

Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

Governance

14 June 2010

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) is a joint creation of community and university partners that is hosted within the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension. The responsibility for guiding and sustaining CUP lies jointly with its community and university partners as represented by CUP's Steering Committee. CUP's Director, with the assistance of the Secretariat, is responsible for CUP's operations. The Director reports to the Steering Committee and to the Dean of the Faculty of Extension, who also is a member of the Steering Committee.

Mission

The Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) is committed to improving the development of children, youth, families, and communities by:

- generating, sharing, and mobilizing new knowledge about child and family development;
- identifying and promoting the use of evidence-based policies and practices for optimizing child and family development; and
- nurturing a culture, both in the community and the University, in which rigorous research, evaluation, and practice are valued highly as critical components in efforts to understand and optimize development.

Goals of Governance

1. Governance must provide the capacity for CUP to engage effectively in activities related to its mission.
2. Governance must be designed to ensure a balance of responsibilities, commitments, and accountability between community and university partners.
3. Governance must provide a process for the recruitment and guidance of a director who will be capable of implementing strategies to achieve CUP's goals and objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities for CUP's Steering Committee

1. The Steering Committee ensures an equitable and adaptive balance between community and university interests in CUP's directions and undertakings.
2. The Steering Committee reviews and revises CUP's mission as necessary and uses it to evaluate CUP's goals and monitor CUP's performance.
3. The Steering Committee provides expert advice to the Director about CUP's directions, strategies, goals, operational structure, and resources.
4. The Steering Committee promotes community-university engagement generally and, more specifically, informs CUP's activities by identifying opportunities, needs, and resources in the community and at the University of Alberta.
5. The Steering Committee promotes CUP by informing potential partners about CUP, by helping potential partners understand CUP's activities and methods of operation, by representing CUP as appropriate, and by advocating for CUP's work and for the type of community-university engagement that CUP represents.
6. The Steering Committee works to sustain CUP by
 - Connecting CUP to individuals, groups, and networks that can enhance CUP's work and contributions,
 - Pursuing sufficient resources for CUP to fulfill its mission,
 - Advising the Dean of the Faculty of Extension on the selection of CUP's Director, and participating in the Dean's annual review of the Director's performance, and
 - Ensuring that its own membership is sufficient for fulfilling these roles and responsibilities.

Membership of the Steering Committee

1. Individuals are invited to join the Steering Committee by the Co-Chairs in consultation with other members of the Steering Committee and with the Director. The central criterion in identifying prospective members is their capacity for and commitment to helping the Steering Committee fulfill its roles and responsibilities, as described above. Affiliation with a department, organization, or agency may be a consideration, but the prospective member must be committed to supporting CUP in pursuit of its mission.
2. The Steering Committee should include significant representation from both the University of Alberta and from organizations or agencies outside of the University. To ensure that the community is well represented in CUP's decision making, no more than 50% of the members of the Steering Committee should be from the

University. The size of the Steering Committee is to be determined by the Steering Committee in consultation with the Director.

3. Members normally serve three-year renewable terms. At the end of his or her term a member can request renewal for another term. Decisions about renewal are made by the Co-Chairs, who may consult with other members of the Steering Committee and with the Director.
4. The Steering Committee can establish working groups or subcommittees, with defined terms, to assist in meeting CUP's objectives. The Steering Committee also can invite ad hoc members, for strategic purposes, for fixed periods of time.
5. Two members of the Steering Committee, one from the community and one from the University, are appointed by the Steering Committee to serve as Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs are responsible for
 - ensuring that the Steering Committee fulfills its roles and responsibilities,
 - representing CUP's interests in the community and University as necessary,
 - calling and chairing meetings of the Steering Committee,
 - inviting new members to join the Steering Committee,
 - deciding about renewal for existing members, and
 - liaising with the Director.
6. Co-Chairs normally serve renewable three-year terms. To ensure continuity of leadership, replacement of Co-Chairs normally is staggered so that one Co-Chair continues when the other is replaced. When a new Co-Chair is required,
 - The remaining Co-Chair appoints one person to act as Nominations Officer, who may or may not be a member of the Steering Committee;
 - The Nominations Officer inquires with members of the Steering Committee about serving as a Co-Chair;
 - The remaining Co-Chair and Director discuss with each potential candidate the responsibilities of the Co-Chair position;
 - The Nominations Officer then presents candidates who wish to be considered for the position to members of the Steering Committee;
 - If a single candidate is presented, the Steering Committee must vote to accept or reject that candidate. If multiple candidates are presented, the Steering Committee must vote to determine which candidate will become Co-Chair. In these votes the outcome is determined by a simple majority of the Steering Committee members present.

When a current Co-Chair requests a renewed term, the other Co-Chair will inquire with members of the Steering Committee about whether anyone else would be interested in serving as Co-Chair. If no one expresses interest, the current Co-Chair's term will be renewed. If a member expresses interest, the other Co-Chair will implement a selection procedure similar to the steps described above.