Community Connect Research Ambassador Toolkit
What does it mean to be a Research Ambassador?

Community Connect (CC) Research Ambassadors reach out to schools, community organizations, non-for-profits, industry, or other agencies, to share their academic work with the public. To be a Research Ambassador, it is pivotal to understand how best to reach out and communicate with a wide range of audiences.

This may include different:

- age groups
- education levels
- socio-economic backgrounds
- interests and curiosities
- gender and/or orientation
- cultures
- disabilities
Ask yourself:

Who is my audience?

What would they want to know?

What is interesting to my audience?

Remember, identifying your audience is the first step in reaching out to the community. Once this process is completed, the following slides will give you the tools to facilitate a public presentation.
How to Reach Out to the Community

1. Contact selected group or organization
   A phone call, then summary email works best

2. Try:
   “Hello, my name is __________. I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta, and I am looking to give a presentation to your students/public/organization/etc. on _____________. Who would be the best person to speak with regarding this matter?”

   Mention:
   a) The reason for presenting (ie. FGSR Research Ambassador, WHCRI funded)
   a) Your area of study
   b) A quick summary of your presentation topic, in accessible language (see below).
   c) Length of presentation
   d) Any planned interactive activities
Preparing a Public Presentation

After deciding on a date and time with the community organization, you must then begin preparing your presentation.

- Think again of the demographics you are addressing in your presentation.
- Answer:
  - what would they want to know about your research?
  - how do I best present my research to this particular demographic?
  - what is interesting to my current audience? (eg. for children aged 8-10, they might want to know how best to recycle their parents’ waste).
  - how can I make my research interactive?
If you want to make your presentation more interactive, consider these ideas:

- **Science/Medicine/Engineering** → Use safe items from your lab to demonstrate your work:
  - e.g. display bones, equipment demonstrations, lab tools, engage in energy restoration activities (gardening, etc.).

- **Arts/Education/Native Studies/Business/Kinesiology** → Create a tactile/discussion-based representation of your work:
Presentation length:

- For kindergarten to grade 12 students, keep presentations short (no more than five to seven minutes).
- The remainder of the talk should be Q & A.

- For adults, consider doing either a shorter presentation with questions and a discussion at the end (ranging from 10 - 40 minutes), or longer presentation (20 - 60 minutes) with questions encouraged at any point.
Presentation Tips

To Powerpoint or to not Powerpoint?

Answer:
- do I need a powerpoint; what would it serve?
- do I have something interesting to show?
- do I need the PPT to help me stay on point?

Try using more visuals, short video clips, and photographs rather than large amounts of text.
Final Tips

• Remember to not use ‘jargon’ without explaining the term. You can teach the audience a new word, but ensure you describe what it means in a clear manner.

• Do not try to cram everything about your research into one presentation. Tell a cohesive story about what you do, or concentrate on an interesting aspect of your work for your intended audience.

• Be dynamic and energetic! People will be interested if you are excited and passionate about what you study.
Final Tips

• Speak audibly, clearly, and slowly. Be sure to project your voice, especially if you are not wearing a microphone.

• Move away from behind a desk, podium, the back wall. Engage the room with purposeful movements and eye contact.

• Read your audience (not just your notes)! Watch if people are on their phones or appearing disinterested. Change your tone, ask them a question audience, do a group activity, just do something different to guide back their attention to your talk.
Questions? Contact grad.pd@ualberta.ca