UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING &
KULE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
FACULTY OF ARTS
400 Arts & Convocation Hall
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2E6
780.492.9557

SKILLS | Supporting the citizenship
SOCIETY | of people with disabilities

INFORMATION LETTER (Directors)

Study Title: **Exploring knowledge generation with Community Service-Learning Partners**

Date

Dear Director,

Your organization is being invited to participate in this study on community-based knowledge generation because you have been a partner of the Community Service-Learning (CSL) program at the University of Alberta. [You have been identified to us by the Director of your organization as someone who might consider participating in this study.] We invite you to consider nominating up to two participants from your staff to be interviewed and join two community research sessions. They would discuss how your organization engages in social innovation and research to further develop your own mission and objectives.

Background & Purpose

Currently, the U of A does not have a dedicated service or a comprehensive infrastructure to systematically help knowledge exchange between university and community-based researchers. The U of A based Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS) and Community Service-Learning (CSL), along with the community-based Skills Society Edmonton, a not-for-profit organization supporting citizenship skills for people with disabilities, proposes a community based-research project with CSL's community partners. The research project seeks to identify tools to facilitate community-based research collaborations between the University of Alberta and the various communities of Edmonton and Alberta.

Your nominated staff will be invited to participate in this study in four ways:

1) In a **Community Research Session**, led by SKILLS Edmonton, and with facilitation from CSL and KIAS, involving staff from CSL's community-based partners (held in Feb/March, 2016). The aim is to discuss community-based knowledge generation and learning, and how these organizations might better work with each other and university-based researchers to generate new knowledge aimed at improving organizational practice. It would be held over half a day at the Skills Society Action Lab, a space specifically designed for creative group work to drive innovative practices. Data will be mapped and visualized and presented back to participants.

2) An Interview (45-60mins), to be held at your organization, with the staff member (s) you identify to explore your organization's experiences of knowledge generation and university partnerships. The interviews would be carried out by CSL and KIAS staff. Interview questions would include the following: how does your organization understand the term research? If you have partnered with the university before, what have been the outcomes of that research and learning for your organization? Were you satisfied with these results? What areas of your service provision or organizational practice would you

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like to know more about? What resources do your communities already have that can generate new learnings? Interview transcripts will be sent back to participating staff for editing.

3) Your organization will be **invited to construct a list of research questions, or areas for research collaboration,** relevant to your context that **you would share with other study participants and with the research team, so that these might become known to U of A researchers and participating community organizations.** This list would be accessible after the study to both study participants and University of Alberta-based researchers via a data base managed by CSL and KIAS, that you would have access to with ownership and control over your organization's contributed data.

4) A final half-day **Community Research Session** will be conducted at the Skills Society Action Lab with participants in December of 2016. The goal here will be to further develop the themes elicited in the first community research session and interviews. Guiding principles and protocols for CBR for university-based researchers will also be constructed to enable productive and respectful knowledge exchange. Data will be mapped and visualized and presented back to participants.

Benefits

First, facilitated interactions with staff from other community based organizations seeking to explore research and learning partnerships may lead to enhanced capacity to work together on projects of mutual interest. Second, participants will be able to clarify their own research and learning needs, and how they might best consult university-based researchers to assist them drive their organizational innovation. Third, through participating in the construction of CBR protocols for engagement between university researchers and community researchers and innovators, participants stand to benefit from more efficient and less duplicative communication between university and community partners. Fourth, at the completion of the study participants will also be provided access to campus and community-based events to match university researchers and community innovators to work on CBR projects of mutual interest and benefit.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks to your staff's participation in the study. They, and your organization, will not be identifiable through their interview transcriptions. You and your staff will be in control of how your organization names any of your research projects on which you would like to collaborate.

Voluntary Participation

Your organization and its staff are under no obligation to participate in this study. Participation is completely voluntary, and not participating will have no impact upon any collaborations with CSL or other University units. Participants may withdraw at each stage - before the first community research session, before their interview, and before the final community research session. If your staff withdraw from the study after some participation, we will negotiate on a case by case basis with the participant what data, if any, they would be comfortable in sharing with the researchers. You will be given the option to withdraw all data unconditionally and without detriment to their standing with the CSL or

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other University program, and to have the data destroyed. If a participant wishes to withdraw or not to participate in certain aspects of the research, he or she can do it at any time up until the time data is reported or published by contacting David Peacock at (780) 554-6709 or peacock1@ualberta.ca. Reports may be prepared as early as one month past the end of final community research session.

Confidentiality & Anonymity

Interviews will be recorded using digital audio recorders and transcribed into written form. Interview transcripts and notes made by the research team will be de-identified and securely stored on the researchers' encrypted and password-protected software program and also in the CSL office (Arts Building, 412 C). Data will be stored for five years after the project ends before being destroyed. Only the research team will have access to this interview data. Any information you provide during interviews will remain **confidential** during storage, analysis, and reporting. You may ask to review your interview transcripts and to receive a summary of the project findings. Interview participants will be kept anonymous.

The research team will discuss the anonymity expectations with the community research group participants and will ask each participant to sign a confidentiality agreement. Each community organization will be expected, as a condition of participating in the study, to provide to the researchers (and their university-based data-bases) a public list of research needs that will be shared, upon request and as gate-kept by CSL and KIAS, with university based researchers and study participants. The research team will consult with the study participants on a yearly basis to make sure the public data is up to date, and the participant is free to withdraw this data at any point from the CSL and KIAS databases**.** This data will be destroyed after five years. After each of the community research sessions, co-constructed, aggregated data will be mapped and visualized and presented back to participants. Finally, each participant in the study will receive a final report of the study and any mutually constructed products (e.g. guidelines and protocols for CBR). Community Research Session data will be stored for five years after the project ends before being destroyed.

Further Information

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact the research team listed below.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

We would welcome your participation in the project and thank you considering our invitation.

King Regards,

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