



Community Service Learning

Based in Edmonton, Alberta
2005-2009

Proposal to the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation

From the University of Alberta

In partnership with the Edmonton Chamber for Voluntary Organizations

December 15, 2004



Request Cover Sheet	
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Amount requested:	Dollar amount/number of years/specific start date
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of purpose of the funding request, including background of CSL pilot projects 2. Five year vision, plan and objectives for CSL at the U of A 3. Long term impact and sustainability of CSL at the U of A 4. Accountability to and recognition of the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation 5. Appendices

Overview and Introduction

Community Service-Learning (CSL) at the University of Alberta is poised to grow in exciting new directions, while strengthening the course-based service-learning activities which began two years ago in the Faculty of Arts. The program development plans reflect long-term goals of CSL to:

- maximize benefit to community organizations
- build knowledge about challenges faced by contemporary communities with emphases on diversity and global change
- create closer links between community service, research and teaching; and
- translate student experiences into long-term community engagement and leadership.

With support from the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, the University of Alberta's five-year plan for CSL reflects a two-pronged approach to realizing these goals: First, the University will focus on specific initiatives that tap into existing strengths at the University of Alberta and proven partnerships with community organizations. Second, the U of A will encourage innovations among faculty, administration, students, researchers and community partners which extend the program's vision. With this approach, the CSL program at the University of Alberta will develop its own unique contributions to knowledge in Canada about service-learning as an alternative academic model *and* community practice.

The CSL Program will draw upon and enhance several core features of the University of Alberta's academic and community activities. Our foci on critical understanding of diversity and global processes, and on strengthened community-based ties between research and teaching, build not only on the community partnerships thus far developed in the pilot CSL program, but also on the expertise within the University of Alberta including but not limited to: the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP); the International Centre; the Prairie Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration; the Parkland Institute; specializations in Globalization within the Political Science and Sociology departments; the campus-wide "Research Makes Sense for Students" initiative; the Theoretical, Cultural, and International program of Educational Policy Studies; community-based learning and research projects in the Circumpolar Institute, Indigenous Peoples Education, and Health Promotion Studies; and the newly developed Office of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Faculty of Arts.

Vision for CSL at the University of Alberta

Five years from now, the CSL Program will build on this strong foundation of intra-university and university-community partnerships to:

- extend service-learning to courses across the Faculty of Arts with at least twenty-five different courses across ten departments
- support the innovation of new CSL courses, such as: courses about CSL itself, interdisciplinary and inter-Faculty courses, courses initiated by student and/or community interest, community-based research courses, courses specifically attending to international students and/or international issues, courses co-designed by faculty and community partners, and courses that tap the diverse knowledge and experience found among local community partners and members
- create new mechanisms for students, faculty, and community organizations to collaboratively design and carry out research projects that directly respond to communities' capacity and service needs, while simultaneously providing a training ground for students

- extend student service-learning experiences into employment, leadership, and community engagement beyond graduation in conjunction with the University's Career and Placement Services (CAPS)
- contribute to knowledge about innovative service-learning models, especially in the areas of research and teaching, critical explorations of diversity and globalization, and the impact of service-learning as students transition from school to work
- embed service-learning values and standards into the administrative structure of the university (e.g., annual reviews, catalog descriptions, programs of study, research ethics and research opportunities)

Background

The CSL Pilot Project at the University of Alberta: Successes and Challenges

The CSL Program was not built from scratch, and its future success will depend on innovations that respond to existing strengths. As the University of Alberta moves forward with CSL, it will continue to strengthen and create new ties with programs that share a commitment to innovative learning and to serving the needs of diverse communities through community-university partnerships.

The pilot phase of the formal CSL Program was itself built on existing community-based practices. Examples that pre-date the official CSL Program include:

- Drama courses in local and international participatory action theatre
- A visual communication design course in which students consult community groups regarding design problems that affect the lives of people
- A Psychology course where students do evaluative research on issues generated by community organizations
- An internship program very successfully integrated into the curriculum in the Department of Human Ecology.

The objectives and programs outlined in the proposal are inspired by accomplishments and challenges the CSL Program has encountered during the two-year pilot project. With modest amounts of funding from the University of Alberta Senate, the Faculty of Arts and the Sociology Department, the CSL Program began in fall 2003 with forty students in three different sociology courses volunteering at eight community organizations. It has expanded in 2004-05 to involve six courses in five departments of the Faculty of Arts, and twenty-five community partners. (See Appendix IV for a list of CSL courses to date.)

Under the direction of Professor Sara Dorow, with assistance from volunteer Professor Emeritus Dr. Charles Beck and a part-time graduate assistant, the CSL Program has built a network of interest and support, starting with a unique partnership with the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations and extending to a broad array of community organizations, Faculties and programs across the University. CSL has seen students organize an exhibit of art by marginalized youth, teach Taichi to senior citizens, develop materials for an Igbo language club, and show up every Saturday to cook and serve meals to people living on the street.

The CSL Program celebrates these successes, even as it faces challenges familiar to any service-learning program: finding service opportunities that are meaningful and useful for both students and community partners, yet necessarily limited in time and scope; providing the support and knowledge necessary to maximizing the integration of CSL with coursework; and regularly maintaining and supporting committed partnerships between participating organizations and the university.

For example, while all community partners in the pilot program enthusiastically said they would participate again, and indeed have done so in fall 2004, most wished they could spare more time to mentor service-learning students and better understand the expectations of the course. By the same token, 75% of students said they would definitely take another CSL course, and all agreed that service learning experiences helped them “think critically about the social contexts of community issues and relationships,” yet they gave more mixed reviews of understanding the relationship between course material and service-learning experiences.

As a result of this feedback and experience, the University appreciates the precise administrative and programmatic steps which must be taken to develop a thriving program beneficial to all participants. More specifically:

Faculty need not only incentives to participate, but training and support for doing so effectively. Working with courses in which CSL is an optional component, receiving infrastructural support for CSL innovations, gaining professional recognition for CSL, and having access to general and content-specific models of experiential and reflective learning are some of the key areas targeted for improvement.

Students need every opportunity to not only learn about the everyday work of community partners but also to “think between” the classroom and the community, and be empowered to embrace a new model of learning. Nurturing cohorts of students who together critically explore their service-learning experiences is crucial to the strength of the current program and to the long-term reverberations of CSL in their lives beyond the university.

Community partners must be supported as co-contributors to the learning experience of students *and* to determining how CSL can best benefit their organizations and clients. This requires from the CSL Program an effective balance of training for and learning from community partners.

As emphasized above, collaboration and communication are keys to bringing the full benefit of CSL to bear on both the University of Alberta and the communities around it.

The next five years of CSL:

The five year vision for CSL can be broken down into nine broad areas of development:

1. Community University Partnership
2. Staff and Structure development
3. Embedding CSL in the University of Alberta Academic Plan and Infrastructure
4. Training and Leadership
5. Encouraging Innovation
6. Understanding Globalization and Diversity
7. Integrating Teaching and Research through Service Learning
8. University of Alberta Service Learning Clearinghouse
9. Immersion CSL: Reading Week
10. Knowledge Development and Evaluation

With support from the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation, the University of Alberta is confident that CSL will be an established, high profile and attractive program. Specific program objectives are outlined under each category.

1) Community-University Partnership

Partnership with the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)

ECVO is a unique umbrella organization with a mandate to develop knowledge about and for the voluntary sector, promote the value of volunteerism, and build the capacity of not-for-profit organizations in the Edmonton metropolitan area. By forming a collaborative partnership with ECVO in fall 2004, our CSL Program has strived to ensure that local community partners have an independent participatory voice in CSL. Not only has the University agreed to sharing space with ECVO in the CSL House (at the edge of the U of A campus, overlooking the Northern Saskatchewan River), but ECVO has applied for funding from the Edmonton Community Foundation for a half-time Liaison that will articulate community partners' volunteer, research, and capacity needs to CSL and to the University more generally, and coordinate community participation in mentorship and evaluation of student placements. Funding from the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation will provide seed money toward supporting the co-educational role of community participants in CSL, even as ECVO will seek ways for community partners to contribute to CSL.

Both partners are eager to put this model of collaboration into practice starting in January 2005. Already, ECVO has helped the CSL Program identify areas in which community partners to CSL need training and support in serving as co-educators of students, and has pointed to the need for voluntary sector administrators to have access to knowledge about current theories and methods in the social sciences.

ECVO will consult with the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations, based at Grant MacEwan College, to develop volunteer management and educator training for community partners. Throughout this proposal, reference to "the CSL Program" implies collaboration between the University and ECVO.

Service-Learning Partner Organizations

The CSL Program has partnered with some twenty-five community organizations in Edmonton (see Appendix III), and has made a conscious effort to include organizations that range from small and grassroots to large and firmly institutionalized. Partnerships have been driven by the content and intent of new CSL courses in Arts, but have also been generated by student or community interests. In fall 2004, for example, the addition of a CSL course in Endangered Languages spurred an effort to partner with several Aboriginal organizations. Finally, while the CSL Program initially focused exclusively on opportunities outside the university campus, we soon realized that the distinction between "community" and "university" could not be so clearly made. Therefore, CSL has created a limited number of partnerships with several organizations based in the Students' Union that have networks that cross this boundary (e.g., the Environmental Coordination Office for Students), and/or that understand the university as a community with its own diverse sets of needs and concerns (e.g. the Women's Centre).

Specific volunteer opportunities for students are worked out in a deliberative process between the course instructor and the community supervisor, facilitated by CSL Program staff and volunteers. As we have done with the pilot project, the CSL Program will hold workshops at least twice a year in which both faculty and community partners receive training, provide feedback to each other about course plans, and take part in an evaluative focus group. (See below for further information on community partner involvement in evaluation.)

Through collaboration with ECVO, CSL partnerships will increasingly be driven as much by projects and capacity needs identified by community partners, as by course objectives identified by faculty members. The CSL Program will then operate on a model of “matching” community needs to service-learning courses and activities, and/or creating new opportunities for meeting those needs. This is in keeping with the dialectic between learning and service—between simultaneous benefit to students and community—that lies at the heart of CSL.

University-Wide Network for Experiential Education

CSL proposes to take the lead in establishing a flexible network of experiential learning programs across the University of Alberta campus. While CSL is distinct from internships and co-op programs in emphasizing a culture of service, many forms of experiential education overlap in the areas of pedagogical framing and community networking. It has become clear that faculty participants from across campus would benefit from a university-wide network that seeks to share information and coordinate efforts where appropriate. Community partners have noted that such a network would be beneficial to them as well, especially if it streamlines their contacts and partnerships with the University.

By the end of Year One, the CSL Program will, with the help of a student research assistant, conduct an inventory of community-focused learning and research opportunities for students at the University of Alberta, and by Year Two, initiate the formation of the university-wide network. In the long-term, this network will serve to nurture CSL initiatives in departments across campus.

2) CSL Staff and Structure Development

Leadership

The growth and development of the CSL Program at the University of Alberta depends on a sustainable staff infrastructure. At minimum, the program requires a full-time Program Director to oversee the day-to-day operation of core and special initiatives, along with administrative support. The Program Director will be someone with experience working and forming networks in the voluntary sector in Edmonton, and ideally someone with some expertise in university-based experiential learning. He or she will be hired in winter 2005, will report to the Associate Dean (Academic) of Arts, and will work closely with the ECVO Community Liaison and the CSL Faculty Director.

Given that CSL involves curricular and research activities at the University, it is also crucial that a faculty member in Arts (where CSL is based) devote some time to the development and direction of the CSL Program. The University of Alberta has pledged funds to cover a course release each term for the Faculty Director and the Faculty of Arts has agreed to fund part-time administrative support to the Program.

The University proposes joint support of the Program Director position, cost shared equally between the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation and the University of Alberta over the five-year funding period.

Funding Request: to share costs of the Program Director

Research Assistants

A series of initiatives over the five years will benefit from as well as enhance the junior scholarship of undergraduate and graduate Research Assistants. CSL will hire and mentor undergraduate and graduate assistants to support and/or carry out specific initiatives, including the university-wide

inventory of experiential learning and community-based research projects described above, as well as the coordination of the International House and Aboriginal colleges service-learning programs, support to the development of innovative CSL courses and research projects, and programs devoted to mentoring undergraduate leadership in community service.

Graduate students will be recruited according to their skills and research interests, and in conjunction with faculty and programs affiliated with CSL. The Department of Educational Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education has already indicated interest in linking its graduate students (e.g., in Theoretical, Cultural, and International Education, and in Adult Education) to such initiatives in CSL. The CSL Program will also take advantage of the unique skills of graduate students in the Humanities Computing Program in Arts, a program that is interested in integrating service-learning.

Funding Request: for graduate student Research Assistants and/or undergraduate student assistants

Resources, Supplies and Space

A common space and two offices in a university-owned house have been designated for CSL usage. The University will further provide furnishings, equipment, and supplies to the physical maintenance of the CSL Program. Foundation funding will support the purchase of two computer systems—one for the Program Director, another for the use of volunteers and part-time graduate research assistants to the CSL Program.

Funding Request: for specified resources, supplies, and/or space

Governance

The CSL Program will continue to be advised by a committee comprised of university faculty and administrators, community representatives, and a delegate of the University of Alberta Senate (see Appendix II). Beginning in 2005, CSL will make two significant changes to the Advisory Committee. First, it will be co-chaired by a university and a community representative. Second, two student representatives will be invited to join the advisory committee: one from the ranks of students who have completed a CSL course and the other from student-run volunteer organizations based on campus (e.g., Alberta Public Interest Research Group, the Environmental Coordination Office for Students, or the Women's Centre).

3) Embedding CSL in the University Academic Plan and Infrastructure

Enhancing Existing Programs: the Course based Core of CSL

Over the next five years, the CSL Program is committed to expanding the number and quality of course-based CSL opportunities for students. Finding concrete ways to integrate support of CSL into the University structure is crucial to solidifying the course-based core of CSL, and thus to building innovations upon its successes.

Such concrete steps have the added effect of making university practices more responsive to multiple communities. Making funds available for faculty, students, and community partners to develop service-learning activities, and to open doors to the two-way development of knowledge, is the clearest signal of this transformation. In addition, the CSL Program will work in partnership with University administration to carry out the following procedural changes:

- Develop clear protocols for rewarding service-learning in annual reviews of faculty members.
- Develop mechanisms for encouraging departments to dedicate funds to support service-learning in their departments, through, for example, a Matching Funds program.
- Develop clear and practical guidelines for the ethics review of student participation in local community-based research.
- Seek to form a University-wide advisory committee dedicated to developing guidelines for assessing the impact and outcomes of publicly engaged university activities.

4) Training and Leadership

Students

Individual CSL courses by themselves are central but inadequate to the task of more fully nurturing a culture of critical engagement across the spheres of community and university. The CSL Program seeks to better integrate service-learning experiences into overall student development, with particular focus on a series of service-based training and leadership opportunities. Several concrete plans are underway including:

Specialized CSL Courses: The Faculty of Arts has recently added a “CSL” designator to its course listings, and has approved the development of CSL 300: Communities, Universities, and Knowledge. It is slated to be offered in winter 2006, co-taught by a professor in Arts and a local leader in the community (who receives an honorarium for doing so). The course will allow students to continue their community volunteer experience while further exploring issues such as the relationship between academic and experiential “ways of knowing,” structural and cultural challenges to community-based action and service, theories of social citizenship, methods of community-based inquiry, etc. The CSL designator will allow for the development of other for-credit CSL opportunities, such as the International House course described below.

Service-Learning Certificate: As some universities in the United States have done, the Faculty of Arts plans by Year Four to create a “community service scholar” designator that may appear on the transcripts of students who have taken at least three CSL courses plus CSL 300 (and/or who have served as mentors in the CSL Program). Long term, the CSL Program plans to develop a Community Studies minor built on this model. The CSL Program will explore ways to link this kind of sustained CSL curriculum to honors programs and/or capstone courses in Arts.

Community Leadership Training: Junior Board Members: CSL students are poised to extend their firsthand experience with community organizations into life-long involvement in volunteer community service, including in a leadership capacity. The CSL Program is in conversation with the Career and Placement Services (CaPS) offices at the University of Alberta to develop senior-level leadership training. By Year Three, we plan to implement a program that screens, prepares, and mentors senior students in Arts (and eventually other Faculties) who would like the opportunity to serve for one year as intern members on the boards of local community partners. The program will be supported by workshops offered by CaPS, and in consultation with the RCVO at Grant MacEwan College.

Service-Learning Mentorship: By the end of Year Two, the CSL Program will begin a pilot program that provides CSL students the opportunity to mentor and encourage the creative involvement of other students in service-learning. Individual graduate or undergraduate students will, for example,

be trained to provide outreach to students in a particular CSL course, to help introduce students to CSL, perhaps visit them in their sites, and serve as an informal contact and information source. Mentors will also have special involvement in Reading Week or International House initiatives. Again, this training will be developed in consultation with CaPS, RCVO, and/or ECVO.

Promotion and preparation for CSL for students: The CSL Program has to date prepared students for CSL through written materials, brief classroom visits, and providing resources to their instructors and community supervisors. We are now ready to implement more creative and in-depth programs for introducing students to the practicalities of serving in the voluntary sector, such as forms of communication and the mutual obligations of volunteering. There is an impressive body of resources available through organizations such as Campus Compact and the newly formed Canadian Association for Community Service-Learning. The task of the CSL Program at the University of Alberta is to adapt these as necessary to local concerns. One area of interest to the CSL Program is developing a series of modules that addresses working with people marginalized by race, class, gender, and other social inequities. “Helping students be comfortable with being uncomfortable” is how one CSL instructor put it recently, when he learned that students seemed to be shying away from choosing placements at Aboriginal organizations.

CSL plans to focus on ways in which to collaborate with community partners to develop creative approaches to supporting “boundary crossing” in student service-learning. A collaborative approach will respond to the increasing demand for cultural knowledge on the part of community partners as well—a recent request from local community organizations to ECVO for a series of diversity workshops is a case in point.

Community Partners

Workshop Series: Over the next few years, ECVO will take the lead in the collaborative development of mentorship training, volunteer supervision support, and workshops in service-learning preparedness (diversity, understanding city and community, etc.). Larger community partners (such as Catholic Social Services) will be asked to provide space. Of particular interest is providing cost replacement and specialized training to small organizations that have no volunteer infrastructure in place and yet are enthusiastic about partnering with CSL, as is true of several of our current partners.

University Coursework for Community Partner Administrative Staff: The CSL Program is committed to increasing access to the full range of university resources for local community organizations. One small but powerful goal is to develop a mechanism for designating spots in selected graduate courses in fields ranging from Political Science to Psychology, for community partner administrators. This will serve as a form of staff development for community partners, help them better understand ways in which current university-based knowledge might intersect with community needs, and invite their own wealth of knowledge into the university classroom.

One priority of the CSL program must be to support the ability of community organizations to participate in and take full advantage of service-learning partnerships and student engagement. We thus plan to implement a modest Capacity Building Fund to which community partners can apply. Already we have identified two possible areas for specific funding.

First it is apparent that there is some need for basic equipment and supplies that support the complete range of volunteer skills. For example, in winter 2005, students in a Faculty of Arts’ Humanities Computing course are using their design and web skills to complete specific projects identified by community partners. We have discovered that using these skills to full capacity may require software support for some of the participating community organizations.

Second, we also want to be prepared to help organizations who work with student volunteers with disabilities, such as having TTY capability in place.

Funding Request: for direct and indirect costs for training and consultation with community partners (honoraria, consulting fees, transportation, stipends for mentors, support to small organizations, etc.)

Faculty

Web-based resources for CSL: Faculty need not only the reward incentives and time to participate in CSL, but access to and training with the pedagogical tools associated with CSL. The CSL Program will work with Academic Technologies for Learning, as well as the Humanities Computing Program, to develop usable web-based resources for Faculty such as ideas for building in reflective activities and models for developing content-specific CSL syllabi (web site described further below).

Faculty Mentors: The CSL Program will also by Year Three develop a *faculty mentor* category for CSL faculty who have experience with CSL and can be available as resource and support people to other individual faculty within their own or a cluster of departments. Faculty who are new to CSL come to an *orientation workshop* offered before the start of every term, and as indicated below the CSL Program will offer an annual *mini-conference* focused on specific “advanced” topics and innovations in CSL pedagogy. Two keys to supporting faculty involvement in CSL—resources for developing CSL innovations in courses, and incentives for linking CSL to research interests—are outlined below.

5) Encouraging Innovation Fund:

The CSL Program will by the middle of Year One establish an Innovation Fund to which faculty can apply for up to \$8,000 to develop an innovative course which:

- Links their own or community research interests to teaching through CSL
- Enhances community participation and development
- Creates avenues for the critical understanding of diversity and global process, and/or
- More effectively uses technology to support service-learning.

The funds could be used to cover costs of technical assistance to develop a course, for a course buy-out, to provide honoraria to community members who participate, or to hire extra teaching assistance. The CSL Program will form a committee representing both university and community to adjudicate these Innovation Awards.

Funding Request: to support a specified number of innovative courses

6) Understanding Globalization and Diversity

Within the Faculty of Arts, programs and personnel in Political Science (Peace and Governance, and Globalization and Governance programs), Sociology (Globalization focus), Drama, Anthropology, Women’s Studies, Linguistics, East Asian Studies, and Middle Eastern and African Studies all have an interest in CSL as a way to link education about global issues to local contexts. It makes sense to build on these strengths, and at the same time to contribute to knowledge about CSL in an under-researched area. In other words, some of the programs outlined here will provide for students the opportunity to learn about global linkages to local and national Canadian contexts (immigrant and

refugee issues, transnational movements and organizations, global flows of material and cultural resources, environmental problems and solutions, uniquely Canadian approaches and responses to development both locally and internationally, multiculturalism and indigenous peoples), and provide for researchers the opportunity to study the viability of various models for doing so.

The CSL Program will gradually implement several experience-based initiatives for learning about globalization and diversity, including right here in Edmonton, linking strengths in the Faculty of Arts to strengths in other parts of the University.

International House: service-learning pairings in the global education program:

The International House at the University of Alberta is the first Canadian house that is a member of the International House Worldwide Association. With a capacity of 154 students, the house is built on a model of building community and understanding between Canadian and international students, and strives for a balance of 60% international students and 40% domestic students. A program of global and intercultural education is built into its mandate.

CSL proposes a community service program that places pairs of students—one Canadian and one international—in a local volunteer opportunity, supported by weekly or bi-weekly workshops and presentations focused on deliberative reflection. The program promises a richer understanding of local issues for both Canadian and international students, and through a lens that stretches reflection internationally and cross-culturally.

While the program will start with a pilot that is not necessarily for credit, the CSL Program will aim to create a for-credit course by Year Three under the newly created CSL course designator. The course will ideally be facilitated by a faculty member or advanced graduate student, and will invite in community experts and members as presenters and/or take groups of students to the community. There is also potential here to tie this program into the successful International Week activities (see below) and/or Reading Week intensive experiential learning.

Health Promotion Partnerships with Aboriginal Colleges:

Health Promotion Studies at the University of Alberta has recently partnered with three Aboriginal colleges in Alberta to develop a health promotion studies program built on service-learning. Their recent Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Community University Research Alliance (CURA) proposal was entitled “Building Capacity for Health Promotion in Aboriginal Communities.” Human Ecology and the Centre for Health Promotion Studies are eager to work with the CSL Program to develop service-learning models that will place Aboriginal students in their own communities as both students and practitioners of health promotion.

Already in winter 2005, graduate students from a Humanities Computing course at the University of Alberta will begin to mentor students from one of these colleges in using web design tools for health promotion in their community. Most of the mentoring will occur on-line, but the CSL Program will use a part of its existing modest budget to pay costs for one on-site visit early in the semester. As this program grows, CSL will work closely with the Centre for Health Promotion Studies, its three partner colleges, and the Indigenous Education program in the Faculty of Education to research and develop service-learning approaches appropriate to the unique concerns of Aboriginal students volunteering in their own communities. The CSL Program will devote funds from its Research Assistant pool to support this effort, and will in turn benefit through if the CURA application is successful.

Peace and Governance Program:

The Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta is working with interested community groups in Edmonton to develop a program in Peace and Governance. The program is interested in developing course-based internships in the area of international peace and governance for both undergraduate and graduate students, and in linking with CSL to do so. Also among its plans are to require students to complete at least one CSL course for the Peace and Governance specialization in Political Science. This partnership between CSL and the Peace and Governance program is an exciting opportunity that will likely bring matching funds to new initiatives in CSL by 2006.

7) Integrating Research and Teaching through Service-Learning

Enhancing undergraduate research has been an important focus in the past year at the U of A. The Research Profile Project, launched in 2003 at the U of A, with the theme “Research Makes Sense for Students,” gives priority to demonstrating the positive impact of research on students and on the external community, and to both acknowledge and expand research opportunities for students. Its first objective states: “campus community, students, external community, and government will recognize the importance of research and teaching together at a university.”

The report on undergraduate research experiences in the Faculty of Arts notes that 1) Arts faces the difficulty of fewer small classes, a useful vehicle for making teaching-research links for students 2) Arts faculty tend to work in isolation rather than in teams 3) in Fine Arts, many undergrads are involved in creative and performance activities that must be considered as equivalent to research. The report highlights the CSL program as an important new avenue toward integrating community-focused research and service with teaching in the Faculty of Arts.

Indeed, one important direction for the CSL Program is to make service-learning a significant avenue for creating research opportunities that are useful to local communities, and for encouraging faculty to integrate these opportunities with their teaching. Already, three separate grant applications at the University of Alberta have integrated CSL components; in addition to the Health Promotion and Peace and Governance programs mentioned, Dr. Sara Dorow has integrated service-learning opportunities into the qualitative research section of a CURA grant request on Sustainable Rural Communities.

Community University Partnership (CUP) for the Study of Children Youth and Families Program:

The CUP Program is an admirable model of a research partnership between community and university. It is an interdisciplinary institute dedicated to research, policy, and practice in the areas of children, youth, and families. CUP brings experience in community partnerships, a deep network of local ties, expertise in community-based research methods, and commitment to responding to research needs identified by community organizations.

CUP is interested in working with the CSL program to link its collaborative research projects to both faculty teaching opportunities and student service opportunities. For example, a new project at CUP has brought a team of university researchers and community practitioners to designing development testing appropriate to the experiences and needs of pre-school immigrant children. CUP is interested in partnering with faculty members teaching senior-level courses in Arts (e.g., in Sociology, Psychology, or Art & Design) to create opportunities for students to volunteer at local daycare centers while acting as informal participant observers for the project. Finally, CUP is developing a certificate in Community-Based Research for graduate students, and is interested in making research mentorship of undergraduates a component of the certificate program.

By Year Three, the CSL Program will collaborate with CUP to develop a program whereby graduate students mentor CSL students in developing research projects in conjunction with their experiential service-learning. Faculty members in Arts might apply to the Innovation Fund to match funding to grad students who mentor CSL students.

Undergraduate Student Research Award

Each year, the Faculty of Arts awards \$5,000 each to 15 students for a full-time summer research project under the tutelage of a faculty supervisor. It is worth noting that 3 of the 15 faculty supervisors in summer 2004 are also faculty involved in CSL courses in 2004-2005. In promoting this award, the Faculty of Arts will especially encourage research that responds to identified needs in a local community, and will strive by Year Two to designate two or three of the 15 awards toward service-learning projects.

8) Community-Based Research Clearinghouse:

Because the CSL Program works closely with community partners to “match” service-learning opportunities to particular courses, it is uniquely positioned to facilitate communication between community partners and the university regarding *research* needs and interests. By Year Four of the funding period, the CSL Program will draw on the experiences of small-scale research collaborations carried out in previous years to develop a formalized mechanism for linking faculty and student researchers with community partners, around community-based research needs identified by one or the other, but worked out collaboratively.

On the university side, this will entail a combination of web-based and personal networking, as well as working closely with the Research Profile Project, the Research Services Office and Undergraduate Teaching Services to normalize the inclusion of local community-based research in the delivery of research and teaching. On the community side, this will necessitate the streamlining of research ideas and needs, with ECVO acting as conduit to the University.

An advisory group of students, faculty, and community members experienced in community-based research collaboration will be formed by the conclusion of Year Three to develop a series of recommendations for establishing the Research Clearinghouse, and to seek long-term funding for it.

Funding Request: for seed money in Years 4-5 to research, design, and initiate the creation of the clearinghouse (to hire graduate assistance in writing grants, support community partner participation, expand the web site, etc.)

9) Immersion CSL: Reading Week

By Year Two, CSL will initiate its first intensive experiential learning opportunity during winter term Reading Week (at the end of February each year) whereby a group of 25-30 students takes part in an immersion service-learning experience: half of each day is devoted to the volunteer project, and the other half is devoted to teach-ins and workshops led by community members.

By Year Three, then, the University of Alberta will be ready to participate in exchanges with other *Project Serve Canada* participating universities (e.g., University of Guelph, UBC, St. Francis Xavier) in which groups of students from each university “trade places.” The U of A will be especially interested by Year Four in specializing in a Reading Week theme that ties a local community project to transnational political, social, and economic issues, for example, through links to the Peace and

Governance program and/or the International Week programming offered every year in January by the International Centre.

The University of Alberta will also in future consider offering a Reading Week experience that includes a participatory research component linked to a larger community-based research project through, for example, CUP or the Drama Department's expertise in community and popular theatre.

Funding Request: in Years 2-5 for graduate assistants, honoraria to community members and faculty participants, group meals, local transportation

10) Knowledge Development & Dissemination

Evaluation of and knowledge about the CSL Program

Evaluation procedures will build on the foundational approach taken in the pilot program, which consisted of written evaluations completed by all participants in CSL courses - faculty, community partners, and students, including students choosing not to do service-learning in CSL-optional courses - at the close of each term, as well as an annual evaluative focus group involving community partners and faculty instructors. Beginning in 2005, students who have taken a CSL course in the past will be invited to take part in their own evaluative focus group.

Evaluation via the University of Alberta's Academic Technologies for Learning: CSL

Pedagogies and Innovations: Useful evaluation is a continual process of asking what we wish to accomplish, and what we need to know to accomplish it. Dr. Stanley Varnhagen heads up an expert team in Academic Technologies for Learning that practices evaluation as a long-term collaborative process, and offers its services to the University community. Dr. Varnhagen has been a leader in assessing educational innovations such as large tutorial-based courses and creative uses of web-based learning enhancements in the Faculty of Arts and across the University.

Under his direction, Academic Technologies for Learning is eager to work with the CSL Program to develop a process of evaluation built on action research in CSL. Of particular interest is the opportunity to work with teams of students, community partners, and faculty to build knowledge in the specific arenas identified by the CSL Program: critical understanding of diversity and globalization, the integration of research-teaching-service, and the viability of building community capacity through service-learning.

In Years One and Two, an intensive exploration of collaborative evaluation will be conducted across a few CSL courses selected on the basis of their varying pedagogical approaches to service-learning. Knowledge gained in these first two years will segue into the development of a more comprehensive process for ongoing evaluation of CSL in Years three to five. This effort will be enhanced through consultation with the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations at Grant MacEwan College, especially in regard to evaluating the experiences of community partners in CSL.

Funding Request: for a Graduate Student Evaluation Coordinator

Landrex-funded Study of Student Outcomes: One of the members of the CSL Advisory Board, Dr. Harvey Krahn, specializes in the study of school-work transitions, the role of the liberal arts in the new economy, and related post-secondary education issues. Dr. Krahn has committed to using some of the research funds he recently received when appointed as the Landrex Distinguished Professor in the Faculty of Arts (see Appendix V for a description of the Professorship) to design and conduct evaluations of the U of A CSL program.

The short-term written evaluations already administered to students by the CSL Program will assess initial satisfaction with and learning from the CSL experience. Longer-term evaluations, in the form of qualitative interviews conducted up to three years after a CSL course, will focus on the broader community and labour market benefits of CSL participation, both from the perspective of former students and the organizations in which they volunteered. Dr. Krahn's research funds will be used to design and pilot-test the longitudinal evaluative study in 2005-2006.

Support from the J. W McConnell Family Foundation will cover the costs of the long-term follow-up interviews with former CSL participants and representatives of the organizations in which they volunteered. Most of the research funds will be used to support graduate students in participating Arts departments who will conduct the evaluation under Dr. Krahn's supervision.

Funding Request: for Years 3-5 only

Knowledge Dissemination

Annual workshops: The CSL Program will coordinate one annual mini-conference focused on presentations and workshops on service-learning innovations and experiences at the U of A, and which encourages co-presentations by faculty, students, and community partners. If at all possible, it will be held in conjunction with ECVO's annual conference (their first such event in fall 2004 was ably assisted by four CSL students). In some years, an outside speaker may be brought in using funds available through the University and in cooperation with interested departments and faculties. The annual gathering will also provide the opportunity for a focus group component, e.g., qualitative evaluation of CSL experiences, from immediate past participants in CSL. Innovative models and research findings presented at this conference will contribute to the journal that will accompany the CSL Annual Report (see below), and will be included on the CSL web site.

CSL Web Site: The CSL Web Site will be linked to the Faculty of Arts, Student Services, Career and Placement Services, Undergraduate Teaching Services, the U of A Home Page, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, and to the Canadian Association for Community Service-Learning web site as well as related on-line resources (such as Campus Compact). It will serve as a source of information about developments in the University of Alberta CSL program, community-based learning opportunities for students and faculty, university-based learning opportunities for community partners, resources and models for service-learning pedagogy and practice, and opportunities for publishing and knowledge dissemination.

The University of Alberta is fortunate to have several excellent sources of support in such an endeavour, most notably the Academic Technologies for Learning office and the Humanities Computing program. A primary goal of the web site will be to use the expertise of these programs to develop creative interfaces for the use of the web site that will make it an enjoyable and easily searchable site for students, faculty, and community organizations. The CSL Program will enlist the services of Humanitech, a non-profit group formed by faculty and students in the Humanities Computing program, to develop and maintain the CSL web site. The CSL Program already has links to Humanities Computing; in winter 2005, one introductory graduate course in Humanities Computing will involve students in helping to design web and print publications for several local community partners.

Funding Request: for Year 1 for design and implementation of web site and in Years 2 -5 for maintenance and development of the site

CSL Newsletter: The CSL Program will, in addition to the web site, publish a hard copy and on-line version of a newsletter twice per year, and once per year publish an annual report. Since enlivening CSL for a broad group of community members, students, and faculty is crucial to developing a learning culture that values service to the community, the Program will also publish with its annual report a readable journal-style summary of research and learning activities that have innovatively linked community service to university knowledge resources. The journal will be made available to the university community, community partners, local stakeholders, and CACSL.

Funding Request: to support contracted writing/editorial assistance as well as printing and mailing costs

Staff Development: The CSL Program will strive to keep its staff in touch with the broader world of CSL knowledge development, so that they might in turn bring that expertise to bear on our local initiatives. This will mean sending staff to conferences (e.g., the annual CACSL conference), and occasionally bringing in outside consultants.

Funding Request: for staff development

Resource Materials: The location and layout of the CSL House allow us to develop a library of materials for faculty, students, and community partners. CSL would like to develop a library of books, films, and journals accessible in a browsing area of the CSL House. The CSL Program will also apply through the U of A Libraries for special funds dedicated to enhancing its collection of service-learning related materials.

Funding Request: for films, books, subscriptions for the CSL Office

Long Term Impact of CSL

Sustainability beyond the Funding Period

The University of Alberta Vice-President (Research) and Vice-President (Academic) recently started a widespread consultation/planning process with Deans, Department Chairs, students, staff, faculty members and various committees. The process will lead to a new academic plan for the next four years at the University.

In the first three months of this academic planning process, discussions have revolved around the University's mission and its connection to the academic plan. Results of these discussions have shown that the intent of the University is to focus on goals that are similar to the goals of CSL, for example:

- improving the experience for undergraduate students
- teaching leadership skills
- communicating how research is informed by teaching
- linking international activities to the reality of our immediate community
- removing barriers to interdisciplinarity and fostering of collaboration;
- engaging with northern, rural and Aboriginal communities,
- developing our potential for new partnerships in Alberta and beyond and
- improving the Faculty evaluation processes.

As the CSL program rolls out as described, it will serve as an avenue for University leadership to work towards these common goals.

CSL will become an embedded part of academic planning, with Faculty and students informed about the opportunity to participate and rewarded for their participation. As more professors, students and community organizations learn about CSL and its many benefits, the University will be further encouraged to look at sustainable funding models.

CSL is based on a track record of success and has a plan to carefully integrate into the infrastructure and academic plan of the University. This coupled with the interest among donors and other partners make the University confident that CSL will be a sustainable program in the long term at the University of Alberta and in the Edmonton area.

Donor Recognition and Accountability to the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation

Donor recognition

The University will be pleased to arrange a media and community event to announce the Foundation's campaign contribution.

The CSL Program itself will provide recognition in program materials, on its website and in publications. The Foundation will also be recognized with a prominent plaque in the CSL House on the edge of the U of A campus. As excitement about the new program builds, the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation will be known by students, faculty, partners, researchers and community members for the development of the new program and as partner in major improvement of the student and community experience.

The University of Alberta will enthusiastically promote the Community Service Learning Program and is open to discussion about how best to help the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation promote its own investment in the U of A.

Accountability

The CSL program looks forward to establishing a reporting plan so that the Foundation is well informed of both the progress of the program and the knowledge gained from the activity. The University sees the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation as an engaged and involved partner whose input will be invited and encouraged.

Through participation on the CACSL national committee, the University of Alberta will contribute regularly to discussion and information sharing about CSL in Canada and will work to make its programs accessible to any person interested in learning more about CSL.

All major philanthropic contributions to the University of Alberta are supported by a written gift agreement. This document confirms the donor's intentions and directs the University's use of the donor's funds.

Long Term Impact

The overall vision and specific initiatives proposed at the University of Alberta spell an effective long-term impact on all participants in CSL, and on the University's very approach to learning.

It is the impact on *students* that best gages the effectiveness of CSL for changing the way universities and communities interact. Five years from now, at least 1000 students at the U of A will have gained one or a whole series of CSL experiences that challenge them to think about the social meaning and public import of their university education, and to act knowledgeably, critically, and collaboratively as community members and leaders, wherever they may land.

Dozens of local *community partners* will have gained access to the University, tangible benefits to their programs and clients from knowledge produced at the University, and experience and training as co-educators toward civic engagement.

The *University* will have more deeply integrated community service and attention to public knowledge into a wide network of teaching and research activities, especially through tangibly encouraging its faculty to do so. Its institutional boundaries, and the river that literally and metaphorically separates university and community, will have been crosscut by an increased number and variety of bridges.

Conclusion

The University welcomes the partnership of the J.W. McConnell Foundation in this transformational initiative. Comments and questions or ideas about the initiatives or participants included in this proposal are welcome and encouraged.

Suggested Appendices

1. Year by Year timeline
2. Community Service-Learning Advisory Board
3. Community Partners in CSL
4. CSL Courses Offered by the University
5. Community Service learning Budget and Funding Request