratively develop resources that support university community engagement.

Figure 3 – The UPBEAT Evaluatory Matrix



In order to help assess a team's enterprising progress, at any given time, the UPBEAT approach gives a set of generic questions to focus an academic enterprise project leader's attention on the next engagement skills which needs to be developed. Ideally all enterprising developments should work to progress the four engagement skills, gradually, measurably and in parallel. This ensures increasing the overall performance of the enterprising team really progresses in an optimum way. If the UPBEAT evaluatory matrix is filled in formally, on a regular basis, by the leaders and their teams, they will get an immediate self evaluation of their progress and a sign of what they next need to do to become even better. This is the best way to quickly improve the quality of a creative team's enterprise engagements, in order that together they will drive real and innovative enterprise progress. The actual performance indicators used to drive such improvements are of necessity individualised to any one innovation project, but the matrix does give a leader, or team members, an early indication of a project situation and its team's progress against other enterprise teams. So, I repeat, because of its importance, the team ought to be developing all its four skills in a balanced and parallel way.

Using the evaluatory matrix gives enterprise project leaders a template for staff development and a step by step project management guide to any academic enterprise project. It also helps any individual academic learn how to improve their own individual enterprising skills, as well as enabling them to recognise what needs to be done to maximise the overall performance of the team. Our evidence on hundreds of cases shows the UPBEAT approach drives improved academics enterprise, both quickly and effectively. An UPBEAT analysis can be done quickly and easily, in a fairly comprehensive way, often in less than 2/3 hours to begin with. and then in a matter of minutes for any upgrade. Then, such an analysis can be used regularly as a project management tool to drive

the next stage of improvement of any individual project and indeed it really does lead to continuous project improvement. The tool can also be used to compare the progress of several projects and to aid enterprise project assessment, development and management. IN order to aid the effectiveness and efficiency of this 'UPBEATIng' process, an electronic tool has recently been developed. A demonstration of this tool please can be seen at [www.escendency.com](http://www.escendency.com) - simply "hit the UPBEAT demo button' at the bottom of the home page for the presentation. I hope this enabling process will help any university efficiently see the current state of any enterprise project quickly and effectively enable them to evaluate projects against each other and make sure they develop enterprises conforming to the highest 'triple bottom line' (economic, social and environmental) principles, making them truly 'fit for purpose' in the global knowledge economy..

For Salford, UPBEAT has become part of a key goal for the University, as is reflected in its Strategic Framework. In particular, it is used as they key performance assessment tool helping it measure this primary university goal and thus driving the university to become a world leader in developing successful international partnership with business and the community. For those who wish to know more about UPBEAT, please e-mail me at [j.a.powell@salford.ac.uk](mailto:j.a.powell@salford.ac.uk) and I will send you an introductory booklet telling you a little more details about the approach and a DVD where you can meet some of my own academics who have themselves become more enterprising. For those who wish to go even further with UPBEAT, they are encouraged to go to our website [www.upbeat.eu.com](http://www.upbeat.eu.com) - comprehensive UPBEAT guideline, the evaluatory matrix and related templates, and the 'questioning framework' to drive development are all held there.

All my studies, including the ones relating to UPBEAT, show (Powell, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008) that successful Higher Academic Enterprise mainly occurs through co-creation, where new technologies, solutions, products or services are both successfully supplied to satisfy real client/user needs, and then properly applied to meet real business demands. This usually means that the University has to provide a wider range of support and coaching than conventional, with similar reverse coaching by the eventual end client, sponsor, user or customer. The key here is deep level conversations, with active listening and mutual coaching, to ensure a collective understanding to enable real and sustainable change.

### Key Indicators of Success

Salford University uses two major indicators to measure the progress of its developing Academic Enterprise. The first relates to quantitative measures of output, income growth, gross value added and financial contribution; these are critical for a university wishing to improve the quality and range of its enterprising academic provision, in order to enable it to flourish in a changing world. The second are the qualitative indicators of outcomes, real improvement and 'quality of life'; these, often less tangible indicators, normally relate directly to the strategic academic mission and vision of the university, and the detailed objectives developed to show it has achieved success against its own agreed high level values or goals. An earlier part of this chapter gave an anecdotal feel for some of these impacts, in terms of improved academic interest in, and take up of, Academic Enterprise by staff within the university, and particularly the 'buzz' so far created at Salford University through Æ. These are indeed good qualitative measures of success. However, in this section I also describe just some of the other external facing outcomes, specifically measured by us, to ascertain progress. I then highlight just two, of a myriad of examples of, best practice developments to date, to give a deeper narrative feel of our many successful projects.

**Quantitative Impact:** In today's world it will hardly surprise anyone to learn that finances are a key indicator of overall success. The simple fact is that repositioning Salford as a premier league 'enterprising university' requires considerable investment. It may be possible, in theory, to boost investment in new situations where income is declining, but there are not many successful examples of this, at least in the university sector, as far as I am aware. So a primary requirement at the start of Academic Enterprise was income growth on projects that enabled socially inclusive wealth creation for our partners, and ourselves – this latter criteria a key academic value driver with respect to our university mission. The institution therefore sought, through Æ, new sources of funding to add to its traditional public resourcing; this in turn would enable me, as the then direct leader of Æ, the ability to initiate novel projects, as pilots of a change process, while appropriately redistributing scarce existing resources to developments more relevant for an 'enterprising university'. I inherited a traditional commercial enterprise function that had lost, not only its direction, but even the ability to

financially 'break-even', let alone produce a profit; I soon realised this was because the previous strategy was too commercially focused and did not understand the proper role of a university in reaching out to business and the community. The new strategy saw a dramatic turn around in this situation and shown below is a table representing the  $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$  Income/Contribution for last nine years.

Year	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	Total
Contribution	reinvestment	reinvestment	reinvestment	£1M	£2M	£1.4M	£1.3M	£1.2M	£6M	£12M
Income (nearest million)	£3M	£5M	£6M	£9M	£16M	£18M	£17M	£17M	£21M	£112M

Indeed by way of a fuller example of growth, the latest year of financial returns the university shows a rise in income from all Academic Enterprise activities to well over £21 million - with the University's part in developing a purposely designed building to promote innovation with small businesses and the community worth a capital sum of £5 million; the Salford Innovation Forum - as a quality building, developed as a 'hub' to drive improved relations with the citizens of Salford, their small businesses and ourselves and is now regularly used by University staff and its strategic partners as they co-create for mutual benefit.

Furthermore, at the initiation of  $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$ , I put an obligation put on all Core  $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$  staff to earn 20% in excess of their salary, in order that we could fund necessary revenue costs, without needing to call upon the university reserves for extra finances; for  $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$  was initiated at times of financial stringency in the university. This amounted to an extra income stream, in those early years, of between £300,000 and £½million, which is not accounted for in the above table; all income surplus to expenditure, was simply reinvested during those early years to keep the division working effectively, until  $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$  was allowed to use it in a more constructive way to promote university Academic Enterprise.

On a final quick performance indicator note, the national profile of this Universities progress in  $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$  has clearly been fully recognised by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, itself. Over the next three years of development our allocation from them, known as the Higher Education Innovation Fund or HEIF 4 for short, will improve from about £650K per annum to £1.1 million next year, £1.5 million in 2009-10 and £1.8 million, the year after. We are now close to being 'top of the league' for enterprise support and will soon to be capped for the HEIF allocation; this reflects we are now on a par with some of the best enterprise universities in the UK. In confirmation of importance of the above returns, an independent financial evaluation of the University by the financial analysts 'Tribal', indicates the university is 'punching well above its weight' with respect to Academic ; indeed their estimate indicates this to be about £5 million above our peer benchmark university group.

**Qualitative Impact:** At its inception the  $\mathcal{A}\mathcal{E}$  team set itself some clear targets for qualitative growth – two major academic enterprise projects per Faculty, and two cross-university projects per annum – all projects were designed and developed to reflect a major ethos and goal of the senior academics leading the different parts of the university. In fact, on average over twenty new, innovative and ground breaking projects have been initiated each year since its inception, with over 150 examples of good practice recorded on our UPBEAT website – [www.upbeat.eu.com](http://www.upbeat.eu.com) . Before describing two in some detail let me name just a few, to give a feel of the range of quality developments so far initiated: CONSTRUCT IT – won a Queen's Award for the way it has helped the construction industry flourish using academic developments; Community Finance Solutions won the Times Higher Education award for Community Enterprise in helping communities develop and manage their own 'Community Banks' – this team has now increased its consideration into the development of develop Community Land Trusts – these will help disadvantaged communities design and run their own 'affordable housing' programmes; Barbara Hastings

Asatorian was voted one of the top five women innovators for her Contraceptive Board game development (see later detailed example); the Salford Film Festival premiered an award winning Salford 'short video' and this has led to a resurgence of film making in Salford's New Deal area, with extra finances being made available for community film/video making; 'Freeflow' is a successful university website which portrays the capabilities of our music students to the world and gets our students job's on the global stage; our 'Business Creation Units' promote university 'spin-outs, and also welcome and nurture small businesses spinning in to work with University staff and students for mutual returns; our WISE project helps women entrepreneurs gain confidence to be innovative for their own wealth creation; our links with the Asian Business Federation have led to improved innovation by ethnic minority groups in Manchester City-Region; our 'Asia Link' project has developed productive working links with China, Japan and Malaysia to promote joint partnerships in the area of Design Management; the Salford Community Media Network – a joint project with a small high tech digital company and the Manchester Community Information Network to develop local reporters for the broadcast arenas of the BBC and Granada; 'Kidscan' is a charity set up to enable the development of 'focused drugs' to help children's cancer and has led to two pharmaceutical products in second stage clinical testing; our Finance section of the University has developed a successful electronic procurement services for higher education; the Core team has recently won a major European contract with the Ministries of Education and Industry and Trade in the Czech Republic to help them develop programmes of enterprise and employer focused education and development – this will also help their own universities engage more fully with European businesses and the communities; 'Bouncing Higher' is a balanced learning approach which helped 130 SMEs increase their Gross Value Added profitability through innovation – see [www.networknorthwest.co.uk](http://www.networknorthwest.co.uk) . The list is endless, but all projects are now developed using the UPBEAT approach as a mechanism to ensure enterprise project management success. The table below summaries other value added initiatives relating to our key performance measures for a typical year.

Number of Major New $\pounds$ Projects	20
Number of New Spin Out/Start Up Companies Initiated and Supported	15
Number of Students supported under BEST – an enterprise support programme	150
Companies under Venture Development	5
Small Business Clubs formed	14
New E-Learning Developments (Courses)	10
Number of SMEs assisted through $\pounds$	250
SMEs trading electronically with $\pounds$ support	150
Value of New Research Activities led by $\pounds$ reflected in British Research Selectivity Exercise Returns	$\pounds$ 2-3 million
SMEs advised	250
Student Placement in Business & Community	600
New Industry Networks/Clusters formed	20
New Products/Services to Market	35
CPD People Training Programmes	500
Grants and Contracts - Regeneration activity primarily funded by Public Agencies	98
Consultancy, Products and Services - The provision of expert advice and work involving analysis, measurement, testing and intellectual input.	187
Staff Exchanges - Staff placements in to industry	12
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships - Collaboration between a company, University academic and a graduate to work on a company project of strategic importance	10

*Note: Data only identifies partnerships with a financial relationship and exclude non fee community activity. The definition of partnerships is a sustained and meaningful relationship with an external stakeholder(s) which leads to mutually beneficial outcomes. The financial benchmark is based upon a minimum contract value of  $\pounds$ 2,000.*

Furthermore, against Goal 1 in the Strategic Framework of the University, we undertook a further 25 fully completed UPBEAT Analyses during this year, with a further 30+ under presently under analysis. 8 of these are now considered at an international level

Our university UPBEAT team has further developed its web site and are presently producing video vignettes to place on it, relating to the best British Reach-out practices with respect to 'leadership, governance and management'; these will be available soon, so do keep an eye on our UPBEAT web site - [www.upbeat.eu.com](http://www.upbeat.eu.com). Furthermore, guidance materials and a supporting video have already been produced to accelerate the development of 'enterprising academics' and the enable more advanced and cost-effective partnering for mutual benefit of ourselves and our partners; if you would like a copy of this material do e-mail me directly at the address shown at the start of this chapter. We have also showcased our UPBEAT capability around the world: for the British Council, to a number senior managers of enterprise universities, to the PASCAL International Observatory and also to the 'Business University International Forum of Japan; the British Council clearly see Salford as a UK best practice in University Reach Out.

#### **Four Examples showing the deeper Quality of Salford Academic Enterprise**

Presented below, in a narrative form, are brief case studies portraying our success in four major new academic enterprise ventures. Hopefully this will give the reader a better understanding of the depth of our Æ's activities in a contextually rich way.

**The Salford Film Festival** Let me start with a typical project in Salford's Æ repertoire. Initiated within the City of Salford itself, the Salford Film Festival was a project produced by my core team in conjunction with local video makers. Some academic colleagues had found, a short video production created by local a Salfordian media team, had been short listed for a BAFTA - a British Oscar. This short, entitled 'Angels', had never been premiered, so we formed a community enterprise partnership, under the leadership of an interested enterprising academic, to create our own local Film Premier, with the Salfordian video acting as the focus of everyone's attention.

With backing from Albert Finney, Sir Ben Kingsley, Robert Powell and a local MP, Hazel Blears – all Salfordians - we created the Salford Film Festival. It was held in the Red Cinema in Salford's Lowry outlet. And, on the final day of our Festival event, 'Angels' was premiered to an audience of over 1,500 people. Not only was this significant in itself, but the cinema became so popular as a result, that its income improved dramatically and as a result we were offered its use for three days a year for the next five years for future Festival. Furthermore, the cinema manager was also so excited by the event, and its effectiveness, that he became a community entrepreneur in his own right. The festival is now in its fourth year of sponsorship, with hundreds of new short community videos being created, often mainly now backed by financial sponsors.

More and more Salfordians, now see themselves as being creative film makers in their own right and are now working with our university's Media School to learn how to be even better at this creative role. This is one early example of local citizens engaging in higher learning for local good and is just one of the many ways I believe universities can virtuously knowledge share, in a useful way, to drive a city-region's renaissance.

**Contraception – the Board Game** Another example of Salford's entrepreneurial academics relates to an enterprise development by one of our Maternity Nurse Lecturers. Barbara Hastings-Asatourian, designed and developed 'Contraception – the Board Game', to help young nurse trainees cope better with explaining to other young people, how they could avoid unwanted pregnancies. Her way of developing this was to let the young demonstrate best principle of the safe use contraception, to themselves, through a simple board game – similar in nature to the game 'Monopoly' which is played throughout the world. Where parents had failed to appraise the young in all the implications of unprotected sex, Barbara had developed a game to embed important new attitudes and behaviours with respect to all aspects of contraception, in a fun, but highly informative way. Thus previously vulnerable young citizens could learn to act more responsibly.

This development, originally adopted across all Salford Schools, resulted in a significant reduction of local teenage pregnancies in the age group it was aimed at. The game has now been used, not only throughout the UK, but in many other English speaking countries. Originally a game for use of a few individuals, it has also now been made into a computer game to engage whole classes. It has also now been translated into French and Spanish and is being used world wide. Furthermore, Barbara and her team have recently developed a further board game, based on socio-cultural research in Africa. This new game has been developed with particular emphasis on the prevention of 'Aids in South Africa' and works well in a totally different cultural context. This game is called - 'Safer sex',

Community Finance Solutions and Salford MoneyLine After many years working as a Housing Association professional and Justice of the Peace, Bob Patterson took early retirement to work with Æ staff to develop his idea of much needed 'Community Banks'. He saw such 'banks' as challenging the mainstream Banks and Financial Institutions and also attacking the stranglehold over the poor held by Loan Sharks and Cheque Cashing Services. After seeing at first hand, many cases of poverty and increasing debt, he perceived that there was a need for access to Financial Services (as basic as a bank account) to an ever-growing excluded group in the poorest and most disadvantaged areas of the UK's cities; the problem is also world wide.

The Æ funding team helped win the resources necessary to undertake rigorous and ground-breaking research in Salford's Institute of Social Research. Significant sponsorship by the Leverhulme Trust, enabled the problem and potential solutions to be properly scoped, and then a benchmark against world's best practice. The diagram shown below gives a visual portrayal of the problems which the financially disenfranchised face. What this shows is that to most of us the doors to mainstream banking, and almost any other loan facility are open to us. This is not the case for the poor who, often without a bank account have those mainstream banking doors firmly shut to them. In their place a number of rather 'seedy' alternatives do open up to them, which often forces them further into debt.

This Æ supported research has led to the setting up of thirteen 'community banks' with collectively over £20 million on reserve for 'on-lending' – the first in February 2001 in Portsmouth and the second in Salford. Salford Money Line was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2000 (see over for Salford's MP Hazel Blears, with two local residents, cutting the inaugural cake) now has over £1.8 million on reserve to help needy individuals and enterprises. This CRT goes beyond the activities of Banks and Credit Unions by supplying credit to those unable to save, owner-occupiers unable to realise their assets, start-up businesses and other excluded by mainstream financial services.





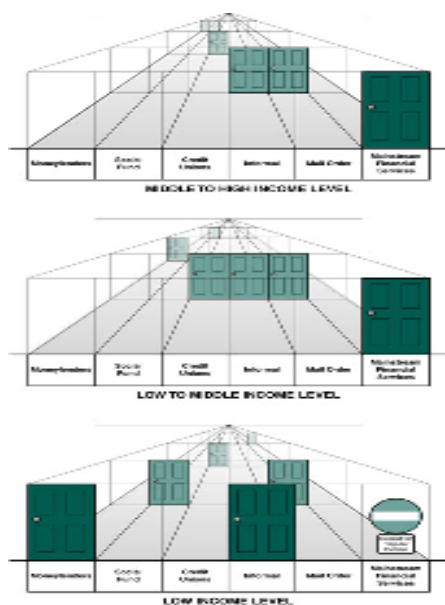


Figure showing Low Income Persons access to Salford Money Line – Lis Peppiat and Phil Munday, Mainstream Finance excluded (bottom right) with Resident Directors, Professor James Powell, Chair of SML, the door open to High Income Earners (top right) Hazel Blears MP who officially opened the 'Community Bank'

The Launch of  
Local  
with

So far there have been almost £2 million worth of loans made by the thirteen 'community bank', with a very small number of defaulters to date. The Æ has been central to the development of these and future CRTs by working to facilitate the plans and potential of a number of Private, Public and Third Sector (Housing Association) partners and enabling the contacts to develop in and with the Communities that CRTs will serve. Continuous monitoring and formative evaluation by Æ researchers throughout the development is enabling the development to maximise its full potential. Æ evaluators are now undertaking summative evaluation in order to be able to give full recommendations to the British Government as to how it might be able to develop the idea on a national basis with some confidence. Because of the early success of the project, the CRT team are presently working up the next phase of this important 'community banking'. Five city based and one rural 'bank' are presently being considered.

As well as assisting individuals with low cost loans to improve lives, the CRTs will be a useful new tool to help various agencies and ultimately society, to tackle poverty and those that prey on the financially weakest in our town and cities.

Bouncing Higher or NetworkingNorthWest NetworkNorthWest, was a £1m project at the University of Salford that ran between 2004 and 2007; It was developed to address the issues relating to poor take up of traditional business support by small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and low levels of engagement of the business community with Institutes of Higher Education (HEIs). Originally funded by the North West Development Agency (NWDA), NetworkNorthWest was specifically developed to improve innovation, entrepreneurship, enterprise and wealth creation in the Northwest's SME business community through educational micro-networking - networking to learn from, and with, others in a similar position in other SMEs using action learning techniques which allow the participants to set the agenda for what they need to learn. At the same time the project was able to benchmark best practice in this form of business support regionally and nationally and internationally.



Working with six delivery partner universities across the North West of England, the support was multi-disciplinary and multifaceted (including applied research, knowledge transfer, management and professional development and provision of sector specific training for employees) and there was potential to deliver support in the form of face to face contact or on-line resources. The project, seen as exemplary by the NWDA, has since delivered support for Manchester Chamber Business Enterprises to a further cohort of SMEs across Greater Manchester and the core process has been adopted as the basis for the second level of intervention for leadership development by the Northern Leadership Academy. It also significantly improved the profitability of the SMEs who took part through the impact of innovative processes and developments enabled by the Action Learning



On of the most interesting overall findings of the present study is summarised in the photograph above. It represents many of those who took part in our action learning programme 'bouncing down' King Street in Manchester in the middle of the rush hour. They did this as they had become so delighted with the process that they wanted to encourage other SMEs to come to an event to mark the end of the formal learning processes. It shows the enjoyment they all felt in taking part in this influential programme of learning and is a representation of the name that they collectively gave to their learning experiences, namely 'bouncing higher'. For them, Action Learning was the educational process that enabled them to 'bounce ideas off against each other' and learn in a relaxed way with 'partners in adversity' to become more creative in their work for wealth creation.

These four examples represent a myriad of Salford's successful higher academic enterprises. They each have enterprising academics in the lead, creative teams who share knowledge with their local business and community partners, and are able get academics co-creating with diverse teams of others on worthy projects.

### **Early Thoughts on a new model of 'Universities for Modern Renaissance'**

From the above work, a new model suggested itself to the author for those engaged universities wishing to fully embrace their creative city-regions . This has been styled as 'Universities for Modern Renaissance'. In this context, the following issues were felt to be important as guiding questions in helping us make these thoughts more coherent and "concrete", namely:

- How can universities best understand that third stream income should be more than another source of income and realise the idea of creative outreach to business and community in their city-regions and make higher academic enterprise a 'noble academic activity' in its own right standing equally alongside 'Teaching & Learning' and 'Research & Innovation' ?
- In this context, should some universities also focus in a complementary way on higher academic enterprise, as they have done in Australia, rather than, or as well as, simply being classical or pedagogical universities?

- Should universities get away from limiting themselves to the traditional role of pursuing basic research, long term blue sky research, teaching and learning and seek more medium term relevance to business and society?
- Moreover, should such universities not show there is complementarity of business relevance and basic research?

An affirmative discussion of these questions with C<sup>5</sup>U, a consortium set up by the European Universities Association set up to explore 'creative universities and their creative relationships with creative city-regions, led to the formulation of a new model and role for the university. Such a model demands more than opening up universities to the idea of innovation, and contribution to knowledge production and creation of IP. It would call for reaching out to wider set of actors, with public interest for mutual development of the global knowledge economy for the mutual benefit of all. C<sup>5</sup>U' believes that ideally all "enterprising universities" who wish to properly engage in the global knowledge economy should help create a modern renaissance for our city-regions. Such a renaissance best starts within creative cities themselves, but can only be initiated by the universities. Therefore a major focus of C<sup>5</sup>U's work was concerned with seeing if the guiding principles behind Universities for Modern Renaissance could be defined and justified for all those universities that want to have as a key part of their mission. That is those who wish creative engagement with their creative city-regions to enable socially inclusive wealth co-creation. Shown below in summary tabular form are the basic arguments in support of the above issues:

	Renaissance OLD	Renaissance NEW
Similarities	University as institution not in the centre of the revival	University as institution becoming central actors and initiators of knowledge society activities, its structures and its implementation.
	Small part of society concerned (but growing, bigger than before, aspiring to grow further)	Large part of society to be engaged, aspiring to reach as many individuals as possible in the "knowledge society"
	Natural sciences not centrally important (decline after early rise in 13th century and before rise in early 17th century)	Natural sciences of central importance and having high visibility, with strong links to social, environmental ,economic & artistic prowess of society
Differences	Concepts of Knowledge refers to common canonical body of knowledge, common sources, dream of a commonly held world view	Diversified sources/labyrinthine sources of information, defying possibility of creating common body of knowledge, systematising knowledge is becoming

Idea of a new relevance of classical knowledge: applying human values and concepts of antiquity to 15th/16th c urban society	increasingly difficult to grow specialised knowledge. Different increases in subtypes and sectors business and the community, systematic needs and desires and trade and finance
New thrust of theory into practice, One will eligiton reviewed the adapted scholarship with as beam (political attitude reference) practice	position in the system; of 'theory into practice', Many lines scientific theories nearly against (political) religious beliefs and practice into fundamentalisms or dissolving in their
Rise of creative arts	function as enhancement of equality and But accepting the dignity of difference' –people
Rise of engineering, innovation important for urban economic and social welfare	living with Rise of big differences between religious cultures and ideologies and leading to a Covenant of Collective Development through Global Conversational domains of
Mono-disciplinary	daily life Pluralism, not even trying to
Knowledge concentrated status/ acceptance of scholar or artist (eating at the table of nobility)	systematising status of knowledge workers Liberation of knowledge, production from institution
	Liberating the individual, rebirth in the ownership, live with diversity
Individual human as central motor of innovation and heart of creativity	Talented Individual humans co- creating in teams as central motors of innovation and heart of creativity
Dream of human possibilities being far greater than their realisation	Dream of human possibilities beginning with a far greater than their realisation

In my view, the University for Modern Renaissance is, and should continue to be, animated by a deep belief that theory can be made relevant for practice and that practice is relevant for theory. Its pursuit of knowledge is thus characterised by combining the reflective distance necessary for finding new paths with a quest to engage in dialogue with the world and to identify and solve its current and future problems through enhanced understanding and systematisation. 'Universities for Modern Renaissance' (or UfMR for Short) share with the Renaissance itself a belief that human possibilities stretch far beyond their current realisation and seeks to explore ways in which human knowledge can help to realise human potential for the good of all. It is thus not just an institution in which reflective scholarship reigns but also a social actor since it seeks new solutions and practices which compensate for social, political and economic shortfalls.

### **A final Independent Endorsement of Academic Enterprise**

Æ now has a national and international reputation outside the university, with many of its projects being heralded by the Council for Industry and Higher Education, UUK, HEFCE and the Lambert Review as being exemplars of best practice. As a major stream of all university activity, Æ is also increasingly being seen to be at the leading edge and a powerful example of its kind by many other universities in the UK, especially by those who are directly aware of its work through UPBEAT. This has been formally endorsed this year, as a result of a major benchmarking exercises undertaken for the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council. In 2007, Lancaster University was commissioned to undertake a series of comparative benchmarks of universities that had adopted open reach-out practices, such as those we have adopted here at Salford in Academic Enterprise. These cases, which included one of Lancaster itself, put Salford to the top of the list, in terms of 'good practice'. Their review related to the broad range of activities relating to all aspect of Academic Enterprise – ones that Salford University is more than happy to have itself judged against, rather than the more conventional one of commercial activity alone. Included in the reference is this study, undertaken by Dr Nigel Lockett, then at Lancaster and now in the Bradford School of Management. This clearly spells out what he, and his researchers, felt to be our major strengths and our ability to deliver a broad range of academic enterprises against our core mission. What is particularly heartening to me, were the comments made by 25 of our own staff when interviewed by Lockett; the staff interviewed came from across all disciplines, from core AE and in the Faculties, and from academics and support staff. Their positive comments about the powerful embedding of AE into the Schools and Faculties, together with the recent progress we had clearly made in developing this new University wide Division, were reinforced by other comments made by our external stakeholders; they also waxed lyrical about the innovation, quality and professionalism of our entire enterprising delivery. This latter study, in its complete form, has been well received by ESRC, who have now commissioned Lancaster, under the leadership of Prof Mary Rose, to do a fuller study of the most successful universities, leading to a major new book on 'enterprising university Reach-out'. This will become a follow up to Burton Clarke's most influential book, on the 'Enterprise Universities', now almost a decade old.

In order to access a range of other material to take the above arguments further please access IRL:

<http://www.ae.salford.ac.uk/JamesPowell/forum/information.php>

### **Looking to the Future**

Academic Enterprise is work in progress, so it would be inappropriate to draw any final conclusions. However, looking forward and more broadly, the future external development landscape of all University activities will continue to be to relate fmore constructively with their local businesses and communities. Such activities must me more response to needs and demands, be relevant as well as of high academic standard and understand the requirement to be competitive, because it is externally where the university must work alongside others, to develop successful enterprises for the real world. This university has begun to professionalize all its academic and managerial activities and is learning to become responsive, delivering quickly and effectively, and following-up consistently. It is now working, through papers such as this, to ensure its profile and strengths are visible to all key decision-makers, but it never ceases in the way it is continuously on the look out to spot new and emerging opportunities, as they arise.

Our future integrated strategy will be one which shows a true 'coincidence of purpose' and breadth of scope in everything we do. In developing our vision for Academic Enterprise we are seeking to attract students, partners, collaborators, investors and employees who wish to participate in, contribute and share this vision. The university is also striving to find cost-effective ways of delivering quality products and processes demanded by society. So our goal is to remain at the leading edge in niche markets and deliverables. However, we also must keep our friendly and listening nature, and build on our international partnerships to enable us to achieve more than our resources allow. This is expressed by the clear and simple phrase - 'Enterprising University - globally aware for local delivery' or in a more expansive mode 'University for Modern Renaissance'.

The generic model of best practice portrayed here – namely 'virtuous knowledge sharing and the Universities for Modern Renaissance – are not new in the sense that I invented them, but they are important to us because I have tried to "recuperate" relevant models, make them explicit, and explain them in the context of creative universities working creatively with their creative city-regions. We have also based our findings on real-world experience of the our universities, and others involved in the context of our discussion about creativity. So, for instance, Universities for Modern Renaissance share a core set of values, which inspire and direct their actions. This core is what is "new" here, and it determines a new characterization of the university (or of certain universities). This core also determines a new attitude to the actual types of activities that a given HEI is undertaking. Universities for Modern Renaissance promote a rupture with the prevailing models of Higher Education. The rupture consists in the explicit, programmatic integration of the pursuit of academic excellence with the engagement with its outside environment. Engagement is not a by-product of the "real academic work" but it inspires and nurtures all activities of the universities, both traditional on-campus activities and non-traditional activities. In the age of globalization and knowledge society, Universities for Modern Renaissance agree that they need to act differently in order to contribute toto and /enable socially inclusive wealth co-creation. "Renaissance" is justified here because, as for the classical Renaissance, the human being is put in the centre of an active and self-liberating approach.

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Please also look at Salford University's web site for more information ([www.ae.salford.ac.uk](http://www.ae.salford.ac.uk)) or contact me by e-mail at either [ae@salford.ac.uk](mailto:ae@salford.ac.uk) or [ja.apowell@salford.ac.uk](mailto:ja.apowell@salford.ac.uk)

Number of Major New Æ Projects	20
Number of New Spin Out/Start Up Companies Initiated and Supported	15
Number of Students supported under BEST – an enterprise support programme	150
Companies under Venture Development	5
Small Business Clubs formed	14
New E-Learning Developments (Courses)	10
Number of SMEs assisted through Æ	250
SMEs trading electronically with Æ support	150
Value of New Research Activities led by Æ reflected in British Research Selectivity Exercise Returns	£2-3m
Student Placement in Business & Community	600
New Industry Networks/Clusters formed	20
New Products/Services to Market	35
CPD People Training Programmes	500
Grants and Contracts - Regeneration activity primarily funded by Public Agencies	98
Consultancy, Products and Services - The provision of expert advice and work involving analysis, measurement, testing and intellectual input.	187
Staff Exchanges - Staff placements in to industry	12
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships	10