



UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
Partnership Consultation March 2020

Growing Together



Office of the President

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Dear community and industry partners,

Thank you very much for joining us at the University of Windsor Community Consultation Breakfast on March 6. A lot has happened since then, and we hope this message finds you and your family safe and well during these uncertain times. COVID-19 has been an enormously disruptive force for everyone, but we have been working hard to safeguard the health and safety of our people and our campus, in partnership with the broader Windsor-Essex community during this time of emergency. The challenges of COVID-19 have demonstrated more than ever the importance of community-university partnerships.

I am enclosing a report summarizing what we learned from the March consultation, and the steps we will be taking over the next year to identify what is working well, what needs work in collaboration with our community partners, and what kind of impact we want that work to have. We are extremely grateful for your honesty and insights – and for the commitment and effort you have already brought to this initiative.

Among the short-term goals we have established:

- Completing our self-study and benchmarking of community engagement by December 2020.
- Creating an online portal, online resource, and associated liaison for community partners by Fall 2021.
- Continuing to provide research and innovation support to our community to address new and diverse challenges presented because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Maintaining efforts in the Office of Experiential Learning to expand, extend, and stabilize placements in this period of economic uncertainty, including aggressive efforts to access public and private funding for placements.
- Continuing communication with stakeholders as this work unfolds.

We know there is still much to do, but we hope that the completed self-study will form the basis for a long-term plan that will be strategically focused on enhancing our role as a community engaged university. We look forward to working with you as those efforts unfold.

Thank you again for your many contributions to this work. Should you have any questions or comments on the report, please feel free to contact us at community@uwindsor.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Gordon, PhD

President and Vice-Chancellor

Partnership Consultation March 2020

Over the last few years, the University has been systematically reaching out to our community partners and working to document our internal practices related to community engagement. Among these projects are:

- the community consultations held in [2017](#) and [2019](#);
- participation in a provincial pilot of tracking procedures for courses that include experiential and community-based learning opportunities followed up by institutional initiatives to complete a full tracking of these offerings;
- the formation and work of the Partnership Steering Committee, through which four offices that play key roles in enhancing the University's capacity to sustainably engage with partners are working to extend their impact through collective action;
- participation in a multi-institutional project aimed at the development of a national community engagement framework for post-secondary institutions.



Our goal in these efforts is to engage both our campus community and our partners locally and around the world in dialogue and fact finding aimed at enhancing how we engage with our community and the kind of broader impact we can have in the community.

A current initiative that builds on these efforts is the University of Windsor's participation in the Carnegie Canadian Community Engagement (CCCE) pilot. In 2018, we were selected as one of sixteen institutions across Canada to participate in this pilot of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification framework in Canada. The decision to participate in this pilot project is one part of the University of Windsor's strategy to develop a more comprehensive understanding of its community engagement. As part of these efforts, the University of Windsor started the process of consulting with its community and industry partners at the Partnership Appreciation and Consultation Breakfast on March 6th, 2020. This consultation focused on two areas of concern regarding community-university partnerships: impact and goals.

A total of 75 individuals attended the event, which included 39 representatives from community and industry partners, 27 administrators, faculty, and staff from the University of Windsor as well as 9 university students. Consultations with four additional representatives from community, industry, and student partners who were unable to attend the event were conducted by email or Microsoft Teams. The meeting began with a brief presentation.



What You Said

During the event, the University of Windsor partners were asked to discuss two sets of questions.

Understanding the Impact of Community-University Partnerships

1. What are your key expectations from community-university partnerships? To what extent does UWindsor meet those expectations?
2. Where specifically do you see the University's impact in the community? What role does partnership play in those examples?
3. From your perspective, how have you seen partners and partnerships influencing practice and planning at the University? Or, how could it? Please provide examples!



Supporting Partnership Goals

1. What are your current and desired goals in partnering with the University?
2. What can the University do to make it easier to achieve your partnership goals?
3. What are the best, least burdensome, ways to get feedback and engage in dialogue with partners?
4. What would be the best ways to recognize and celebrate community-university partnerships?
5. What other issues, opportunities, or experiences do you want to make sure we are aware of?

Key Themes from the Consultation

In response to these questions, participants shared many valuable insights and examples. Some key themes that emerged from this discussion included the following:

Student involvement in the community is key.

- Partners want to see continued growth in the University's offerings for experiential learning as students bring fresh perspectives, energy, and new ideas to the workforce
- Partners hope to see more engagement from the University's alumni and more systematic approaches to fostering that engagement



Neighborhood engagement is important, and the University's involvement in the downtown core is valued.

- Partners want to see more reciprocal engagement with our neighbours (e.g., the downtown core and Windsor West)
- Partners want to see the University provide more leadership in urban renewal, citizen engagement and education, and the creative economy

There are many opportunities to enhance the impact of community-university partnership.

- Transparent and consistent messaging from the university on its priorities regarding community engagement
- An agile, neutral point of contact on campus (e.g., a "concierge" or "liaison") who works to understand partner needs, connects partners to the appropriate people at the University, and supports collaboration
- Increased knowledge mobilization and collaborative problem solving around complex urban and regional issues (e.g., transportation infrastructure, newcomer transitions, applied technologies, etc.)
- Greater systematic engagement from the university with our community and industry partners to promote opportunities for, to celebrate the impact of, and to recognize these partnerships



Where We Are Now: Community Engagement During COVID-19

During this uncertain time, the University of Windsor remains committed to the Windsor-Essex community, [our community](#). Our faculty, staff, students, and alumni have stepped up to donate [supplies](#) and [funding](#) to support the efforts of frontline workers at Windsor Regional Hospital. University of Windsor researchers have pivoted their [research](#) to work collaboratively with our partners to be at the forefront of research and innovation to combat COVID-19. These efforts include:

- Formulation of a novel [hand sanitizer](#), creation of new [tools](#) as well as the development of more effective and efficient [testing methods](#) to help combat COVID-19;
- Design and production of [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) and [hand-sewn masks](#);
- Investigation of the impact of COVID-19 on [small businesses](#) and [physical activity](#); and
- Examination of the possible [connections between vaping and complications from COVID-19](#), the use of [gaming elements to fight the spread of COVID-19](#), and the ability of [wastewater to be used as indicator of COVID resurgence](#).

Much of this work is funded by the [COVID-19 Rapid Response grant](#) offered through the interinstitutional health collaboration network of which UWindsor is a key player, WE-Spark, supported by the Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation (VPRI).

Furthermore, our faculty, staff, students, retirees, alumni, and partners have banded together to provide services within the Windsor-Essex community and beyond. These services have included:

- Providing [counselling](#) and [housing](#) to frontline workers;
- Supporting local businesses through the [EPICentre's Nimble Program](#);
- Offering [delivery services to seniors](#);
- Developing [educational resources for parents and teachers](#);
- Sharing nursing expertise in [First Nation Communities](#) and [US field hospitals](#); and
- Creating a COVID-19 [information hub](#).

We are fully committed to a long-term strategy that will enhance our partnerships with the community based on mutual exchange, reciprocity and relationships of trust and respect. The COVID-19 period has continued to reinforce for all of us how integral community partnership is to our mission, and how vital our collective and shared work is to the prosperity, health, and resilience of our community. We are grateful to all of you for your commitment and your many contributions to the community, which have been all the more necessary during these difficult times.

Next steps for community engagement at the University of Windsor

In the long term:

COVID has fostered a period of unprecedented change at the University, and the health, safety, and learning of students and our campus community are our top priorities. As the many decisions that now have to be made unfold, we look forward to a period where we will be able to more fully and strategically plan for the long term of how we will work in partnership with our community. We know we will have learned from everything that is happening, and we look forward to learning about your experiences as well.

We anticipate that by December 2020 we will have completed our current study and benchmarking of community engagement practice and scope at the University, and at that time we will be ready to begin preparing a long-term strategy that will include essential directions and observations that emerged from this partnership breakfast: you are key stakeholders in all the efforts we make.

In the short term:

A number of pressing concerns were identified that we feel we can begin to address now. These include:

- Completing our self-study and benchmarking of community engagement by December 15th, 2020
- Ongoing consultation with community-engaged faculty and staff as well as units who are tasked with community outreach to assess effective practices and key challenges and to learn from one another
- Creating an online portal with an associated liaison available by Fall 2021
- Constructing online resources focused on ways to connect with the institution, publically available within Fall 2021
- Maintaining efforts in the Office of Experiential Learning to expand, extend, and stabilize placements in this period of economic uncertainty, including aggressive efforts to access federal funding for placements
- Continuing to provide research and innovation support to our community to address new and diverse challenges being presented through the current COVID-19
- Pursuing guidance on best practices through [the national community engagement pilot](#)
- Continuing communication with stakeholders as this work unfolds

Thank you very much for your willingness to be part of this work. We look forward to continuing these efforts together.

Appendix

Contact Information for Faculty and Staff Facilitators by Table Number

Table Number	Facilitator(s)	Email Address
1	Ms. Heather Pratt	hpratt@uwindsor.ca
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4	Ms. Kerri Zold	kzold@uwindsor.ca
5	Ms. Kristen Morris	Kristen.Morris@uwindsor.ca
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To tell us more about your partnership with the University of Windsor, please contact our team at community@uwindsor.ca!