



**Transcript of Plain Language Podcast:  
Community-Campus Engagement (CCE) Brokering,  
Partnership Tools, and Student Pathways to Engagement: An Environmental Scan**

**CCE BROKERING**

[Sounds of people chatting while eating]

In 2016, the CFICE team recruited Holly Stack-Cutler to develop a report titled *Community-Campus Engagement Brokering, Partnership Tools, and Student Pathways to Engagement: An Environmental Scan*. This report is the first output of Phase II of the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) Project. The report provides a breakdown of existing brokering mechanisms, processes, and tools that are used by communities, academics, and students involved in community-campus engagement work.

In this podcast, we provide an overview of the report's section on Community-Campus Engagement Brokering. This section of the report looks at different brokering models. In the CFICE context, a brokerage mechanism or model is an organization, person, tool, or platform that helps connect and support relationship development between community groups and academics.

For this section of the report, Stack-Cutler gathered information by attending some of CFICE's Brokering working group meetings, conducting interviews with brokers and working group members, and reviewing the academic literature on brokering.

Stack-Cutler explains that brokers are important in community-campus engagement work since they can both establish new relationships between partners, and also help partners mediate conflict and promote equity; this includes helping partners figure out how to share power and resources. Stack-Cutler explains that brokers are especially valuable because they can help maintain continuity and momentum in a partnership when staff changes occur in either group.

Overall, Stack-Cutler found 4 main types of brokering models that exist. These models include: 1. Community-based brokers which are research centres that may have non-profit or charitable status and exist independently of academic institutions. 2. Community-university based brokers, which include a combination of university and community members and although often housed at a university, provide services outside of academic institutions. 3. University-based brokers, such as science shops, service learning, and outreach partnership offices; and finally funder-based brokers such as Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Funder-based brokers are different from the other three in that they are very large in scale and mainly provide funding to facilitate brokerage.

Through her research, Stack-Cutler found that regardless of the brokerage model, brokers often face three main challenges. First, brokers can find it very difficult to balance between directing the partnership process, and letting others lead. Second, brokers often face a lack of, or limited, funding, which reduces their capacity to fully engage in their work. And third, brokers can experience additional issues with engaging with faculty members in community campus relationships and being vigilant about keeping the needs of the partners in mind.



Stack-Cutler did some more digging after discovering these challenges and found that they can be overcome in a number of ways. For example, brokers who build adequate infrastructure, such as developing a core planning team for their brokering model, can increase their capacity to engage in their brokerage efforts. Adequate infrastructure can also include physical and online platforms that help facilitate face-to-face meetings and provide the community with physical or online workspaces.

Brokers can also learn and practice applying different strategies and skills that increase their ability to balance between directing and letting others lead the partnership work they broker. For example, taking a community-first approach to brokering can help brokers focus on learning about a community partner's strengths and limitations before matching them with an academic partner. Understanding these strengths and limitations allow the brokers to find the most suitable academic partner for the community partner, which can help brokers achieve success. Stack-Cutler also found that encouraging partners to take the time to get to know each other and build trust is essential for a partnership to move forward successfully.

In the report, Stack-Cutler also points to some examples of brokerage groups that have taken extra steps to promote equality and social justice in community-campus partnerships. For example, some brokers have encouraged community partners to host the funding as opposed to it being held at the university. For brokers who usually charge for their services, some have removed membership fees or have offered different rates based on partners' incomes. Other brokers have tried to encourage participation by diverse stakeholders in the partnerships they broker, bringing individuals from the business sector, government, and funders to be part of these community-campus partnerships. And others have chosen to offer their services in locations that are more accessible to the community as opposed to offering them on a university campus. All these efforts strive to balance the power held by the partners in the community-campus relationships which the brokers facilitate.

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This plain language podcast is brought to you by the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement project, a 7-year action-research project that investigates how to improve community-campus partnerships. For more information, please visit our website at [carleton.ca/communityfirst/](http://carleton.ca/communityfirst/)

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