

From the Editor

“Building Engaged Scholarship in Canada”: Introducing the First Issue of the *Engaged Scholar Journal*

Dear readers, you are holding in your hands, or reading online, the inaugural issue of the first Canadian scholarly journal on collaborative and community-engaged research, teaching, and learning. The idea to create such a journal was born on the University of Saskatchewan campus in 2013 as a result of a growing realization among many people that such a journal is long overdue. Conceived first by Dr. Keith Carlson, professor of history and then the University’s Special Advisor, Outreach and Engagement, the visionary work began, carried on by a group of committed scholars who soon became the journal’s advisory committee. I was invited to become the journal’s convener. In its first year of operation, the group worked very hard to promote the idea of such a journal on campus and among other Canadian scholars as well as non-academic organizations. It has been a productive year during which various consultations and forums were held on and off campus with diverse groups and CES practitioners, working across Canada and internationally, on what kind of journal the *Engaged Scholar Journal* should be. By April 2014, the Journal was established. With the generous support of the office of Vice-President Advancement and Community Engagement, the Journal’s office was opened, a position of a managing assistant funded and filled, and the Journal’s advisory and editorial boards struck. We then began our work in earnest towards the production of this inaugural issue as well as other issues that are already lined up for publication.



Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, Editor
(Photo: Erin J. Weiss)

In the first year of the Journal’s operation, our capable advisory committee supported the expansion of the scope of the Journal beyond the regional and its establishment as a national venue for all Canadian community-engaged scholars to present their work. We wanted to offer a shared forum for in-depth discussion of the meanings and applications of the work Canadian engaged scholars pursue with various partner communities across our nation and elsewhere. In their work, the advisory committee were guided by the following: (a) their own experience in community-engaged scholarly work; (b) the long history of community-engaged scholarship at the University of Saskatchewan; (c) the University’s integrated plan and its emphasis on community-engaged research, teaching, and learning; and (d) by the vibrant national debate on the meanings and directions of community-engaged scholarship that has been unfolding in Canada for the last several years.

This initiative to build a national journal on our campus has strong roots in the long and at times pioneering history of University of Saskatchewan’s collaborative work with various

communities, stakeholder groups, and constituencies. *The Foundational Document on Outreach and Engagement: Linking with Communities for Discovery and Learning*, prepared in 2006, while proposing further avenues for strengthening the community-engagement links between the University and external partners, also offered a brief overview of the history of such engagement at the University. Here are a few examples from that document.

The University of Saskatchewan tracks its own history of community engagement back to the early twentieth century. As early as 1907, the year the University was founded, its first president Walter Murray referred to the University of Saskatchewan as “the people’s university” that belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. The University historian and biographer Michael Hayden (as cited in University of Saskatchewan, 2006, p. 6) asserts that no other university in Canada can make such a claim. The emphasis on the University’s responsibility of sharing its wealth of knowledge with the province’s citizens generated a number of important initiatives. The Extension Department was founded in 1910 and soon took over a number of provincial agricultural extension programs. A famous undertaking, the “Better Farming Train” (1914-1942), brought faculty members in the College of Agriculture into various farming communities around the province where they exchanged their expertise with the farmers. Heritage preservation efforts in the province were spearheaded by the University professors of history and led to the establishment of the Saskatchewan Archives Board in 1945. Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra was founded by the first professor of music. All in all, as *The Foundational Document* states, “until the 1930s, all professors at the University were expected to be involved in extension work of one form or another (University of Saskatchewan, 2006, p. 6).”

In the 1960s and 70s, many changes took place in the University, stemming from its expansion and influx of new faculty, by now commonly recruited from out of province. The role and nature of the links between the University and the province and its people also continued to evolve, with some projects ending their life and others beginning. In that period, much of what was known back then as extension work was performed through the Division of Extension that housed its own faculty responsible for maintaining the links with various provincial regions and for properly responding to educational and research needs in these regions (University of Saskatchewan, 2006). In years to come, many other outreach and partnership-based initiatives have been pursued in and with various communities and groups in the province and beyond.

At the same time, the University continued to evolve into a nationally and internationally recognized institution of higher learning. It is not until the 2000s, though, that a conceptually new approach towards university-community partnerships in research, teaching, and learning began to be promoted on our campus, as evidenced in a number of initiatives directed at strengthening the institutional foundations for community-engaged and community-driven co-production of knowledge through research, teaching, and learning. *The Foundational Document* of 2006, a product of many minds, is a good manifestation of the University’s renewed commitment to effective and mutually beneficial university-community collaboration to the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan and other communities with which the

University collaborates.

In 2012, after an extended period of self-study and analysis, the University developed an action plan, *Engaging with External Partners: Recommended Principles Guidelines and Action Plan Components* as a part of its Second Integrated Plan. This programmatic document, drawn under the skilled leadership and guidance of Vice-President Advancement and Community Engagement Heather Magotiaux, now serves the University as a strategic framework for action when it comes to many community-engaged scholarly activities pursued by the University.

Such renewed commitment to and reconceptualization of community-engaged scholarship at the U of Saskatchewan in the 2000s followed important developments in national academia as well as in the Canadian society as a whole. Among other things that informed such reconceptualization was the 1998 addition of the Community-University Research Alliances Grants Program (CURA) to the grants portfolio of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, a publicly funded national agency. This reconceptualization also followed, at least in chronological terms, the emergence, in the 1990s, of a lively debate in the United States on the nature and purpose of a university in general and of the “scholarship of engagement” in particular.¹

In his preface to a thought-provoking book *Engaged Scholarship: The Politics of Engagement and Disengagement*, edited by one of our contributors Tania Kajner and Linette Schultz (2013). Budd L. Hall (2013) indeed asserts that Canadian community-engaged scholarship evolved into a strong field of its own not so much in response to the above American debate but rather out of Canada’s own internal developments in academic and social fields. In Canada, claims Hall, one can divide the history of engaged scholarship into three periods.

The first period preceded the creation of SSHRC’s Community-University Research Alliances Program in 1998. Hall refers to this period as the “old days,” and links it to the creation of various early extension programs and educational institutes in Canada, such as Frontier College (1899) and university extension (University of Alberta, 1912). Through the first part of the twentieth century, other Canadian institutions of higher learning continued to collaborate with various communities and constituencies in their localities as exemplified by the Antigonish Movement at St. Xavier University (1930s-60s) and the Workers’ Education Association with links to the University of Toronto (1930s) (Hall, 2013). The creation of the Extension Department in the University of Saskatchewan in 1910 and the work of all University faculty in the early decades of the twentieth century also are the highlights of this period.

The 1960s and 1970s signaled a significant departure from the original forms of engaged scholarship that university extension work was presupposed to be. These changes were certainly rooted in the overall global transformations of that time. The collapse

¹ The concept and the phrase ‘scholarship of engagement’ was first introduced by Ernest Boyer in the 1990s, in the context of a wide national debate in the United States on the role and purpose of universities. Boyer (1997) further focused on the notion of scholarship of engagement in his article “The Scholarship of Engagement.”

of the centuries-old European colonial order, the appearance of new nations on the world map, and the emergence of worldwide cultural and ideological movements (for gender equality, human rights, global ecology, and so on), all of this coupled with technological revolutions in communications and transportation led the humanities and social sciences and eventually the sciences into a new phase of their development. Whatever it is called (late modernity, postmodernity, globalization, and so on), this new era has also been characterized by a growing recognition that the universities and their scholarly agendas need to focus on the needs of the real social worlds in which they operate.

As a part of these global developments, in Canada, according to Hall (2013), the emergence of Indigenous researchers (1960-70s), the arrival of participatory action research from the anti-colonial struggles of the Global South to Canada (1970-80), and the development of various human rights movements had a substantial impact on scholarly agendas of the day. So distinct was the historical context of the 1960s that in my opinion this decade may be recognized as the beginning of yet another phase in the evolution of engaged scholarship in Canada. Involved in the social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, Canadian scholars participated in and advanced epistemological transformations in the social sciences and humanities and eventually in the sciences, advocating for reflective and socially responsible scholarship and promoting the new idea of engaged scholarship based on collaborative and mutually beneficial research and co-production of knowledge.

The establishment of SSHRC's Community-University Research Alliances Grants Program followed these important developments and was directly informed by this increased interest in socially responsible and engaged scholarship. In Hall's (2013) periodization, CURA's establishment in 1998 signaled the beginning of another phase in the history of Canadian engaged scholarship. As Hall writes, "academics whose ideological or epistemological preferences made working with community groups, listening to their issues and concerns, and co-constructing knowledge together natural and inevitable, flooded the SSHRC offices with proposals which were, for the first time, products of alliances between scholars based in universities and scholar-intellectuals located in community groups (Hall, 2013, viii)." It was the CURA, continues Hall, that informed the directions and prerogatives in the development of the engaged scholarship practices in Canada, not the American debate that has been unfolding at the same time in the United States.

On May 26, 2012, the Governor-General of Canada delivered a paper to the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences on Knowledge Democracy, and, in the eyes of Hall, this signaled the beginning of a new phase in the history of Canadian community-engaged scholarship that will no doubt see new developments in the field of engaged scholarship in Canada. Engaged scholarship continues to receive further recognition on the Canadian campuses and partner organizations. Thus, by 2013, some 50-60 universities in Canada incorporated engaged scholarship in their plans and or pledged university-wide support to engaged scholarship. Today several national

networks spearhead the community-engaged collaboration in Canada, *Community-Based Research Canada*,² *Research Impact* focusing on knowledge mobilization,³ *Engaged Scholarship* Canadian partnership with a focus on faculty policies⁴ and the *Canadian Alliance for Community Service Learning*.⁵ Many other local and regional organizations contribute to this work as well.

The creation of our Journal in 2014 is another recent development that coincided with the beginning of the latest phase in the Canadian history community-engaged scholarship. Much networking and discussion has been taking place these days in the Canadian field of engaged scholarship, but so far academic and community-based scholars have not been served by a national scholarly venue for community-engaged scholarship. This is the niche that we hope to fill. We hope that our multidisciplinary Journal will further enhance the Canadian practice of community-engaged scholarship and directly contribute to the growing dialogue and vibrant debate on what sort of engaged teaching, research, and learning Canadians are practicing. I would like to project that this latest phase in the development of engaged scholarship in Canada so far may be best defined by the metaphor of “network,” rather than “framework” as might be the case with our colleagues in the field of engaged scholarship in the United States. To strengthen networks and networking, a sustained productive dialogue informed both by theory and practice is needed. Our Journal has been indeed conceived as a platform for such a dialogue.

Though it may not be immediately obvious from the essays and reports profiled in this inaugural issue, a lively and very honest dialogue on engaged scholarship in Canada has already been initiated by our Journal, months before the publication of its inaugural issue. Such dialogue began with the assignment of each submitted article to two anonymous peer-reviewers, established scholars and practitioners of engaged scholarship. One of the privileges of being on the editorial team is the ability to have a sustained exposure to this dialogue as we monitored and managed the exchanges that took place behind the scene between the authors and their reviewers (all remaining strictly anonymous to each other). These exchanges were constructive, critical, and well-grounded in the existing literature and debates on scholarship of engagement. We are very grateful to the twenty-six reviewers, out of eighty-four we contacted, for their thorough reading of the manuscripts and commitment for quality and high standards

² Community-Based Research Canada (CBRC) is a coalition of a five Canadian universities, research networks, and community organizations. CBRC’s mission is “to be a national champion and facilitator for community-based research (CBR) and campus-community engagement in Canada”; cited in <http://communityresearchcanada.ca>

³ *ResearchImpact* (RIR) is a pan-Canadian network of eleven universities focused on knowledge mobilization and committed to “maximizing the impact of academic research for the social, economic, environmental and health benefits of Canadians”; cited in <http://researchimpact.ca/about/about-research-impact/>.

⁴ The partnership is comprised of eight universities and an international organization that have pledged to work together to change university culture, policies and practices in order to recognize and reward CES, cited in <http://engagedscholarship.ca>

⁵ The Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (CACSL) supports, educates and networks to ensure the effective growth of CSL in Canada. Cited in <http://www.communityservicelearning.ca/en/>

in scholarly engagement. Most of the presented articles here underwent substantive revisions as a result of such writer-reviewer exchanges and therefore already reflect a built-in dialogue among at least three or more individuals in the case of each article. All in all, a collective intellectual input into this issue is generated by seventy three scholars, including forty one co-authors, twenty-six reviewers, three book reviewers and three members of the editorial team. This is quite an extended network of scholars! We extend our sincere thanks to all those scholars for their contributions to our inaugural issue.

The submissions profiled in our inaugural issue represent the diversity of scholarly engagement in Canada as evidenced in the titles and abstracts of the essays. Our authors come from the health sciences, the arts, sociology, education, linguistics, policy studies, business, women and gender studies, psychology, biodiversity and environmental studies, and other scholarly areas. They speak about their work conducted in Canada and abroad, with various social groups, ethnic and indigenous communities. Most of them are university-based researchers; others are community-based co-authors while some are students, and yet others are firmly positioned in both academic and community worlds. All are united by their commitment to real community-driven partnerships and engaged scholarship (see the statistical overview of the first issue in the table below).

A single issue of our multidisciplinary journal, even if inaugural, by default cannot present all the complexity of Canadian community-engaged scholarship, neither can it provide a comprehensive overview of its history. Rather, with the publication of the first issue, we hope to initiate a sustained discussion on the meanings, applications, joys and challenges of doing engaged scholarly work in Canada and abroad, in local settings and global contexts. What is the relationship between the vibrant fields of engaged scholarship in Canada and the United States? Is there a productive dialogue between the Canadian practitioners of engaged scholarship and those outside of North America? What are the challenges in designing and executing a community-engaged collaborative work locally and in a global context, in uni-cultural or cross-cultural settings? How do engaged scholars address the imbalance in power relations in their work? What are the political implications of community-engaged research? What will drive Canadian engaged scholarship in the near future? We hope that our readers, be they Canadians or not, will become contributors and will offer their own reflections on these and other questions in the near future, by sharing their work and their ideas on the pages of our *Engaged Scholar Journal*.

Sincerely,

Natalia Khanenko-Friesen
The Editor

Table 1. Inaugural Issue Statistics**A. Authors and Submissions**

Authors and Co-Authors	
University-based	29
Community partners	12
Total	41

Article Submissions	
Original proposals for peer and editor review	22
Articles submitted for editor review	2
Articles submitted for peer review	13
Peer- reviewed articles accepted for publication	8
Book reviews submitted for editor review	3

Geographic Distribution (Corresponding Authors Only)	
Atlantic Canada:	
Eastern Canada:	6
<i>University of Guelph</i>	1
<i>Ryerson University</i>	2
<i>York University</i>	1
<i>Carleton University</i>	1
<i>NGOs</i>	1
Western Canada:	17
<i>University of Alberta</i>	4
<i>University of Saskatchewan</i>	7
<i>University of Victoria</i>	1
<i>Brandon University</i>	1
<i>University of British Columbia</i>	2
<i>University of British Columbia - Okanagan</i>	1
<i>NGO</i>	1
Total:	23

B. Peer-Reviewers and Peer-Reviewing

Peer-Reviewers	
Total invitations to peer review	82
Number of peer reviewers who accepted invitations	26

Geographical Distribution (Peer Reviewers)	
Atlantic Canada:	1
<i>University of New Brunswick</i>	1
Eastern Canada:	2
<i>University of Guelph</i>	1
<i>Lakehead University</i>	1
Western Canada:	20
<i>University of Alberta</i>	3
<i>St. Thomas More College</i>	1
<i>University of Saskatchewan</i>	10
<i>McEwan University</i>	3
<i>University of British Columbia</i>	1
<i>University of Victoria</i>	1
<i>Royal Roads</i>	1
Abroad:	3
<i>University of Brighton (United Kingdom)</i>	1
<i>University of Michigan (US)</i>	1
<i>Columbia University (US)</i>	1
Total:	26

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