

**St. John's, Newfoundland, Roundtable
Memorial University
May 30, 2018**

Co-hosts: Robert Greenwood and Sandy Brennan (Memorial University)

Participants (10): Academic administrators (6), Faculty (3), Student(1), Government (1)

We would like to respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather, as the ancestral unceded homelands of the Beothuk and the island of Newfoundland as the ancestral unceded homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk.



Background/ Current events: Newfoundland and Labrador have two public postsecondary institutions: Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) and the College of the North Atlantic. MUN has a “special obligation” to the people of the province. At last reporting, there were 28 for-profit career colleges in the area (CICIC, 2018). MUN was the C2UExpo host in 2013 and is hosting the People, Place, and Public Engagement conference in Fall 2018, (<http://www.mun.ca/publicengagement/pppconference/>).

SOAR Summary

Strengths: As a small, isolated province with only one university, participants identified several strengths. First, they acknowledged the long history of partnerships between university (faculty, students, and alumni) and community. Benefits noted include interdisciplinarity, “ability to network quickly across sectors”, unique skills and resources, and the resilience, resourcefulness, and flexibility of the community. Other strengths include a distinct regional engagement with connections to national and international networks. Support for partnerships with community is provided for via resources, encouragement, infrastructure, and facilities at MUN. There is an overall support for partnerships and innovation and an increased willingness to try new approaches from the community and governments.

Opportunities: Involving students in community campus engagement presents the biggest opportunity in this province. Suggestions included solving community challenges through teaching and research, innovative curriculum and pedagogical approaches (Semester in Dialogue/LEAD program), field studies in engineering, and integrating the alumni relations office with the engagement office. Technology and emerging facilities were identified as an opportunities that could be taken advantage of; specifically, using technology to facilitate working together (online meetings), and working with the Battery Facility to create a

programming and technology hub. Several opportunities for enhancing and supporting the community/campus interface were identified: communications, strategic planning, grants & funding, less onerous ways of engaging, and doing more with less. A structural challenge that was identified is the divided highway running through MUN campus; though it was not clear how this could be turned into an opportunity.

Aspirations: Across the participants, there were four main aspirational themes. The biggest overarching aspiration was that “all students would graduate with a meaningful “community engagement” experience”. Process-focused aspirations in support of this theme included recommendations for showcasing oceans research, fostering “genuine” connections between education and careers, and building mindfulness capacities for students and faculty. A second theme is for MUN to be acknowledged as leaders in aid to communities at the local, regional, national and international levels. There was also a deep sense of shared responsibility, value, and obligation to communities to serve their needs. This also includes a hope that Aboriginal, rural, people with disabilities, and other marginalized communities see public engagement as a practical component of change. The third set of aspirations is around processes: to connect practitioners, recognize intersectional identities, recognize CCE in promotion and tenure for faculty, share mistakes, and to “share ideas and consider new approaches-- without fear of reprisal”. The fourth and final theme was to strengthen the connection to existing partners and build better ways of reaching out to others. In support of this theme, industry, community and governments have multiple bridges, relationships with MUN and social capital/trust is the norm.

Results: The results sought from community campus engagement were generally conveyed as metrics, dispositions, and resources needed. For metrics, participants noted that they might be able to readily provide these through indicators such as the numbers of students, faculty, partners, and partnership projects. Whereas, longer term impacts on communities, students, faculty, and particular community issues could be more challenging to determine and would require additional resources. Dispositions pointed to a more happy and vibrant culture, promoting a more open and less judgmental society, a more resilient and sustainable community, “[P]ublic & Universities are comfortable & motivated to work together”, willingness to consider new approaches, and a greater sense of civic engagement for students and alumni. Resources needed in order to support desired results were also identified. Some examples of resources mentioned include: funding, time, coordinated efforts, strategic planning, better flow of information sharing, space and facilities for events, programming for mutual information, support for honouring and sharing stories.