

Developing Evaluable Principles  
For Community-University Partnerships at Simon Fraser University

by

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BBA, Simon Fraser University, 2011

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# **Developing Evaluable Principles for Community-University Partnerships at Simon Fraser University**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

A global trend over the past twenty years has seen post-secondary institutions around the world engaging in deeper and more intentional ways with their communities to address complex and pressing social, environmental, political, and economic challenges than in the past (Hollister et al., 2012, p. 83). As a growing priority in Canada, community-university engagement is increasingly being recognized, legitimized, and committed to as part of institutional strategies in higher-education (CFICE Community Impact Symposium, 2017, p. 1; Tremblay, 2017, p. 15). Simon Fraser University (SFU), as the client for this project, has embraced community engagement as an important pillar of the strategic vision for the institution, and has identified the measurement and evaluation of outcomes and impact as a priority area of inquiry to ensure a high quality of engagement and benefit to both the community and university (SFU Community Engagement Strategy, 2013, p. 5). Yet the complex, distributed, dynamic and ever-changing nature of community-university engagement poses a number of evaluation challenges, and possibilities for measurement and evaluation of community-university engagement at the institutional level are still being explored.

According to the literature, the need for public accountability; institutional learning and development; and internal legitimacy for the community engagement missions of post-secondary institutions, are all key drivers for the increasing interest in evaluation for community-university engagement activity (Coste & Tiron-Tudor, 2015, p. 176; Hanover Research, 2014, p. 3, Singh, 2017, p. 4; Garlick & Langworthy, 2008, p. 3; Holland, 2001, p. 4; Vargiu, 2015, p. 567; Cuthill, 2008, p. 31; Shephard, Brown, Guiney & Deaker, 2018, p. 85; Charles, et al., 2010, p. 73). Some issues that make institutional measurement and evaluation of this work challenging, include the wide range of definitions and types of community engagement activities, the difficulty of capturing impacts, evaluation methods and data collection, and the culture of evaluation in higher education (Charles, Benneworth, Conway & Humphry 2010, p. 70; Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 16; Olowu, 2012, p. 97; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. 2; Hanover, 2014, p. 9, Tremblay, 2017; Holland, 2001, p. 23; Shiel et al., 2016, p. 132; Janke, 2014, p. 32; Shephard, Brown, Guiney & Deaker, 2018, p. 90). With regards to culture, the importance of aligning values to institution-wide metrics and ensuring that evaluation efforts serve a true learning and improvement purpose, as opposed to a standardized exercise in reporting and accreditation, are key points that came out in the literature (Rudd 2007, p. 80; Vargiu, 2014, p. 579; Shephard, et al., 2018, p. 92).

A number of beneficial tools and frameworks currently exist for post-secondary institutions to assess their efforts in community-university engagement; however, common limitations with these tools include evaluation of outcomes and impact, reflection of community voice and participation, and the connection between process and outcomes in collaborative relationships (see Appendix A). The notion of exploring the connection between processes and outcomes of initiatives in community-university collaborations is a topic of interest in the

literature. It is recognized that community-university relationships are complex, and partnerships should be evaluated for process, and to what extent they lead to benefits in teaching, research and community development, though there appears to be a gap in this area of research (Rubin, 2000, p. 228; Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 11; Rudd, 2007, pp. 80-81; Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 4; Singh, 2017, pp. 4-5; Holland, 2001, p. 11).

The purpose of this report is to explore a new method of evaluation called Principles-Focused Evaluation (Patton, 2018) as a possible evaluation match for the complexity of community-university engagement, and as a method to connect process and outcomes. Principles-Focused Evaluation (PFE) uses principles as the core evaluand as opposed to specific projects, programs, or initiatives as the focus of evaluation (Patton, 2018, p. viii-ix). Principles, when clearly and meaningfully articulated, welcome complexity and provide direction to guide action and behaviour towards desired results within a variety of contexts, without prescribing specific activities or models for what should be done and how (p. 12). This allows for foundational values, experiences, knowledge, lessons and assumptions from practice to be communicated in a way that provides general guidance but does not constrain, and is not time-bound, thereby facilitating “ongoing engagement across many discrete projects and multiple change initiatives” (p. 40).

Principles-focused evaluation is not appropriate for every situation and it is important that it be a match for the purpose of the evaluation (Patton, 2018, p. 196). This type of evaluation is useful for large, complex, dynamic interventions at the organizational level and beyond (p. 21). Murphy (2014) compares evidence-based practice and effective principles from an evaluation perspective to outline the differences, and when one might use one over the other. It is not a question of which method is better, but which method is best for the situation (P. 84). Evidence-based practice assumes a particular systematic method, technique or approach to be implemented regardless of context, and are desirable in situations that are well understood, with a clear comprehension of cause and effect (Murphy, 2014, pp. 82-83). Principles are best used in complex systems with high degrees of uncertainty, change, and interacting social, economic, political, ecological, cultural, historical and other contextual factors at play. These situations benefit from principles that provide guidance on approaches to process but allow for flexibility and adaptability in practice (Murphy, 2014, pp. 85-86). In the context of community-university engagement, the types of partnerships, programs and initiatives will vary depending on what is possible, appropriate and relevant to the situation and therefore requires a more adaptive approach to evaluation.

The definition and purpose of community engagement as stated by the Carnegie Foundation and adopted by SFU, identify partnership and collaboration between universities and communities as the primary means towards achieving the desired outcomes of improving and enhancing teaching and research, educating students, strengthening civic engagement and democracy, and making a positive difference in society (“Carnegie Community Engagement Classification”, n.d.). Therefore, using principles-focused evaluation as a framework for theory of change (Patton, 2018, p. 346), it seems reasonable to deduce that a set of principles guiding

behaviour and action for the development and maintenance of effective university-community partnerships would contribute towards the desired results as articulated by the Carnegie Foundation.

The objective of this research project is to identify and articulate a set of effectiveness principles for community-university partnership at SFU that reflect both university and community interests. Looking to the future, eventually a principles focused evaluation would answer the question of how and to what extent the process of engaging in community-university partnerships in a principled way is contributing towards the desired results of community-university engagement as defined by the Carnegie Foundation (“Carnegie Community Engagement Classification”, n.d.). Principles-focused evaluation provides an evaluation match to determine the quality and meaningfulness of principles, whether and how the principles are being followed, and if followed, whether and how they are leading towards the desired results (Patton, 2018, p. ix).

## **Methodology and Methods**

The project follows a principles-focused evaluation methodology, and the methods include key informant interviews, and a focus group. A total of twelve dyadic interviews and one one-on-one interview were conducted. Six of the dyadic interviews and the one one-on-one interview were conducted with SFU Faculty and Staff, and six dyadic interviews were conducted with community partners. One focus group was held with 5 SFU students at the Vancouver campus. The data was analyzed in NVivo using content analysis, and an analytic induction approach was employed for deriving themes from the data.

The limitations for the project include the fact that evaluation in community-university engagement is a relatively new and emerging field of study; the inability to include a wide range of voices in the research due to scope; the iterative nature of principles requiring a longer time frame for development; and the researcher’s dual role as an employee at SFU.

The steps for this project included: reviewing the academic literature for existing principles for community-university partnerships; identifying key individuals to be involved in the interviews; drafting principles; and recommending next steps for a principles-focused evaluation.

## **Key Findings**

### *SFU Faculty and Staff Interviews*

Interview respondents shared many valuable experiences and stories that exemplified the importance of some key themes including: building and maintaining trusting relationships that are characterized by an undercurrent of mutual benefit; approaching community work with a listening and learning mindset; mindfulness around context and power; flexibility and adaptability in a complex environment; open and honest communication and feedback; and even self-care. Challenges were centered around institutional infrastructure and issues related to

alignment of university structures, capacity, and resources to best facilitate community engagement work.

### *Community Partner Interviews*

Interview respondents shared valuable knowledge and experience that exemplified the importance of some key themes, many of which mirror the themes identified by SFU Faculty and Staff including: building and maintaining trusting relationships that are characterized by an undercurrent of mutual benefit; approaching community work with a listening and learning mindset; mindfulness around context and power; flexibility and adaptability in a complex environment; and open and honest communication. Themes that came out more prominently in the interviews with Community Partners include the importance of participating in, understanding, and listening to the community; network building and navigating the institution; valuing and respecting the knowledge and expertise resident in community; and working towards power balance and equity.

### *SFU Student Focus Group*

The themes and concepts identified by the students are similar to those that emerged through SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews and echoed the heavy focus on mutual benefit and relationships; attention to the university-community divide; listening and learning; flexibility in a complex environment; and open communication. Challenges focused on capacity and time for students to be involved in community engaged work, and institutional support for students taking on community-based projects outside of structured courses.

The discussion and analysis of the findings revealed a set of five overarching principles around the themes of Relationship, Context, Respect, Flexibility and Communication. Twenty-one operating principles were also identified which provide practice-based grounding to enhance the meaning of the overarching principles. These principles are outlined in Appendix B. An outcomes framework is also provided in Appendix C, showcasing how principles can be connected to outcomes.

## **Recommendations**

According to Patton (2018), a high-quality principle should provide direction and guidance for behaviour and action, which in turn should lead towards desired results; however, until evaluated, the effectiveness of a principle, or set of principles, is unknown (p. 3). Principles therefore should be evaluated for quality as well as for process and outcome. The following recommendations are presented to the client for consideration:

### **Recommendation 1 – Assessing Meaningfulness, Surfacing Concerns and Establishing Clarity**

It is recommended that the draft effectiveness principles for community-university partnerships at SFU be evaluated to determine their quality and meaningfulness. Principles should be reviewed using the GUIDE criteria (Patton, 2018). An evaluation framework that could be used to facilitate workshops, and to gather data through an online platform, is provided in Appendix D. It is also recommended that the process for assessing the meaningfulness of the principles be used to surface and address questions and concerns from practitioners, and to establish clarity around the purpose, value and niche of principles-focused evaluation for community-university partnerships at the institutional level.

### **Recommendation 2 - Assessing Adherence and Results**

Once principles are evaluated for quality and necessary changes are made, it is recommended that the principles be evaluated for whether and how they are being followed, and if followed, whether and how they are leading towards the desired results. For the evaluation of adherence and results, it is recommended that this process be co-developed, and considered in connection with the current process being led by SFU and other Canadian post-secondary institutions to develop a Canadian version of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

### **Recommendation 3 – Broad Representation**

It is recommended that a broad representation of different types of community-university partnerships are included to evaluate the principles for meaningfulness, adherence and results, as the scope of this project was limited in the number of people that could be involved to develop the initial draft set of principles.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Over the past approximately two decades, there has been a growing trend for post-secondary institutions around the world to engage with their communities for the purpose of better addressing complex social challenges by bringing together the collective knowledge and experience of the academy and community (Hollister et al., 2012, p. 83). Simon Fraser University (SFU), the client for this project, has embraced community engagement as an important pillar of the strategic vision for the institution, and has identified the measurement and evaluation of outcomes and impact from community engaged work as a priority area of inquiry to ensure a high quality of engagement and benefit to both the community and university (SFU Community Engagement Strategy, 2013, p. 5). Yet the complex, distributed, dynamic and ever-changing nature of community-university engagement poses a number of evaluation challenges, and possibilities for assessment of community-university engagement at the institutional level are still being explored.

The following report explores a new method of evaluation called Principles-Focused Evaluation (Patton, 2018) as a possible evaluation match for the complexity of community-university engagement, and as a method to connect process and outcomes. Traditional planning and evaluation models that require the identification of specific activities and targets for community-university engagement are challenging in a complex environment, as there exists a wide diversity of contexts, situations, needs, interests, and possibilities for this work across the institution and in different communities (Charles, et al., 2010, p. 70-71). Principles-focused evaluation uses principles to guide behaviour and action towards high-level desired results, thereby enabling a diversity of approaches, projects, and initiatives depending on what is needed, useful, relevant and meaningful in the current context and situation (Patton, 2018). In addition, principles provide an avenue for studying the connection between process and outcome for the purpose of learning and improving practice, which is an area of interest in the literature (Rubin, 2000, p. 228; Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 11; Rudd, 2007, pp. 80-81; Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 4; Holland 2001, p. 11).

Through a review of the literature and primary research with SFU Faculty, Staff, Students and Community Partners, a set of effectiveness principles for community-university partnerships at SFU are developed and positioned as a theory of change for contribution towards desired results of community-university engagement activity. Recommendations are made with regards to next steps in a principles-focused evaluation for SFU.

### **1.1 Defining the Problem**

“The accelerated challenges that our society faces today, necessitates the re-emphasis of principles of Community University Engagement as priority areas in our higher education framework.”

- Singh, 2017, p. 13

As North American society faces vast social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental strife, universities as place-based institutions have a significant role to play in developing the capacity, resilience, vibrancy and sustainability of the local communities in which they are situated (Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p VII; Boyer, 1996). In an influential and fulsome analysis of university relationships, Boyer (1996) reviewed a three-hundred and fifty-year history of significant connection between North American universities and their surrounding communities in their ability to address the pressing issues of the day but expressed concern that this commitment to social impact has been declining in recent years. This decline, according to Boyer, was situated within a growing societal perspective that our education system addresses private as opposed to public needs and interests and that the production of knowledge and student credentials through higher education institutions does not necessarily serve the common good (pp. 18-19). Written over twenty years ago, Boyer's argument is still relevant in today's Canadian university environment.

Similarly, Andrew Petter, Simon Fraser University's president, advocates for a transformative model of higher education that challenges this production paradigm of educating and producing knowledge for the global marketplace towards a model concerned with the re-focusing of this work to better align with the values of social and environmental justice (Petter, 2017). Strandberg (2017) further argues that the reality, growth, and threat of issues such as climate change, poverty, income inequality, food and water scarcity, systemic discrimination and intolerance require a fundamental shift in how the university's role in society is perceived.

The responsibility to work with and make a positive difference in communities has been a growing priority for higher education institutions in Canada and around the world over the last two decades (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 1; Singh, 2017, p. 2; CFICE Community Impact Symposium, 2017, p. 1; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. VII; Hollister et al., 2012, p. 83; Tremblay, 2017, p.15). Simon Fraser University (SFU) who is the client for this project, acknowledged community engagement as a central component of their vision and mandate (SFU Strategic Vision, 2013). In defining community engagement, Simon Fraser University adopted the Carnegie Foundation definition which is "collaboration between the university and communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (SFU Community Engagement Strategy, 2013, p. 2; "Carnegie Community Engagement Classification", n.d.). This statement is further articulated by the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification as follows:

The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good (n.d., par. 2)

The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification identifies both the public and private sectors in their definition of community engagement, which indicates that the term ‘community’ is not limited to non-profit or government partners and includes for-profit organizations. As stipulated by the organization Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, the concept of ‘community’ should not be bound by one definition as it could refer to groups that share common interests, experiences, values, identities, needs, or geography, for example (“Frequently Asked Questions”, 2018). Community should be defined in the context of the partnership depending on the purpose of the engagement and nature of activity (Holland & Gelmon, 1998, pp. 106-107; Dempsey, 2010, pp. 365-383). With regards to the public and private sectors in the Carnegie definition in particular, as long as the partnerships between post-secondary institutions and these groups meets the definition of the purpose of community-engagement as defined above, then they are considered to be community engaged. Therefore, in the context of this paper, for-profit organizations are included in the term ‘community’.

This formal recognition of a commitment to community engagement has created an expectation for accountability; however, there is a lack of knowledge and tools on how to evaluate and report on outcomes and impact at an institutional level (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p.4; Shiel, Filho, do Paco & Brandli, 2016, p. 125, Singh, 2017, p. 4; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. VII). According to Singh (2017), this evaluation challenge has resulted in a lack of justification for the effective use of resources in community-university engagement activities, leading to institutional resistance towards developing embedded, systemic structures that serve to support, facilitate, and advance university-community engagement (Lorenzoni, 2013, p. 25). Therefore, assessment of the impact from community-university engagement activities that considers both university and community interests, according to (Lydon & Ballamingie, n.d., p. 1), is essential for the legitimization, sustainability and future funding of this work in higher education.

Despite the above definition and purpose of community-university engagement as defined by the Carnegie Foundation, a clear understanding of what the statements mean in practice and how to achieve the desired results tends to defy traditional and linear methods of evaluation due to the elusive, complex, and dynamic nature of community-university engagement. For instance, at the most basic level, it is likely that the definition of what constitutes a mutually beneficial collaboration and desirable impact will be different depending on the context of the collaboration and between academic and community partners (Goemans, 2016; Singh, 2017, p. 4).

Simon Fraser University, being a higher education institution, is a complex system involving many actors and stakeholders with varying perspectives, needs, and diverse goals (Betts, 1992, p. 40) and is nested (Morgan, 2005, p. 9) within the larger systems of the three geographical locations where it resides in Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver, British Columbia (BC). As a large, bureaucratic and hierarchical organization, SFU has many departments and faculties operating in silos and community engaged work is decentralized across operational units resulting in many different manifestations of community-university activity. While this

distributed model of community engagement allows for place-based, flexible, and innovative solutions based on context, it has also resulted in little institutional knowledge of the depth and breadth of community engagement activities that take place at SFU, and their effects on society.

As a consequence of this complexity, the benefits of university-community engagement are difficult to assess and traditional methods of evaluation are not sufficiently adaptive to account for an increasingly complex and dynamic environment (Lorenzoni, 2013, p. 26). Therefore, because the needs, requirements, possibilities, and opportunities, people and resources will always be changing for community-university engagement in the post-secondary environment, a developmental and adaptive approach to evaluation is needed to allow for diverse interventions in a dynamic system of interactions (M. Patton, personal communication, November 9, 2016; CFICE Community Impact Symposium, 2017, p. 16).

One such evaluation practice that has been recently developed by evaluation pioneer Michael Quinn Patton in the new book “Principles-Focused Evaluation: The GUIDE”, concentrates on using principles as the core evaluand as opposed to using specific projects, programs, or initiatives as the focus of evaluation (Patton, 2018, p. viii-ix). In a context of complexity where success demands adaptability, using linear planning and evaluation models that attempt to constrain and bound the complex environment in order to define a clear path forward towards pre-determined outcomes is at best inappropriate, and at worst can disrupt and delay the work (Patton, 2018, p. 12, 249). Principles, when clearly and meaningfully articulated, welcome complexity and provide direction to guide action and behaviour towards desired results within a variety of contexts, without prescribing specific activities or models for what should be done and how (p. 12). This allows for foundational values, experiences, knowledge, lessons and assumptions from practice to be communicated in a way that provides general guidance but does not constrain, and is not time-bound, thereby facilitating “ongoing engagement across many discrete projects and multiple change initiatives” (p. 40). As Patton (2018) stipulates, principles, and principles-focused evaluation can certainly co-exist with more traditional results-based approaches (pp. 390-392). It is likely that following principles will lead to more specific projects and activities, which may each employ different evaluation methods depending on what is useful for the situation. Yet as things change in the environment and the goals, objectives, targets and other parameters shift for different projects and initiatives, the principles should remain constant (Patton, 2018, p. 391).

According to Patton (2018), a high-quality principle should provide direction and guidance for behaviour and action, which in turn should lead towards desired results, however until evaluated, the effectiveness of a principle, or set of principles, is unknown (p. 3). Principles therefore should be evaluated for quality as well as for process and outcome. Through principles-focused evaluation, the effectiveness of principles can be evaluated to determine “(1) whether principles are clear, meaningful and actionable and if so (2) whether they are being adhered to and if so (3) whether they are leading towards desired results” (p. ix).

In the context of community-university engagement, the definition and purpose of it as stated by the Carnegie Foundation and adopted by SFU, identify partnership and collaboration

between universities and communities as the primary means towards achieving the desired outcomes of improving and enhancing teaching and research, educating students, strengthening civic engagement and democracy, and making a positive difference in society (“Carnegie Community Engagement Classification”, n.d.). Therefore, using principles-focused evaluation as a framework for theory of change (Patton, 2018, p. 346), it seems reasonable to deduce that a set of principles guiding behaviour and action for the development and maintenance of effective university-community partnerships would contribute towards the desired results as articulated by the Carnegie Foundation. This appears to be an area that is lacking in the literature, as Hart & Northmore (2011) indicate that there has been little attention paid to the evaluation of how community-university partnerships are created and maintained and the associated advantages, outcomes and impacts that result from successful partnerships for both the community and university (p. 4).

## **1.2 Project Client**

The client for this project is Simon Fraser University’s Office of Community Engagement and the lead contact is the Director of Community Engagement and Outreach, Matthew Grant, who reports to the Vice President (VP) External Relations. The Office of Community Engagement at SFU is a relatively new department formed in 2016 and is expected to work collaboratively with the VP Academic and VP Research portfolios to “collectively support and strengthen community-university partnership to positively impact students, researchers and society” (Grant, 2016, p. 1). The department was tasked with five main objectives to contribute towards the development and embedment of the community engagement agenda within the culture and fabric of the university including: measurement of impact, communication and celebration; infrastructure development; community access; integration; and culture (Grant, 2016).

## **1.3 Project Objectives and Research Questions**

The main research question that was addressed in this report was: what are the key effectiveness principles for community-university partnerships at SFU? Patton (2018) describes effectiveness principles as guiding statements that provide direction on decision making based on learning, experience, values and knowledge of what works in practice, for the purpose of achieving desired outcomes.

Secondary questions explored that support the primary research question are:

- What types of university-community partnerships exist at SFU?
- What are the most important elements in the process for setting up successful university-community partnerships?
- What are the most important elements in the process for sustaining successful university-community partnerships?

- What are the most important elements within a partnership for realizing successful outcomes of community-university engagement activities?
- What challenges or barriers prevent successful community-university partnerships?

The objective of this research project is to identify and articulate a set of effectiveness principles for community-university partnership at SFU that reflect both university and community interests. The word “identify” rather than “develop” or “create” is used because it is likely that the principles are already there and being used in practice. They just need to be surfaced, articulated and assessed for quality so that they can be intentionally implemented, reflected upon, and evaluated for effectiveness. A lesson extracted from a principles-focused evaluation involving six youth homelessness organizations revealed that “they didn’t create the principles so much as they discovered them like a vein of gold running through the mountain of their collective experience and knowledge. They were already there, but they had to learn to see them, mine them, and recognize their value” (Patton, 2018, p. 245).

Looking to the future, eventually a principles focused evaluation would answer the question of how and to what extent the process of engaging in community-university partnerships in a principled way is contributing towards the desired results of community-university engagement which is to: “enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good” (“Carnegie Community Engagement Classification”, n.d.). Principles-focused evaluation provides an evaluation match to determine the quality and meaningfulness of principles, whether and how the principles are being followed, and if followed, whether and how they are leading towards the desired results (p. ix).

Yet in order to answer this ultimate question, clear, meaningful, and evaluable principles that are agreed upon and used by community-university engagement practitioners will need to be surfaced and articulated. As Patton (2018) asserts, “no principles, no principles focused evaluation” (p. 347). This work constitutes the first part of a formative evaluation process (Patton, 2018, p. 204), which will be the focus of this project.

## **1.4 Background**

Evaluation for community-university engagement has been identified as a need since 2013, given SFU’s aspiration to be “Canada’s most community-engaged research university” (SFU Strategic Vision, 2013, p. 4). Evaluation and measurement have also been identified as the number one priority in SFU’s Community Engagement Strategy (2013, p. 5) to ensure activities are of benefit to the community and contribute to the development of sustainable community partnerships. One of the action items outlined in that document was to develop measurement indicators and methods to collect data for SFU community engagement (SFU Community Engagement Strategy, 2013, p. 5). An internal research document focusing on tools for measuring and supporting community engagement in teaching, research and service, provided some possibilities for measurement (Provencal, 2011); however due to resource constraints, a

comprehensive effort to develop a measurement system and indicators for community-university engagement has not been attempted to date at SFU. Regardless of capacity limitations, the development of measurable indicators assumes that specific and prescriptive goals, objectives and strategies are in place institution-wide for community engagement. In a context of deep complexity, continuous learning, adaptation and decentralization, this approach is challenging and potentially disruptive (Patton, 2018, p. 12, 249), and there may be benefits to considering a different methodology.

In the last three years, the VP External Relations portfolio has put more interest into evaluating SFU's progress in the area of community engagement; however, the focus has been on outputs and the need for evaluation of the deeper outcomes and impacts in communities and at SFU that result from community engagement activities has been recognized (Core Theme: Engaging Communities, 2015). For example, an internal report submitted as a self-evaluation to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) identified three indicators to evaluate progress towards the goal of becoming Canada's most community-engaged research university that included the following: number of participants in local SFU outreach programs; number of active international partners; and alumni engagement score (Core Theme: Engaging Communities, 2015, p. 3). These indicators were chosen as a simple way to quantitatively show engagement locally, globally and with alumni; however, there is recognition in the report that further work is needed to identify qualitative measures for community engagement impact and a particular interest in capturing faculty engagement activities was identified (Core Theme: Engaging Communities, 2015, pp. 6-9).

Along with the three quantitative indicators, approximately fifteen key initiatives were identified to demonstrate improvement in the priority areas that were outlined in SFU's Community Engagement Strategy (2013) including programs such as SFU's Lifelong Learning department, the Community Engagement Initiative Fund, an annual Student-Community-Engagement competition, the SFU Surrey – TD Community Engagement Centre, the Vancity Office of Community Engagement and SFU Public Square. Yet many community-university engagement programs, initiatives, and activities are left out. This is most likely due to the sheer volume and breadth of endeavors that result from a decentralized organization with three campuses, 30,000 students, 6500 faculty and staff, and 120,000 alumni (Core Theme: Engaging Communities, 2015, p. 24). The key initiatives that are highlighted also focus on showcasing inputs such as financial commitments, and outputs such as number of participants, and number of students engaged. Exceptions to this are projects that were funded through the Community Engagement Initiative where project outcomes were identified in the report (Core Theme: Engaging Communities, 2015, p. 13-23).

The SFU Community-Engagement Strategy developed in 2013 was meant to cover a five-year term and is therefore due for an update. In an attempt to re-generate the strategy in a way that does not constrain and bound the complex environment surrounding community-university engagement, SFU's Office of Community Engagement has been leading a process over the past year to develop an aspirational Community Engagement position paper meant to

inspire, spark dialogue, mobilize and support community engagement across SFU's distributed institutional infrastructure. This would serve as a living institutional document, relevant to mainly an internal audience of faculties, departments and individuals engaged in community-based work. As part of this process, several strategic questions and critical success factors were identified that included a recognition of the importance of meaningful measurement and evaluation frameworks to facilitate accountability and continuous learning from community engagement efforts and to increase the quality and effectiveness of activities over time (SFU's Office of Community Engagement, 2018). The report also calls attention to the connection between process and outcome by highlighting the importance of strong partnership relationships to facilitate community-university engagement activities that lead towards mutually beneficial outcomes and contribute to addressing pressing social challenges (SFU's Office of Community Engagement, 2018).

A piece that is currently missing in SFU's community engagement documents and in current attempts to evaluate community-university engagement impacts, is a set of shared effectiveness principles that guide the work in this area. In January of 2017, the deans from SFU's eight faculties were interviewed and asked to reflect on the current priority areas and SFU's definition of community engagement, which is defined as "collaboration between the university and communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (SFU Community Engagement Strategy, 2013, p. 2). In reference to the definition, one of the Dean's outlined the complex and abstract nature of it by saying: "It's so big. It's staggeringly big. What does this actually mean? What is true reciprocity? What does mutual benefit actually mean?" (Grant, 2017, p. 21). It is likely that it means different things depending on the context of the partnership. Another Dean indicated that "community engagement comes in many shapes and sizes. In the same way that people hold very different perspectives about knowledge generation, they're very differently situated in the kind of community engagement they choose to do" (Grant, 2017, p. 12). The differences in how community engagement activities emerge in practice, for what purposes, and to what ends, outlines the need for effectiveness principles that guide behaviour and action towards successful community-university partnerships, but that do not restrict or limit complexity and adaptation by prescribing a particular model of what works, or what should be done (Patton, 2018, p. 21). Principles can facilitate agreement on foundational elements that provide direction and guidance for the work but allow for differences in how the principles are manifested in practice (p. 341).

Principles abound and are often expressed as a result of values, experience, expertise, knowledge, assumptions or lessons (Patton, 2018, p. 76), as exemplified by the following quote from one of the Deans who stated that "community engagement isn't just making partnerships. Community engagement is about making those partnerships and through those partnerships creating new knowledge and understanding" (Grant, 2017, p. 14). Therein lies a principle – to be effective, create new knowledge and understanding through partnerships. Another example is a quote from a Dean who stated that "an engaged university should focus on the process by which we engage our communities because the process is the purpose. We should invest our time in

relationships, because it is the relationship that is important” (Grant, 2017, p. 15). In this case there may be two principles – pay attention to and value the process and invest time in relationships. Once principles are identified, the evaluation question then becomes whether the principles are meaningful and actionable (i.e. are they helpful in guiding behaviour and action in practice? Are they evaluable?), whether and how they are being adhered to, and whether that adherence is leading towards desired results (Patton, 2018, p. 180).

The development of principles for effective community-university partnership that are accepted and acknowledged university-wide will not only be useful for evaluation purposes, but will also be key for embedding community-university engagement across the institution, leaving it invulnerable to changing administration (Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. 7). Other post-secondary institutions such as the University of British Columbia have started uncovering some institutional and department level principles and practices of community engagement to act as a guide and anchor for decision making; to inform the development of goals, plans and initiatives; and to uphold quality and consistency in community-university engagement practices (“Principles & Good Practices”, 2017). The development of principles for community-university partnerships that are action-oriented, guide decision making, are adaptable and evaluable, will take this trend one step further to inform continuous learning and evaluation of community-university engagement work at SFU.

## **1.5 Organization of Report**

The following report is organized into eight sections. In section 2.0, the literature review addresses the evaluation landscape for community-university engagement, principles for community-university partnerships, examples of principles-focused evaluations in practice, and finally, describes the conceptual framework guiding the research. Section 3.0 describes the principles-focused methodology, methods, data analysis, and project limitations. In sections 4.0, 5.0 and 6.0, the findings from the SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews as well as the SFU student focus group are summarized based on the main areas of inquiry and major themes that emerged. Section 7.0 provides a discussion and analysis of the findings and outlines the overarching and operating effectiveness principles for community-university partnerships that flow from the findings and literature review. An outcomes framework for the effectiveness principles is also discussed. Section 8.0 outlines recommendations for moving forward with a principles-focused evaluation for community-university partnerships. Section 9.0 concludes the report, and section 10.0 provides a personal reflection on the principles-focused evaluation process.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the literature review is three-fold. The review will first of all set the stage and context for the current environment in evaluation for community-university engagement. Another purpose of the review is to reveal foundational values and guiding concepts for community-university partnerships that already exist in the literature to help inform principles for SFU. Finally, because principles-focused evaluation is a new method, some examples of how the method manifests in practice will be reviewed to help inform how it could be implemented in the higher education context, with a particular focus on principles of community-university partnership.

Three overarching themes reviewed in the following literature review are: the current state of evaluation in community-university engagement, principles for community-university partnerships, and examples of principles-focused evaluation in practice.

The following search terms were used to find scholarly and grey literature connected to the three areas of inquiry: University-community engagement, post-secondary engagement with communities, higher education and community engagement, evaluation in university-community engagement, measurement in university-community engagement, university-community engagement assessment, community-university partnerships, university-community engagement impact measurement, community-university engagement principles, community-university engagement partnership principles.

The following databases were used to conduct the research: University of Victoria Library Summon 2.0, Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, and the Simon Fraser University Library Search. Additional sources were found using citations and reference lists from relevant literature.

### **2.2 Current State of Evaluation in Community-University Engagement**

The following section is organized into six sub-sections to present an overview of the reasons, challenges, current tools, and considerations for evaluation in university-community engagement. The subsections address the motivations for evaluation in community-university engagement; the difference between benchmarking, auditing and evaluation; measurement challenges in this area; considerations for moving forward with assessment efforts; current assessment tools available; and finally, support for principles of community-university partnerships in the evaluation literature.

#### **2.2.1 Motivations for Evaluation**

As post-secondary institutions across the globe have identified community engagement as a central component of their visions and missions, the interest in measurement and evaluation in this area has increased over the past few decades (Tremblay, 2017). In addition to the visibility in strategic planning documents, several other reasons exist for the increasing interest in evaluation

of community-university activities at higher-education institutions, including but not limited to: external accountability, internal legitimacy, quality, comparison, and learning and development, which will be discussed in more detail below.

With regards to external accountability, the shift to a New Public Management (NPM) approach to governance in the 1980s, significantly increased the pressure for publicly funded institutions to improve transparency and accountability for the responsible stewardship of public dollars (Larran & Andrades, 2017, p. 303). Thus, the drive for accountability from post-secondary institutions has grown substantially over the past few decades as governments and society increasingly demand that universities are more responsive to the external environment, and can prove impact towards the common good from publicly funded activities (Alexander, 2000, p. 411; Coste & Tiron-Tudor, 2015, p. 176; Hanover Research, 2014, p. 3, Singh, 2017, p. 4; Garlick & Langworthy, 2008, p.3, Janke, 2014). The growth of interest in evaluation at higher education institutions is certainly partly predicated on this rising interest in accountability in response to greater social, economic, environmental and performance pressures to prove an institution's value to society (Holland, 2001, p. 4).

Promoting the legitimacy and scholarly importance of community engagement work to the internal academic audience within a post-secondary institution is another motivation. The ability to effectively demonstrate the value of community engaged work as it relates to student learning, research, community and institutional outcomes is an important pre-requisite for instigating systemic change within an institution for the legitimization, rewarding and resourcing of community engagement work as a scholarly endeavor, especially when budgets are constrained (Holland, 2001, p. 2; Vargiu, 2015, p. 567; Cuthill, 2008, p. 31; Shephard, Brown, Guiney & Deaker, 2018, p. 85; Garlick & Langworthy, 2008, p. 5).

Another compelling reason is that of quality, which is increasingly called for in the literature with regards to measuring outcomes and impacts as opposed to simply tracking outputs and activities. There is a growing interest in examining what changes result from university-community engagement work, and in the inclusion of community voice in the evaluation process to ensure a meaningful experience for all stakeholders (Holland, 2001, p. 5; Tremblay, 2017, Singh, 2017, p. 4, Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 20; Charles, Benneworth, Conway & Humphry, 2010, p. 72; Shephard, et al., 2018, p. 92).

Learning, development and comparison across post-secondary institutions is another reason for the rising interest in measurement and evaluation in community-university engagement. The development of a number of benchmarking tools in the literature points to this desire for internal and cross-organizational reflection, learning and improvement, combined with a method to assess how an institution is progressing in this area as compared to other institutions nationally or internationally, and to identify areas for improvement (Garlick & Langworthy, 2008, p. 5; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. 2, Hanover, 2014; Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 6; Charles, et al., 2010, p. 73).

### 2.2.2 Benchmarking, Auditing, Evaluation

It is important to distinguish between the terms benchmarking, auditing and evaluating as all three are used in the literature and hold different meanings. Auditing is a performance management technique using standard and pre-defined measures to determine what has been done, and what could be improved in the future. Audits normally target simple output data which tends to be quantitative in nature (Hanover, 2014, pp. 16-17; Charles, et al., 2010, p. 73, Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 7). The purpose for benchmarking is self- assessment against industry standards or recognized effective practices, allowing for comparisons between organizations as well as to serve as an institutional check-point to reflect on strengths and areas in need of improvement (Hanover, 2014, pp. 16-17; Charles, et al., 2010, p. 73, Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 7). The process of auditing can help with benchmarking as a way to identify key performance indicators and establish some baselines (Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 8). Lastly, evaluation focuses on the assessment of outcomes or change resulting from activities, what effect processes or approaches have on outcomes of initiatives, and broader impacts to society (Hanover, 2014, pp. 16-17; Charles, et al., 2010, p. 73, Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 9). All three of these approaches hold value in the endeavor to assess community-university engagement at both the project and institutional level, and it may be that a combination of these methods will be an important consideration in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of this work and how to maximize benefits for both universities and communities.

### 2.2.3 Measurement Challenges

Several challenges are noted in the literature with regards to measurement and evaluation of university-community engagement, including: the multiple definitions and types of community engagement activities; the difficulty of measuring impacts; data methods and collection; and the culture of evaluation.

A key issue noted throughout the literature is the challenge of a shared understanding and definition of community-university engagement, as well as the vast variety of practices and activities. As Charles, Benneworth, Conway & Humphry (2010) state, “the diversity of activities covered by engagement with the community presents great difficulties of comparison as well as fundamental problems of measurement” (p. 70). Efforts have been made to standardize measurement approaches, however, due to the elusive and transient definition of community-engagement along with the diversity of initiatives which differ within and across institutions and communities, there is no single method or framework that will be appropriate for every situation (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 16; Olowu, 2012, p. 97; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. 2; Hanover, 2014, p. 9, Tremblay, 2017). The type of activities undertaken at a particular post-secondary institution will inevitably vary due to differences in the communities within which they are situated, the particular issues they are tackling, the history and culture of community-university relations in the area, the needs in the community, and the resources available (Charles, et al., 2010, p. 70-71). The nature of this work is highly complex, and thus it may be

unconstructive to attempt the adoption of a standardized measurement approach (Holland, 2001, p. 23), and may be more appropriate to determine the assessment method with the local institutional and community context in mind.

Dubb, McKinley and Howard (2013) have identified that “while program measures do exist, most institutions do not have a systematic method of measuring or evaluating the impact of their work in communities” (p. VII). This issue speaks to some of the challenges that have been identified with the current landscape of tools available for community-university engagement evaluation, which includes the predominant focus of measuring outputs over outcomes and impacts, and the focus of measurement on internal (university) outcomes as opposed to external (community) outcomes (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 5; Olowu, 2012, p. 92; Shiel et al., 2016, p. 132; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. 9).

The terms ‘impact’ and ‘outcome’ can carry a number of meanings, but in this context, impacts refer to the broader and longer-term community and societal changes that may be partially a result of outcomes from community-university engagement activities, such as changes in behaviour (Tremblay, 2017, p.17), or even population level impacts such as employment rate. Outcomes refer to the direct results of projects or initiatives such as changes in access, awareness or learning for example (Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p.16).

While there has been an increased interest in the evaluation of outcomes and impacts from community-university engagement activities, Janke (2014) calls attention to the importance of recognizing the challenges associated with collecting this type of data including time and resources (p. 32), as well as the impossibility of attributing a cause-effect relationship between broader societal impacts and specific initiatives, due to the fact that many activities and factors are responsible for the results that community-university projects may be working towards (Mulvihill, Hart, Northmore, Wolff & Pratt, 2011., p. 4; Tremblay, 2017, p. 17; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. 2; Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 2001, p. xi).

Flowing from this issue of measuring outcomes and impacts is the question of data collection. Janke (2014) reflects on experiences at the University of North Carolina to identify indicators for community-university engagement which helps to illustrate this challenge. Initially in their process to develop measures, mostly quantitative indicators were identified as they were relatively easy to obtain, and much more intentional thought was needed to make sure that the gathering of any additional quantitative or qualitative data would be worth the investment – or in other words “is the juice worth the squeeze”? (p. 32). Notwithstanding this very real and legitimate concern of cost versus benefit, it is also important to consider the effects of data collection decisions on others, and the signal it sends with regards to where value is being placed. Shephard, Brown, Guiney & Deaker (2018) interviewed faculty members with regards to the evaluation of community-engaged teaching and research, which revealed some frustration with the tendency for institutions to focus on the collection of quantitative data for reporting purposes – for example, number of students, hours and partner organizations – as it is not seen as being representative of the true story, impact and value of the work (pp. 90-91). Charles, et al., 2010 also caution that the use of quantitative measures does not unintentionally shift the focus of

effort to meeting a pre-identified target, to the detriment of working towards outcomes and impacts (pp. 71-72). In the University of North Carolina scenario, more meaningful measures to assess whether the institution was contributing towards positive impacts in society were identified as a clear need from the outset, but the issue of data collection was named as a significant barrier, and the need to invest in tools that have the capacity to support more complex data collection, aggregation and analysis was recognized (Janke, 2014, p. 38).

A final challenge to be considered here, and highly connected to the above discussion regarding data collection, is the culture of evaluation, especially with regards to institution wide measurement efforts. As Rudd (2007) identifies, institution level auditing and benchmarking efforts can quickly become – or at least be perceived as – hierarchical exercises in filling out templates or checking boxes for the purposes of meeting pre-conceived standards for reporting or accreditation, and not necessarily as a way to improve learning, collaboration, processes and practices (p. 80). Connected to this challenge, is the issue of linking project-level evaluation to broader institutional outcomes (Hanover, 2014, p. 7; Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 4-5). Many initiatives are being evaluated at the individual level, however few institutions have strategic and systematic ways to collect, aggregate, connect, and learn from that data in meaningful ways institution-wide that actually serves to develop more intentional and authentic connections with community (Hanover, 2014, p. 8; Rudd, 2007, p. 80; Shiel et al., 2016, p. 132). Another issue identified in the literature is the tendency to use measures and processes that focus on the perspective of the university to define and determine success from partnership initiatives, and community perspectives are often lacking in these efforts overall (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 5; Olowu, 2012, p. 92; Dubb, McKinley & Howard, 2013, p. 9; Tremblay, 2017, p. 16).

#### 2.2.4 Considerations Moving Forward

In consideration of the challenges in community-university engagement assessment practices, a few key take-away points can be made to help inform a path forward. First, is the importance of critically examining the question of what is being valued as a result of measurement and evaluation efforts, and how assessment methods can better align with espoused values. For instance, institution-wide metrics tend to put emphasis on assessing how dedicated a university is to community engagement by using indicators that might capture, for example, the number of people engaged, number of service-learning courses taught, or number of hours spent in community (Vargiu, 2014, p. 579; Shephard, et al., 2018, p. 92). These indicators place value on the activities themselves, and often do not capture the quality of process or the efficacy of these efforts to determine whether or not they lead towards desired outcomes for both the university and community (Vargiu, 2014, p. 579; Shephard, et al., 2018, p. 92). If an institution places value on community-university engagement as a method towards achieving desired outcomes such as improving and enhancing teaching and research, educating students, strengthening civic engagement and democracy, and making a positive difference in society, then it is key that evaluation methods are developed to match this ambition (Shephard, et al., 2018, p. 92).

A second point, which may seem contradictory to the first, is that measurement and evaluation efforts should be realistic and practical given the capacity and resources available. Mulvihill, et al., (2011) warn that expectations regarding what can be achieved and measured in community-university projects can easily expand beyond scope, and it is important to stay grounded, think through what information should be captured and why, match the evaluation plan to the resources available, and remember that “it is not possible to evaluate everything all of the time” (p. 7). Some suggestions point towards building more intentional processes for aggregating project level data to be used at the institutional level, perhaps by identifying key priority areas or broad frameworks that units can use as a guide, while still allowing for the flexibility of choice to implement the assessment method that best fits with the project, resources and context (Mulvihill, et al., 2011., p. 7; Vargiu, 2014, p. 581; Hanover, 2014, p. 16).

Finally, a significant gap identified in the literature was the lack of community involvement and perspective in the development and implementation of assessment processes for community-university engagement initiatives, rendering the current available tools largely reflective of the voice, objectives and goals of the institutions (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 6; Olowu, 2012, p. 94). It is recommended for assessment efforts moving forward that community voice and perspective be reflected throughout, and that measures be kept flexible and adaptable to a changing environment (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 21-22; Mulvihill, et al., 2011, p. 8).

### 2.2.5 Current Tools Available

A summary table of tools for the assessment of community-university engagement at the project and institutional level in the academic and grey literature is available in Appendix A. The table describes each tool and its general purpose, whether it be benchmarking, auditing or evaluation; the categories and areas of focus that the tool addresses; how the tool is commonly used; and the limitations. In general, there seems to be a high number of institutional benchmarking tools, and the most common limitations are evaluation of outcomes or impact, reflection of community voice and perspective, and evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes.

These tools are all very valuable in different ways. The benchmarking frameworks that identify recognized practices for institutional level infrastructure for support of community engagement seem to be particularly useful guides to facilitate the conditions necessary for community engaged work to emerge and flourish across the organization. These tools indicate a rise in advocacy for aligning all functions of the institution to work together for community benefit, and for universities to model the way in which institutional action can help find solutions to the complex challenges we are facing in the 21st century (T. Howard, Personal Communication, October 2017). Community engagement in this sense is not seen as an “add on” to the core university mandates of teaching and research. These tools signify that the traditional reductionist assumptions of separation between these concepts is shifting towards a systemic approach of considering them as an integrated whole (B. Holland, Personal Communication, November 2017).

A tool of particular interest is the Carnegie Classification, as SFU is currently engaged in a process with the Swearer Center at Brown University to co-develop, with other Canadian post-secondary institutions, a Canadian Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. This classification system is used for both benchmarking and accreditation. Out of all the tools considered, Carnegie appears to be the most comprehensive as a framework to guide the process of self-assessment through questions that reflect best practices for the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education (“Swearer Centre”, 2018). In addition to asking questions that reflect on what initiatives are being implemented and in what ways community engagement is being embedded within the institution, the Carnegie framework asks about outcomes and impacts resulting from initiatives. While it provides some clarification around what type of information is expected for outcomes and impacts, it does not prescribe a method for evaluation or expectations around particular indicators/metrics, thereby providing flexibility for institutions, and their community partners, to develop their own methods for evaluation based on the context they are situated in. It also goes deeper than other tools in assessing to what extent, for example, community voice is represented in institutional decision-making processes, or how the information gathered from measurement and evaluation efforts is being fed back into the system to improve and further institutionalize community engagement. The Carnegie Classification system is also committed to continuous learning and adaptation through a revision cycle every five years where the framework itself is updated to reflect the dynamic and changing environment of community-university engagement (“Swearer Centre”, 2018). Data gathered from the Classification process is also used for other research purposes to glean insights at a national level to further advance collective knowledge in the field. Finally, the Carnegie Classification framework specifically carves out a space for the consideration and evaluation of community-university partnerships, which will be addressed in section 2.2.6.

#### 2.2.6 Support for Principles of Partnership in the Evaluation Literature

The interest in studying and documenting the process of how community-university partnerships are created and sustained as well as what they can achieve is not a new concept in the evaluation literature (Rubin, 2000, p. 219). It is recognized that community-university engagement is complex, due in part to the inherent relationship dynamics, and that these partnerships should be evaluated for process and to what extent they lead to benefits in teaching, research and community development (Rubin, 2000, p. 228; Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 11). Hart & Northmore (2011) advocate for evaluation processes that use community-university partnerships as a theory of change towards desired outcomes of community-university engagement initiatives as it “helps us to understand whether community–university partnerships are a useful mechanism for achieving desired outcomes and to understand whether, and if so how, university participation adds value” (p. 13).

Using community-university partnerships as a theory of change also allows for more flexibility, adaptability and learning in evaluation efforts. Traditional and logical planning and assessment processes that rely on pre-determined and often quantitative measurement

frameworks are challenging in complex environments and do not consider the importance of partnership building processes as key requirements for success in these endeavors (Rubin, 2000, p. 228; Rudd, 2007, pp. 80-81). Rudd (2007) very clearly indicates the need to use assessment approaches that move beyond rational planning models and to integrate what are essentially, core values and principles of community-university engagement into measurement processes. These include intangible but meaningful precepts such as: trust, shared purpose, transparency, accountability, mutuality and sustainability among others (pp. 80-81). As Holland (2001) stipulates, “just as looking at the organizational factors of the engaged campus might suggest points of measurement, we might also probe these lessons learned about successful partnerships as a possible source of measures related to relationships, community capacity, and other community impacts” (p. 11). While this is an area of interest in the literature, there appears to be a gap in the development of mechanisms and frameworks to evaluate the process of how community-university partnerships are created and maintained and the associated advantages, outcomes and impacts that result from successful partnerships for both the community and university (Hart & Northmore, 2011, p. 4; Singh, 2017, pp. 4-5).

Many of the tools listed in Appendix A, as previously identified, lack attention to the evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement. The Carnegie Classification system however, does include a section where these types of questions are stated. The framework poses the question of whether an institution takes any specific action to “ensure mutuality and reciprocity in partnerships” (“2020 Classification Framework”, p. 21), and if so, how those actions are assessed to facilitate improvements moving forward. A specific example provided in the framework for an action that an institution could take to address mutuality and reciprocity in partnerships is to develop “principles that inform the development and operation of partnerships” (p. 22). This is promising evidence of the potential benefits for developing and using guiding principles of community-university partnership to ensure institutional accountability towards authentic, respectful and effective relationships with community. Developing a Principles-Focused Evaluation framework for community-university partnerships at SFU would, ideally, not only address this specific set of questions in the Carnegie Classification, but also serve as a method through which other questions within this framework could be addressed.

### **2.3 Community-University Partnership Principles in the Literature**

The following section is organized into five sub-sections, and sub-section 2.3.3 is further divided into eight sub-subsections in order to present the literature on existing principles for community-university partnerships, which will use the principles developed by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health as a framework. The subsections will discuss the definition of community-university partnerships; explore reasons why principles for partnership are desirable; and delve deeper into existing principles for community-university partnership that exist in the literature. Other concepts that came up in the literature review that do not fit within the framework developed by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health will also be outlined in a

separate section. Finally, a section will be dedicated to institutional structure and resource considerations, which came up repeatedly in the literature connected to community-university partnerships.

### 2.3.1 Defining Community-University Partnerships

Much like the term “community-university engagement”, there exists no one accepted definition of community-university partnerships in the literature (Drahota et.al, 2016), however, there appears to be similar elements in the definitions that have been developed. A prominent theme that comes up in discussions of partnerships is the idea of mutual benefit, where all groups involved in the partnership contribute to the effort, and receive benefit as a result of participation (McLean & Behringer, 2008, p. 66; Holton, Early, Jettner & Shaw, 2015, p. 108; Kenworthy-U’Ren & U’Ren, 2008, p. 89; Holland & Gelmon, 1998, p. 107; Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, Mackeigan & Farrar, 2011, p. 16). For the university, examples of benefit might include knowledge development; research publications; teaching and student learning; funding opportunities; and public respect and trust (Fisher, Fabricant & Simmons, 2004, p. 31). For communities, examples of benefits may come in the form of more developed knowledge; research and public visibility on issues of community concern; improved service outcomes; capacity building for staff and the organization; and increased access to funding (McNall, Reed & Allen, 2009, p. 323).

Beyond, but not contrary, to the idea of mutual benefit is that of common purpose, or as conceptualized in Hammersley (2017), reciprocity, where community and university groups come together with shared goals for social benefit and the greater good of society and the relationship is more transformational as opposed to transactional (p. 120). This provides a collective framework within which parties from different contexts can work together, apply their respective core competencies, achieve mutual benefit and co-create new knowledge towards a larger shared purpose (Kenworthy-U’Ren & U’Ren, 2008, p. 89, Curwood et.al, 2011, p. 16, Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 73; Kearney & Candy, 2004, p. 183).

Another concept that helps to define community-university partnerships is that of knowledge sharing and co-creation. As Holland & Gelmon (1998) stipulate, effective partnerships are “knowledge-based collaborations in which all partners have things to teach each other, things to learn from each other, and things they will learn together” (p. 107).

There are differences though, even within institutions, with regards to who and what is included in the definition of community-university partnerships. For example, Holton, Early, Jettner & Shaw (2015) embarked on a study at Virginia Commonwealth University to develop a definition of community-university partnership and found differences in how the term was being understood across faculties and departments. Some perceptions centered around the need for partnerships to have an inherent focus on social betterment, and some had a broader view that was “more inclusive of various types of organizations and purposes” (p.108), and their resulting definition leaves this open to interpretation.

Therefore, while these foundational concepts may help frame a loose definition of community-university partnerships, it is also essential to recognize that all partnerships are different, and when embarking in this work, it is key to seek an understanding of the type of relationship each party is looking for (Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, p. 91), and act with flexibility and adaptability based on context.

### 2.3.2 Why Principles for Partnership?

Partnerships are at the crux of community-university engagement activities that result in meaningful outcomes for everyone involved, and a synergistic relationship exists between the effectiveness of initiatives and the quality of the relationship (Pearce, Pearson & Cameron, 2007, p. 40; Holland & Ramaley, 2008, p. 34; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002 p. 504). Partnerships are complex, take time to develop, and require significant attention to the elements of process that facilitate the successful development and sustainment of these relationships (Pearce, Pearson & Cameron, 2007, p. 40; Kearney & Candy, 2004, p. 182; Northmore & Hart, 2011, p.5).

Kearney & Candy (2004) outline the importance of this attention to process, indicating that the approach taken in collaboration activities between community-university partners is directly connected to outcomes, and that traditional rational planning models that assume a linear trajectory for projects, do not sufficiently account for the evolving, complex and dynamic nature of these relationships (pp. 183-184). Rather what is needed are guiding principles that capture the important and foundational process factors for the establishment and maintenance of strong partnerships within a variety of contexts, that embrace complexity and lead towards mutually beneficial outcomes (Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis, 2005, p. 97; Kearney & Candy, 2004; Holland, Gelmon, Green, Greene-Moton, Stanton, 2003, p. 2).

From a systems perspective, principles, especially if actively followed and evaluated, might be considered as a way to affect the system at one of the highest leverage points (D. Finegood, Personal Communication, August 2018). The second highest leverage point for systems change identified by Meadows (1999) is “The mindset or paradigm out of which the system arises” (p. 17). The mindset or paradigm referred to, are the deeply rooted beliefs and assumptions about how things work in society, and they provide the foundation from which the rest of the system organizes itself (Meadows, 1999, pp. 17-18). Principles have the ability to communicate values, assumptions and beliefs that are different from the current norm, and guide behaviour and action towards a new paradigm.

For instance, community-university partnerships are affected by a multitude of contextual, systemic and historical factors that principles can help surface and address. For example, historically, community-university relationships have been strained due to the tendency for academic institutions to use community resources to conceptualize and carry out research activity without community input or involvement, and subsequently to publish results in inaccessible formats to the community in question (Drahota et.al, 2016, p. 165). This procedure of operation is informed by deeply embedded assumptions about the value that is placed on certain systems of knowledge, thereby undermining the value of others, and points to a “lack of

respect for community knowledge” and “a view of community members as objects, rather than partners, for research” (Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 74).

The positioning of the university as the “expert” with significant access to information and resources, along with the failure to recognize and value the assets and knowledge resident within communities, creates a power imbalance in collaboration initiatives. This dynamic has led to feelings of mistrust and suspicion, and a mis-match between community need and the resulting knowledge product, thereby rendering communities hesitant to work with academic institutions in the first place (Drahota et. al, 2016, p. 165; Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 74).

Therefore, principles informed by practice and learning around developing trust, sharing power, and valuing different forms of knowledge are key to facilitating effective community-university partnerships, and these, along with others, will be discussed at greater length in the next section.

### 2.3.3 Principles in the Literature

The following section outlines principles for community-university partnership that already exist in the literature. This section will use the principles developed by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, listed in *Figure 1*, as a framework to present the literature. Community-Campus Partnerships for Health is an organization that articulates partnership between universities and communities as a theory of change for health equity and social justice and the positive transformation of communities and post-secondary institutions (“About Us”, 2017; “Mission and Values”, 2017). This organization has been developing and fine-tuning their principles since 1998 and have a breadth of resources on their website pertaining to university-community partnerships and what makes them successful (“Resource Library”, n.d.). The principles developed by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, listed in the box below, will be used as headings (i.e. Principle 1, 2, 3 etc.), and each will be further contextualized and explained. Some of the principles, due to their similarities and interdependencies, will be considered together.

1. The Partnership forms to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.
2. The Partnership agrees upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and processes for accountability.
3. The relationship between partners in the Partnership is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
4. The Partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.
5. The Partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
6. Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority in the Partnership by striving to understand each other’s needs and self-interests and developing a common language.
7. Principles and processes for the Partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
8. There is feedback among all stakeholders in the Partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the Partnership and its outcomes.
9. Partners share the benefits of the Partnership’s accomplishments.
10. Partnerships can dissolve, and when they do, need to plan a process for closure.
11. Partnerships consider the nature of the environment within which they exist as a principle of their design, evaluation, and sustainability.
12. The Partnership values multiple kinds of knowledge and life experiences

Source: CCPH Board of Directors. Guiding Principles of Partnership. Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, 2013. Retrieved from: <https://www.ccphealth.org/guiding-principles-of-partnerships/>

**FIGURE 1. COMMUNITY-CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS FOR HEALTH (CCPH) PRINCIPLES**

### ***Principles 1, 2 & 7***

1. The Partnership forms to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.
2. The Partnership agrees upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and processes for accountability.
7. Principles and processes for the Partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.

FIGURE 2. CCPH PRINCIPLES 1, 2 & 7

The principles listed in *Figure 2* are being considered together due to their focus on partnership purpose, goals, processes and outcomes and the importance of input and agreement from all partners on these elements.

A few themes are inherent in this list of principles. The first of which links back to the defining elements of community-university partnerships outlined in section 2.3.1 - shared purpose and mutual benefit. In reference to research partnerships, Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis (2005) identify the importance of early involvement of both academic and community partners with regards to conceptualizing and setting the research agenda in order to ensure a sense of shared ownership and commitment, as well as outcomes that equally benefit the community and university (p. 92). This idea is not limited to only research partnerships however, as all engagement initiatives would benefit from early conversations, in absence of pre-conceived agendas, to discuss the ideas, possibilities, collaboration opportunities, goals, and processes for moving forward in a way that values and respects all voices and interests at the table (Holland & Ramaley, 2008, pp. 34-35). Holland et. al (2003) draw attention to the difficulty of this manifesting in practice, however, as partnerships are often hastily cobbled together to take advantage of opportunities tied to funding or other fleeting resources and may not take the time to expressly communicate expectations, priorities, visions and hopes of each partner (p. 3). This dynamic makes it challenging for partnerships to work towards a common purpose while ensuring mutual benefit over the longer term, therefore it is worth taking the time to have this dialogue upfront and throughout the partnership (Holland et. al, 2003, p. 3; Cauley, 2000, pp. 13-16).

Other themes include honesty, realism, expectation management and mutual understanding of contextual factors. Unrealistic expectations based on pre-conceived assumptions can be harmful to partnership relationships as they may lead to feelings of let-down, frustration and failure if internalized expectations are not met (Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, pp. 90-92). It is important for partners, therefore, to be open and honest with each other with regards to what is possible and feasible, considering their interests, capacities, resources, and other priorities and demands on their time (Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, pp. 90-92; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 507; Roker, 2007, p. 184). Developing an understanding of the organizational and environmental systems context that each partner is working within is an

especially important consideration for expectation management, as each will have different constraints and requirements depending on factors such as funding, urgency of issues, institutional missions or objectives, bureaucratic procedures, systems of recognition and reward, operational timelines and other elements (Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 83). Engaging in this kind of conversation is also key to understanding what each partner is interested in gaining, and what they are willing and able to compromise on, or not. In addition, the level of authentic understanding among partners that can be achieved through this dialogue can help to set the foundation for future conflict resolution by setting a standard of open and honest communication from the beginning (Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, pp. 90-92).

While the above concepts are often brought up in the literature in conjunction with the beginning stages of an initiative, it is important that these principles be revisited throughout the partnership as things change over time (Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 78; Cherry & Shefner, 2004, p. 230; Cauley, 2000, pp. 14-16). Non-linearity is to be expected, and as partnerships evolve, develop and shift with the changing environment, the originally created mission, vision, goals and outcomes may need to be altered or clarified, processes confirmed, and assumptions reassessed at various points in the relationship (Cauley, 2000, pp. 14-16; Hammersley, 2017, pp. 126-127).

With regards to the importance of these principles in practice, a systematic review of the community-university partnership literature conducted by Drahota et. al (2016) revealed a number of facilitating and hindering factors on the partnership process, and having a shared purpose and goals was identified as a significant facilitating factor, while conflicting expectations was identified as a hindering factor (pp. 184-186).

### ***Principle 3***

3. The relationship between partners in the Partnership is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.

FIGURE 3. CCPH PRINCIPLE 3

The importance of the elements listed in *Figure 3* are reflected in Drahota et. al's (2016) systematic review of the literature, where they found trust, respect and the existence of a good relationship to be significant facilitating factors for community-university partnerships (pp. 184-186). Trust is further defined by the partners' sense of confidence that the other party has their best interests in mind, are capable of carrying out the work, will conduct themselves with integrity, and will provide a safe and confidential space for information and thought sharing (Drahota et. al, 2016, pp. 184-186). Respect is further defined by relationships where all voices and opinions are given the opportunity to be heard and valued, and good relationships are defined where a positive and unified vibe exists between partners who enjoy working together (Drahota et. al, 2016, pp. 184-186).

One of the key themes that comes up in the literature with regards to building authentic partnerships based on trust and respect is the importance of personal relationships (Northmore &

Hart, 2011, p. 7; Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, p. 90; Buys & Bursnall, 2007, pp. 77-78). As McLean & Behringer (2008) state, “more than anything else, partnerships thrive on personal connections” (p. 69), and taking the time to get to know one another, to learn about each other’s needs and cultural practices, to come through for one another, and to commit to the collaborative process is key to building sustainable partnerships that last far beyond short-term funding opportunities (Holland et. al, 2003, p. 4, Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 84; Holland & Ramaley, 2008, p.35). Developing relationships, and by extension, trust, takes time and requires commitment to follow through on promises, to share resources, and to support each other with even the most mundane of project tasks, which will help to build a solid foundation for future work together (Northmore & Hart, 2011, p. 7).

Another important factor for building genuine, trusting and respectful partnerships relates back to the first principles considered above (principles 1, 2 and 7) around developing a shared purpose, managing expectations, ensuring all voices are heard and valued. As Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis (2005) identify, trust and respect are built when partners are honest with each other and are able to bring together their interests and capacities to define project goals and outcomes for mutual benefit, and when all knowledge, especially community knowledge, is appropriately valued (p. 88).

By contrast, Cocuzzi’s (2017) interviews with community members who had experience working with academic institutions revealed several important lessons for what not to do when attempting to build trust and respect in community-university partnerships. It seems that the heart of the issues stemmed from the community feeling that the intentions of academic partners were not aligned or connected to the interests of the community (p. 51). Relationships struggled and were unable to build trust if the community felt as though the academic institution had a hidden agenda and were attempting to force a particular project or vision, and if the academic partners came in with little knowledge of the community and did not follow an inclusive process (Cocuzzi, 2017, pp. 57-65).

#### ***Principle 4***

4. The Partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.

FIGURE 4. CCPH PRINCIPLE 4

The principle identified in *Figure 4* is grounded in the concept of asset-based community development, which counters the traditional notion of needs or deficiency-based action where organizations act as service providers to clients, further encouraging citizens to become dependent on external ‘experts’ to fix the situation, as opposed to realizing their own capacity, creativity, power and potential to make a positive difference (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, pp. 1-6; Connors & Prelip, 2000, p. 27). Asset-based community development is grounded in the notion that energy for positive social change is more likely to

emerge from the identification and appreciation of assets and strengths in the community, as opposed to focusing on deficiencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). This is not to say, however, that needs do not exist, capacity building is not required, or external support is not needed. Rather it shifts the focus to recognize the strength, capacity and resiliency that is resident in the community already as a starting point to grow from, and to garner motivation and support (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 5).

Holland & Gelmon (1998) indicate that an important feature for sustainability in community-university partnerships is the “effective use and enhancement of community capacity based on clear identification of community resources and strengths” (p. 108). Connors & Preliip (2000) identify some practical ways to do this, including the integration of a documentation process for assets that exist within the partnership, ongoing evaluation to ensure assets are being capitalized on, and the use of language to shift the focus from approaching initiatives through a lens of deficiency and need, to building from a place of strength (p. 31).

### ***Principle 5, 9 & 12***

5. The Partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
9. Partners share the benefits of the Partnership’s accomplishments.
12. The Partnership values multiple kinds of knowledge and life experiences

FIGURE 5. CCPH PRINCIPLES 5, 9 & 12

“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” -Lilla Watson

The principles identified in *Figure 5* will be considered together as they all attempt to mitigate a similar core assumption and history of the university as ‘expert’; the development of one-sided relationships; and systemic inequalities resulting in an imbalance of power.

The first concept embedded in these principles is the power imbalance that may exist between post-secondary institutions and community partners. This will of course depend on the community partner, and may be particularly true for civil society organizations, as opposed to government or business (Northmore & Hart, 2011, p. 6). Part of the challenge is a long-standing paradigm of charity as opposed to justice, where there exists an unspoken hierarchical divide, and resources are deployed from university to community in the context of helping or fixing, as opposed to sharing for mutual benefit and the common good (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 510; Fisher, Fabricant & Simmons, 2004, pp. 28-29; Hammersley, 2017, p. 117). There is a history of academic institutions exhibiting condescending and paternalistic behaviour when working with community partners which may not necessarily be conscious, but a product of deeply embedded systemic structures and social hierarchy that separate the academy from community (Cherry & Shefner, 2004, p. 226; Hammersley, 2017, pp. 117-118).

As Holland & Gelmon (1998) identify, the tradition of academic institutions presenting themselves as experts, using community issues as subjects for research, and offering solutions to communities ‘in-need’ has “led to much of the estrangement of universities and colleges from their communities” (p. 105). A 2011 discourse analysis of articles in the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning found that some of the scholarly discourse about community-university engagement (particularly related to service-learning for students) was presenting this work primarily as a way for the university to advance its scholarship or financial interests, and that the community was a recipient of guidance and aid from the university (Bortolin, 2011). Even though this work is often very well-intentioned, it is important that partnerships take active measures to avoid the perpetuation of an embedded social hierarchy through paternalistic and colonial practices (Tilley-Lubbs, 2009; Fisher, Fabricant & Simmons, 2004; Cherry & Shefner, 2004, pp. 230-231; Dempsey, 2010, p. 384; Hammersley, 2017, pp. 117-118).

In order to develop effective community-university partnerships, therefore, it is essential to recognize and attempt to mitigate this dominant pattern by developing an awareness and understanding of systemic factors such as structural and social inequalities, valuing the benefits of partnership for all parties, and facilitating processes based on two-way collaboration, mutual respect, and equity (Northmore & Hart, 2011, p. 6; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 510; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis, 2005, p. 95; Curwood et.al, 2011, p. 24; Cherry & Shefner, 2004, p. 228; Fabricant & Simmons, 2004, p. 30).

In reference to principle twelve, a key method for establishing a better balance of power in partnership relationships is to appropriately value the knowledge that community partners bring to the table. Post-secondary institutions inherently value formal, academic, empirical and technical knowledge, whereas the informal, lived, experiential and embodied knowledge resident within communities may not be given the attention it deserves in partnership projects, thereby risking the silencing of community voice (Fisher, Fabricant & Simmons, 2004, pp. 29-30; Cherry & Shefner, 2004, p. 227). Approaching community-university partnerships with a listening and learning mind-set, positioning community partners as respected holders of valuable knowledge, and recognizing the strengths and assets resident within communities, will serve to reduce power imbalances and enable a two-way flow of dialogue and co-creation of knowledge (Northmore & Hart, 2011, p.6; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis, 2005, p. 90; McLean & Behringer, 2008, p.69; Holland & Ramaley, 2008, p. 34; Lorenzoni, 2013, p. 132; Dempsey 2010, p. 384; Hammersley, 2017, p. 119).

Finally, in reference to principle nine, the sharing of recognition and celebration of partnership accomplishments is an important component of balancing power. From a justice perspective, celebration of joint contributions to achievements further validates and legitimizes the value of all partners, whereas one-sided recognition to institutions with the most power communicates a dynamic of charity and may lead to mistrust in the relationship (Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, p. 91; Blake & Moore, 2000, p. 65). The idea of sharing the benefits of accomplishments also brings to light the equal importance of taking responsibility for failures,

which solidifies the commitment to the partnership, and increases trust and respect (Blake & Moore, 2000, p. 66).

This set of principles brings to the forefront the idea that the university and community are equal partners in the quest to build a better world with much to learn from each other. Academic institutions should not go in to communities assuming they have more knowledge, more skill or better ideas. Rather, they must “work toward disrupting that assumption by applying a critical lens to our positions and our discourse and attempting to remain true to the principles of community-based engagement, the principles that inspired us in the first place.” (Bortolin, 2011, p.55).

### ***Principle 6***

6. Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority in the Partnership by striving to understand each other’s needs and self-interests, and developing a common language

FIGURE 6. CCPH PRINCIPLE 6

The principle outlined in *Figure 6* is reflected in Drahota et.al’s (2016) review of the literature, where effective communication is identified as a significant facilitating factor for community-university partnership processes. Effective communication is defined as honest, respectful, consistent, and goes beyond strictly professional matters to include personal human connection (pp. 184-186). Another related facilitating factor includes well-structured meetings that are held often enough for the context of the initiative; are productive; offer the opportunity to build informal connection; and use a format, such as in-person or distance, that works for all partners (Drahota et.al, 2016, pp. 184-186). Similarly, hindering factors included poor communication, as well as the lack of a common language. With regards to common language, it was found to be problematic when partners did not share an understanding of definitions and terms being used to communicate about the work of the partnership (Drahota et.al, 2016, pp. 184-186).

Important elements of effective communication also include listening, a commitment to understanding the different needs and contexts of partners, and respect for diversity of opinions, values, beliefs, culture and practices (Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis, 2005, p. 89; SenGupta, 2000, p. 41). This has substantial connection back to the first principles that were considered in *Figure 2* as effective communication is critical to facilitating a mutual understanding of interests, and developing shared purpose goals, benefits, processes, and managing expectations (Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis, 2005, p. 89; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 508). Communication is also synergistic with Principle 3 as an enabling factor in building trust and respect. Personal relationships are important for building trust and respect, and communication is an essential component in building relationships. Consequently, personal relationships make communication easier (SenGupta, 2000, p. 45).

Buyss and Bursnall (2007) also identify communication as an important factor for sustainability of partnerships, as motivation and enthusiasm throughout initiatives are kept up when partners are informed on activities and opportunities for feedback and clarification are provided (p. 79).

### ***Principle 8***

8. There is feedback among all stakeholders in the Partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the Partnership and its outcomes.

FIGURE 7. CCPH PRINCIPLE 8

The principle in *Figure 7* is highly connected to the principle outlined in *Figure 6*, which focuses on communication. Feedback is a form of communication that must occur on a regular basis in order to facilitate an open and honest flow of information between parties with goals around improving activities and ensuring ongoing partnership effectiveness and mutual benefit.

Ongoing feedback and continuous learning are key ingredients for partnerships to thrive. A commitment to seeking, understanding and using feedback throughout partnership initiatives is an important part of developing trust and respect in relationships (Holland & Gelmon, 1998, pp. 107-108; Sebastian, Skelton & West, 2000, p. 58). Flexibility and openness to change and adaptation based on timely and regular feedback for the purpose of improving the partnership initiatives enables confidence to be built among partners and facilitates a dynamic of continuous listening and learning (Sebastian, Skelton & West, 2000, pp. 58-62; Holland & Gelmon, 1998, pp. 107-108).

With regards to outcomes from partnership initiatives, while some desired outcomes will be shared among partners, some will also be different, as the university may have particular interests around research and student learning, and the community partner around client outcomes, improvement of service, increased staff or organizational capacity or other expectations. Therefore, feedback processes and the documentation of outcomes is essential for keeping tabs on the continued mutually beneficial nature of the partnership, as well as unexpected consequences (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 509; McLean & Behringer, 2008, p. 69). For instance, Cocuzzi (2017) stipulates the importance of mindfulness around the potential unintended negative effects of engagement processes, as they may become more of a burden than a benefit, and feedback mechanisms are an effective way to become aware of and mitigate issues along the way (pp. 86-89). With regards to measuring outcomes, Northmore & Hart (2011) identify the importance, yet also the difficulty, in determining and measuring outcomes from community-university partnership initiatives, and stipulate that while outcomes are important, the narratives that illuminate the process along the way are just as critical as a method to uncover lessons for effective practice (p. 8).

### ***Principle 10***

10. Partnerships can dissolve, and when they do, need to plan a process for closure.

FIGURE 8. CCPH PRINCIPLE 10

The issue of ending partnerships is not dealt with as extensively in the literature as the other principles, however it is an important consideration, especially when the idea of partnership maintenance and sustainability is so often attributed to success. Bringle & Hatcher (2002) indicate that sustainability in partnership relationships is not always an indicator for success and could even lead towards a dysfunctional dynamic if the relationship is not healthy (pp. 511-512). Time-bound partnerships can be very beneficial for all parties, especially when the expectations, goals and purpose are clearly articulated, and partners understand the nature of the relationship (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 511).

For partnerships that are not explicitly time-bound, it is good practice to have policies and processes in place to dissolve the relationship if it is no longer meeting the expectations or needs of the parties involved. Connected to Principle 8 which addresses the importance of feedback, Bringle & Hatcher (2002) call for consistent attention and assessment of partnership process and outcomes to enable the ongoing determination of whether or not partnership initiatives are continuing to produce the expected benefits (p. 512). If partnerships do require dissolution, the key is to approach the situation with respect, honesty, compassion and thoughtfulness in order to leave the door open for more appropriate collaborations in the future (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 512).

### ***Principle 11***

11. Partnerships consider the nature of the environment within which they exist as a principle of their design, evaluation, and sustainability.

FIGURE 9. CCPH PRINCIPLE 11

As Holland and Ramaley (2008) observe, “in implementing community engagement, one size does not fit all” (p. 36). When engaging in community-university partnerships, it is critical to recognize that each will be different and will be shaped in diverse ways as a product of their environment and “the history, capacity, culture, mission and challenges faced by institutions and communities” (Holland & Gelmon, 1998, p. 106).

Taking a systems approach may help ground the principle identified in *Figure 9*, which outlines the importance of understanding the nature of the environment within which partnerships exist. Looking at community-university partnerships from a systems perspective requires partners to think about the broader contexts each party is embedded within, and how various complex social and economic factors, organizational structures, processes, relationships, cultures, locations, priorities, pressures and challenges might interact and affect the collaborative

work (Suarez-balcazar, Harper & Lewis 2005, p. 91; Kearney & Candy, 2004, p. 187; Dempsey, 2010, p. 383; Hammersley, 2017, p. 120). Taking this level of complexity into account also serves to build the relationship and partnership processes. As each party develops a better understanding of the systemic factors at play which may facilitate or hinder initiatives, it helps to inform how best to carry out the work in the most effective way (Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis, 2005, p. 91).

This concept may also be helpful in addressing the common question of how to define “the community” when referring to community-university partnerships. Holland & Gelmon (1998) question whether a standard definition is needed, or would even be beneficial, since the community should be defined within the context of each partnership, depending on the nature of the activity, the issue or opportunity being addressed, and the shared purpose of the effort (pp. 106-107). Refraining to bound the concept of community with a standard definition also allows for the recognition that communities are highly diverse and complex, and differences of opinion, interest and expectations exist both between and within communities, necessitating a more open and flexible approach to describing the concept of community (Dempsey, 2010, pp. 365-383).

#### 2.3.4 Other Possible Principles

A few other concepts came up in the literature that did not fit within the framework of principles developed by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health that are worth mentioning and considering.

One such concept is the people and roles involved in the partnership. Identifying and communicating clear roles that enable the contribution of core competencies, skills and resources of all partners in a synergistic way is recognized as a facilitating factor for effective community-university partnerships (Drahota et.al, 2016, pp. 184-186; Buys & Bursnall, 2007, pp. 78-79). In addition, involving the types of people who come into the partnership with positivity, motivation, commitment and dynamism, and who understand the value of the partnership process, contributes to the success of the effort (Drahota et.al, 2016, pp. 184-186; Buys & Bursnall, 2007, pp. 78-79).

Time commitment was another concept that came up as an important factor to consider in community-university partnerships. Cocuzzi (2017) identified the importance of awareness and respect for the time required of community partners to participate in engagement processes which may not be compensated and could lead to additional burden if time is not used effectively (pp. 67-68). Drahota et.al (2016) also identified excessive time commitment as a hindering factor for community-university partnership processes as it may lead to membership drop-out or general dysfunction of the initiative (pp. 184-186).

Finally, the broader conversation regarding the separation of universities from community is another concept worth examining in the context of principles. Dempsey (2010) points out that the framework within which community-university engagement is conceptualized and discussed creates artificial boundaries that “reinforce a strict campus/community divide” (p. 364). This conceptual divide reifies the paradigm of universities as expert holders and creators of

knowledge with the ability to decide when to reach outside the academy to deploy resources for community benefit, as opposed to acknowledging their interconnected role in the broader social, economic, political, cultural and environmental system within which we all live, and realizing they are an integral part of communities (Dempsey, 2010, p. 364; Curwood et.al, 2011, p. 24). This concept has close ties to the discussion related to Principles 5, 9 and 12, however it calls out a more fundamental assumption that goes beyond balancing power to understanding that the university and community are “part of a fragile ecology of mutual dependence and possibility” (Fisher, Fabricant & Simmons, 2004, p. 32).

### 2.3.5 Institutional Infrastructure

Embedded within the literature about principles that guide community-university partnership approaches and processes, also includes mention of the institutional structures of support that are required to create the conditions necessary for successful partnerships to be developed and to enable the principles to be followed in practice. From a systems perspective, institutional infrastructure can be a powerful leverage point. By implementing incentives, barriers, policies or expectations, the rules of the system can be shifted in a different direction which will change behaviour and action (Meadows, 1999, p. 14). This is an important consideration in the context of evaluation and assessment of community-university engagement as it signals the value of benchmarking tools that encourage self-assessment and reflection on the institutionalization of community engagement. While this is beyond the scope of this project, several authors have cited the connection between institutional factors and community-university partnerships and it is worth outlining some key points.

First is the idea that adequate support for the proper development and sustainability of community partnerships requires involvement of all levels of staff and faculty in order to carry out long-term strategies and protect against initiatives becoming too dependent on transient leaders and funding (Northmore & Hart, 2011, pp. 8-9). Second is the need for an understanding and valuing of the time and effort required for post-secondary actors to develop and grow partnerships to a point where they will generate outcomes of perceived benefit to the institution, such as teaching, learning and research. Often the essential activities required to cultivate effective partnerships such as building relationships, fostering trust and respect, developing a shared purpose and vision and other elements are not resourced adequately, thereby potentially preventing meaningful projects from coming forward (Buys & Bursnall, 2007, pp. 81-85; Curwood et.al, 2011, p. 24). Holland & Gelmon (1998) point to the challenge of not only implementing institutional changes to better support principled community engagement, but also determining what changes to make and how (p. 108). Some areas for possible focus include faculty/staff development, recognition and rewards; allocation of time, funding and other resources; research and curriculum support and development; inclusion of community-engagement in institutional mission; and other possibilities (Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 84; Curwood et. al, 2011, p. 24). Existing benchmarking tools also point to particular areas of focus for institutionalizing community engagement, some of which can be found in Appendix A.

Going beyond the value of institutional support structures for the development of fruitful community-university partnerships, McNall, Reed & Allen (2009) articulate the importance of institutional support for the evaluation of these relationships to research the connections between process and outcome (p. 328). These authors make explicit the need for not only tangible support such as funding, time, capacity building, and practical assistance in evaluation, but also a paradigm shift whereby the institution and faculty embrace community-university partnerships and engagement as a scholarly endeavor in and of itself (p. 328).

## **2.4 Examples of Principles-Focused Evaluation in Practice**

Principles-focused evaluation is not appropriate for every situation and it is important that it be a match for the purpose of the evaluation, and that it be of use to those engaging with it, as it is considered under the umbrella of utilization-focused evaluation (Patton, 2018, p. 196). This type of evaluation is useful for large, complex, dynamic interventions at the organizational level and beyond, that are simply not simple enough to fit into a logic model (p. 21). Murphy (2014) compares evidence-based practice and effective principles from an evaluation perspective to outline the differences, and when one might use one over the other. It is not a question of which method is better, but which method is best for the situation (P. 84). Evidence-based practice assumes a particular systematic method, technique or approach to be implemented regardless of context, and evaluation methods are based on expectations of logic and linearity of the results of a single program or of multiple identical programs (Murphy, 2014, pp. 82-83). Evidence-based practices are desirable in situations that are well understood, with a clear comprehension of cause and effect, such as the implementation of vaccines to prevent the spread of infectious disease. Principles on the other hand are best used in complex systems with high degrees of uncertainty, change, and interacting social, economic, political, ecological, cultural, historical and other contextual factors at play. These situations benefit from principles that provide guidance on approaches to process but allow for flexibility and adaptability in practice (Murphy, 2014, pp. 85-86).

In the context of community-university engagement, the types of partnerships, programs and initiatives will vary depending on what is possible, appropriate and relevant to the situation and therefore requires a more adaptive approach to evaluation. As an organization with high aspirations to be Canada's most community engaged research university as articulated in the vision (SFU Strategic Vision, 2013), it is more important than ever to inquire into how the institution is realizing this vision and living its values. Principles focused evaluation allows for this type of strategic evaluation at the higher organizational level (Patton, 2018, p. 128), however it is very easy to default back to the norm of project or initiative specific evaluation based on tried and true methods such as SMART goals, logic models and indicators (p. 134-135). Therefore, having concrete examples of how the principles-focused evaluation methodology is currently being deployed will be helpful to understand how the focus can be kept on the evaluation of principles.

The following section is divided into four subsections which will each examine one instance of a principles-focused evaluation. There are two examples of completed evaluations that are considered principles-focused including the Paris Declaration Principles for International Development Aid and an evaluation of principles developed for six agencies serving homeless youth (Patton, 2018, p. xi). There is also a current example of an evaluation at the principles development stage for collaborative approaches to evaluation (Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert & Hudib, 2015). This study is useful to highlight for the purposes of this project, which will be to focus on principles development. Finally, a study was conducted through Michigan State University to measure outcomes against certain community-university partnership processes which will also be reviewed (McNall, Reed & Allen, 2009). While this study was not technically identified as a principles-focused evaluation, the purpose of it was to inquire into the connection between partnership processes and perceived benefits of the partnership from the perspective of community partners, which is a good fit with the method.

#### 2.4.1 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

In 2005, after many efforts to increase the quality of international aid and development, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was approved by over one-hundred countries and organizations across the globe (Patton, 2018, p. 227; Wood et al., 2011, p. xii). The declaration identifies five key principles for aid effectiveness which are further articulated through fifty-six associated commitments (Wood et al., 2011, p. 2). The principles are identified as follows (Patton, 2018, p. 227):

- Ownership: developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.
- Alignment: Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems
- Harmonization: donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures, and share information to avoid duplication
- Results: developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured
- Mutual Accountability: Donors and partners are accountable for development results

In the Declaration document, under each principle are a list of commitments for both donor and partner countries to contextualize and provide more guidance for implementing the principle in practice. For example, under the first principle of ownership, a commitment, or operating principle, for the partner countries is to “exercise leadership in developing and implementing their national development strategies through broad consultative processes” and for donors to “respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it” (OECD, 2005/2008, p. 3).

An evaluation based on the principles was conducted between 2007-2011 across twenty-two countries and eighteen donor organizations engaged in development aid to determine whether the Declaration has made a difference in behaviour for the effective implementation of

aid, and the subsequent impact on international development (Patton, 2018, p. 228; Wood et al., 2011, p. xii).

In the evaluation synthesis document, Wood et al., 2011 reflect on the development of the methodology and state the challenges associated with conducting a non-traditional evaluation that is focused at a higher strategic level as opposed to a programmatic level, and the inclination throughout the effort to drift towards the use of more familiar reductionist evaluation methods (p. 3). Due to the complex nature of the evaluation, a mainly qualitative methodology was chosen so as not to “squeeze these complex and subtle processes through simple numerical silos” (Wood et al., 2011, p. 3).

To carry out the evaluation, an underlying theory of change was developed which articulated eleven intended intermediate outcomes for aid effectiveness, along with five longer-term development impacts flowing from the principles and commitments made in the Declaration (Wood et al., 2011, p. 5). The intended outcomes and impacts are quite general and include statements such as “less duplication of efforts and rationalised, more cost-effective donor activities” for intermediate outcomes, and “reducing poverty” for longer term impacts (p. 4). The evaluation aimed to assess the degree to which the declaration was being implemented in different contexts, improvements in aid effectiveness, and how improvements in aid effectiveness are contributing to longer term development (Patton, 2018, p. 230). A common evaluation matrix was developed to gather evidence for these questions across countries and organizations. The matrix begins by gathering baseline data to determine the direction of change since the Paris Declaration in 2005 and asks questions to identify contextual factors affecting the implementation of the Paris Declaration. It then uses the eleven intermediate outcomes identified in the theory of change to determine the distance of change in those areas, and then asks questions relating to the contribution of aid to the sustainable development results as identified in the theory of change (OECD, n.d.). In addition to the data gathered through the matrix, other key documents and reports were reviewed, and key informants were interviewed by the evaluation team to develop case studies for each country to determine their progress in relation to the commitments outlined in the Paris Declaration (Patton, 2018, pp. 186-187).

Overall, the evaluation found that “the principles and commitments in the Declaration... have almost all proved relevant to improving the quality of aid and of the partnerships needed to make it work” (Wood et al., 2011, p. 53), and that a principles-focused approach to aid reform and evaluation is the most appropriate method due to the vast differences in implementation of this work across complex social, cultural, political, environmental and historical contexts (Patton, 2018, p. 233).

#### 2.4.2 Principles for Working with Youth Facing Homelessness

Another predominantly qualitative example of a principles-focused evaluation study was carried out in Minnesota, as part of a collective of six organizations working with youth experiencing homelessness (Murphy, 2014). The organizations were given an opportunity, through a common funder, to convene around issues of shared concern and to improve practices

(Patton, 2018, p. 238; Murphy, 2014, p. 96). Evaluation was identified as a common challenge, as the agencies found that the standard reporting measures did not do justice to, or communicate properly, the work that was being conducted and the impact on the lives of youth (Patton, 2018, p. 238). In addition, due to the organizations working with youth in communities with widely varying contexts, the implementation of their work differed from one agency to another. They found that generally accepted methods or procedures for implementing activities, in other words, ‘best-practices’, did not allow for enough of a nuanced approach in the contexts of complexity they were working in (Murphy, 2014, p. 10). As Murphy (2014) identifies, “young people experiencing homelessness share only two things in common: they are not housed, and they are youth” (p. 384), and the reasons leading to their homelessness as well as the strengths and barriers they face to improve their situations, vary greatly. What the organizations did have in common, were foundational principles for how they approached their work with youth facing homelessness, and as part of the collaboration process, nine principles were surfaced that communicate the deep experience and lessons shared across the youth serving agencies (Patton, 2018, p. 238).

The purpose of the study was to determine if and how the principles were manifesting in practice across the organizations, and their effectiveness for improving the lives of youth (Patton, 2018, p. 239; Murphy, 2014, pp. 11-12). A qualitative case-study method was employed to gather the stories and journeys from fourteen youth as well as their interactions with staff at the agencies in order to determine how the principles showed up in practice and their effects on the experiences of the youth being served (Murphy, 2014, p. 96). The study showed that all of the nine principles were not only reflected in the case studies, but also proved to be significant and effective in making a positive difference in the lives of youth experiencing homelessness (Patton, 2018, pp. 239-240). Murphy (2014) stipulates the importance of principles for navigating complexity as they have the power to take us beyond the boundaries of delivering pre-determined and tangible outcomes, such as housing and employment for homeless youth for example. Principles shift the value of the work to the broader deep-seated, beliefs, lessons and knowledge for effective approaches for working with youth to enable a process that will lead to not only tangible outcomes, but also the intangible elements necessary for long term success such as resiliency, connection, self-efficacy and belonging (pp. 429-430).

From an evaluation perspective, Patton (2018) outlines an example of how intermediate outcomes can be unearthed from the principles, and how associated evaluation questions can be developed for determining if outcomes were met, and how the principle and intermediate outcomes connect to the overarching outcome of getting youth out of homelessness (p. 98). The following is an example using the outcomes framework outlined in Patton (2018), but with a principle that has not had its outcomes or evaluation questions articulated in the book (p. 98). One of the principles is: “Strengths-based: start with and build upon the skills, strengths, and positive characteristics of each youth” (Patton, 2018, p. 18). The embedded intermediate outcome for this principle could be that youth understand and appreciate their skills, strengths and abilities, and that youth use these strengths to move forward in their lives. Evaluation

questions could be: to what extent can youth recognize and articulate their skills, strengths and abilities; and, how are youth taking their skills, strengths and abilities into account when making plans for the future? The connection to the overarching housing outcome is that youth may have low levels of confidence and feelings of self-worth which may be preventing them from obtaining employment, and thereby housing. Identifying their strengths and talents and encouraging them to develop themselves in these areas and pursue their interests will help boost their confidence and likelihood to succeed.

The above example provides a helpful framework to visualize how a principles-focused evaluation can be positioned and structured towards outcomes, which will be useful as this method is considered for community-university partnerships.

### 2.4.3 Developing Principles for Collaborative Approaches to Evaluation

In a paper written by Cousins, Whitmore & Shulha (2012), the authors express some concern for the direction of theory development in collaborative approaches to evaluation. Collaborative approaches to evaluation, as defined in Cousins, Whitmore & Shulha (2012), encompasses a number of evaluation methods and theories including participatory evaluation, participatory action research, empowerment evaluation and others, but fundamentally is characterized by the involvement and partnership of individuals who have a stake in the evaluation, throughout the process (pp. 8-14).

The development of theory in this area has been trending towards the use of logic models to describe and prescribe methods of what to do and how, and teasing apart various collaborative approaches to evaluation as separate models within themselves. The concern expressed with this direction is the decoupling of collaborative evaluation from the context within which it is being implemented, and the push towards traditional models that tend to favour rigor by prescribing methods and steps, as opposed to a flexible approach that guides behaviour, but ultimately allows for complexity and diverse interventions depending on the particular situation and needs (Cousins, Whitmore & Shulha, 2012, pp. 9-16).

Collaborative approaches to evaluation are implemented in complex contexts with varying, dynamic and ever-changing social, historical, cultural, economic, and environmental factors at play, and these must be prioritized to help inform a process that will be meaningful and beneficial for everyone involved (Cousins, Whitmore & Shulha, 2012, pp. 15-18). Therefore, the authors call for the development of a set of foundational principles to guide collaborative and participatory forms of inquiry (p. 18).

Building from this initial work and case for principles, Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert & Hudib (2015) present a study that outlines the process and results of developing principles for collaborative approaches to evaluation (p. 193). Informing the process was a fundamental understanding that principles are best formed through the synthesis of knowledge, experiences, lessons, values and learnings from practitioners who can provide rich, qualitative accounts of what has been effective, and challenging in practice (Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert & Hudib, 2015, pp. 194-195). The research was completed in four phases involving self-

reflection, feedback and testing of the idea from the evaluation community, surveying over three-hundred evaluators, and gathering feedback from survey participants on an initial set of draft principles (pp. 197-198).

The resulting principles are listed as a set of eight and are further described and contextualized to indicate what the principles look like in practice, using evidence and examples from the surveys. Each principle is also accompanied by additional statements that could be framed as operating principles, which outline some key themes for operationalizing the principle. For example, under the first principle, “clarify motivation for collaboration” the accompanying statements include “evaluation purpose”, “information and process needs” and “evaluator and stakeholder expectations” (Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert & Hudib, 2015, p. 199).

As part of the study to identify principles, the authors were also able to articulate the relationship between process and outcome, and through the survey responses, found connection between the quality of the collaborative approach to evaluation, and the resulting outcomes for stakeholders (Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert & Hudib, 2015, p. 212). Another key learning that surfaced in the process of developing the principles was the interrelated nature of them, and the importance of considering them as a synergistic whole as opposed to an independent list. The authors contend that all of the principles are important, but the degree to which each principle will be relevant to any given situation is dependent on context (Shulha, Whitmore, Cousins, Gilbert & Hudib, 2015, p. 198).

#### 2.4.4 Community-University Partnerships at Michigan State University

A study conducted by McNall, Reed & Allen (2009) at Michigan State University demonstrates the features of a Principles-Focused Evaluation without being labelled as such. The authors recognize the lack of attention in the literature paid to the connection between foundational principles of partnership and outcomes, and articulate that “it is time for the scholarship on community-university partnerships...to move beyond listing the ingredients of successful partnerships to developing models that articulate the relationship between partnership characteristics and partnership outcomes” (McNall, Reed & Allen, 2009, p. 319).

The purpose of the study was to illuminate the correlation between relationship dynamics and the resulting benefits of the partnership for the community, university and broader society in order to offer insights on successful practices to increase capacity for effective engagement (p. 321). To do this, four features were identified – which could be reframed as principles – of effective community-university partnership that the authors deemed to have relatively widespread consensus in the literature which included the following (McNall, Reed & Allen, 2009, p. 319):

1. Cooperative goal setting and planning
2. Shared power, resources and decision making
3. Group cohesion
4. Partnership management

The second, third and fourth feature above, plus an additional one for knowledge co-creation and mobilization, were used in a survey to measure the extent to which these characteristics were present in partnerships, and to uncover the effects of partnership dynamics on the resulting outcomes of the partnership, from the perspective of community partners (pp. 321-322). A regression analysis measuring ten pre-identified benefits from partnerships against the four features, revealed a number of benefits associated with the features of effective partnership, including the development of research on relevant and salient community issues, and better results for the community served by the organization (p. 325).

It is interesting that this particular study uses mostly quantitative methods to carry out what resembles a principles-focused evaluation, while the other examples identified in this paper are quite focused on qualitative methods. While there may be valuable lessons to be gleaned from the methodology, the relevance of this study is less about the methods used and findings discovered, and more about the explicit signaling of value in a principles-focused endeavor for community-university engagement. McNall, Reed & Allen (2009) state that “the quality of community–university engagement is only as good as the quality of the individual partnerships through which that engagement is enacted” (p. 327), and inquiring into the principles of partnership relationships that lead to successful outcomes, will build capacity for achieving mutual benefit by enabling the deliberate and intentional fostering of those elements in practice (p. 327).

## **2.5 Summary of the Literature Review**

The need for public accountability, institutional learning and development, and internal legitimacy for the community engagement missions of post-secondary institutions, are all key drivers for the increasing interest in evaluation for community-university engagement activity. Some issues that make institutional measurement and evaluation of this work challenging, include the wide range of definitions and types of community engagement activities, the difficulty of capturing impacts, evaluation methods and data collection, and the culture of evaluation in higher education. With regards to culture, the importance of aligning values to institution-wide metrics and ensuring that evaluation efforts serve a true learning and improvement purpose, as opposed to a standardized exercise in reporting and accreditation, are also key points that came out in the literature. A number of beneficial tools and frameworks currently exist for post-secondary institutions to assess their efforts in community-university engagement, however common limitations with these tools include evaluation of outcomes and impact, reflection of community voice and participation, and the connection between process and outcomes in collaborative relationships.

The notion of exploring the connection between processes and outcomes of initiatives in community-university collaborations is a topic of interest in the literature. It is recognized that community-university relationships are complex, and partnerships should be evaluated for process, and to what extent they lead to benefits in teaching, research and community

development, though there appears to be a gap in this area of research. Principles may provide a promising way to start exploring this connection between process and outcome by capturing the foundational process factors for the establishment and maintenance of effective partnerships.

Principles for community-university partnerships have been created by the organization Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH), which outlines twelve foundational principles for building and maintaining successful partnerships between post-secondary institutions and their communities. Key elements in these principles include having a shared purpose, mission, values, and goals; mutual trust and respect; building on strengths; communication and feedback; balancing power; valuing different forms of knowledge; and others. These existing principles serve as an important framework to consider in the development of evaluable principles of community-university partnership at SFU. Other themes that came up in the literature that did not fit within the existing principles developed by CCPH, included the benefit of articulating clear roles; involving the right type of people in the partnership; the importance of respecting time and capacity constraints of community partners; and addressing the university-community divide. Another key finding in the literature review on principles for community-university partnership, is the underlying challenge of institutional infrastructure, and the call for structural support within institutions to create the conditions necessary for successful partnerships to be developed and to enable principles to be followed in practice.

In the final section of the literature review, four examples of principles-focused evaluation in action are outlined as a way to showcase how this method can be implemented in practice across diverse contexts ranging from a global cross-country evaluation to that of a single post-secondary institution. This is important given the relative infancy of principles-focused evaluation compared to other evaluation methods, as well as its non-traditional approach.

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

Rallis (2018) describes a conceptual framework as a way to communicate the focus and direction of a study by presenting the researchers “thinking and intended actions” (p. 356). It also serves as an instrument to guide decisions, lines of inquiry, and methods throughout the research process; and connects the study to theory (Rallis, 2018, pp. 355-356).

The conceptual framework used to guide this study is represented visually in *Figure 10*. It is based on an interest to explore the connection between process and outcome in community-university engagement. This stems from an underlying assumption that the approach, stewardship and process of collaborations between university and community partners is connected to the outcomes of those initiatives. There is a recognition in the literature that community-university partnerships should be evaluated for process, and to what extent they lead to benefits for both the university and community (Rubin, 2000, p. 228; Hart, Northmore & Gerhardt, 2009, p. 11), and principles provide a promising avenue for exploration in this area. The focus of the study, therefore, is to develop a set of principles based on knowledge, values, experience, lessons and assumptions from practice that serve to guide behaviour and action for the development and activation of effective university-community partnerships.

A framework for the development of quality principles, as introduced in Patton (2018), is called the GUIDE framework which suggests that in order to be effective, principles must be guiding, useful, inspiring, developmental and evaluable (p. 36). This framework will be used to create the first draft of principles for effective community-university partnerships at SFU. To be guiding, a principle must be stated in a way that is action oriented to indicate a particular path forward that is distinct and clear (p. 37). To be useful, it should be implementable in practice (p. 37). To be inspiring it should be undergirded by values and express what is important (p. 37). To be developmental it should be adaptable enough to allow for diverse interventions in a complex environment and stand the test of time (p. 37). To be evaluable it should allow for the determination of whether and how the principle was followed, and whether following the principle leads towards desired results (p. 38).

Once principles are articulated, they should be evaluated to determine whether or not they are meaningful, how and to what extent they are being adhered to, and whether they are leading towards desired results (Patton, 2018). While this work is beyond the scope of this project, these elements are included in *Figure 10* as they are essential components for a principles-focused evaluation, which helps to inform conceptual framework of the study.

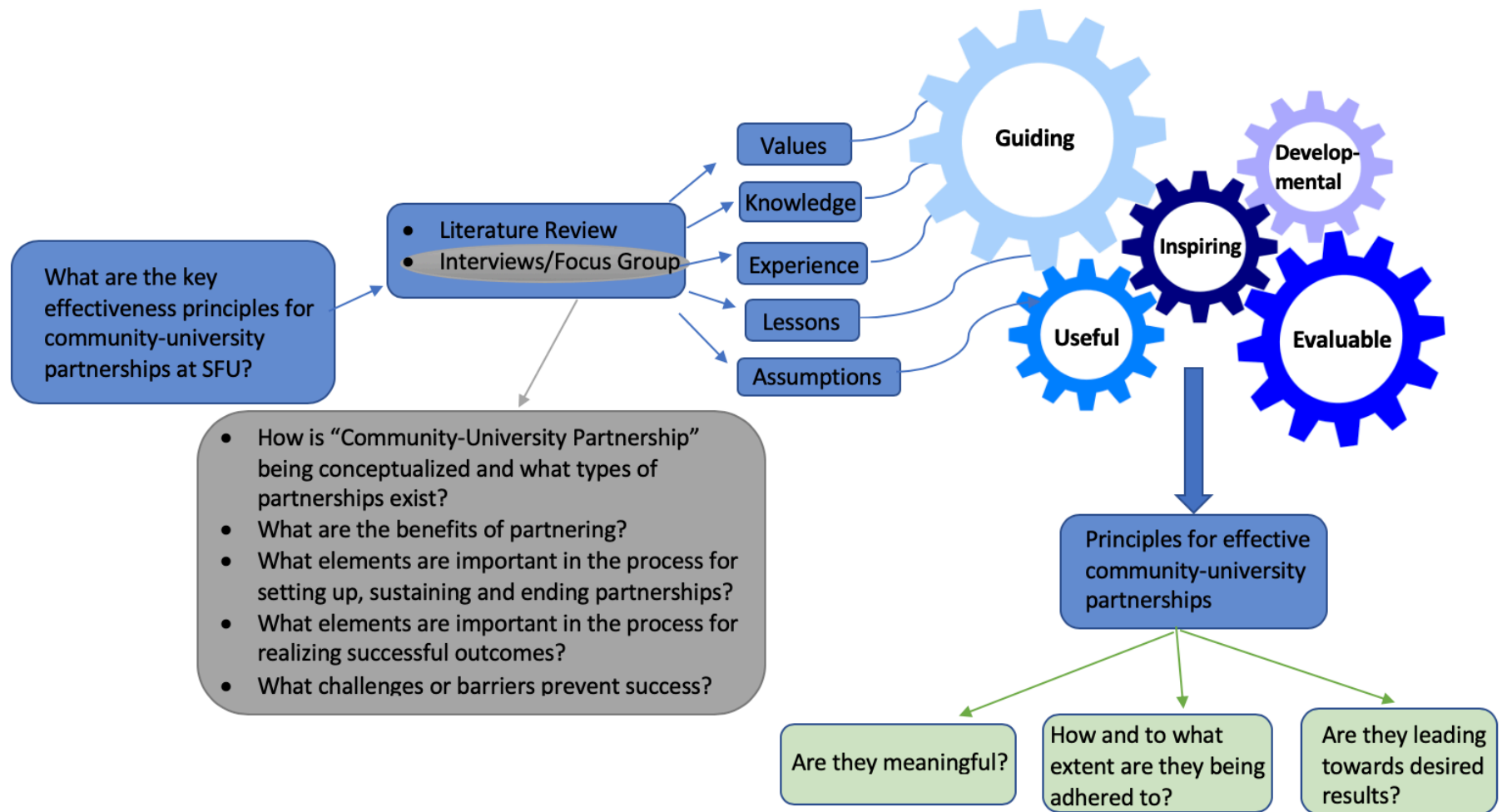


FIGURE 10. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

*The framework begins with the main research question and is followed by the methods through which information and data were gathered. The questions of interest for the interviews and focus groups are identified. The information gathered leads to the discovery of foundational values, knowledge, experience, lessons and assumptions from practice on processes elements for effective community-university partnerships. These values, experiences, lessons etc. were transformed using the GUIDE framework into principles for effective university-community partnerships. The evaluation questions that flow from the principles are out of scope for this project, but recommendations were made with regards to next-steps in the principles-focused evaluation process to address these questions.*

### 3.0 Methodology and Methods

The purpose of the following section is to describe the methodology, methods, data analysis and limitations for the research. The project follows a principles-focused evaluation methodology, and the methods include key informant interviews, and a focus group. The data was analyzed in NVivo using content analysis, and an analytic induction approach was employed for deriving themes from the data. The limitations for the project include the fact that evaluation in community-university engagement is a relatively new and emerging field of study, the inability to include a wide range of voices in the research due to scope, the iterative nature of principles requiring a longer time frame for development, and the researcher’s dual role as an employee at SFU. This research project was reviewed by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board, as well as Simon Fraser University, and was approved with the following certificate number: BC18-114.

#### 3.1 Methodology

A Principles-Focused Evaluation methodology was employed for the project and followed the principles that guide principles focused evaluation as articulated in Patton (2018, p. 31). There are eight principles that were addressed, with the acknowledgement that they were not all employed to the same extent given the scope of a Master’s project. This is acceptable within the methodology, as long as all principles are addressed to some extent (p. 355). The principles are listed in *Table 1* below verbatim in the first column, with the second column outlining how they were addressed within the context of this project.

<b>Principles Guiding Principles-Focused Evaluation</b>	<b>How principles were addressed in the context of this project</b>
1. Matching – Conduct principles-focused evaluation on principles-driven initiatives with principles-committed people. Principles are the evaluand (focus of evaluation).	The focus of this project was to identify effectiveness principles of university-community partnership at SFU by conducting qualitative interviews with individuals within the university and community who have experience in this area.
2. Distinctions matter – Distinguish types of principles: natural, moral and effectiveness; distinguish principles from values, beliefs, lessons, rules and proverbs.	Effectiveness principles were the focus and were extracted from interviews and academic literature.
3. Quality – support development of principles that meet the GUIDE criteria: They <i>Guide</i> ; are <i>Useful</i> ; <i>Inspire</i> ; support <i>Developmental</i> adaptations; and are <i>Evaluable</i>	Principles were drafted after key informant interviews and focus group using the GUIDE Framework.

<p>4. Evaluation rigor – Systematically inquire into and evaluate effectiveness principles for both implementation (are they followed?) and results (what difference do they make?)</p>	<p>This is beyond the scope of this project; however, recommendations are made for next steps in the principles-focused evaluation process to evaluate adherence to and results of adherence to principles.</p>
<p>5. Utilization focus – Focus on intended use by intended users from beginning to end, facilitating the evaluation process to ensure utility and actual use</p>	<p>SFU is the client for this research, and the Director of Community Engagement and Outreach was consulted throughout the process to ensure the project will be of use to inform a possible evaluation method for community-university engagement at SFU.</p>
<p>6. Beyond rhetoric – Support using principles comprehensively; use them or lose them; don't let them become just a list; apply them across functions (staff development, working with clients, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation)</p>	<p>It will certainly be a goal for principles to be used on an ongoing basis, however it is beyond the scope of this project to ensure their continued use. There is an argument to be made about process use, and the very fact that the inquiry and evaluation around principles is happening may serve to make community-university engagement practitioners more intentional about principled practice and more aware of how their adherence to principles affects the results of their partnerships (p. 233-234).</p>
<p>7. Interconnections – Interconnect principles. The eight principles of principles-focused evaluation are an interdependent, interconnected whole (not a pick-and-choose list). For any set of principles being evaluated, examine how individual principles are aligned (or not) and interconnected (or not)</p>	<p>This would ideally be explored as part of a participatory process to evaluate the meaningfulness of the drafted principles. This is beyond the scope of the project, but next steps in the process to evaluate the meaningfulness of the principles are recommended.</p>
<p>8. Learning – Reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the principles-focused evaluation process and results to learn and improve; engage in principles-focused reflective practice. Deepen learning about principles-driven programming and principles-focused evaluation; extract and apply lessons</p>	<p>A reflection on the process of using the principles-focused evaluation methodology was completed by the researcher. Part of the reflection is included in the Recommendations section 8.0 as the reflection surfaced insights relevant to the implementation of a principles-focused evaluation at SFU.</p>
<p>Source: Patton, 2018, p. 31</p>	<p><b>TABLE 1. METHODOLOGY</b></p>

A principles-focused evaluation requires the involvement of individuals entrenched in the work to develop, use and reflect on principles in order for it to be successful. This approach is grounded in social constructivist epistemology, a common lens in qualitative studies, which suggests that people co-construct knowledge and understanding through their interactions with

one another and therefore truth and meaning is subjective and complex (Burr, 2015; Creswell, 2014, p. 8-9). Thus, the approach best suited to this study is a qualitative research design that allows for the exploration of an emergent topic that considers the need for meaning-making in a context of complexity (Creswell, 2014, p. 8-9).

### **3.2 Methods**

There are no standard methods for principles-focused evaluation. Patton argues that as long as the methods employed are useful and suitable for the context of the evaluation, they are acceptable (Patton, 2018, p. 196). Some guidance is given on process for the development and review of principles (p. 348), most of which were addressed as part of the methods for this study. The steps for this project included: reviewing the academic literature for existing principles for community-university partnerships; identifying key individuals to be involved in the interviews; ensuring those involved are aware of the purpose for principles-focused evaluation; drafting principles; and recommending next steps in the process for a principles-focused evaluation.

#### **Key Informant Interviews**

The primary method of data collection for this project was qualitative semi-structured interviews with SFU Faculty, Staff and community partners, which used open-ended questions to allow participants to express their thoughts and perspectives on the topic (Creswell, 2014, p. 190). As indicated in the methodology section, individuals from the university and community were identified for the interviews based on their experience and ability to provide a depth of knowledge and understanding to the research questions (Creswell, 2014, p. 189). Patton (2018) recommends what he calls “principles-focused sampling” (p. 197) which advocates for choosing people who are embedded in the work and adhering to principles in practice so that the study focuses on cases that provide a depth of information.

Purposeful sampling was used to choose participants for the study. The participants were chosen based on their experience and expertise on the topic of community-university partnerships which was determined by their involvement in community-university engagement activities with SFU. For example, SFU Faculty, Staff and community partners were chosen based on their involvement in community partnerships via their teaching, research or service activities through signature SFU community-engagement entities and initiatives such as Public Square, Vancity Office of Community Engagement, RADIUS, Innovation Boulevard, City Studio, Centre for Dialogue, and others. An effort was made, based on the knowledge of the client and researcher, to contact participants for the study who have been involved in community-university partnership work for a number of years in order for them to be able to draw from a depth and breadth of experience.

To involve a wider breadth of people in the research and to facilitate co-construction of knowledge, SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partners were asked to participate in a dyadic interview with one of their colleagues that they have a positive working relationship with. Dyadic interviewing is a technique that pairs individuals together for an interview, allowing for a

process of interaction and conversation between interviewees, which enables a deeper and more nuanced exploration of the research topic (Morgan, Eliot, Lowe & Gorman, 2016, p. 109-110). Pairs were determined in consultation with the client for faculty and staff interviews, and with faculty and staff for the community partner interviews to minimize the potential for any political or power relationships that could negatively affect the interview dynamic. SFU faculty and staff were interviewed with other SFU faculty and staff, and community partners were interviewed with other community partners. Many individuals working in community-university partnerships have close and supportive working relationships with each other, and often work together in the development of these partnerships. Therefore, interviewing in pairs allowed for them to build off each other's responses and reveal insights that might not otherwise have surfaced. A total of twelve dyadic interviews and one one-on-one interview were conducted. Six dyadic and one one-on-one interview with SFU Faculty and Staff, and six dyadic interviews with community partners.

### **Student Focus Groups**

One focus group was held with 5 SFU students at the Vancouver campus. The original intention was to hold three focus groups, one focus group at each of SFU's three campuses in Surrey, Burnaby and Vancouver, BC, however a low response rate necessitated combining the focus groups into one. Invitations were sent to students based on their experience with community-university partnerships through their involvement with, for example, student clubs (Enactus SFU); courses such as the Change Lab, Semester in Dialogue, and City Studio; community engagement competitions; or their own projects. Students may have less years of experience compared to Faculty and Staff, therefore they were chosen based on their recent involvement with community-university initiatives.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The qualitative data derived from the interviews and focus group were examined through a content analysis approach, which is a "research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action" (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 108). Interview and focus group recordings were transcribed verbatim, imported into NVivo, and were coded using an "analytic induction" approach (Patton, 2015, p. 543). Analytic Induction describes a process whereby data are coded using both deductive and inductive approaches. The coding began with a deductive approach using the existing framework of principles for community-university partnerships as addressed in the literature review. Passages from the interviews and focus group were coded in connection to the existing principles if they addressed related themes, and in many cases, passages were coded for several principles at once. In addition to coding the content based on the existing framework of principles from theory, an inductive approach was used to code emergent themes. Using NVivo, several queries were made in the software to

identify frequency of themes based on the questions asked of participants, as well as connections between themes.

### **3.4 Project Limitations and Delimitations**

The first limitation for this study includes the fact that evaluation practices in community-university engagement is an emerging field of study and, as identified in the literature review, there is a lack of academic studies on the topic and no consensus among researchers and practitioners on how to measure outcomes and impact at the institutional level. This limitation points to the need for further research on the topic and presents a challenge for this project as there are few best practices to follow, and the application of Principles Focused Evaluation in this field has not been attempted before. The limitations also present an opportunity to contribute to the literature, and to take the first step in applying an evaluation method that works with complexity and facilitates the development of principles that are action-oriented, guide decision making, are adaptable and evaluable to inform continuous learning and evaluation of community-university engagement work at SFU.

Another limitation includes the broad spectrum of people involved in university-community engagement activities and the impossibility of including all voices in the research. Therefore, a delimitation for the project will be to gather data from a limited number of key university and community practitioners and students who are entrenched in this work and have a depth of knowledge and experience. It is important to note, there will be no claims that the development of principles through this research are by any means exhaustive. Moving forward it will be important to further engage university and community partners to contribute towards the development of the principles.

Another delimitation is with regards to the principles that will be developed as part of the research. The process for developing principles is iterative, and the principles developed here for the purposes of a Masters project will not go through as rigorous a process as they could. Patton (2018) recommends that people participating in the development of principles share them with others to get feedback, test them out in practice, and live with them for a period of time before confirming them (p. 348). Therefore, this research can be thought of as the first step for identifying meaningful principles and can be used as a foundation for the development of a principles-focused evaluation process at SFU, if the method proves to be of interest and value.

A final limitation is the researcher's dual role as an SFU employee, working in the Office of Community Engagement which will require continuous critical reflection on inherent assumptions, beliefs, values and bias while gathering and interpreting data, as well as sufficient acknowledgement of how this background may shape interpretation of findings (Creswell, 2014).

## **4.0 Findings: SFU Faculty and Staff Interviews**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The following section describes the findings from the interviews that were conducted with SFU Faculty and Staff from August – October 2018. Six dyadic and a single one-on-one interview were conducted with individuals from faculty, staff and leadership levels in Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver who have a working relationship with one another. The purpose of the interviews was to hear from key informants who have experience with community-university partnerships about their experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned in the field in order to surface some possible principles. Interview participants were asked to comment on how they interpret the term “community-university partnership”; what types of partnerships they are involved in; what the benefits are; effective process elements for setting up, sustaining and ending partnerships; effective process elements for realizing successful outcomes; and challenges or barriers preventing success. The following section summarizes the findings from these questions and identifies major themes that surfaced from each category.

### **4.2 Community-University Partnerships, Types and Benefits**

In order to get a sense of how the term “community-university partnership” is being conceptualized at SFU, all interview respondents were asked to comment on their perception of what the term means within their contexts in the organization; the types of partnerships they have been involved in; and how they perceive benefit from partnership activity.

It was evident through the responses that the term is being defined very broadly at the institution, and that many activities and relationships can be considered under this umbrella. A concept that emerged was that community-university partnerships encompass a large continuum of activity which could include everything from a one-off event or exchange of knowledge, to an agreement with a community to conduct research, to longer-term partnership relationships where the interaction is deeper and more frequent. In addition to the type of activity, it was also identified that community-university partnerships exist on a continuum of relationship level, which could include on-the-ground staff working on specific projects with community, to larger institutional level collaborations.

When referring to the term “community-university partnership”, it was clear that respondents were thinking about it in terms of external partnerships, but there was a wide range of considerations for what and who that might include. For instance, community-university partnerships were described in connection to relationships and work with non-profit organizations and charities, school districts, health authorities, indigenous communities, government, industry, other academic institutions, boards of trade, funders/donors, alumni, grassroots collaboratives, community members, and at the broadest level, society in general. Geographic location was also mentioned as partnerships occur in local and international contexts. Due to the broadness of how community-university partnerships are being defined, it was recognized that it leads to complexity at the institutional level in terms of allocation of

resources, standards of how it is being done, as well as measurement and evaluation. It is also complex at the on-the-ground level as each “community”, however that is defined within the partnership, is different, and requires context-based responses.

When describing the types of partnerships they were involved in and the purpose of them, respondents gave a number of examples which are summarized in *Table 2* below. These are not necessarily representative of all the different types of partnerships taking place at SFU; however, it provides a snapshot of the breadth of activity that exists, and what is being considered under the umbrella of community-university partnerships at SFU.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Community Engaged Learning	Students working with community as part of course work, extracurricular, or practical placements with organizations	CityStudio, Semester in Dialogue, ChangeLab, co-op, practicums, volunteerism
Community Engaged Research	Faculty engaging in collaborative research activity with community	Hakai Network, Major Collaborative Research Initiatives, place-based community projects
Community Participation	SFU Faculty and Staff embedding themselves within communities as engaged members	Participation on committees, multi-sector community collaboratives, Board of Directors
Institutional (local)	High-level and long-term institutional partnerships with local entities that enable a breadth of engagement activity	Partnership with municipal governments such as SFU’s relationship with the City of Surrey for City building, infrastructure development, research, learning
Institutional (International)	High-level and long-term institutional partnerships with international entities that enable a breadth of engagement activity	Partnerships with international institutions for the co-delivery of educational programs, student exchange, international research opportunities
Convening and Facilitation	The university facilitating the convening of community members and cross-sector partners for learning, exchange, dialogue, social innovation, and catalyzing initiatives	SFU Public Square, SFU Centre for Dialogue, SFU Vancity Office for Community Engagement, RADIUS
Community Organizing and Advocacy	Amplifying and augmenting community voice around relevant and salient	Discussions, knowledge mobilization and supporting the bringing of community

	community issues affecting public policy	perspective to the forefront on important conversations to decision makers
Educational Programming	Developing educational programming of relevance to specific communities	Working with rural communities to develop educational programming, Continuing Studies offerings
Infrastructure	Leveraging institutional infrastructure for community benefit	Sharing of space for events, meetings and work co-location. Using financial and procurement power for social impact.
<b>TABLE 2. TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS, SFU FACULTY &amp; STAFF</b>		

Each of these examples may exist somewhere on a continuum of depth of partnership from a one-time public event, to a participatory action research project, to a long-term institutional partnership that encompasses a wide variety of activity.

In spite of the broadness, differences, and complexity of how community-university partnership is being defined and conceptualized in the context at SFU, the idea of mutual benefit and reciprocity was a major theme that came up forty-one times in the discussion across interviews in answer to these questions. As one participant eloquently stated, “what excites me is to see how the underlying values of reaching out beyond the university and forming a relationship that has mutual benefit as a core element of it, can actually operate and be successful in all these different settings”.

The idea of mutual benefit and reciprocity was referred to, at the most basic level, as the production of benefit and value for those involved in the partnership. While the benefits for each partner may not be exactly equal in every instance of partnership, it is the notion that the relationship overall is characterized by a spirit of mutuality, and that by bringing together the unique knowledge, assets and capacities of the community and university, value is being created and realized for all partners. Some examples of benefits that were identified are summarized in *Figure 11* below:

# University Community

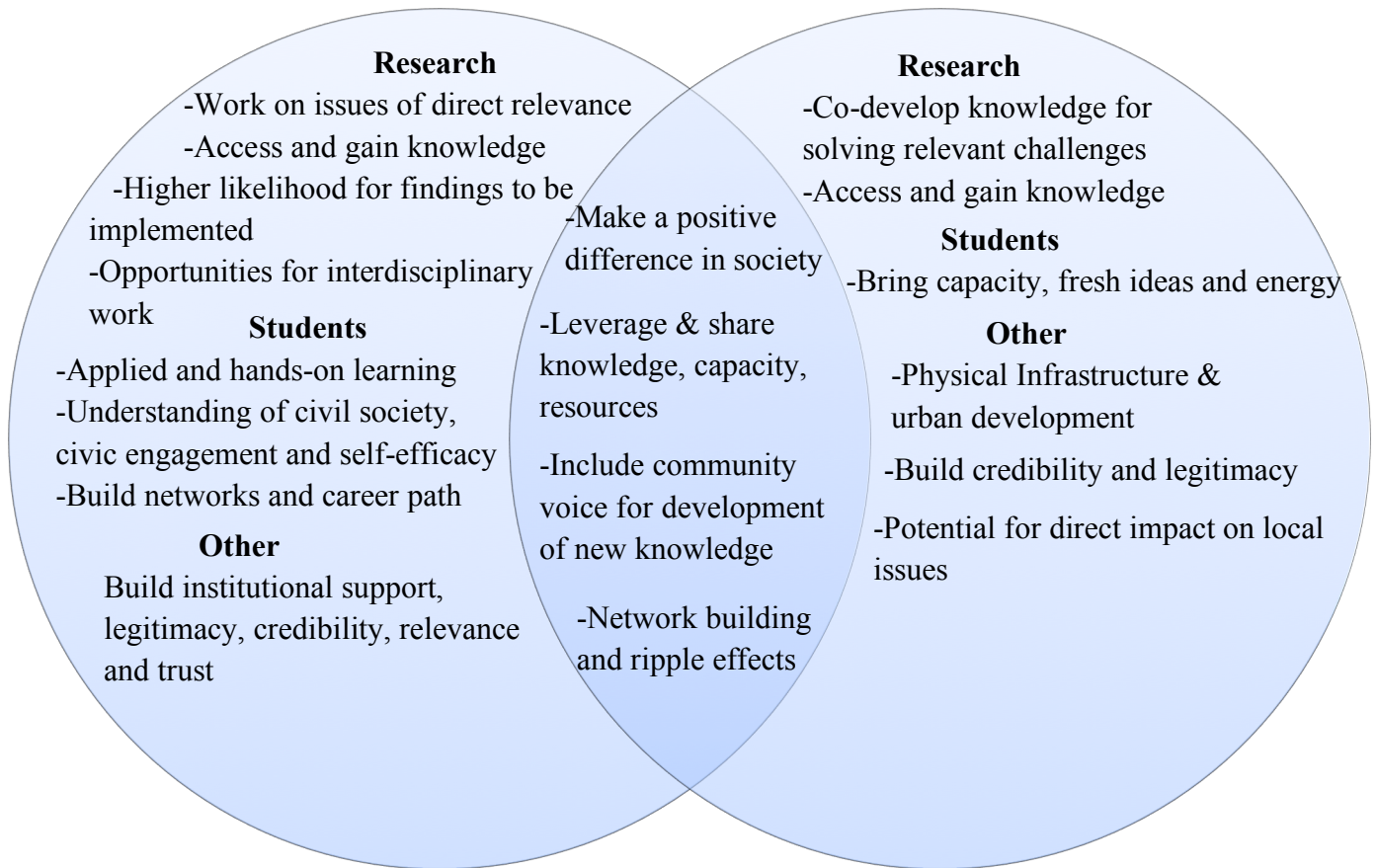


FIGURE 11. MUTUAL BENEFIT DIAGRAM, SFU FACULTY AND STAFF

Another theme that came up ten times in answer to these questions was around the sense of divide between the “university” and the “community” that is inherent in the language of the term community-university partnerships. The need to move beyond the notion of the university as separate from community, and as the expert knowledge holders that come in and out of communities to help, fix, or provide solutions was identified. The importance of building authentic relationships by being part of communities, allowing partnerships to emerge absent of pre-conceived agendas, valuing and learning from diverse forms of knowledge, and working towards a larger and shared social purpose were all sub-themes that surfaced.

Finally, an important point around language was brought up by three interview respondents with regards to the word “partnership”. At SFU, the word “partnership” has certain legal implications, and therefore is not often used to describe the work that takes place between units of the institution and community on formal documents or agreements unless the nature of the activity fits the parameters of a partnership as defined by the institution in a legal context. Beyond the legal implication, some apprehension was expressed that the word may be too restrictive in its suggestion of a relationship solely between two parties, as opposed to a word like “collaboration” that is more inclusive of the possibility for multi-party involvement.

### 4.3 Beginning Stage of Partnerships

All interview participants were asked to respond to a question regarding their lessons learned for effective processes in the beginning stages of a partnership. In three of the interviews, respondents were also asked a prompt within this question to comment on what elements need to be discussed and understood between partners. Whether or not participants were asked the prompt simply depended on the detail of their answers from the first question.

#### 4.3.1 Relationships

The most prominent theme, which came up thirty-two times throughout all of the interviews on the topic of the beginning stages of partnerships, was the importance of building trusting relationships. Building relationships and trust were identified as essential elements before even beginning the work on projects and initiatives in order to lay the foundation for the more transactional components of partnership activity to take place, as well as to enable open and honest communication. Four respondents described spending significant amounts of time and effort – a full year in one case – to get to know the community, build relationships and establish trust before beginning partnership activities. The human connection element of partnerships came out as key to showing a genuine and authentic commitment to the community, which is essential to setting up the partnership for future success. As one participant stated, “I think that’s...our currency. That’s what we’re dealing in, the currency of trust all the time. That’s the only way we can do the work that we do.”

An example shared that highlights the value of this work is SFU’s ongoing relationship with the City of Surrey. That relationship has been purposefully and carefully built and sustained over a number of years, and elements such as trust and mutuality have been well established. This strong foundation of relationship enabled SFU to take advantage of a substantial funding opportunity through the Federal Government to build a new campus building in Surrey within two years. Without the existing relationship with the City, this endeavor would have likely been impossible due to the short time-frame.

This concept of building relationship and trust rang true through a number of examples and stories shared, and across different types of partnerships, whether they be connected to research, convening, programming, institutional partnerships or student learning. In relation to students, building trusting relationships was also identified as an important component of their own learning, as opposed to something that is only done behind the scenes before they go out into community.

Many practices were shared with regards to how authentic and trusting relationships with community are built, a common one being to “show-up”, to be present and spend time. This may include attending community events and participating on committees and collaboratives that may not necessarily connect to one’s own goals right away, but that contribute towards building a foundation of relationships and trust for future work together by demonstrating a genuine commitment to the community. Other practices include sharing food and getting to know others as people, as opposed to just by the “hats that we wear”; recognizing and valuing the time

community spends on the partnership; and coming through on commitments. In connection to this, the notion of having the “right people” from the university involved in partnerships was also brought up, as the work required to set up and steward community partner relationships requires certain skills, abilities, approaches and follow-through.

#### 4.3.2 Listening

Another theme that came up seven times, was around communication, listening and understanding the interests and needs of partners at the beginning stage of collaboration. The most prominent piece that emerged was the importance of starting without a pre-conceived agenda, plan, process or outcome, but to focus on listening and learning about what is important, needed, of interest, and useful from the perspective of the partner. This is not to say that the university should not have any goals or interests in mind, and there are instances where more direct and strategic partnerships could be sought with groups whose values align with a specific university driven activity. It is more a comment on approach and process to start from a learning mindset, from a place of openness and flexibility and from a perspective that the goals and interests of community are of equal importance. This is in contrast to starting with a university centric goal or strategy, and inviting community participation to achieve it, and assuming that goal or strategy will also be of benefit to community. This is also key to ensuring mutually beneficial outcomes for all partners. One participant stated, “I think this is true actually for all forms of Partnership. If you're not listening to what the person, the group, the people you're wanting to work with really want, I think you're going to be in deep trouble. That's where things really go off the rails for people.”

#### 4.3.3 Context, Politics and Power

Considering, understanding, and paying attention to history, context, politics and power dynamics was another theme that came out as important in the beginning stages of partnership. This concept was often referred to in connection to working with historically marginalized communities, however it was also discussed in the context of working with multi-sector partners within a geographic community. There are often complex political and power dynamics between organizations within and across sectors and depending on how the university fits in to that particular context, has important implications for how partnerships are navigated.

In reference to working with historically marginalized communities, there may be significant up-front work required from university representatives when going into those partnerships to overcome a history of distrust that may have been built up over years of negative interaction with institutions of higher education. Examples included working with indigenous communities where previous experiences with extractive and one-sided practices of post-secondary institutions have left suspicion and distrust in their wake. While it may be impossible to know exactly what happened with a particular community in the past, it is important to recognize this history and context in general and approach the navigation of a way forward with humility, respect and reconciliation in mind. This concept also rings true, but perhaps in different

ways, with other historically marginalized communities, for example in the downtown east-side of Vancouver, where the relationship with post-secondary institutions is also fraught with a complex history.

Some practical lessons that were shared included explicitly recognizing, naming and engaging in conversation about the “role that...universities have played in the big Colonial project” and the history of going into communities as experts and abstracting information without leaving anything of value behind, and/or causing harm in the process. Approaching partnerships with care, vulnerability and an un-defensive manner, understanding and following appropriate protocols, and being open and willing to give up power and step back if and when the work is not welcome or of value to the community, were all mentioned. There is also a self-reflective practice that is important to this work to enable an ongoing commitment to recognizing and acknowledging when one is, however unintentionally, reifying or perpetuating systems of oppression.

#### 4.3.4 Managing Expectations

A final theme that emerged eleven times, was around managing expectations, and being open, honest, and transparent about what is or is not possible to deliver as a result of the partnership given the capacity, resources and support available for the initiative from the university context. It was mentioned by four respondents that the university can be perceived by the community as a large institution with significant capacity and resources. While this is true in many ways, due to the complexity of how universities are structured, the capacity and resources available for any given opportunity may be, in fact, quite limited. The assumption might be that if a university representative is involved in a project, they will have the ability to harness and align the vast resources of the institution for the purposes of the initiative, when in reality, it may only be the involvement of one researcher with a small grant, a community-engaged learning course with a small number of undergraduate students, or administrative leadership or staff who must rely on their connections within the institution to find people who have the interest and time to engage. Interview respondents emphasized the importance of communicating honestly the institutional constraints that may prevent or otherwise challenge the ability to take on certain pieces of work or meet certain outcomes, so as not to over-promise and subsequently disappoint when expectations cannot be met.

It was also mentioned by one participant that this is an important consideration for university representatives. Limiting assumptions and gaining an understanding about the capacity, challenges and constraints that community partners may be facing, enables honest discussion about what may be possible, or not, from the partners’ point of view when it comes to their involvement in the collaboration activities.

## 4.4 Sustaining Partnerships

All interview participants were asked to respond to a question regarding their lessons learned for effective processes in sustaining partnerships over time. In six of the interviews,

respondents were also asked a prompt within this question to comment on whether any of their partnerships had changed over time, if so how, and what elements they thought allowed for flexibility and change. In the one interview that was not asked this question, they had already addressed the topic in response to the previous question.

#### 4.4.1 Ongoing Attention to Relationships

Similar to the beginning stages of partnership, ongoing attention to relationship also emerged thirty-two times as a prominent theme with regards to sustaining partnerships. Respondents identified that the work around “showing-up” in community, participating in events, on committees, and adding value to community beyond personal goals does not end once partnerships are established.

In addition to continuing a general presence in community, direct attention to the relationship with established partners was identified as important for sustaining and maintaining partnerships. Several examples were shared through lessons from practice including going for coffee, checking in over the phone, or even using social media to follow, comment, share, like, and generally maintain a touch-point. Other practices included inviting partners to events or conferences that they might benefit from; helping to build their networks by recommending them to other partners; and generally promoting the work that takes place between them and the university in a positive way. Another important point about tending to relationships was made around responding, offering support and being helpful when unexpected things come up that may fall outside of the parameters of the agreed-upon work together. At least three examples of this came up for different contexts of partnerships including research, institutional and convening, and each spoke of the value this type of responsive approach can add to building trust and deeper relationships.

Finally, paying attention to the relationship and maintaining a level of connection and trust with community partners, even if particular projects have ended, facilitates nimbleness to take advantage of new opportunities as they come forward, and enables partners to work through and overcome challenges together. As one participant stated: “It's like you're on a train that keeps moving forward, and every once in a while, a partnership might jump on...so a specific research project, a specific issue or opportunity, but the relationship keeps moving forward...and when I say forward, might go around the bend and it might feel like you're dipping into something that's not working for a while, but it keeps moving and there's trust. If there is trust in the relationship, when challenges do occur that there's trust to...identify how to work it out”

#### 4.4.2 Flexibility and Adaptability

Across all interviews, respondents spoke about examples of partnerships changing and evolving over time, sometimes through a deepening of relationship and connection, and other times through a scaling back or ending of activity.

When working in community-university partnership, it's important to recognize the complex, fluid and dynamic environment one is working within, and to develop a level of comfort and flexibility for change and ambiguity. As one respondent noted, “the context is

continually changing. So there's staff changes, priority changes, funding changes. And so you have to be really adaptable to all that so that you can see the bigger picture and see where the opportunities are.” In one of the examples shared, these types of changes in the environment resulted in a significant reduction of partnership activity, and in another case, no activity at all due to capacity issues with funding and leadership shifts. In both of these circumstances however, relationships were kept in-tact to allow for future work together if the opportunity were to arise. This possibility for substantial change in activity is a stark reality when working in this field and important for practitioners to be aware of.

In all other examples that were shared, as time went on, success was realized, and relationships established more trust, the partnerships deepened and took on new or more involved initiatives and were able to take advantage of opportunities emerging from the changing environment. Examples included the development of a new community-engaged learning program involving multiple partners, a willingness to implement bigger and riskier ideas, collegial support for day-to-day challenges and practice, movement to more co-lead and co-developed research, and the agility to jump on opportunities such as funding or a new research topic. A common facilitating factor for the positive evolution of partnerships was the foundation of relationship and trust, as well as the presence of ongoing mutual value and benefit for all partners.

#### 4.4.3 Feedback and Improvement

Finally, the concept of feedback and check-in points along the way came up four times, to ensure that mutual benefit and value is still being derived from the partnership and to discuss possible ways to improve or shift depending on what is needed or necessary. As partnerships evolve and things change, the original nature of relationship and activity may no longer be useful, or there could be better ways to carry forward the work. Therefore, not being afraid to critically inquire into where things are at with the partnership, and to explore different directions for continued value was identified as important.

Connected to this concept of feedback and improvement is for partners to keep each other accountable and to help one another learn and grow. An interview respondent shared a story that outlined the importance of honesty when something is of concern in the partnership, as those conversations can help to clear any issues of mis-communication or mis-aligned expectations and get to the crux of the problem so it can be worked through. An additional insight shared was to take an approach to these issues with a willingness to learn and improve as opposed to prematurely ending or choosing not to work with the partner again.

### 4.5 Ending Partnerships

All interview participants were asked to comment on lessons learned with regards to effective processes for ending partnerships.

#### 4.5.1 Keeping Relationships

Surprisingly, the answers to the question about ending partnerships turned out to be quite connected to the concept of sustaining partnerships. Seven respondents indicated that their partnerships do not often come to a formal end. Projects and initiatives may end; however, the relationships remain. The partnership may take on new forms over time and may go through ebbs and flows; however, efforts are made to keep the relationship in-tact to allow for future opportunities for work together to emerge. As one respondent indicated, “I actually don't think I've ever ended a relationship. I've seen it morph and transform. And sometimes it has morphed and transformed into something that is wonderful from my perspective and natural in its progression. Sometimes it's not, but it hasn't disappeared.”

A connected theme, which was noted by five respondents, was around managing the work load associated with sustaining these relationships and, similar to previous sections, managing expectations. A clear theme around self-care came out in these responses where there exists a push and pull dynamic for people doing this work to try to maintain good relationships with community partners, but also set boundaries around their time and capacity for follow up. The following quote illustrates this point: “I think, that once they see you as someone who really wants to be responsive - and I have trouble saying no sometimes, and I get personally involved sometimes...and I think you really do also have to have boundaries when you do this work”

#### 4.5.2 Honesty and Feedback

Three participants spoke about particular instances where partnerships experienced significant challenges and either produced poor results or resulted in a pre-mature ending. The lessons that surfaced for these situations included the value of honesty and feedback. In one instance, the importance of having debrief sessions and sharing learnings with partners was identified, and to approach these conversations with the mindset of “we all just want to get better at what we do. We all just want to learn and grow. We're all human beings...like not so much ‘how did we let each other down’, but ‘what can we do better next time, and how can we grow from this’”.

In another instance, a project had to come to an end mid-way through due to political sensitivity around the topic, which involved some significant partners and funders. Lessons learned from this situation included honesty and transparency, as well as clarity about the reasons why the partnership had to end, which resulted in a positive exit experience as all stakeholders were kept apprised of the situation.

#### 4.5.3 Celebration

Finally, two respondents identified the importance of celebrating partnership accomplishments and sharing learnings. Celebration and acknowledgement of the partnership can be a positive way to close projects and initiatives if they are time-bound, and sharing lessons learned can be a good way to leave a legacy and benefit others. The following quote exemplifies this sentiment: “I think it helps if you can not only celebrate the accomplishments that have resulted from the relationship, but also...produce materials that will be beneficial going forward,

and Lessons Learned, advice to others, that kind of thing - so that there's a sense that even if the relationship doesn't continue in its own form, the benefits of it will continue”

## **4.6 Structure vs Non-Structure**

Another theme that emerged from ten participants in response to different questions, was the dichotomy between having formal and non-formal structures for partnerships, and when more formal structures are necessary.

The concept of trust came up three times in the context of moving forward with partnership activities without formal agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), as well as the identification that formal agreements are not always necessary, nor is there capacity for that level of structure every time. As one respondent stated: “I think given the number of Partnerships we do, to enter into a memorandum of understanding with everyone that we possibly worked with...we would need [our own] legal department. And so we don't have that, but it honestly comes down to trust”

Another respondent noted that “trust reduces complexity”, so if a partnership has a strong foundation of trust, more formal agreements may not be necessary. Three respondents mentioned that the tactic of documenting conversations and promises made over email can be enough to carry through a partnership and to ensure everyone is clear about the expectations.

This of course depends on the type of partnership, and what level of resources are involved. Four respondents identified instances when they would be more likely to use an MOU or contract, which were situations that involved exchanges of funds, human capital (i.e. student placements), and working with industry and government where the institutional context is already set up in a more structured way.

Two respondents identified instances where having an MOU or contract to refer back to was helpful in the partnership to guide the direction of the activity, solve issues as they came up, and limit liability. Two other respondents identified some challenges with the use of MOU's and more formal structures including the added levels of bureaucracy which can limit flexibility and innovation, as well as the danger of neglecting the relationship and relying on the MOU as the foundation of the partnership.

## **4.7 Outcomes**

All interview respondents were asked about lessons learned regarding effective processes for partnerships to achieve intended outcomes.

### **4.7.1 Complexity**

A prominent theme that surfaced from four respondents was the complexity of community-university partnerships, and the likelihood that outcomes identified at the beginning of a partnership will change over time, or they may not be fully known until later on. As one respondent outlined: “I think one has to be open to the idea that the relationship will take on a life of its own - that doesn't mean one shouldn't have goals at the outset, but it means those goals

shouldn't get in the way of new goals emerging...one of the real values of these Community Partnerships is that they enable people to discover things they didn't anticipate at the beginning.” Being open to complexity and being flexible in the approach to outcomes was identified as particularly important in order to maintain the balance of mutual benefit in the relationship as factors in the environment and within the partnership change.

This idea of adaptability and flexibility for change was also counteracted by a comment that for certain kinds of partnerships, the outcomes may not be negotiable. The construction of the new campus building in Surrey was used as an example, where changes in direction for that project were not possible. Therefore, this does depend on the particular project, context and situation.

Also connected to the theme of complexity was the concept of unintended consequences and paying attention to, and being aware of, outcomes that the partnership has contributed to, as opposed to directly caused. This was identified by four respondents, and examples included changes in perspectives, new relationships and networks, new opportunities, growth in influence, and changes in community dynamics. One particular example shared involved a research project in a small community working with youth, and the possible impacts for the young people who had never considered attending post-secondary before, interacting in a positive way and building relationships with university professors. As the respondent stated: “that was not the intention, that wasn't the goals, that was the outcomes, but I actually think when you're doing this work, that's what's interesting to try to track...it's contribution not attribution, but what are some of the other spin-offs, the relationships, networks, because of your dropping yourself into this ecosystem that start to form?”

A final insight under the theme of complexity identified by two respondents was around the need for evaluation and measurement choices to be context specific as each partnership will have different needs depending on the people involved, the capacity and resources available, as well as the type of project and associated deliverables. There are many choices available for evaluation methods and different process elements for achieving outcomes, therefore the lesson learned was to do what makes sense for the partnership, and to have processes for checking in, which will be discussed next.

#### 4.7.2 Communication & Project Management

Another theme that surfaced across the interviews in relation to achieving outcomes was communication and project management. Regarding communication, six respondents identified the importance of articulating what all the partners are hoping to get out of the partnership activity, and what success would mean to everyone involved, which speaks to the mutual benefit foundation for collaboration. Apart from indicating what success might look like at the beginning, it was also identified that continuous communication and check-in points would be useful to re-visit intended outcomes as things evolve and change, and new outcomes or learnings emerge that may be worth capturing.

Apart from communication, other project management techniques were mentioned as helpful process pieces for partnerships to achieve their desired outcomes. Five respondents

specifically mentioned the benefit of documenting the parameters of the partnership and the intended outcomes to ensure everyone is on the same page with what is being committed to, and to provide a foundation point that could be reexamined and changed if needed. Recording the specifics about what each partner is committed to delivering was also mentioned as a helpful process to ensure projects are moving forward and milestones are being achieved. This documentation can be as simple as providing written re-caps from meetings and conversations through email, or a formal agreement depending on the nature of the partnership, as previously discussed in section 4.6.

## **4.8 Challenges**

Throughout the interviews, participants were either asked directly to comment on challenges they face in the work, or in some cases participants brought up challenges on their own within the context of the question. All interview respondents mentioned various challenges inherent in their work, and some of these were already addressed within the previous findings sections in terms of managing expectations, complexity, politics and power, and the work load associated with relationship building and maintenance. A few types of challenges however, warrant further attention which will be discussed below.

### **4.8.1 Institutional Infrastructure**

As reflected in the literature review, discussing community-university partnerships is virtually impossible without considering the backdrop of institutional infrastructure that significantly affects the work, and often presents challenges. Every interview participant except for one, mentioned something connected to institutional infrastructure when they were discussing challenges, and the theme came up thirty-five times overall in this context.

#### *Alignment and Culture*

A major sub-theme that came up around institutional infrastructure was the idea of alignment between the way the university is structured and the community-engagement mission of the institution, and the associated culture change required to make those shifts.

This idea of alignment came up in the context that the university is complex and while there may be a high level and inspirational vision around community engagement, the institution is not set up as a command and control model, and faculty, departments, and units have significant autonomy and existing processes that are not necessarily conducive to community engagement. Examples where mis-alignment may happen is with faculty, as “faculty have academic freedom, they don’t have to put their energies where the university wants them to”; with space and financial policies; academic structures and others. While faculty may have academic freedom, institutional structures also play a large part in this mis-alignment as the recognition and reward structures do not support faculty to engage in this type of work. Two participants spoke about the barriers associated with tenure and promotion which rewards a certain kind of activity and does not value the work associated with community-engagement, thereby making it difficult to do that work and progress in their careers. Therefore, as one

participant stated, “we may have the best idea in the world in an abstract sense of what we think could be a great partnership, but if we don't have people within the university who are prepared to commit to it to make it work, it's not going to happen”.

Another piece that emerged connected to the idea of alignment was that community engagement seems to happen on the fringes or the “edges” of the institution and is not yet embedded in the “real work” of the university which is the academic programming, research, and associated administrative practices. Participants reflected on how the institution can move beyond this model of community engagement that takes place outside of the core work of the university, and how it can shift to a model where the organization learns from the engagement with community and starts to shift its culture to enable a scenario where the whole institution is better aligned to do this work. As one participant mentioned: “community engagement has to be the whole university - it's not a siloed activity by a group of people who are in community engagement...if it's done well, it has to involve literally every aspect of the University”

This reality of complexity, alignment and culture makes it incredibly challenging on the community to engage with the institution, and an interview participant shared a comment from community that the institution needs a “front door”, or essentially the infrastructure necessary to help them navigate the institution when they want to bring forward partnership ideas. Connected to this, two other respondents spoke about the importance of “intra-partnership” in their work and brokering connections with colleagues from within the institution to improve their community engagement practice.

### *Capacity and Resources*

An important point about capacity was mentioned by nine respondents across the interviews with regards to the work required to sustain community partnerships. This was touched on briefly in section 4.5.1, however it is worth revisiting as it was mentioned several times. Interview participants noted the intensive time requirements to keep community-partnerships going whether it be faculty, staff or administrative leadership working on research, student learning, or institutional level collaborations. Community-engagement work is under-resourced at the institution, which can lead to issues around self-care as the people involved in community-partnerships often do not have enough support and may have a hard time setting boundaries due to the personal relationship dynamics that accompany the work. As one participant stated: “the word that's coming up for me right now is self-care. It's very very easy to get burned out in this work because there is no shortage of opportunities, needs Etc.... and I think this kind of work attracts many people who find it hard to say no. So they say yes to everything and...it is about the people, it is about the personal relationships, and because of that, you tend to get asked a lot.”

Another dynamic surrounding resources at the institution is a “culture of scarcity” where the allocation of funds is watched carefully, and due to community engagement being on the periphery of the core work of the institution, any resources going towards it are not automatically accepted or endorsed by powerful players within the organization. As a respondent indicated: “there's always questions about, you know, where are we investing and why are we

investing...and so there's that kind of tension I think that can hold back movement for progress on really embedding a culture of authentic community engagement.”

Notwithstanding these challenges, three respondents commented positively about the institutional leadership at SFU and high-level support for this work which is contributing towards larger systems change and making the on-the-ground work easier for practitioners.

## **4.9 Summary**

Every effort was made to honour the rich experiences and knowledge that the participants brought to the interviews. The findings, while not representative of all SFU Faculty and Staff, provide a good overview of how broadly the concept of community-university partnership is being considered at the institution, benefits that come from this activity, and important lessons about process elements that have been effective in the work.

Interview respondents shared many valuable experiences and stories that exemplified the importance of some key themes including building and maintaining trusting relationships that are characterized by an undercurrent of mutual benefit; approaching work with community with a listening and learning mindset; mindfulness around context and power; flexibility and adaptability in a complex environment; open and honest communication and feedback; and even self-care. Challenges were centered around institutional infrastructure and issues related to alignment of university structures, capacity and resources to best facilitate community engagement work.

## 5.0 Findings: Community Partner Interviews

### 5.1 Introduction

The following section describes the findings from the interviews that were conducted with Community Partners from September – November 2018. Six dyadic interviews were conducted with individuals from Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver who have experience with community-university partnerships through SFU and other post-secondary institutions, and who have working relationships with each other. The Community Partners who were interviewed came from predominantly non-profit and municipal government backgrounds, though some also had for-profit and provincial government backgrounds. The purpose of the interviews was to hear from key informants about their experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned in the field in order to surface some possible principles. Interview participants were asked to comment on how they interpret the term “community-university partnership”; what types of partnerships they have been involved in; what the benefits are; effective process elements for setting up, sustaining and ending partnerships; effective process elements for realizing successful outcomes; and challenges or barriers preventing success. The following section summarizes the findings from these questions and identifies major themes that surfaced from each category. It is important to note that participants shared examples from a variety of their experiences working with different post-secondary institutions, therefore not all examples represent their experiences specifically with SFU.

### 5.2 Community-University Partnerships, Types and Benefits

In order to get a sense of how the term “community-university partnership” is being conceptualized with community partners, all interview respondents were asked to comment on their perception of what the term means to them, as well as the types of partnerships they have been involved in, and how they perceived benefits from partnership activity.

Interview respondents were quick to discuss community-university partnerships in the context of mutual benefit, and how they can bring together the capacity of the university and community to create value that benefits everyone. Similar to SFU Faculty and Staff interviews, it was also recognized by Community Partners that the benefits may not be equal for any given activity, but that the relationship overall strives for mutual value. As one participant put it: “It's not about zero balancing at every week, or measurement...you'll go to do something and it's got no benefit to the university short term, but you're doing it because you care about that Community or that partnership.”

In answer to these questions, the theme of mutual benefit came up fifty-seven times. Most of the themes identified by SFU Faculty and Staff were reiterated by Community Partners, and several new themes came up. *Figure 12* below is a larger version of *Figure 11* and includes the community partner perspective. Themes that SFU Faculty and Staff had identified and were echoed by Community Partners are underlined, and new themes brought up by Community Partners are in italics.

# University

# Community

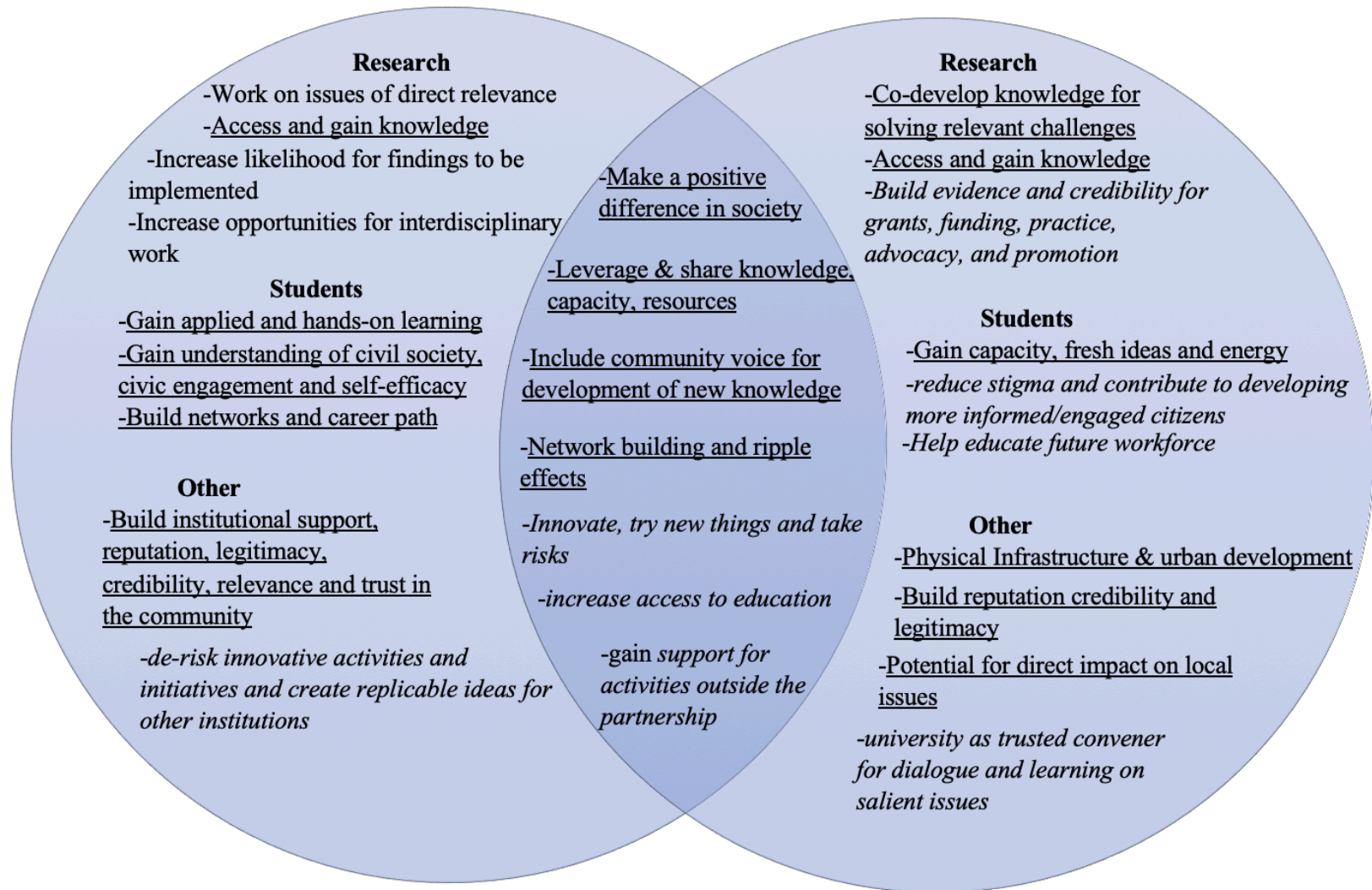


FIGURE 12. MUTUAL BENEFIT DIAGRAM, SFU FACULTY & STAFF AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Themes that SFU Faculty and Staff had identified in Figure 11 that were echoed by Community Partners are underlined, and new themes brought up by Community Partners are in italics.

### 5.2.1 Types of Partnerships

Similar to SFU Faculty and Staff interviews, the idea that community-university partnerships encompass a broad range of activity and exist on a continuum of one-off interactions, to multi-stakeholder collaborations, to formal institutional partnerships and research, also came up across two interviews.

When describing the types of partnerships they were involved in, and the purpose of them, respondents gave a number of examples, many of which mirrored the categories of examples that SFU Faculty and Staff identified which are summarized in *Table 2*. The largest category of examples was for Community Engaged Learning. The only categories not covered by the community partners who were interviewed were examples of Institutional (International) and Community Organizing and Advocacy.

The types of partnerships and examples that interview respondents cited are listed below in *Table 3*. A description of the type of partnership is not included as descriptions are the same as listed in *Table 2*.

Type	Examples
Community Engaged Learning	Student placements, practicums and co-op, working with students in community-engaged learning courses, development of ongoing community programs with practicum student support
Community Engaged Research	Evaluation for a community program, multi-stakeholder research on neighbourhood houses, participatory research projects, development of evaluation tools
Community/University Participation	The university participating on community tables such as the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table, and community participation on University-led projects such as the Burnaby Festival of Learning and C2U Expo
Institutional (local)	Surrey Urban Indigenous Committee, Innovation Boulevard, City of Surrey and City of Vancouver partnerships
Convening and Facilitation	Working with RADIUS and LED lab for facilitation of a community initiative
Educational Programming	Community Leaders Igniting Change, Transportation 101, Journalism 101, Community Adult Literacy Program, working with post-secondary institutions on academic curriculum
Infrastructure	Social procurement catering contracts, social hiring, sharing of space for events, meetings and co-work locations
<b>TABLE 3. TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS, COMMUNITY PARTNERS</b>	

Again, these are not necessarily representative of all the different types of community-university partnerships, however it provides a snapshot of the breadth of activity that exists, and what is being considered under the umbrella of community-university partnerships from the perspective of community organizations working with SFU.

### 5.2.2 Power and Historical divide

An interesting theme that came up nine times in answers to the question about the meaning of the term “community-university partnerships” was the power balance between the university and community, and a sense of historical divide that is changing, but is still a present challenge. This theme was also brought up in different questions throughout the interviews and will be discussed further when challenges are addressed in section 5.8, however it is touched on here due to the prominence of the theme in connection to the term “community-university partnerships”.

When describing what community-university partnership meant to them, two interview participants indicated that good partnerships should be the opposite of “the University doing charity work”, and only working with community groups if and when it works for the institution and fits within the model of what they have to offer. They gave examples of partnerships they were involved in, or knew of, that were not approached with a spirit of mutuality, respect and equity, and where the university was in a position of power and imposed its ideas, assumptions, values, or resources in ways that were not respectful of community need or knowledge. This was referred to in a historical sense as exemplified by the following quote: “I think maybe in a different world, like 30 years ago...there's a lot of power indifference - power imbalance where they would say ‘look I think your soup kitchen is not working well, we can have some students who will go and fix it’”. A current example was also given by the following quote: “one of the things that when I do think about Campus Community Partnerships...about ‘here, we will give you students’ - I think that's like, oh my gosh, so exhausting... students can be a burden...and so for the ‘old way’ I feel like is ‘here, we'll throw free labor at you’ and it's like no, it's not free.”

This theme also came up in reference to experiences of partnerships that were characterized by an unequal sharing of resources and a lack of understanding that “the practice needs to guide the research as much as the research guides the practice”. Three interview participants also brought up the issue of access, as post-secondary institutions are still out of reach for many members of society, especially those who are historically marginalized and who often represent part of the population served by the community organizations working in partnership with the institution.

Finally, because of this historic community-university divide, two respondents noted the importance for universities to build trust with communities in order to be accepted at the proverbial “table” to participate in community work.

## 5.3 Beginning Stage of Partnership

All interview participants were asked to respond to a question regarding their lessons learned for effective processes in the beginning stages of a partnership.

### 5.3.1 Relationships

When speaking about effective processes for the beginning stages of a partnerships, similar to SFU Faculty and Staff, the most prominent theme was the importance of relationships, which came up thirty times.

#### *Trust*

The concept of building trusting relationships came out strongly and was mentioned by seven interview participants. A specific process factor revealed across three interviews in the context of building trust was “don't start the relationship just when you want something”. Respondents indicated the significant value brought by participating in the community through committees or events, building relationships without an agenda, and demonstrating commitment to mutually benefit. Once a foundation is built, projects can emerge. This was referred to by Community Partners both in the context of being on the receiving end of the university approaching the community, but also in the context of the community approaching the university. Therefore, the idea of taking time to build unassuming and authentic relationships before starting partnerships appears to be an important facilitating factor on both sides.

The importance of trust was also brought up in a different context in one interview that is worth highlighting, which was the idea of transferring trust from the university through the partner organization, and over to the community members that a particular partner initiative may be attempting to reach. This was discussed over two examples, which highlighted a social hiring program and a research initiative that post-secondary institutions were spearheading. What was key in these examples was the need for the university to build a significant level of trust with the partner organizations, and for them to be involved early enough to understand, help shape, and be champions for the initiative in order for them to be able to transfer that trust to the community members they work with. Universities often need to overcome a history of dis-trust with marginalized communities, especially with regards to research, therefore the trusting relationship with the partner organization is crucial to making that connection.

A final context that surfaced with regards to trusting relationships at the beginning stage of a partnership was around ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for community to work with the academy. Two interview respondents mentioned the intimidation factor of working with the university and the importance of mutual respect and trust to ease this tension. As exemplified by the following quote: “when I first started in the [project], I was very intimidated by the academics - but then it was pretty clear they needed me at that table to bring them to the reality of community. But I think that there was a mutual respect for each other, and I think that was really important right from the very beginning, you know, the talking about all the letters next to their names. I don't have any letters next to mine.”

#### *Approaching the University*

Five interview respondents indicated that having relationships with people at a post-secondary institutions was key to being able to approach the university with ideas for partnership activities, and to cut through bureaucratic processes that may stop an activity before it starts.

Participants mentioned the value of having relationships with people at the university as they can act as connectors when ideas for partnership activities surface, and if those relationships are not there, it becomes very difficult to know where to even start, and many community organizations do not have time to navigate through the institution to find the right contact. These relationships have helped community organizations navigate the process for obtaining university partnership support for funding applications, and access university resources that may have previously been inaccessible due to established process and procedure. One example shared involved a funding opportunity for a community organization that required post-secondary partnership where the process to get approval “actually slowed us down, and we were like ‘Ok, should we, should we not’...what we ended up doing is that we had one prof on the inside and we were like ‘what can you do, how can you help us’, and she was the one that reached out on our behalf to other researchers and said ‘hey, can you get on board with this?’”

### *The Right People*

A final sub-theme that emerged under the umbrella of relationships was the idea of having the “right” people involved in community partnerships. This came up three times in the context of leadership, and three times in the context of personality and skill. In terms of leadership, it was identified that having buy-in on community-university partnerships at the leadership level can facilitate a much easier process as they have more decision-making power, access to resources, and networks to set up the conditions necessary for projects to move forward. With regards to personality and skill, interview participants identified that certain people can be “brilliant, and leaders in their fields, but it doesn't mean that they're necessarily going to be really good at Community engagement”. Important qualities and skills mentioned for good community engagement included listening, open-mindedness, authenticity, humbleness, being respectful and non-condescending, using plain language and having an approachable demeanor. While seemingly simple, attitude and approach can make the difference between a project moving forward or not, as exemplified by the following quote: “And at its worst...it comes out as a just an arrogance ‘well we're just the University, and this is the way it is, take it or leave it’. And that again comes down to personalities and individual relationships. So there are some projects or approaches that just become non-starters”.

### 5.3.2 Listening and Valuing Knowledge

The importance of bringing in Community Partners early in the project conception phase, truly listening, valuing their knowledge, being open to new ideas, and being willing to change direction was brought up by seven interview participants. When working with community partners, institutions “really have to be open to things changing, and having your ideas blown out of the water”.

Bringing partners in early and being flexible on the direction of a project in the beginning stages allows for different voices and perspectives to be heard, and for all of those voices to help shape the activity into something that will be beneficial for both the university and community. Participants spoke about this across non-profit, City and institutional partnership contexts and

across various types of projects such as research, student learning, convening and infrastructure. As exemplified by the following quotes: “Don't do it just because you have funding and it's what the university wants to do...you actually have to go about it with the permission of the community and actually make it useful for them.”

“I think that a significant amount of resources and time and patience needs to go into the front end... you need to... go into discussions with community and be prepared to be, maybe wrong about something, or be prepared to have an idea that is challenged...approach that with some humility, and try and be as flexible as they can be to accommodate those Community Partners, I think that's really a better way to go about approaching it instead of coming down and saying ‘we're going to do this, And you're either with us or get out of the way’”

### 5.3.3 Understanding Context and Setting Boundaries

Another theme that was brought up by six participants for the beginning stages of a partnership was understanding context and setting boundaries. Interview respondents spoke about the importance for university partners to understand the context they are coming from, and elements that may be presenting challenges or barriers for their involvement in partnership activities. This concept came up when referring to things like the political environment for City staff, and also just generally with regards to time and capacity, where there is a need to make strategic decisions on how energies are spent. Community partners taking on students, for example, came up from both the non-profit and municipal government context as additional work that is not part of their mandates. While this activity often does produce benefit for the community organization, sometimes it does not, and it requires additional capacity that they are not being compensated for to train, educate and guide these students.

This idea of understanding context was connected to the concept of setting boundaries so that there is a limit to the scope of involvement by community partners depending on their time constraints, how much the project fits within their own mission and activities, and whether there are additional resources to off-set their time. In the SFU Faculty and Staff interviews, there was a similar theme that came up around managing the expectations of community partners, which was brought forward from the perspective of being part of an institution with vast resources, and the fear of generating high expectations, over-promising and subsequent disappointment. From the Community Partner side, the perspective seemed to focus more on setting boundaries, being able to say “no” to opportunities, and being clear about how much they can be involved given their other priorities.

Connected to the idea of understanding context and setting boundaries, two interview respondents mentioned the importance of clear communication between partners regarding the basic tenants of mutual benefit, and having “frank conversation about ‘what is my organization going to get out of this, and what is the university going to get out of this, and is there a win-win opportunity here? And how are we going to adjust our thinking and our behavior to make sure that both of us walks away from this with that’”.

## 5.4 Sustaining Partnerships

All interview participants were asked to respond to a question regarding lessons learned for effective processes to sustain partnerships over time. In three of the interviews, respondents were also asked a prompt within this question to comment on whether any of their partnerships had changed over time, if so how, and what elements they thought allowed for flexibility and change. Due to time constraints, three interviews did not specifically address this prompt.

### 5.4.1 Relationships

Similar to the beginning stages, attention to relationships also came up as a prominent theme for sustaining partnerships. Two sub-themes emerged in the interviews with Community Partners which are discussed below.

#### *Showing Up and Commitment to Place*

Six interview respondents discussed the value of being present, participating and showing up in the community, showing up specifically for your partners, and commitment to place-based engagement.

With regards to showing up, four interview respondents indicated the value of “face-to-face” interaction through meetings, informal get-togethers, and participation at community events and tables. These opportunities to connect in person can deepen connections through common experiences and lead to stronger ties. One respondent also commented on the potential negative consequences of infrequent interaction by saying, “I think that trust is a very fragile animal and it can be broken a lot easier than it is built, and I think space and time chips away at relationships and trust.”

Apart from general interaction, the importance of showing up specifically for your partners was also mentioned as an important facilitating factor by three respondents for sustaining relationships. Examples included writing support letters for funding, helping your partner through challenging situations by using your networks and resources, going to out of town conferences and presenting on the partnership together, and generally “being available when you’re called on”.

Two respondents specifically addressed the value of the university making a place-based commitment to communities through physical space, and participation in the community. The underlying sentiment was the value that is added in terms of how the university is perceived and accepted, and the depth of partnerships that can be sustained when the it becomes an embedded part of the community. This is in contrast to not having any physical or participatory ties to the community, and parachuting in and out to do projects. This of course cannot be the case for all situations as universities partner with communities in a number of locations, however, it speaks to the value of place-based engagement strategies and making long-term commitments to participation in local communities.

### *Network Building*

Another theme that was brought up under the umbrella of relationships was around building networks, which helps to facilitate deeper partnerships that can be better sustained over time. Three interview respondents spoke to this concept, and it was the idea that having a relationship with someone at the university can enable connections with other people, departments and faculties, which can lead to other ideas and projects, thereby strengthening the connection. As one participant stated, “finding ways to get introduced to other parts of universities just increases the potential for Partnerships around other projects. There [are] elements of SFU I had no idea even really existed until I started to talk to people and met more people. And so I think building relationship and increasing your network within that University is super helpful in maintaining and deepening that connection.”

#### 5.4.2 Checking in and follow-through

Finally, five interview participants spoke about following through on commitments, and checking in with partners along the way to ensure mutual value is still being derived, and to adjust the process as needed if a partner is feeling over-burdened. As partnerships evolve, things may shift and change, and challenges will arise, so ensuring an ongoing commitment to open communication, follow-through and follow-up can be helpful for “being able to withstand the rocky times”.

With regards to follow-through, an interview participant shared experiences they have had with student and faculty researchers who connect with the organization for help with community access with a research topic on a relevant community issue, but then “you never hear from them again” and the knowledge transfer to community is lost. This type of experience can damage possibilities for future work together. Another interview respondent also spoke about follow-through but in a positive way about how it can build a strong foundation for many future projects together, and “if there had been a string of events...that just, didn't go well and weren't fulfilled, then it's hard to say if the spirit of partnership is sustained”.

With regards to follow-up, two participants spoke about the value of checking in along the way to ensure that partners are still seeing value in the activity, and ensuring everyone is comfortable with the work load, as sometimes projects can take longer than expected, or require more resources than originally expected. Having those check-in conversations along the way can enable adjustments as needed to improve the partnership.

## **5.5 Structure vs Non-Structure**

Similar to the SFU Faculty and Staff interviews, the theme of structured versus non-structured partnerships came up across responses to various questions throughout the interviews, however it came up less, with five Community Partners. With three of the interview respondents, the theme came up generally when discussing different types of partnerships where some of them, such as an institutional level partnership, may be characterized by a more formal agreement. Other types of partnerships may not need written agreements, and respondents highlighted the importance of relationship, trust, and following through on commitments.

An interesting and surprising insight surfaced with two interview participants where the connection was made between the use of MOU's and maintaining a balance of power in the partnership – as stated by a participant, “I think MOU's when used correctly or in a respectful, dignified way, restores power balance”. From their perspective, agreements that are customized for the partnership and outline some basic parameters around how the partners are working together and what they hope to achieve, but also communicates flexibility as things change, can be a good way to set up boundaries and expectations that address possible imbalances of power. For example, one of the participants spoke about it in reference to having an exit plan so that if things change and the community organization no longer has the capacity to be involved, then they have the power to make those changes. As one participant stated, “I think acknowledging that if this doesn't work out, or if you're having trouble, like ‘you can let us know, and it's not put in stone’...it's a working agreement and having that conversation earlier to make sure that they know that they have the power to say that.”

## **5.6 Ending Partnerships**

All interview participants were asked to comment on lessons learned with regards to effective processes for ending partnerships.

### **5.6.1 Honesty and Clarity**

Through a variety of examples, the themes of honesty and clarity around process and action for ending partnerships came up with six interview respondents. This was described in the context of “recognizing when it’s time, and not shying away from going through the pain of doing that and doing it respectfully and using proper process”, when partnerships are no longer producing mutual value or meeting desired objectives. One interview respondent shared an example of an ongoing partnership with a post-secondary institution for a community-engaged learning course. While the activity was valuable for the community partner in some semesters, they found that overall it was not mutually beneficial enough for the capacity and time required, and they were honest in letting the partner know that they were no longer interested in participating and “it was civil and it was fine”.

In addition, when projects take an unexpected turn, honesty, communication and clarity are important for maintaining respect and credibility. Two respondents shared stories where things changed unexpectedly. In one scenario, respect and trust were broken due to the actions of the post-secondary institution where they ended the partnership with no communication or warning, leaving the community partners scrambling to find alternatives, thereby damaging future possibilities for work together. In another scenario, the partnership had to end due to extenuating circumstances, and the community partner took the necessary steps to end the partnership and was honest and forthright with the funder, thereby maintaining trust and credibility.

### 5.6.2 Keeping Relationships

Four interview respondents also mentioned that while projects and activities end, their relationships often continue on. As one participant stated, “a good partnership doesn't end with the project, right? It keeps going. That's the definition of a good partnership is like – they're a phone-call away.” Respondents mentioned still keeping in touch with the individuals from a project that had ended, and the value of those relationships continuing whether it be in starting new projects; helping one another with challenges; or in the case of working with students, staying connected to potential future employees or donors.

### 5.6.3 Celebration

Two respondents also mentioned the value of celebration at the end of partnerships to give a proper sense of closure, wrap-up and recognition, especially if the partnership has been significant in depth and length. As one participant mentioned, “if you have something that ends, I think it's worth actually investing in a proper sort of closure. Like let's celebrate the achievements and what happened and let's recognize the work that people have done”.

## 5.7 Outcomes

All interview respondents were asked about lessons learned regarding effective processes for partnerships to achieve intended outcomes.

### 5.7.1 Agreement on Expectations and Communication

When discussing effective processes for realizing successful outcomes from partnerships, six interview participants identified that having basic agreement on the purpose and expectations of the partnership as well as communication throughout, are important facilitating factors. Participants mentioned the value of agreeing on certain parameters at the beginning and identifying the “bottom-line” of what each party is hoping to accomplish. Check-in points along the way would then help to ensure mutual benefit is still being derived and would allow for adjustments if needed. Participants also acknowledged the likelihood of changing goals and processes and indicated the value of having flexibility built in to any agreements that are made, and to use the check-in process as a way to “revisit what they agreed to, and kind of adjust as we go”.

### 5.7.2 Complexity

Connected to the previous point about likely changes in community-university partnerships, three interview participants also specifically mentioned the complexity of the environment that these partnerships operate in, and the ambiguity and messiness that often accompanies community work. As one participant stated, “so I would have said to you 10 or 15 years ago, that you entered into this partnership, you should have clearly identified outcomes, and goals, and methodology...and now I would say the key to the partnership is both of you being open to emerging outcomes, and emerging processes and methodology. That's probably more reflective of what happens.”

Another participant identified the complexity of the work at an institutional level as well, given the leadership and funding environment that universities operate in as publicly funded entities. As things change in the political environment and in leadership positions within the institution, priorities can shift significantly, which has domino effects on partnerships that need to adapt and change.

## **5.8 Challenges**

Throughout the interviews, participants were either asked directly to comment on challenges they face in the work, or in some cases participants brought up challenges on their own within the context of the question.

### **5.8.1 Institutional Infrastructure**

Six interview respondents mentioned some general challenges working with post-secondary institutions related to institutional infrastructure, and seven respondents discussed challenges specifically related to the alignment between the university structure and needs, and community needs, which will be discussed a separate section below.

With regards to general challenges, respondents brought up the structural barriers that are typical of large institutional bureaucracies that may prevent community-university partnerships from happening, or at least, slow them down. One example shared discussed challenges involved with changing procurement processes due to existing embedded systems and the need to get senior leadership on board to make some headway. This led to a discussion about empowering lower level staff to bring ideas for community-university engagement up, and start pushing forward initiatives, as the people connecting with the community on the ground are often not at the senior level. As one participant stated, “your less senior staff in any large bureaucracy, more often than not, they won't feel terribly empowered to bring something up unless it's something spectacular...if there's no immediate need to do something differently, then the inclination is usually like, ‘well it ain't broke so I'm not going to fix it’...so, I don't know how a large institution really makes less senior Staff feel empowered to be a part of all that stuff”.

Another interview participant recognized the institutional challenges that were brought up by SFU Faculty and Staff regarding the lack of rewards and recognition for community-engagement work. The respondent connected this as a possible reason for the absence of follow-through from students and faculty on knowledge transfer to the community from research projects.

### *Alignment Between Needs*

Challenges concerning alignment between the structure and needs of the university versus community interests, came up with seven interview respondents. Several examples of this revolved around working with students connected to community-engaged learning courses or practicums, or other pre-determined programs where students work with community organizations. Issues that came up included the need to match ideas and projects with the timing of the semester system; trying to match the type of project with the abilities of students that are

available; and student generated projects or research where the topic is based on course content or interest that “might not be on the mark” with regards to what is needed in community. One interview respondent provided an example of a particular community feeling “over-researched”, and a different angle was suggested to the researchers on the topic they were interested in that would add value and avoid direct interviews with community. This was met, however, with an unwillingness to adjust the research topic and approach.

Expanding on the issue of timing with the semester system, this structure creates a situation whereby students can only work on small and short projects over a period of four months which makes it difficult to establish sustainable impact. As one interview respondent stated, “the other thing is if universities can come up with like, how can they create sustainable projects and concepts as opposed to one-offs”. An example was provided whereby a program that is needed in the community is set up in partnership with the university where students, support and expertise are provided on an ongoing basis to sustain the activity over the long-term. There are certainly examples of this that exist, however it is currently not the norm, and at least four respondents commented on the inflexibility they’ve faced working with post-secondary institution in the past where they have tried to suggest changes or new ways of operating, but were up against a mentality of “this is how we do it, if you don't like it, too bad”.

### 5.8.2 Capacity and Time

The lack of capacity and time for community when engaging in partnerships with the university came up with ten interview respondents. This challenge was referenced in a variety of contexts including working with students and research, working with more than one post-secondary institution, and navigating through university departments and structures. Respondents spoke about the challenges associated with taking on extra projects that they are not necessarily mandated or funded for, and the need for understanding between partners about that context, and what it actually means for the community partner to take on that work. This also brings the concept of mutual value and benefit to the forefront, to ensure resources are being put to good use. As one participant indicated, “I think working with non-profits, especially, there's obviously a lack of capacity...so, it's great to have another staff person or whatever to do additional work that we really need to do...but it's extra work and time and money and whatever, to really train that person up...having the university actually understand the nature of the community that they're working in and that you can't just throw someone in - there's got to be some sort of balance.”

### 5.8.3 Valuing Community Knowledge and Respect

A final theme that emerged was that of valuing community knowledge and general respect for their expertise and time. This was brought up by six interview participants.

In connection to research, three interview respondents spoke about situations where university representatives did not “look to community as credible sources of information and partners” and “they think that they know best and that academia is so far above the practical knowledge that community has”. This has also been reflected in the allocation of funding for

projects involving community-based research where “about 95% goes to University and if you’re lucky, they’re thinking about 5% going to the community partner. And so a real lack of equity”. This may also be reflective of the structural issues with research funding, as many grants require in-kind contributions, and therefore community partners end up being asked to provide their involvement in-kind as “the argument would be ‘well you’re already doing this work anyway’”. These experiences, while not necessarily representative of every situation, point to the importance of approaching partnership opportunities with genuine respect for the knowledge and expertise resident in the community and to strive towards an equitable allocation of resources and benefits that appropriately values the work that is being done on both sides.

This theme, though in a slightly different way, also surfaced from three interview respondents in the context of working with students. In one situation, the community organization was working with a student placement, and in the other situation, it was a group of students working on a project. For both circumstances, the community organization took the time and effort to mentor the students but were not given the same level of effort or respect from the individuals supporting the students on the university side. In both situations, challenges occurred, and the community organization attempted to communicate with the Faculty supporting the projects to rectify the situation, however they were met with no response. Due to this process break-down, the student projects and placement ended up being more of a burden than a benefit, and “it just felt very disrespectful”.

In connection to working with students, another interview participant gave an example of a common process whereby community organizations are asked to prepare, “pitch”, and present a project for students to take on as part of their community engaged learning course, with the knowledge that the project may or may not be chosen by the students. This practice may seem fairly innocent as a way to match students with projects, however it also perpetuates a power imbalance and does not respect the time and capacity restraints for community organizations when they may not receive any benefit for their effort.

## **5.9 Summary**

The interviews with Community Partners revealed some key insights, and their honesty and willingness to share the positive and challenging aspects of this work was essential for surfacing these findings. The findings, while not representative of all Community Partners working with SFU, provide some important lessons, and a sobering reminder that there is significant work left to be done to bridge the community-university divide.

Interview respondents shared many valuable experiences and stories that exemplified the importance of some key themes, many of which mirror the themes identified by SFU Faculty and Staff including building and maintaining trusting relationships that are characterized by an undercurrent of mutual benefit; approaching work with community with a listening and learning mindset; mindfulness around context and power; flexibility and adaptability in a complex environment; and open and honest communication. Themes that came out more prominently in the interviews with Community Partners include the importance of participating in,

understanding and listening to the community; network building and navigating the institution; valuing and respecting the knowledge and expertise resident in community; and working towards power balance and equity.

## **6.0 Findings: Student Focus Group**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The following section describes the findings from the focus group that was conducted with five SFU students on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Effort was made to schedule three focus groups with students, however due to a low response rate, only one was scheduled. The purpose of the focus group was to hear from students who have experience working with community partners through community-engaged learning courses and their own projects, about their experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned in order to surface some possible principles. Interview participants were asked to comment on how they interpret the term “community-university partnership”; what types of partnerships they have been involved in; what the benefits are; effective process elements for setting up, sustaining and ending partnerships; effective process elements for realizing successful outcomes; and challenges or barriers preventing success. The following section summarizes the findings from these questions and identifies major themes that surfaced from each category.

### **6.2 Community-University Partnerships, Types and Benefits**

Similar to SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews, the focus group participants were asked to comment on their perception of what the term “Community-University Partnership” means to them, as well as the types of partnerships they have been involved in, and how they perceived benefits from partnership activity.

The theme of mutual benefit came up nine times, and many of the benefits that were identified from the interviews with SFU faculty and staff and community partners were echoed in the focus group. The participants spoke about the value for students to obtain “hands-on experience”, relationship and network building for future careers, and learning from different perspectives and forms of knowledge. For example, two participants spoke about the value of working with people who have lived experience with substance abuse and poverty, and the mutual learning that comes out of those experiences on both sides. With regards to benefits for the community, focus group respondents mentioned benefits for the community members that participated in their projects and identified things like “self-efficacy”, and learning new things. For those who were working with staff within organizations, participants identified the value that the student perspective and a “fresh lens” can bring to issues and projects. Students also mentioned the benefit that SFU’s institutional reputation had for them in working with community as it added legitimacy and credibility to their work.

When discussing the term “community-university partnerships”, the theme around the university-community divide came up briefly with two respondents who indicated the importance of listening, sharing knowledge, using accessible language, and ensuring the community feels welcome on campus in an academic setting. As one participant mentioned, “I was part of organizing a conference...earlier this year, and some people were intimidated to come to the university”.

The types of partnerships and activities that focus group participants have been involved in would all fall under the “Community-Engaged Learning” category and included course-based engagement through City Studio and Semester in Dialogue, volunteering, and developing their own projects with funding through the SFU Student Community Engagement Competition.

### **6.3 Beginning Stage of Partnership**

All focus group participants were asked to respond to a question regarding their lessons learned for effective processes in the beginning stages of a partnership and were asked a prompt within this question on what elements need to be discussed and understood between partners.

#### **6.3.1 Relationships**

Similar to SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews, the most prominent theme was relationships and connections, which came up seven times. More specifically, students talked about the value of SFU having established relationships and connections with community organizations and collaboratives, and the importance of obtaining a baseline of community support in order to get their projects started. This was true of both course-based engagement and independent projects. Participants talked about the difficulty of “cold-calling” and the exponential speed and efficiency at which projects can move forward when SFU has an existing relationship with the community and can facilitate the connection with the students. As one participant stated, “[SFU staff] was the first contact to connect us with a couple of pivotal artist-activists in the community, and without that, we wouldn’t have had the net to catch us”.

#### **6.3.2 Communication and Expectation Management**

Another theme that came up from four participants, which is similar to themes in both the Faculty/Staff and Community Partner interviews, is that of communication, process and managing expectations. In terms of communication and process, students talked about the importance of establishing modes of communication that will work for the partnership – whether it be email, phone or texting for example – and establishing a process for communication and decision-making in order to avoid confusion and redundancy when multiple people are working on the same project. In the same vein, one participant talked about their learnings from an after-school program where working with different schools required different processes for communication and level of involvement. For example, there were differences in how involved the schools wanted to be in approving the curriculum. At first, “we didn’t know what the protocol was...so a lot of it was just seeing how far we could go before someone would stop us”, and after this experience upon reflection the participant realized, “it’s kind of like setting up boundaries...setting up the rules from the get-go and then going from there, which is something that we are going to use next time we do the program”.

Managing expectations was another theme that came out of the focus group from two participants who specifically indicated the importance of understanding as a student “what you’re capable of within the partnership”, what can be agreed to, what the limitations are, and being clear about that with the partners.

### 6.3.3 Listening and Flexibility

A final theme that surfaced with two participants was listening, valuing community knowledge and being willing to adjust ideas and process to meet community need. One participant talked about the importance of using accessible language and avoiding coming in to community with academic frameworks, but rather listening to their experiences and “letting them build it up themselves”. The reason for this is the intimidating nature of the academy and the danger of people feeling “less smart or less capable if they’re not coming at it from an academic perspective, which is totally untrue”. Another participant spoke about the necessity to be flexible and adaptable when working with community as the project idea and process that has been envisioned may need to be adjusted to meet the particular needs of the community in question. As the participant stated, “the biggest thing we learned from it was, we can't make appointments for people to meet us at a specific time when they're marginalized. We had to go and visit each of them and make time for them...on their own schedules”.

## 6.4 Sustaining Partnerships

Focus group participants were asked to comment on what they see as effective processes for sustaining community partnerships over-time, recognizing that they are students and they may not have experience with longer term partnerships.

The main theme that came up in this discussion was the focus on relationship and one participant recognized that the relationship building with the community as part of the course-based engagement was the most important part of the learning and stated, “yes, you're doing these projects, but actually the real work that's happening is building relationships. Because now as students we have the opportunity to have these connections and continue throughout our lives with them”. This is an important reflection and observation, and a testament to the relationship-focused approach that is taking place at SFU. If students are encouraged through their community-engagement experiences to build positive relationships and connections, these encounters could lead to more opportunities for the student, and also for SFU in the future.

## 6.5 Ending Partnerships

When asked to comment about effective processes for ending partnerships, the most prominent theme was around celebration, recognition and wrap-up. Three participants indicated the value of putting some time and energy into a proper closure for projects that naturally come to an end and recognizing people for their help along the way. It was also mentioned that ending projects on a note of celebration and acknowledgement is a good way to provide closure for a particular activity, but also to keep the relationship and connection points open for future possibilities. As one participant stated, “So it's that wrapping up, it's acknowledging their help - and that's a great way to think of...just that you're closing this chapter, but it's not closing the book”.

## **6.6 Outcomes**

When discussing effective processes for achieving intended outcomes, the concept of complexity came up six times. Participants identified how dynamic and unpredictable it can be working with community, and the importance of staying open and flexible with outcome measurements to allow projects to evolve and change depending on what works, and what is needed. As one participant stated, “our plan didn't end up being our plan because of the messiness of the individual needs. But I think that was a really important lesson for us - that messiness is really important”.

It was recognized, however, that this way of operating can be challenging in the university environment where there are expectations to be met that might be attached to project funding or to course requirements, and things like “checklists”, “quotas” and “tick-boxes” were mentioned by participants as potential barriers for doing the work, and surfacing the real value that came out of projects. One participant stated the following when talking about quantitative institutional metrics: “I don't think that institutions do a very good job... of allowing for messiness, because they don't know how to evaluate it. And that would really concern me if I were to look at ALL of the values of what we got out of our project, and I think what the community has expressed they got out of it - it just wouldn't fit.” Therefore, processes that enable an overarching shared purpose, but also allow for flexibility and iteration on outcomes and how things are done, were identified as important.

## **6.7 Challenges**

Focus group participants were asked specifically to comment on challenges they face as students working with community partners, and some challenges also surfaced in answers to other questions. Two main themes emerged which are Capacity and Time, and Institutional Infrastructure.

### **6.7.1 Capacity & Time**

The theme of capacity and time came up six times in the discussion regarding challenges. Students have a number of demands on their time on top of their course-work, which may include jobs, volunteering, family commitments and even commuting, which limits their time and capacity to do community-based work. Participants noted that even though students may be interested and motivated to get involved, sometimes it is as simple as the fact that “people just can't afford it”, and they may choose to pick up an extra shift at work rather than put time into a community project. This indicates the importance of institutional infrastructure to embed community-based experiences into the academic structure in order to appropriately credit and value the work, and to make it accessible to students who cannot afford the opportunity cost of extra-curricular activities.

### 6.7.2 Institutional Infrastructure

The main challenges related to institutional infrastructure came from the experiences of two students who received funding from the university to take on independent community-based projects or were doing activities as part of a student club. One of the issues was around navigating the requirements, procedures, and “red-tape” that may come up when working with community organizations and other publicly funded entities which may include insurance, liability and unexpected charges. These barriers would be less of a challenge for students in structured opportunities due to the institutional relationship and established process, however for students attempting projects on their own, there is little support for them in navigating these barriers.

Another challenge that came up three times was that of knowledge acquisition, transfer and continuity among students doing community-engaged work. Again, this was identified in the context of students engaging in projects independently and through student clubs. One participant identified a gap in training for students interested in doing community engaged work outside of a structured course. In terms of longevity, “when you're working as a student independently, either through like a club or through your own project, that sense of continuity is gone...once everyone graduated, all those contacts were lost - you couldn't ask for donations, you couldn't get those groups to come back, and it's starting from scratch every two years”.

## 6.8 Summary

The focus group with SFU students, while only scratching the surface, was helpful to capture some of the student experience in community-university engagement and partnerships. The themes and concepts identified by the students are similar to those that emerged through SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews and echoed the heavy focus on mutual benefit and relationships; attention to the university-community divide; listening and learning; flexibility in a complex environment; and open communication. Challenges focused on capacity and time for students to be involved in community engaged work, and institutional support for students taking on community-based projects outside of structured courses.

## 7.0 Discussion and Analysis

### 7.1 Introduction

The purpose of the following section is to connect the themes that were surfaced from the SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews as well as the SFU Student focus group to the literature and identify a set of effectiveness principles for community-university partnerships at SFU. As identified in the Conceptual Framework in section 2.6, the first intention for the research was to surface values, knowledge, experiences, lessons and assumptions from community-university partnership practice through the literature review, interviews and focus group. This was accomplished in the previous Literature Review and Findings sections. The second intention was to analyze this information together and apply Patton's (2018) GUIDE framework in order to develop effectiveness principles that are guiding, useful, inspiring, developmental and adaptable, which will be the focus of the following section.

Five main themes were distilled from the findings which includes Relationships, Context, Respect, Flexibility and Communication. These themes will be discussed below in the context of the findings from the interviews and focus groups as well as the literature. As articulated in the conceptual framework in section 2.6, Patton's (2018) GUIDE framework for developing principles was used to turn the research findings and literature review concepts for each of these themes into overarching and operating principles for effective community-university partnerships. Overarching principles are the main foundational principles, and operating principles provide more practice-based guidance for how the principle could be applied. As Patton (2018) states, "overarching principles provide general guidance for effectiveness. Operating principles provide more specific guidance for effectiveness" (p. 68). The benefit of having an overarching principle coupled with several operating principles is that the operating principles can provide more grounding to the meaning and activation of the overarching principle, however they are not exhaustive of all the ways the principle could be applied, thereby keeping the principles adaptable and developmental in an ever-changing environment.

The principles articulated in the sections below answer the main research question which is "what are the key effectiveness principles for community-university partnerships at SFU?". As Patton (2018) stipulates, effectiveness principles are guiding statements that provide direction on decision making based on learning, experience, values and knowledge of what works in practice, for the purpose of achieving desired outcomes (p. 9). The principles are meant to offer direction to university practitioners for developing and maintaining effective community-university partnerships, however many of the principles are relevant for community partners as well.

It is pertinent to note that the principles developed in the sections below should be considered as an integrated and "mutually reinforcing whole" (Patton, 2018, p. 86), as opposed to an independent and mutually exclusive list. The principles connect closely with one another, have areas of overlap, and strengthen and support one another. In similar fashion to the way Shulha et al. (2015) identified principles for collaborative evaluation, the principles articulated for effective community-university partnerships should be considered together, though the

significance and relevance of any one principle will inevitably vary depending on the situation (p. 198). Therefore, while all principles should be considered for effective community-university partnerships, the degree to which each of them are implemented in practice will depend on the particular context and circumstance.

Finally, an outcomes framework for the principles is presented which makes preliminary connections between the principles and short, medium and long-term outcomes. It is beyond the scope of the project to evaluate the principles; however, the outcomes framework provides an example for how the principles could be connected to determine the extent to which they contribute towards desired outcomes of community-university engagement.

## **7.2 Relationships**

The concept of building trusting relationships came out as the strongest theme throughout all of the findings and was especially prominent when respondents discussed effective processes for beginning and sustaining partnerships. It was brought up over sixty times in this context across all the data. Several practical lessons were shared with regards to building and sustaining trusting relationships including showing up and participating in the community; building authentic human connection outside of work titles; being there for each other beyond the parameters of the official partnership; coming through for one another and delivering on promises; and building networks and bringing people together.

Mutual benefit was also an underlying theme in connection to relationships. This came up in the sense that the relationships themselves were part of the benefit of the partnership; that the relationship facilitated benefits that would not have otherwise occurred; and/or that the combination of the trusting relationship and mutual value allowed for the partnership to evolve in a positive way. The connection was also made the other way around, that demonstrating commitment to mutual benefit in a partnership helps to build relationships. A good example of this is when respondents talked about the importance of participation in the community without a pre-conceived agenda as a way to build relationships. The benefits for any given activity may not be equal for all partners, but it demonstrates a commitment to the partnership and to a spirit of mutuality overall, as opposed to only reaching out when something is needed.

Connecting this theme back to the principles identified in the literature, it relates best to Principle 3 which states “the relationship between partners in the Partnership is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment” (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). There are many connection points between the interview findings and this principle with regards to the importance of relationship, and the literature review connected to this principle further articulates those similarities. For example, the literature corroborates the findings for building and sustaining trusting and genuine relationships with regards to the importance of personal and human connection, coming through on promises, supporting each other, showing up in an authentic way without a hidden agenda, and having each other’s best interests at heart (Drahota et. al, 2016, pp. 184-186, Northmore & Hart, 2011, p. 7; Kenworthy-U’Ren & U’Ren, 2008, p.

90; Buys & Bursnall, 2007, pp. 77-84; Holland et. al, 2003, p. 4; Holland & Ramaley, 2008, p.35; McLean & Behringer, 2008, p. 69; Cocuzzi, 2017, pp. 57-65).

With regards to the concept of respect, which is included in the literature and in Principle 3 in direct connection to relationships, in the context of these findings, it seemed to be better situated as a distinct overarching theme which will be discussed in section 5.3. While respect is essential for effective relationships, the concept warrants further articulation and un-packing, as it encompasses a larger set of practices and values, and therefore it will be considered separately.

Relationships seem to be at the most foundational core of effective community-university partnerships and the literature review surfaced some other important factors for successful relationships including respect for community knowledge, listening, honesty, sharing resources, and managing expectations. These themes also came up in the findings and will be flushed out further in connection with other themes and principles in the following sections. Due to the central nature of the relationship principle, it may be pertinent to consider it as a “pole star principle” which, according to Patton (2018), is a principle “so important that it dominates all others” (p. 88).

### Overarching Principle

Develop and sustain trusting relationships based on a foundation of authenticity and mutual value.

### Operating Principles

Using the lessons and experiences from the research findings and literature review, practice informed operating principles to accompany the above overarching principle could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Participate and add value in community without a pre-conceived agenda
- Demonstrate reliability and commitment by delivering on promises
- Facilitate the space to get to know partners on a personal and human level
- Be responsive and helpful, where capacity allows, to requests for assistance outside of the parameters of the particular partnership project or activity. Leverage available resources, networks and knowledge to be of help where needed.
- Explore ways to deepen relationships by building networks and social fabric. Introduce and recommend partners to other contacts and positively promote the partnership.

## **7.3 Context**

Another overarching theme encompassing a set of concepts that surfaced across all of the data is around attention to context, history, power and politics when engaging in community-university partnerships. Respondents indicated that each partnership will be different depending

on the context and each situation deserves an individualized and nuanced approach to setting up the parameters for partnership.

The historical divide between the university and the community is relevant in this discussion as there are many instances where the institution needs to overcome a history and context of power imbalance and distrust in the community. Elements of this concept emerged across all of the interviews and focus group where respondents spoke about the history of universities operating as “ivory towers” and imposing or extracting ideas, knowledge, and resources in a one-sided way that exemplified and took advantage of power-imbances. This has led to the need for vulnerability, humility, self-awareness, and care when moving forward with partnership activities. This may be especially true for historically marginalized communities; however, it is often not possible to know what experiences partners may have had with universities in the past, therefore an awareness and sensitivity around this topic in any partnership situation is important. This connects back to Principles 5 and 12 in the literature review which address the concepts of balancing power and valuing different forms of knowledge (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). The literature acknowledges that there is a history of academic institutions exhibiting condescending and paternalistic behaviour when working with community partners which may not necessarily be conscious, but a product of deeply embedded systemic structures and social hierarchy that separate the academy from community (Cherry & Shefner, 2004, p. 226; Hammersley, 2017, pp. 117-118)

In addition to the general history and dichotomy between the university and community, there will also be other factors affecting the nature of partnerships. Interview respondents spoke about the value of understanding the bigger picture with regards to the environmental, cultural and political dynamics within the community of interest and between collaborators, in order to determine how the university might fit into the picture and play a role. This connects back to Principle 11 in the literature review which addresses the consideration of context for the design of the partnership (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). This principle emphasizes that when engaging in community-university partnerships, each will be different, and will be shaped in diverse ways as a product of their environment and how various complex social, economic, environmental, cultural, and organizational factors might interact and affect the collaborative work (Suarez-balcazar, Harper & Lewis 2005, p. 91; Kearney & Candy, 2004, p. 187; Dempsey, 2010, p. 383; Hammersley, 2017, p. 120). Therefore, it seems that this idea of paying attention to context, history, power and politics is relevant not only for work with historically marginalized communities, but across different types of partnerships. It is also an essential foundation for approaching situations with the understanding that, as articulated by an interview respondent: “every time you develop those Partnerships, it has to be seen as a new beginning or a new context, or not making assumptions based on how we did it the last time it's going to work this time.”

These ideas are also connected to Principle 7 in the literature review, which speaks to the notion that each partnership should identify their own principles and processes to govern the collaboration (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). As indicated in the findings, in practice this

could involve a formal written agreement or contract, or it could be as informal as an email-documented conversation to ensure everyone is on the same page with how things are moving forward. In what context it is appropriate to use structured versus non-structured formats for partnerships depends on the situation, but participants mentioned using more formal agreements when the partnership involves substantial resources; when the partnership is being made at a higher institutional level; or when more intentional agreements can serve as a method to help balance power in the relationship.

### Overarching Principle

Consider the unique social, economic, political, cultural and environmental context, history and power dynamics as a factor for how each partnership is approached, designed and sustained.

### Operating Principles

Using the lessons and experiences from the research findings and literature review, practice informed operating principles to accompany the above overarching principle could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Acknowledge the history of un-equal power dynamics and social hierarchy separating the university from community. Approach collaborations with vulnerability, openness, and humility, and be willing to step back or change course based on feedback.
- Avoid perpetuating systems of oppression by engaging in regular self-reflective practice and being open to feedback and learning.
- Co-develop implicit or explicit principles and processes with partners for each collaboration, considering the context and nature of activity. Use formal agreements if needed or necessary for establishing parameters, managing resources and balancing power.

## **7.4 Respect**

An overarching theme around respect seemed to surface implicitly from the findings. While the word itself came up relatively infrequently in the interviews and focus group, there were several practices, approaches, experiences and lessons learned that spoke to the importance of a respectful process when engaging in community-university partnerships. As indicated in section 5.1, the notion of respect comes up in the literature review in direct connection to Principle 3 which speaks to relationships. Respect is further defined in the literature review by relationships where all voices and opinions are given the opportunity to be heard and valued (Drahota et. al, 2016, pp. 184-186). While respect is certainly essential for relationships, it became apparent that this concept needed to be considered separately and further articulated as an overarching principle encompassing a set of operating practices that provide more grounding and practical meaning to the word.

One of the themes that came up across all the data was around the importance of listening, bringing partners in early enough to help shape the activity, and ensuring initiatives are useful to the community. Participants from both the SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews spoke about the value of listening to the perspective of community partners with regards to what is important to them, what is of interest and what would be of use before deciding on any particular direction for projects and activities. This is highly connected to the concept of respect, as bringing partners in at an early stage of project conception ensures that all voices and perspectives are heard and are given equal consideration with regards to the direction of the initiative. The opposite of this process would be to make decisions and move forward on initiatives based on university-centric goals and perspectives and invite community participation as an after-thought. In other words, as articulated by an interview participant “we're going to do this, and you're either with us or get out of the way”. This connects to both Principles 2 and 6 in the literature. Principle 2 addresses the importance of partners agreeing on the direction of the partnership, and Principle 6 addresses communication and understanding each other's needs and interests (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). As indicated in the literature review, Holland & Ramaley (2008) identify that all engagement initiatives would benefit from early conversations, in absence of pre-conceived agendas, to discuss the ideas, possibilities, collaboration opportunities, goals, and processes for moving forward in a way that values and respects all voices and interests at the table (pp. 34-35). This theme around listening and ensuring all partners have a voice in shaping projects also extends beyond the beginning stages of collaboration and should continue throughout partnership initiatives.

Another related concept connected to the notion of respect that surfaced across all interviews and the focus group, is the importance of valuing different forms of knowledge. This is connected to the above discussion around listening, however it goes beyond the inclusion of perspectives for the direction of projects. Participants spoke about the involvement of different epistemologies for the co-production of knowledge, research, programming and educating students, and the importance of appropriately valuing this contribution within the partnership. Participants from both SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews connected this to the idea of equity and respect and spoke about how an inclusive environment should be facilitated to ensure all partners feel comfortable sharing their experiences, and that the distribution of resources should properly reflect the value of community knowledge. As one participant stated, “It was raised at this conference about patient-oriented research that you have to actually pay Community Partners and those who are engaged if they're taking time out of their day. You're paying them for the lived experience...I'm paid to do the part of this that I'm doing as an academic, but community members also have to be valued that way.” Participants acknowledged that while distribution of resources might not be equally shared, they should be fairly shared. This connects to both Principles 5 and 12 which address balancing power, sharing resources and valuing different forms of knowledge and experiences (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). As indicated in the literature, Post-secondary institutions inherently value academic knowledge, whereas the informal, lived, experiential and embodied knowledge resident within

communities may not be given the attention it deserves in partnership projects (Fisher, Fabricant & Simmons, 2004, pp. 29-30; Cherry & Shefner, 2004, p. 227), thereby necessitating attention to process factors to help mitigate this issue.

Appropriately valuing and respecting community knowledge also extends to recognition and acknowledgement of partnership accomplishments in ways that reinforce the reciprocal nature of the relationship and celebrate all partners for their contributions. This came up across five interviews as well as the focus group and is also reflected in the literature review in connection to Principle 9. As stated in the literature, celebration of joint contributions to achievements further validates and legitimizes the value of all partners, whereas one-sided recognition to institutions with the most power communicates a dynamic of charity and may lead to mistrust in the relationship (Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, p. 91; Blake & Moore, 2000, p. 65).

A final theme under the umbrella of respect is around understanding and respecting community capacity, time and boundaries. This came up primarily in the interviews with Community Partners where almost all respondents spoke about the challenges of taking on new projects with post-secondary institutions, being involved in research, and mentoring students which they are not necessarily funded or mandated for. This is not to say that community partners are not benefitting from collaboration activities, however it came out strongly in the interviews that there needs to be respect and understanding around the context community partners are working within, mindfulness about what is being asked of them, and enabling boundaries to be set depending on their capacity and what additional resources might be available to support. This relates back to Principle 11 in the literature which addresses the importance of understanding context, and also Principles 2 and 6 with regards to communication and agreement on project parameters (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013).

### Overarching Principle

Demonstrate respect for the knowledge, experience, and capacity of all partners and strive for equity in the relationship

### Operating Principles

Using the lessons and experiences from the research findings and literature review, practice informed operating principles to accompany the above overarching principle could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Approach partnerships with a listening and learning mindset, and ensure all partner voices are heard to help shape and bring forward collaboration initiatives
- Create inclusive environments where all partners feel welcome and valued for their time, experience and knowledge

- Discuss what a fair distribution of resources and benefits looks like for the partnership based on the specific initiative; capacity and contribution of partners; and resources available
- Celebrate partnership accomplishments in ways that honour and value the contributions of all partners

## 7.5 Flexibility

Across the interviews and focus group, participants spoke about complexity, flexibility and adaptability when working in community-university partnerships, both in connection to relationships and outcomes.

The idea of flexibility and adaptability connects back to the discussion in section 5.3 around listening. Participants across the interviews and focus group identified the need to be open to various directions that projects could take based on the inclusion of different perspectives, and open to the possibility that certain projects may not work for the community. As a participant stated, “as a university partner - really have to be open to things changing, and having your ideas blown out of the water, and you need to totally go back to the drawing board”.

In both of the SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews, participants talked about the reality of the complex environment surrounding community-university partnerships. Throughout partnership initiatives and over time, elements such as funding, leadership, priorities and capacity may change unexpectedly. In some cases, changes may bring forth new opportunities for expanding and deepening partnerships, and in other cases, may result in a scaling back or shifting of activity. In either scenario, it was recognized that people engaged in partnerships need to have a certain comfort level with complexity, ambiguity and change in order to adapt to a dynamic environment and to take advantage of new opportunities.

Across all interviews and the focus group, participants spoke about the importance of enabling the space for outcomes to emerge and allowing flexibility for outcomes to change throughout the partnership. It was also identified that due to the complexity inherent in community-university partnerships, there may be a number of unanticipated outcomes that surface from initiatives, and that it may be valuable to recognize and track those when possible. Methods for evaluating outcomes from collaboration activities should also be kept open for partners to decide on what makes the most sense depending on the initiative, what they are hoping to learn, as well as capacity and resources available. Notwithstanding the value of openness and flexibility with outcomes, it was also identified in both SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews that there are likely base-line outcomes that partners are hoping to achieve, and depending on the project, some may be more flexible than others for change.

All of the above points connect back to Principles 1 and 2 in the literature, the former addressing the evolving nature of partnerships and the latter addressing agreement between partners on partnership parameters (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). Principle 2 in its current form, however, does not account for complexity and change, therefore it needs to be taken into consideration in complement to Principle 1. As indicated in the literature review, non-linearity is to be expected, and as partnerships evolve, develop and shift with the changing environment, the

originally created mission, vision, goals and outcomes may need to be altered or clarified, processes confirmed, and assumptions reassessed at various points in the relationship (Cauley, 2000, pp. 14-16; Hammersley, 2017, pp. 126-127).

### Overarching Principle

Facilitate the space for emergence and be open and adaptable to change in a complex environment.

### Operating Principles

Using the lessons and experiences from the research findings and literature review, practice informed operating principles to accompany the above overarching principle could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Be willing to shift direction for projects and initiatives provided there continues to be mutual value in the partnership
- Take advantage of unanticipated opportunities where capacity allows
- Allow for outcomes to emerge and change throughout partnership initiatives where possible, while taking into account established parameters
- Choose evaluation methods that are a match with the initiative, desired insights, and available resources. Attempt to capture unanticipated learnings, outcomes and ripple effects.

## **7.6 Communication**

A general theme around communication surfaced across the interviews and focus group that encompasses a few sub-themes and practices such as understanding interests and checking in, managing expectations, setting boundaries, language and process, and honesty and feedback.

Connected to the discussion in the previous section (5.4) with regards to flexibility and adaptability, respondents from SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews indicated the importance of getting an early understanding of what partners are hoping to get out of the collaboration initiative; checking in with each other along the way to adjust as needed; and ensuring mutual benefit continues to be derived as things change in the environment. While flexibility is important, some projects may have more concrete and set deliverables than others, so having an early understanding of base-line requirements for outcomes from partnership activities provides clarity and enables better decision making as things move forward. As a Community Partner respondent stated, “you have to lay that on the line - what's the personal skin in the game...if I'm a graduate student...and it's critical that this move forward in a way that allows me to get my dissertation done, then we all need to know that.”

The concept of managing expectations came up in both the SFU Faculty and Staff interviews as well as the focus group. In Community Partner interviews, a similar theme came up around setting boundaries, which was touched on in section 5.4 with regards to respect. For SFU Faculty, Staff and Students, the idea of managing expectations seemed to come from an underlying assumption that community partners may have high expectations of university partners given the relative abundance of resources, and the concern that promises may be made or expected that cannot be kept. As outlined in the literature review, unrealistic expectations based on pre-conceived assumptions can be harmful to partnership relationships as they may lead to feelings of let-down, frustration and failure if internalized expectations are not met (Kenworthy-U'Ren & U'Ren, 2008, pp. 90-92). For Community Partners, the sentiment around setting boundaries was from the perspective that they need to make strategic decisions on what, and how much they can get involved in depending on the fit with their mandate, capacity, and available resources. Their concerns seemed to centre around protection of their time and avoiding over-committing. In a similar vein, SFU Faculty and Staff also spoke about the importance of boundaries and self-care, as keeping up with the workload surrounding community-university partnerships and maintaining relationships can be challenging. Regardless of whether the need is to manage expectations, set boundaries, or both, honest communication with regards to what is possible, what the limitations are, and what can be reasonably committed to from the perspective of all partners is essential.

Attention to communication processes and language also came up briefly across the interviews and focus group. With regards to communication processes, focus group participants identified the importance of determining the best methods for communication between partners, and identifying communication point people if the partnership involves multiple collaborators. SFU Faculty and Staff interviews revealed another important communication process factor which includes documentation of promises, and what each partner has committed to delivering. As indicated in the findings from both SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews, this type of documentation could be in the form of a structured contract or agreement, it could simply involve recording conversations through email, or a combination of both, depending on the partnership. This is also addressed in section 5.2 with regards to context. Regardless of what format is used, the important point is that attention is paid to a communication process that works for the partnership, provides clarity, and enables accountability around commitments.

The use of language only came up a few times in the focus group discussion and once in the Community Partner interviews, however it is worth touching on. Community and university partners may be accustomed to using certain terms, acronyms and vernacular within their fields of work and study, which may not be understood by others outside that realm. In the literature review, it was found to be problematic when partners did not share an understanding of definitions and terms being used to communicate about the work of the partnership (Drahota et.al, 2016, pp. 184-186). Being mindful about the use of language helps to create an inclusive environment and ensures all partners are on the same page.

All of the concepts in the above paragraphs can be connected back to Principles 2 and 6 in the literature, which address agreement around partnership goals and processes, communication, understanding interests, and language (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). As indicated in the literature review, effective communication is critical to facilitating a mutual understanding of interests, and developing shared purpose, goals, benefits, processes, and managing expectations (Suarez-Balcazar, Harper & Lewis, 2005, p. 89; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 508).

Finally, communication sub-themes around honesty and feedback came up across the SFU Faculty and Staff and Community Partner interviews. These concepts surfaced mainly in connection with examples of situations where collaborations experienced issues, and honesty and feedback were used to either learn from challenges and improve partnerships, or to end them if they were no longer producing mutual value. Participants spoke about the reality of “things going sideways” and the importance of tackling issues head-on. Communicating honestly with partners if there is a concern, if circumstances change, or if something unexpected happens, was identified a facilitating factor to maintain trust and respect in the relationship. This connects back to Principles 8 and 10 in the literature review. Principle 8 addresses feedback and ongoing improvement in the partnership, and Principle 10 addresses ending partnerships (CCPH, Board of Directors, 2013). As stated in the literature review, feedback processes are essential for continuously improving, and keeping tabs on the mutually beneficial nature of the partnership (Sebastian, Skelton & West, 2000, pp. 58-62, Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 509; McLean & Behringer, 2008, p. 69). If partnerships do require dissolution, the key is to approach the situation with respect, honesty, compassion and thoughtfulness in order to leave the door open for more appropriate collaborations in the future (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 512).

### Overarching Principle

Communicate openly, honestly, accessibly, and with enough frequency to establish clarity, facilitate ongoing improvement, and navigate challenges.

### Operating Principles

Using the lessons and experiences from the research findings and literature review, practice informed operating principles to accompany the above overarching principle could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Establish a shared understanding of interests, goals, commitments, and limitations.
- Check-in with partners along the way to provide feedback for improvement and ensure continued mutual benefit. Make adjustments as needed.
- Determine preferred modes and frequency of communication
- Use accessible language

- Communicate concerns or changes in the partnership with timeliness, respect and honesty

## **7.7 Institutional Infrastructure**

Across all the data, participants identified challenges associated with post-secondary institutional infrastructure when engaging in community-university Partnerships. Challenges included alignment issues between the established systems of the institution and the community engagement mission, mis-alignment between university structure and community need, scarcity of resources, reward structures, navigation issues and the need for more support systems for people engaging in this type of work. Many of these issues are also echoed in the literature review, which points to similar areas for improvement including resources, rewards, support and training (Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 84; Curwood et. al, 2011, p. 24).

These issues are not addressed by the discussion and principles outlined in the previous sections, as the principles are meant to guide practice for developing effective community-university partnerships as opposed to tackling institutional processes. Nevertheless, due to the prominence of this theme in the literature and findings, it is clear that institutional systems, processes, and procedures have a significant impact on community-university partnerships and hold a great deal of power to either facilitate or inhibit the work.

As indicated in the literature review, institutional infrastructure is an important consideration in the context of evaluation and assessment of community-university engagement as it signals the value of benchmarking tools that encourage self-assessment and reflection on the institutionalization of community engagement. SFU's current endeavor to explore the co-development of a Canadian version of the US based Carnegie Community Engagement Classification is a good opportunity to address this issue, as the classification is meant for institutions interested in systematizing, documenting and developing community engagement at the institutional level, and identifying ways to improve.

## **7.8 Outcomes Framework**

As Patton (2018) stipulates, “effectiveness principles point to results” (p. 95), and the process, as articulated by principles, is important for achieving results as “outcomes depend on and flow from processes within some particular context” (p. 101). Principles should be evaluated to determine how and to what extent they contribute to desired results, and until evaluated, their effectiveness is unknown. In order to do this, it is important to create conceivable connections between the principles and desired outcomes, while acknowledging the fact that following principles is only a contributing factor towards achieving results (Patton, 2018, p. 207-208). It is not possible to attribute a direct causal relationship between principles and results for community-university partnerships as they operate in complex environments, and many other circumstances will affect outcomes. Nevertheless, principles, if meaningful and adhered to in practice, can contribute significantly towards achieving positive results by providing useful guidance and direction for “navigating complex dynamic systems and engaging in strategic initiatives” (Patton, 2018, p. 21).

A principles focused approach can be thought of as similar to a theory of change approach in that both attempt to articulate a trajectory towards impacts, however a principles focused method does not prescribe specific results or activities for how to achieve them (Patton, 2018, p. 389). For high-level strategic interventions such as community-university engagement which permeates the entire institution and manifests in diverse formats across departments as opportunities emerge, “both processes and results are non-standardized, contextually variable, changing, adaptive and emergent” (Patton, 2018, p. 12). Therefore, it is important that a vision be articulated but outcomes and objectives be kept general to allow for a diversity of interventions. Much like the complex environment they operate in, working with and evaluating principles is inherently ambiguous, and requires a level of comfort with uncertainty (Patton, 2018, p. 136).

While it is beyond the scope of this project to evaluate the principles, a sample outcomes framework is presented in Appendix C to showcase how they might be considered for evaluation in connection to outcomes. The framework lists the overarching principles and identifies potential short-term outcomes that may result from following them, based on the findings and literature review. Possible medium-term outcomes are articulated based on the identification of mutual benefits derived from the findings. Finally, long-term outcomes are listed, which are taken directly from the definition of community engagement as articulated by the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement (“Carnegie Community Engagement Classification”, n.d.). The basic logic underpinning the outcomes framework is that the principles provide guidance to practitioners for behaviour and action to enable the development and maintenance of mutually beneficial partnerships, which in turn produce results that contribute towards the desired outcomes identified by the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. These outcomes are not exhaustive of what could be included in an outcome’s framework for community-university partnerships as the definition of what constitutes a mutually beneficial collaboration and desirable impact will be different depending on the context of the collaboration, and between academic and community partners (Goemans, 2016; Singh, 2017, p. 4). Nevertheless, this provides an example connecting the principles to possible outcomes and could be used as a foundation to build from.

## **7.9 Summary**

The discussion and analysis of the findings from the interviews, focus group and literature review has revealed a set of overarching and operating principles for effective community-university partnerships connected to the themes of relationships, context, respect, flexibility and communication. Elements of each of these themes came up across all of the primary data, and they also connect back to nearly all of the principles identified in the literature, save for one. The only principle from the literature not explicitly addressed through the new principles that were created, is Principle 4 which speaks to building capacity and approaching partnerships from an asset and strengths-based as opposed to a needs-based perspective (CCPH Board of Directors, 2013). This principle did not surface explicitly from the primary research;

however, there may be ties to the principles developed related to respect, with regards to valuing and respecting community assets and knowledge. A table outlining all of the overarching and operating principles is summarized in Appendix B.

Apart from the development of the principles, the theme of institutional infrastructure was touched on due to its prominence in the interviews and focus group as well as the literature review. While the principles themselves do not address this topic, institutional infrastructure can be an important facilitating or hindering factor for the development of effective community-university partnerships and should be considered for institutional efforts connected to evaluation, learning and improvement.

Finally, the development of an outcomes framework for the principles is discussed, and an example framework that connects the principles to short, medium and long-term outcomes is presented in Appendix C.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

### **8.1 Introduction**

As indicated in section 1.1, a high-quality principle should provide direction and guidance for behaviour and action, which in turn should lead towards desired results; however, until evaluated, the effectiveness of a principle, or set of principles, is unknown (Patton, 2018, p. 3). Principles therefore should be evaluated for quality as well as for process and outcome. A principles focused evaluation for community-university partnerships would answer the question of how and to what extent the process of engaging in community-university partnerships in a principled way is contributing towards the desired results of community-university engagement which is to: “enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good” (“Carnegie Community Engagement Classification”, n.d.). This premise is supported by literature, as Hart & Northmore (2011) advocate for evaluation processes that use community-university partnerships as a theory of change towards desired outcomes of community-university engagement initiatives as it “helps us to understand whether community–university partnerships are a useful mechanism for achieving desired outcomes” (p. 13).

Engaging in a principles-focused evaluation would enable SFU to methodically and rigorously inquire into how espoused values of community engagement are manifesting in practice, and in turn, how that affects outcomes. As indicated in the literature review, it is important to critically examine the question of what is being valued as a result of measurement and evaluation efforts, and how assessment methods can better align with espoused values. Placing value on community-university engagement as a method towards achieving desired outcomes, requires that evaluation methods are developed to match this ambition (Shephard, et al., 2018, p. 92).

Through principles-focused evaluation, the effectiveness of principles can be evaluated to determine the quality and meaningfulness of principles, whether and how the principles are being followed, and if followed, whether and how they are leading towards the desired results (Patton, 2018, p. ix). The following section will provide recommendations for next steps in the process to address these questions.

### **8.2 Recommendation 1 - Assessing Meaningfulness, Surfacing Concerns and Establishing Clarity**

It is recommended that principles be evaluated for quality and meaningfulness and be adjusted as necessary based on the results of the evaluation. It is also recommended that as part of this process, the space be enabled for the surfacing of concerns and for the establishment of clarity with regards to the method and purpose of principles-focused evaluation for community-university partnerships.

The first step in a principles-focused evaluation, once principles have been developed, is to evaluate how meaningful the principles are for people who will be using and implementing them. To assess the meaningfulness, it is recommended that principles be reviewed using the GUIDE criteria (Patton, 2018), by individuals with experience engaging in community-university partnerships, including SFU Faculty, Staff and Students as well as Community Partners. One possible method for accomplishing this task would be to host workshops across SFU's three campuses where participants would assess to what extent the principles are clear, meaningful, actionable and evaluable. An evaluation framework to evaluate the meaningfulness of the principles has been drafted, based on the sample interview protocol provided in Patton (2018, p. 182-184), and is included in Appendix D. This framework could be used to facilitate workshops to assess the meaningfulness of the principles. Patton (2018) has also developed an additional comprehensive rating rubric tool (p. 352-354) to quantitatively represent the meaningfulness of principles, which could be used in tandem with the qualitative discussion questions outlined in Appendix D, if desired. The principles could also be made available through an online platform, such as the SFU website, and the evaluation questions could be provided through an online survey for those who are unavailable to attend the workshops. Once evaluation data has been gathered, it should be reviewed and analyzed to determine any changes to the existing principles that may be needed to ensure their relevance across different types of partnerships.

It is also recommended that the process to assess the meaningfulness of the principles be used as an opportunity to surface questions and concerns and to establish clarity about the purpose and niche of principles-focused evaluation for community-university partnerships. During the interview process, it was my observation that many individuals were able to see the potential value for this work; however, some appeared skeptical. The skepticism is important to unpack as it is a necessary part of the process to address barriers for principles-focused evaluation to be embraced in practice at SFU.

My understanding of the skepticism I encountered was related to two things. First was a hesitation around the development of a common set of principles, or values, for community-university partnerships since each collaboration is unique and dependent on a variety of situational and contextual factors that range from the history and nature of relationship to the type of activity being carried forward. While this concern is certainly legitimate and valid, it is important to note that this exact concept can be, and was, turned into its own principle to communicate that partnerships should be approached, designed and sustained in ways that respect the uniqueness of each collaboration.

Second was a sense of evaluation fatigue. There are many evaluation methods that exist, and no single method or framework will be appropriate for every situation, therefore, principles-focused evaluation is just another method to add to the list. This is an important observation and requires a distinction between evaluation methods chosen for individual partnerships and activities, and evaluation at the institutional level. In any given partnership, it is important to choose an evaluation method that best fits the circumstances, the activity, the desired learnings,

and the resources available – which may or may not include principles-focused evaluation. This concept has also been turned into a principle.

The suggested niche for principles-focused evaluation is at the institutional level where principles for community-university partnerships can be used as a unifying framework across different types of community-university engagement activities to better understand, learn and improve how our approach and process in engaging with communities affects the higher-level outcomes we hope to achieve from these activities. From an institutional accountability perspective, it may be more meaningful for people engaged in this work to move beyond simple quantitative indicators and targets for success, and rather hold themselves accountable to principles for effective practice in community-university partnerships and to reflect on the connection between process and outcomes – and to discover that sometimes, process and outcome are one in the same.

The process for assessing the meaningfulness of the principles will present an opportunity to bring practitioners together to address the types of questions and concerns as outlined above; facilitate the co-ownership and iterative development of the principles; and establish clarity around the purpose, value, and niche for this method of evaluation at the institutional level.

### **8.3 Recommendation 2 – Assessing Adherence and Results**

After assessing the quality and meaningfulness of the principles, it is recommended that principles be evaluated to determine how they are being followed and to what degree they are manifesting in practice, and subsequently how they are contributing towards desired results (Patton, 2018, p. 102).

This can be done using “principles-focused sampling” where a number of cases can be chosen across different programs and types of initiatives that are acting in a principled way, “but each adapting those principles to its own particular target population within its own context” (Patton, 2018, p. 200). This could be done quantitatively and/or qualitatively, and the examples outlined in the literature review showcase both methods. For example, in section 2.4.2, Murphy (2014) synthesized information from fourteen qualitative case studies to make a summative judgement as to the adherence to and results of following principles for six agencies working with youth facing homelessness. In the McNall, Reed & Allen (2009) example in section 2.2.4, they used a regression analysis to measure the extent to which certain principles were present in community-university partnerships, and to uncover the effects of relationship dynamics on the resulting outcomes of the partnership (pp. 321-322). While both qualitative and quantitative methods are possible, it seems that qualitative methods are quite important to allow for and capture complexity, therefore it would be recommended to include qualitative methods if a principles focused evaluation moves forward.

To determine the exact methods and processes for evaluating adherence to principles and results, it is recommended that this be co-developed with the people who will be involved in the evaluation, and to whom the results will be of use. As indicated in the literature review, it is important for evaluations to stay grounded; to think through what information should be captured

and why; to match the evaluation plan to the resources available’ and to remember that “it is not possible to evaluate everything all of the time” (Mulvihill, et al., 2011, p. 7). In order to ensure the evaluation is useful, relevant, practical and achievable, it will need to involve decision-makers and other interested stakeholders to determine the exact path forward.

There may be an opportunity to start this conversation as part of the work taking place at SFU to convene a cohort of post-secondary institutions to develop a Canadian version of the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement. Currently, the framework separates questions related to process and outcome by asking about institutional assessment of areas such as the quality of community engagement, measurement of outcomes and impacts, and methods for ensuring mutually beneficial and reciprocal partnerships (“2020 Classification Framework”). Perhaps for the next iteration, there could be a discussion about making intentional connections between the process and outcome questions in order to assess how and in what ways the process of engaging in community-university partnerships in a principled way contributes to the desired outcomes of community-university engagement activities, thereby facilitating institutional learning and improvement for increasingly effective community-university partnerships.

#### **8.4 Recommendation 3 – Broad Representation**

It is recommended moving forward that the evaluation of meaningfulness, adherence and results of the principles include a broad representation of different types of community-university partnerships.

With regards to assessing meaningfulness, due to the scope of this particular project, it was not possible to consult or give the opportunity for everyone involved in community-university partnerships at SFU to participate in the process of identifying the draft principles. Therefore, it would be beneficial to broaden the reach to assess the meaningfulness of principles and include a number of people who are involved in a wide range of different types and levels of partnerships. This would allow the draft principles to be tested and assessed across the spectrum of partnerships to determine where the principles are, or are not, meaningful in different contexts, and where they can be adjusted.

With regards to assessing adherence and results, it would be pertinent to engage a number of community-university partnerships cases that represent different types of collaborations and initiatives in order to get a sense of the relevance and effectiveness of the principles in a variety of contexts.

## 9.0 Conclusion

The increasingly complex social, environmental, political, and economic challenges faced by people across the globe has necessitated greater connection and deeper engagement between post-secondary institutions and their communities in an attempt to build a better world. SFU has committed to an ethos of community engagement and aspires to develop institutional measurement and evaluation processes to increase accountability, legitimacy, quality and learning from community-university engagement efforts. Evaluation issues due to the complexity of the work have made institution-wide attempts to gather meaningful data challenging, and this project sought to explore principles-focused evaluation as a possible evaluation match that would enable adaptability and diverse interventions in a complex environment.

A principles-focused methodology was employed to identify a draft set of effectiveness principles for community-university partnerships, based on the hypothesis that engaging in community-university partnerships in a principled way would significantly contribute towards desired results from community-university engagement activity. The principles were identified through a thorough review of the literature, as well as primary research with SFU Faculty, Staff, Students and Community Partners. Research participants were asked to share their knowledge, experience and lessons learned for developing and sustaining community-university partnerships. The discussion and analysis of the findings revealed a set of five overarching principles around the themes of Relationship, Context, Respect, Flexibility and Communication. Twenty-one operating principles were also identified which provide practice-based grounding to enhance the meaning of the overarching principles. An outcomes framework is also discussed and provided in Appendix C, showcasing how principles can be connected to outcomes.

Finally, recommendations were made with regards to next steps in a principles-focused evaluation process, which includes the evaluation of meaningfulness, adherence and results. It is recommended for the process going forward to include a broader representation of different types of partnerships to evaluate the principles, as the scope of this project was limited in the number of people that could be involved to develop the principles. It is also recommended that evaluation of adherence to principles and results be considered in connection with the current process being led by SFU to develop a Canadian version of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Assessment tools in Community-University Engagement

Tool	Purpose	Areas of focus	How it is used	Limitations
REAP – University of Bradford (England)	REAP is a primarily qualitative evaluation tool for university and community partners to use in the self-assessment of projects and activities taken on in collaboration. The tool facilitates the evaluation of outcomes as defined by the partners for particular projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reciprocity</li> <li>• Access</li> <li>• Externalities</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Reciprocity and access are treated as inputs that result in different benefits to the university and community. These inputs lead to outputs of partnerships and externalities, benefits of which are shared between the community and university</p>	<p>REAP can be used as a framework and process guide for planning and evaluating university-community engagement activities at the individual project level.</p> <p>It should be used from the beginning of the project to identify indicators and monitor progress, and at the end to assess outcomes.</p>	Institutional level data gathering or benchmarking
EDGE – National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (UK)	EDGE provides a benchmarking tool for the institutional infrastructure needed to support community engagement. It helps to determine, at the institutional level, what a college/university is doing well, and where it can improve, to better support community engagement.	<p>Self-assessment matrix that enables reflection of nine key focus areas across a scale of four levels of commitment to determine whether certain factors are at the “embryonic”, “developing”, “gripping” or “embedded” stage (i.e. EDGE).</p> <p>Focus areas include: mission, leadership, communication, support, learning, recognition, staff, students and public</p> <p>Each of the above focus areas contain more specific sub-dimensions which each can also be assessed across the “EDGE” levels of commitment.</p>	<p>EDGE is used as a tool for self-reflection and illumination on the state of community-engagement support at the institutional level. Universities should use it to identify strengths, and areas for improvement.</p> <p>For focus areas in need of improvement, more in-depth information and tools to further the university’s progress exist for each of the 9 categories.</p>	<p>Evaluation of outcomes or impact of community engagement work</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p>

<p>Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification (US)</p>	<p>Provides a tool for benchmarking and accreditation focused on the institutionalization of community engagement to improve educational effectiveness.</p> <p>In each classification cycle, changes are made to the documentation framework to reflect the complex, dynamic and changing environment.</p>	<p>Categories of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• institutional identity and culture</li> <li>• institutional commitment and integration</li> <li>• curricular &amp; co-curricular engagement</li> <li>• outreach and partnership</li> </ul> <p>Evidence describing outcomes and impacts of community engagement on students, faculty/staff, community and the institution as a whole are also solicited.</p>	<p>The classification is a self-assessment documentation framework meant to enable a variety of measurement and evaluation approaches, encouraging the provision of data and stories that reflect individual institutions.</p> <p>It is meant for institutions interested in systematizing, documenting and developing community engagement at the institutional level, and identifying ways to improve.</p>	<p>Currently US based</p> <p>It is not an assessment rubric and does not provide individual project-based evaluation guidance</p>
<p>Ashoka U – Changemaker Campus Designation (US)</p>	<p>Accreditation and Benchmarking tool reflecting a manifesto advocating for the transformation of higher education as a force for social impact through social entrepreneurship, and social innovation.</p>	<p>Breaking down institutional barriers and developing changemaking strategies through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visionary Leadership</li> <li>• Innovative education</li> <li>• Institutional culture and operations</li> <li>• Contribution and commitment to Social Innovation</li> </ul>	<p>A criteria matrix identifies indicators for each area of focus, which are assessed, with support from Ashoka team, as part of the process to become an accredited changemaker campus.</p> <p>The designation is meant to start a process of ongoing partnership with Ashoka and the associated changemaker network to continuously improve, share best practices, and contribute to society.</p>	<p>Evaluation of outcomes or impact of community engagement work</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p> <p>Community voice and perspective in developing and assessing partnership activities</p>
<p>Campus Engage (Ireland)</p>	<p>A benchmarking framework meant to support institutions in their efforts to assess community engagement at the institutional level in a way that aligns with best practices internationally, and to assist them in their reporting,</p>	<p>Five categories are identified, each with a list of possible indicators that could be measured through qualitative or quantitative methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged research</li> <li>• Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• Student Volunteering</li> </ul>	<p>The framework is intended to support and not prescribe. The identified categories and indicators are suggestions for institutions as they set their own priorities and structures. It is also meant to assist institutions in their response to the new Higher</p>	<p>Evaluation of outcomes or impact of community engagement work</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between</p>

	communication, celebration and evidence building efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Public Engagement and Involvement</li> <li>•Institutional Infrastructure and Architecture</li> </ul>	Education System Performance Framework 2018-19 in Ireland.	<p>process and outcomes of community engagement.</p> <p>Community voice and perspective in developing and assessing partnership activities</p>
National Inventory for Institutional Infrastructure on Community Engagement (NIIICE) - US	A national database for benchmarking and research in university-community engagement. NIIICE replaced the Campus Compact membership survey which gathered information on the state of community engagement across a number of institutions. This tool enables comparisons between institutions on key criteria that are aligned with the Carnegie Classification.	<p>Approximately 200 benchmarks and best practices based on the literature and the Carnegie classification criteria under six categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Institutional architecture/policy</li> <li>•Centre infrastructure</li> <li>•Centre operations</li> <li>•Centre programming</li> <li>•Centre director</li> <li>•Institutional information</li> </ul>	NIIICE is an online survey, 90% of which can be filled out based on lived knowledge from community-engagement centre staff or directors. The tool can be used to gain a better understanding of how an institution compares to others in key categories and identify areas for improvement to better support community engagement. The survey can be helpful for strategic planning, program review, and preparation for accreditation applications.	<p>Evaluation of outcomes or impact of community engagement work</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p> <p>Community voice and perspective in developing and assessing partnership activities</p>
Outreach and Engagement Measurement Instrument (OEMI) - Michigan State University	The OEMI is an institutional assessment tool used to gather information from university scholars on community engagement activities for monitoring and evaluation purposes.	Quantitative data is collected along seven dimensions: Time spent, Societal issues, Institutional strategic goals, Forms of activity, Locations, Non-university participants, External funding and in-kind support. Qualitative data is captured for individual projects with regards to purpose, outcomes and impacts on research and community.	The annual survey serves to develop a centralized database of information on faculty outreach and engagement for documentation, accreditation, faculty development, analysis, benchmarking and storytelling purposes.	<p>Collects data only from faculty and academic staff</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p> <p>Community voice and perspective in developing and assessing partnership activities</p>
The National Assessment for Service and Community Engagement (NASCE) – Brown University	The NASCE is an institutional assessment tool that measures the rate, frequency and depth of student community engagement (CE). In addition, it gathers data on student perceptions of service,	<p>Students are asked to indicate the rate, frequency and depth of involvement across nine areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Civic Participation</li> </ul>	The implementation of NASCE is a service provided to institutions for a cost. Institutions are provided with a customized survey and report from survey responses.	<p>Collects data mainly from students</p> <p>Evaluation of outcomes or impact of community engagement work</p>

	student motivations and obstacles for engaging in service, and institutional structures that facilitate or impede student participation in community engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Opportunity, Access and Development</li> <li>• Environmental</li> <li>• Working to promote Health or Fitness</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Addressing Homelessness or Housing</li> <li>• Elder Care</li> <li>• Addressing Hunger or Nutrition issues</li> <li>• Religious or Spiritual service</li> </ul>	The data is helpful to illuminate strengths and areas for improvement, for strategic planning and for benchmarking with other institutions using the service.	<p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p> <p>Community voice and perspective in developing and assessing partnership activities</p>
Democracy Collaborative – Anchor Dashboard	The Anchor Dashboard is a benchmarking and assessment tool for institutions deploying their human, physical and economic resources in partnership with community towards addressing social and environmental challenges in the communities within which they are located.	<p>The Anchor Dashboard is divided into four focus areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged Anchor Institution</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Health, Safety and Environment</li> <li>• Community Building and Education</li> </ul> <p>Each focus area considers institutional resources that can be deployed for overall community benefit, and indicators are set at the population level. For example, an institutional outcome indicator might be dollars spent on public health interventions and community outcome indicator might be infant mortality rate</p>	<p>Each of the areas of focus have sub categories, and associated indicators that identify internal institutional outcomes and external community outcomes. Each of these come with instructions for providing evidence on the indicators.</p> <p>The metrics are helpful to ensure the institutions are making progress towards their anchor missions.</p>	<p>Developed in the context of the US</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p> <p>Community voice and perspective in developing and assessing partnership activities</p>
Levels of Commitment to Community Engagement	Benchmarking tool and self-study tool to assess institutionalization of community engagement.	<p>Self-assessment matrix enabling reflection of seven organization factors impacting community engagement institution wide, which can be assessed against four levels of commitment.</p> <p>Organizational factors include: mission, promotion/tenure/hiring,</p>	Self-reflection framework to determine where an institution is with respect to the institutionalization of community engagement and where it hopes to be in order to inform strategic planning and decision making.	<p>Evaluation of outcomes or impact of community engagement work</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p>

		organization structure, student involvement, faculty involvement, community involvement and campus publications		Community voice and perspective in developing and assessing partnership activities
Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Community Engagement in Academic Departments – Portland State University	Benchmarking and self-study tool to assess institutionalization of community engagement specifically within academic departments.	<p>Self-assessment matrix enabling reflection of six dimensions impacting community engagement across departments, each with several sub-components which can be assessed against four levels of commitment categorized as “awareness building”, “critical mass building”, “quality building” and “institutionalization”</p> <p>The high-level dimensions include: mission and culture, faculty support, community partnership support, student support, organizational support, and leadership support</p>	<p>Self-reflection framework to determine where an academic department is with respect to the institutionalization of community engagement, and to identify opportunities for improvement and change. The tool can also be used as a way to track and measure progress over time.</p> <p>It is recommended that the rubric be completed as a team exercise within an academic department.</p>	<p>Specific to Academic Departments</p> <p>Evaluation of outcomes or impact of community engagement work</p> <p>Evaluation and understanding of partnership dynamics and the connection between process and outcomes of community engagement.</p>
Collaboratory	Collaboratory is a new online tool that enables institutions to document, share, aggregate, communicate and analyze data related to community engagement work.	<p>Examples of categories of information that can be collected includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional community engagement activities</li> <li>• Institutional public service activities</li> <li>• Engagement through the curriculum</li> <li>• Faculty and staff profiles</li> <li>• Institutional department profiles</li> <li>• Community partner engagement with the institution</li> </ul>	<p>Collaboratory is an online database where information is gathered to allow for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A base of evidence</li> <li>• Showcasing of contributions</li> <li>• Shared understanding</li> <li>• Feedback mechanisms</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Monitoring of institutional progress towards strategic goals in community engagement (benchmarking)</li> <li>• use the data for accreditation and awards</li> <li>• an international database and research program</li> </ul>	Very new tool in the early adopter phase – unclear what the limitations are

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## Appendix B: Effectiveness Principles for Community-University Partnerships at SFU

Themes	Overarching Principles	Operating Principles
Relationships	Develop and sustain trusting relationships based on a foundation of authenticity and mutual value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participate and add value in community without a pre-conceived agenda</li> <li>○ Demonstrate reliability and commitment by delivering on promises</li> <li>○ Facilitate the space to get to know partners on a personal and human level</li> <li>○ Be responsive and helpful, where capacity allows, to requests for assistance outside of the parameters of the particular partnership project or activity. Leverage available resources, networks and knowledge to be of help where needed.</li> <li>○ Explore ways to deepen relationships by building networks and social fabric. Introduce and recommend partners to other contacts and positively promote the partnership.</li> </ul>
Context	Consider the unique social, economic, political, cultural and environmental context, history and power dynamics as a factor for how each partnership is approached, designed and sustained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acknowledge the history of un-equal power dynamics and social hierarchy separating the university from community. Approach collaborations with vulnerability, openness, and humility, and be willing to step back or change course based on feedback.</li> <li>○ Avoid perpetuating systems of oppression by engaging in regular self-reflective practice and being open to feedback and learning.</li> <li>○ Co-develop implicit or explicit principles and processes with partners for each collaboration, considering the context and nature of activity. Use formal agreements if needed or necessary for establishing parameters, managing resources and balancing power.</li> </ul>
Respect	Demonstrate respect for the knowledge, experience, and capacity of all partners and strive for equity in the relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approach partnerships with a listening and learning mindset, and ensure all partner voices are heard to help shape and bring forward collaboration initiatives</li> <li>○ Create inclusive environments where all partners feel welcome and valued for their time, experience and knowledge</li> <li>○ Discuss what a fair distribution of resources and benefits looks like for the partnership based on the specific initiative; capacity and contribution of partners; and resources available</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Celebrate partnership accomplishments in ways that honour and value the contributions of all partners</li> </ul>
Flexibility	Facilitate the space for emergence and be open and adaptable to change in a complex environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be willing to shift direction for projects and initiatives provided there continues to be mutual value in the partnership</li> <li>○ Take advantage of unanticipated opportunities where capacity allows</li> <li>○ Allow for outcomes to emerge and change throughout partnership initiatives where possible, while taking into account established parameters</li> <li>○ Choose evaluation methods that are a match with the initiative, desired insights, and available resources. Attempt to capture unanticipated learnings, outcomes and ripple effects.</li> </ul>
Communication	Communicate openly, honestly, accessibly, and with enough frequency to establish clarity, facilitate ongoing improvement, and navigate challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Establish a shared understanding of interests, goals, commitments, and limitations.</li> <li>○ Check-in with partners along the way to provide feedback for improvement and ensure continued mutual benefit. Make adjustments as needed.</li> <li>○ Determine preferred modes and frequency of communication</li> <li>○ Use accessible language</li> <li>○ Communicate concerns or changes in the partnership with timeliness, respect and honesty</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Outcomes Framework

Overarching Principle	Short-term outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes (Based on identified mutual benefits)	Long Term Outcomes (from the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement Definition)
Develop and sustain trusting relationships based on a foundation of authenticity and mutual value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enable mutually beneficial projects to emerge and take hold</li> <li>○ Enable efficient transactions</li> <li>○ Provide a strong foundation for trying new things and taking risks</li> <li>○ Facilitate nimbleness to take advantage of new opportunities</li> <li>○ Enable partners to work through and overcome challenges together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase access to learning and knowledge</li> <li>○ Increase relevance and effectiveness of projects and research findings</li> <li>○ Foster innovation and risk-taking</li> <li>○ Build networks</li> <li>○ Increase inclusion of community voice for the development of new knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>Increase the impact of community-university partnerships to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity;</li> <li>○ enhance curriculum, teaching and learning;</li> <li>○ prepare educated, engaged citizens;</li> <li>○ strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility;</li> <li>○ address critical societal issues;</li> <li>○ contribute to the public good.</li> </ul>
Consider the unique social, economic, political, cultural and environmental context, history and power dynamics as a factor for how each partnership is approached, designed and sustained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contribute to overcoming a history of distrust</li> <li>○ Contribute to advancing social justice and balancing power</li> <li>○ Enable identification of roles, and determination of where value can be added</li> <li>○ Facilitate a nuanced approach to achieving mutual benefit</li> <li>○ Contribute to building credibility, relationships, trust and respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gain support for activities outside partnerships</li> <li>○ Build institutional support, reputation, legitimacy, credibility, relevance and trust in community</li> <li>○ Build evidence and credibility for funding, practice, advocacy and promotion</li> <li>○ Build capacity with shared knowledge and resources</li> </ul>	<p>Source: Community Engagement, Swearer Centre, Brown University. (n.d.). Retrieved from <a href="http://www.brown.edu/swearer/carnegie/about">http://www.brown.edu/swearer/carnegie/about</a></p>
Demonstrate respect for the knowledge, experience, and capacity of all partners and strive for equity in the relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enable all partner voices to be heard for establishment &amp; maintenance of mutually beneficial and relevant initiatives</li> <li>○ Prevent imposition of assumptions and one-sided projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase interdisciplinary work</li> <li>○ Provide high-quality learning opportunities for students</li> <li>○ Build inclusive communities and social infrastructure</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prevent overburdening partners</li> <li>○ Enable co-development of new knowledge</li> <li>○ Facilitate greater commitment and buy-in</li> <li>○ Contribute to advancing social justice and balancing power</li> <li>○ Contribute to building credibility, relationships and trust</li> </ul>		
Facilitate the space for emergence and be open and adaptable to change in a complex environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enable partners to see the bigger picture, to take advantage of emerging opportunities and to withstand challenging times</li> <li>○ Enable discovery of new and unanticipated benefits</li> <li>○ Enable adjustments to maintain the balance of relevance and mutual benefit for initiatives</li> </ul>		
Communicate openly, honestly, accessibly, and with enough frequency to establish clarity, facilitate ongoing improvement, and navigate challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitate mutual understanding of interests and enable good decision making to achieve goals</li> <li>○ Enable accountability and follow-through on commitments</li> <li>○ Facilitate learning, improvement and growth of partnerships</li> <li>○ Uphold relationships, credibility, trust and respect during challenging times</li> <li>○ Prevent disappointment and frustration</li> <li>○ Prevent unbeneficial initiatives from continuing while keeping the possibility for future opportunities open</li> </ul>		

## Appendix D: Framework for Evaluating the Meaningfulness of Principles

Principle	Guiding	Useful	Inspiring	Developmental	Evaluable
Develop and sustain trusting relationships based on a foundation of authenticity and mutual value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What does it mean to develop and sustain trusting relationships?</li> <li>○ What does it mean for relationships to be authentic and mutually valuable? Why is that important for trust?</li> <li>○ How and in what ways does this principle provide meaningful guidance?</li> <li>○ What would be opposite guidance to this principle?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How and in what ways does (or would) this principle inform your practice and influence your behaviour and action?</li> <li>○ What are some examples of how you would use this principle in practice?</li> <li>○ In what ways, if any, would this principle not be useful, or difficult to implement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is your reaction to this principle?</li> <li>○ From your perspective, what values about community-university partnerships are expressed in this principle?</li> <li>○ To what extent do you think this principle communicates what is important?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Think about and describe the different types of community-university partnerships you have been part of, and how they have changed over time.</li> <li>○ How applicable is this principle to those different experiences?</li> <li>○ In what situations would this principle not be meaningful or relevant? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do (or could) you determine if this principle is being followed?</li> <li>○ How do (or could) you find out if partnerships are characterized by trust, authenticity and mutual value?</li> <li>○ What would be evidence of this?</li> </ul>
Consider the unique social, economic, political, cultural and environmental context, history and power dynamics as a factor for how each partnership is approached,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are examples of social, economic, cultural...etc. factors that could be considered?</li> <li>○ What does it mean to consider these as factors for how partnerships are approached, designed and sustained?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How and in what ways does (or would) this principle inform your practice and influence your behaviour and action?</li> <li>○ What are some examples of how you would use this principle in practice?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is your reaction to this principle?</li> <li>○ From your perspective, what values about community-university partnerships are expressed in this principle?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Think about and describe the different types of community-university partnerships you have been part of, and how they have changed over time.</li> <li>○ How applicable is this principle to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do (or could) you determine if this principle is being followed?</li> <li>○ How do (or could) you find out if partnerships are being approached, designed, and sustained based on consideration of</li> </ul>

designed and sustained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How and in what ways does this principle provide meaningful guidance?</li> <li>○ What would be opposite guidance to this principle?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In what ways, if any, would this principle not be useful, or difficult to implement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To what extent do you think this principle communicates what is important?</li> </ul>	<p>those different experiences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In what situations would this principle not be meaningful or relevant? Why?</li> </ul>	<p>one or more of the identified factors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What would be evidence of this?</li> </ul>
Demonstrate respect for the knowledge, experience, and capacity of all partners and strive for equity in the relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What does it mean to demonstrate respect for knowledge, experience and capacity?</li> <li>○ What does it mean for relationships to be equitable?</li> <li>○ How and in what ways does this principle provide meaningful guidance?</li> <li>○ What would be opposite guidance to this principle?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How and in what ways does (or would) this principle inform your practice and influence your behaviour and action?</li> <li>○ What are some examples of how you would use this principle in practice?</li> <li>○ In what ways, if any, would this principle not be useful, or difficult to implement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is your reaction to this principle?</li> <li>○ From your perspective, what values about community-university partnerships are expressed in this principle?</li> <li>○ To what extent do you think this principle communicates what is important?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Think about and describe the different types of community-university partnerships you have been part of, and how they have changed over time.</li> <li>○ How applicable is this principle to those different experiences?</li> <li>○ In what situations would this principle not be meaningful or relevant? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do (or could) you determine if this principle is being followed?</li> <li>○ How do (or could) you find out if respect is being demonstrated and if equity exists in the relationship?</li> <li>○ What would be evidence of this?</li> </ul>
Facilitate the space for emergence and be open and adaptable to change in a complex environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What does it mean to facilitate space for emergence and to be open and adaptable to change?</li> <li>○ How and in what ways does this</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How and in what ways does (or would) this principle inform your practice and influence your behaviour and action?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is your reaction to this principle?</li> <li>○ From your perspective, what values about community-university</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Think about and describe the different types of community-university partnerships you have been part of,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do (or could) you determine if this principle is being followed?</li> <li>○ How do (or could) you find out if space is being facilitated for</li> </ul>

	<p>principle provide meaningful guidance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What would be opposite guidance to this principle?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What are some examples of how you would use this principle in practice?</li> <li>○ In what ways, if any, would this principle not be useful, or difficult to implement?</li> </ul>	<p>partnerships are expressed in this principle?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To what extent do you think this principle communicates what is important?</li> </ul>	<p>and how they have changed over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How applicable is this principle to those different experiences?</li> <li>○ In what situations would this principle not be meaningful or relevant? Why?</li> </ul>	<p>emergence, and if partners are open and adaptable to change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What would be evidence of this?</li> </ul>
<p>Communicate openly, honestly, accessibly, and with enough frequency to establish clarity, facilitate ongoing improvement, and navigate challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What does it mean to communicate openly, honestly, accessibly and with frequency?</li> <li>○ How does communicating this way contribute to clarity, improvement and navigating challenges?</li> <li>○ How and in what ways does this principle provide meaningful guidance?</li> <li>○ What would be opposite guidance to this principle?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How and in what ways does (or would) this principle inform your practice and influence your behaviour and action?</li> <li>○ What are some examples of how you would use this principle in practice?</li> <li>○ In what ways, if any, would this principle not be useful, or difficult to implement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is your reaction to this principle?</li> <li>○ From your perspective, what values about community-university partnerships are expressed in this principle?</li> <li>○ To what extent do you think this principle communicates what is important?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Think about and describe the different types of community-university partnerships you have been part of, and how they have changed over time.</li> <li>○ How applicable is this principle to those different experiences?</li> <li>○ In what situations would this principle not be meaningful or relevant? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do (or could) you determine if this principle is being followed?</li> <li>○ How do (or could) you find out if there is open, honest, accessible and frequent communication in partnerships?</li> <li>○ How do (or could) you find out if communication is contributing towards clarity, improvement and navigating challenges in the partnership?</li> <li>○ What would be evidence of this?</li> </ul>

Source: Patton, 2018, p. 182-184

