

Understanding and sustaining community and volunteerism at Green College

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Volunteering one's time and resources is a small wonder. Canadians give charitably in ways that define and shape the communities they live in, be it contributions to support the arts and sports clubs, food banks and shelters, or to reach beyond with international relief efforts. Many volunteer and non-profit organizations (VNPOs) rely significantly on volunteer labour, including Green College, a residential college at the University of British Columbia (UBC).

Green College depends on the efforts and goodwill of numerous volunteers and their committees to advise and create activities and lectures in its community. A better understanding of the Green College community is necessary to understand and make informed decisions about the future direction of the unit without damaging these volunteer relationships.

Green College's operation is in tension between the efficiencies asked of a modern university and the inefficiencies of complex relationships, and from that tension the volunteer community is at risk. Efficiencies drive specialization, and at UBC there are specialized units for resident housing, for extension, and for hospitality. Green College integrates all three, as one-third residence, one-third extension and community engagement through public lectures, and one-third conference and accommodations host. It integrates the academic and social environment for its members. In the College's last External Review, Kidd, Woodward and Gallini (2012) described it as a "university good, a signature unit" of UBC and a rare organization successful in instituting mechanisms for interdisciplinarity (p. 2). Integration, not specialization, is at the core of the College's operation in facilitating interdisciplinary exchanges.

The purpose of this project was to engage the Green College community to identify what supports volunteerism, demonstrated as community participation, and what could be done to maintain and improve it. Participants were asked to focus on what is already working and describe their best or peak experiences in the community.

The project sought to:

- (1) Obtain illustrative examples of the community phenomenon;
- (2) Identify present and ideal factors that promote and sustain involvement in the community;
- (3) Engage and recruit members in a generative process to suggest how to maintain and improve involvement;
- (4) Provide recommendations to current Green College leadership.

Methodology and Methods

This project used a custom qualitative research design, adopting elements of an action research and appreciative inquiry methodology within a social constructionist framework. Methods included a literature review on determinants of volunteerism and semi-structured interviews of key informants in the Green College community. Participants included a cross-section of current residents, former residents, and of staff who maintain the systems at Green College. Eighteen interviews were conducted, analyzed, and the data shared in aggregate with a focus group of

participants to generate recommendations on how to maintain and improve the current volunteer environment.

Key Findings

The broader social constructionist framework accepts different viewpoints, and in aggregate generates a composite view of the community and its volunteering efforts. Any findings are specific to the particular time and place the research was undertaken; the value and accuracy of any findings may not be as relevant or meaningful as time and intervening events occur at Green College. The qualitative methods chosen are also very specific to the Green College environment and were not designed for extrapolation to other environments.

Quotes from the interviews of participant experiences and their time at Green College were pulled together into three narratives to illustrate the volunteering community phenomenon. The narrative was framed in three ways around the perspectives of the self, others, and the environment.

Focussed questions from the interviews probed participants for “core experiences” they had and want future members to experience and “three wishes” they would make to further strengthen the community. There were three clear core experiences: to experience the sense of community, to establish relationships, and to be enriched. These core experiences reflected the most powerful and valued experiences participants had at Green College. Data from the three wishes questions revealed various wishes for change for people, processes, and conditions. These wishes are achievable with future planning and problem-solving.

Content analysis of the eighteen interview transcripts was conducted for factors that could influence one’s decision to volunteer. Fifty factors were grouped under referents of the environment, self, and others. These findings, along with the literature review, may assist Green College in creating and preserving the community and its volunteer environment.

Recommendations

The focus group generated a vision statement, from which future thinking about Green College by its members can be centred:

We envision a College that exemplifies values of reciprocity, embraces interdisciplinarity, and encourages and supports members’ personal and community initiatives. We foster an environment that enables people to become better versions of themselves. We will engage the past, present and future members of Green College to create change in the community and the greater world.

The following three core values were distilled from the findings and narrative by the focus group. By varying degrees, all three core values have an empathic and alter-centric element to them. These are qualities they expect all members of the community to demonstrate, and for the College and its community to act in ways consistent and promotional with these themes:

1. Reciprocity: people are there for you, you are there for them when you can (community-minded);
2. Comfort in interdisciplinarity and differences (open, fair, and curious-minded);
3. Taking initiative including follow-through (proactive-thinking and action)

The focus group reflected on the findings and narrative, with particular focus on the core experiences and three wishes findings to generate a set of recommended actions to help the College achieve the vision set forth by participants. These recommendations were to:

1. Research and redevelop the College's communication systems;
2. Amend all introductory and welcome materials to prominently and consistently reinforce the three core values identified;
3. Encourage and promote connections on and off-site among members through mixed-member events, competitions, and academic visitor interactions;
4. Organize and promote structure for engagement with Society Members;
5. Develop an explicit program for Resident Members to engage with communities outside of Green College;
6. Pilot initiatives to challenge calcified social clusters within the College to be more open to and receptive of others.

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1.0 Introduction

Volunteering one's time and resources is a small wonder. In 2007, just under half of Canadians over age 15 volunteered, together volunteering almost 2.1 billion hours (Hall & Statistics Canada, 2009, p. 10). Canadians give charitably in ways that define and shape the communities they live in, be it contributions to support the arts and sports clubs, food banks and shelters, or to reach beyond with international relief efforts.

Many volunteer and non-profit organizations (VNPOs) rely significantly on volunteer labour, including Green College, a residential college at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Musick and Wilson (2008) suggest several reasons for growing interest in the subject. Most importantly, changes in the sector have brought demand for better information for more effective recruitment and retention methods; VNPOs have moved from a simpler world of philanthropy and charity to a world of competitive business and government bureaucracy (p. 6).

Green College is at risk to disrupt the volunteer relationship that forms its community without better information and awareness about how it works. There, the vibrant resident community is also the volunteering community. Green College is reliant on volunteers to contribute significant hours. Green College must be resilient to weather political and financial shocks, and in managing those may have difficulty in setting organizational priorities without better information. Leadership and the community itself may misjudge and miscalculate the importance of its activities and the structures that promote that relationship. What does a community do to foster and maintain a strong relationship between volunteers and the volunteer organization? What motivates volunteers to give? How can an organization improve alignment with those motivations?

From a social constructionist perspective, the focus of this report is to examine the community and volunteering phenomenon at Green College and provide insight and recommendations to future leadership and membership on how to support and sustain a high level of volunteerism. The remainder of this section outlines the problem, the client and its background, and project objectives.

1.1 A Balancing Act

A reliance on intuition about its volunteers is not unique to Green College; no organization has perfect information nor the limitless resources required to gather and process it. Volunteer-based organizations are perhaps more vulnerable, being reliant on the goodwill, availability, interest, and capacities of volunteers to operate. To sustain and improve the volunteering community, Green College will need this knowledge to help it change to meet future goals and demands.

In the absence of clearer data about the relationships between Green College and its membership, Green College may make changes that unbalance vital relationships. Resident and Society Members, faculty, and the university administration may not share the same understanding of what Green College is or what it ought to do, and in this difference not align priorities with the growth and sustainability of Green College and its volunteers. Not all relationships are equal, both in terms of the effort necessary to maintain them and in the consequences of those relationships changing. From each point of view, the College, the community, and/or the university may sour some or all of those relationships in their efforts to improve the organization. More on the layers of relationships at Green College can be found in section 2.

Green College's administration permits the community much freedom to shape and decide its future, and in doing so, its community could be the architects of its demise. Green College members and their blend of unique characteristics changes with each year. Annually, nearly half the residential community is replaced with new members. The loss of individuals and their balance of personal and community orientations and their institutional memory may irreparably disrupt the community. Additionally, Wymer, Riecken, and Yavas (1997) cite risks of dwindling discretionary time among volunteers compounded with competing volunteer opportunities as factors that reduce the pool of volunteers (p. 4). These factors could be introduced by a community taking an ambitious direction, tying up volunteer time and energies, and starving other volunteer opportunities of the help needed to succeed. This risk is equally plausible coming from changes in a demanding academic program, driving members away from non-academic pursuits at the College.

1.2 Project Client

Founded in 1993, Green College is an interdisciplinary graduate residential college at UBC that encourages an environment that supports and enriches the experiences of those living at, engaging with, and being hosted by the institution. Green College is a unit at UBC and reports to the Vice President Academic and Provost's Office under the Learning Support and Resources portfolio. It is funded by a blend of endowed and centrally-supported sources. Green College employs seven staff including its Principal and relies considerably on volunteers from the residence and the University to serve on the College's numerous committees. An organizational chart is provided in Appendix A.

Green College fosters a scholarly community that is both residential college and incubatory centre for academic ideas. In the eyes of the 2012 External Review, Kidd, Woodward, and Gallini (2012) described it as an interdisciplinary community of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, who "live in close proximity, share the major decisions of everyday life (through an elaborate committee structure), commit to daily communal dining, and participate in the many series of presentations that are offered by the college" (p. 2). Green College uses and depends on numerous committees to advise and create activities in its community.

The scholarly community at the College is home to Resident Members that are graduate students, postgraduates and visiting scholars. Green College offers no accredited curriculum, instead providing free public lectures for members and the wider community. Invited scholars from these lectures stay and dine at the College, enriching and are enriched by Resident Members, faculty, and others in attendance from the local community. This hospitality for invited scholars is also supported by the College's hotel and other hospitality services (event/venue rentals and catering) supporting other departments at UBC, either as clients or as collaborators.

1.2.1 BACKGROUND

Green College's operation is in tension between the efficiencies asked of a modern university and the inefficiencies of complex relationships, and from that tension the volunteer community is at risk. Efficiencies drive specialization, and at UBC there are specialized units for resident housing, for extension, and for hospitality. Green College integrates all three, as one-third residence, one-third extension and community engagement through public lectures, and one-third conference and accommodations host. It integrates the academic and social environment for its members. In the College's last External Review. Kidd, Woodward and Gallini (2012) described it as a "university

good, a signature unit” of UBC and a rare organization successful in instituting mechanisms for interdisciplinarity (p. 2). Integration, not specialization, is at the core of the College’s operation in facilitating interdisciplinary exchanges. Efficiencies of scale, however, drive institutions to eliminate such complexity.

Green College is an interdisciplinary college, and interdisciplinarity demands integration. This achieved through complex and time-consuming relationships. The College’s organization employs collegial principles, embodied in its motto “Ideas and Friendship” and operates in consideration of a multitude of committees that help inform the College and animate its environment. Deviation from this consultative style may have corrosive ramifications for relationships in the community. For example, committee members (many of whom live at the College) are provided with opportunities to shape the present and future of the College, working for the good of the community. If disaffected by a decision, the committee member’s disposition can affect multiple relationships; they can sour other committee members, the work of other related committees, and ultimately the life of other members expectant of the committee’s efforts.

A relatively low priority of Green College to other activities at UBC represents a threat to the College’s volunteer composition. Changes to the way the university and its faculties deliver services to graduate students may not consider the impact on student housing in its form at Green College. The university can shift in ways that undermine Green College’s relationships. For example, program orientations in some faculties occur before September, preceding the tenancy start dates for most Green College residents. Yet, strict residence contracts demand members remain to the very end of summer to maximize revenues and thus preclude the opportunity for many students to arrive early. Combined, the College may never recruit subsets of new students in some disciplines and consequently diminish the variety of disciplines represented in its membership.

1.3 Project Objectives and Research Questions

Green College needs a better understanding of its volunteer community and a broader strategy to cope with internal and external shocks. The purpose of this project was to engage the Green College community to identify what supports volunteerism, demonstrated as community participation, and what could be done to maintain and improve it. Member engagement in the research process is intended to not only gather information about volunteering but also raise awareness and appreciation of it.

The project objectives were to:

1. Obtain illustrative examples of the community phenomenon, for the community, Green College, and other stakeholders
2. Identify present and ideal factors that promote and sustain involvement in the community
3. Engage and recruit members in a generative process to suggest how to maintain and improve involvement
4. Provide recommendations of change to current Green College leadership

A strengths-based approach was used. The assumption was that the community was working well, though no-one can fully explain how. Participants were asked to focus on what is already working. They were asked to highlight their best or peak experiences in the community, and individually contribute answers to two focussed questions:

- What experiences would community members want to guarantee for future members?
- What would a community member wish changed to strengthen the community?

1.4 Organization of Report

This report is divided as follows. Section two provides description of Green College's design and structure. Section three provides information from academic literature on volunteerism and on the social constructionism framework used by this research. Section four outlines the methods used in the project. Sections five and six provide a summary of findings and a deeper examination of the experiences and conditions for volunteering at Green College. Finally, sections seven and eight provide recommendations and final comments to conclude the report.

2.0 Green College Design and Structure

Green College is an exceptional incubator of new ideas and new knowledge, stimulating the interdisciplinary exchange, collaboration, and research and innovation that is essential to the 21st-century research university. – Kidd, Woodward and Gallini (2012, p. 2).

The above quote captures one essence of Green College but says nothing about how it does it. One may classify Green College as a graduate residential College, but that would be a gross oversimplification. Green College is both a graduate residential college and a centre of interdisciplinary exchange and activities that enriches the lives and experiences of people at Green College, UBC, and beyond. To achieve this, Green College maintains a triad of functional connections (figure 1) to host visiting academics and foster an environment of learning, engagement, and curiosity.

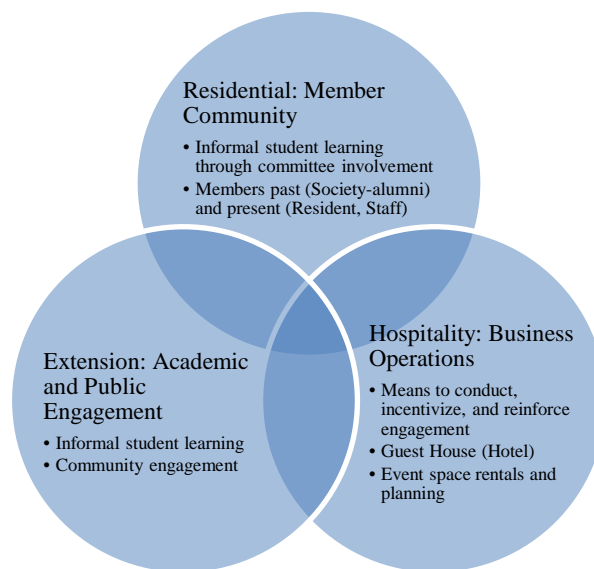


FIGURE 1. GREEN COLLEGE FUNCTIONAL CONNECTIONS.

There is much at stake when balancing the College's functional connections. The three functional connections are integrated and may confuse stakeholders about what the output is. One view might suggest residents and the sum of their experiences in growing and networking at Green College is the 'output.' Another view might consider the College's 'extension' efforts through public programming and bringing scholars to the university and to the general public to be the output. Yet another view might consider it to be simply as host, where the output is satisfied departmental clients who have used the College's business operations. Multiple outputs can create several bonds between Green College and the university, yet create ambiguity and division once one must decide where unit resources and priorities are placed to sustain each of them. As suggested in the background, efficiencies may drive leadership to deemphasize one or more of these and thus lose the collegial and integrated nature of what makes Green College function fully.

The following section expands on some of the characteristics of Green College. First we expand on the layers of community and the importance of them. Next, we explain membership at Green College and how one becomes part of the community. Finally, we conclude with the balancing and unification of volunteer relationships and their efforts.

2.1 Functional Connections and Layers of Community

One must recognize how Green College fits within and contributes to the wider community ecosystem through layers of community. The integration of these layers at Green College creates a mutually reinforcing network with significant reach beyond the resident community. The reach of this network varies, however the connections are created and maintained through the use of the network; strong connections support engagement across these layers of community, and

engagement supports and reinforces the need for strong connections. These layers are represented in figure 2.

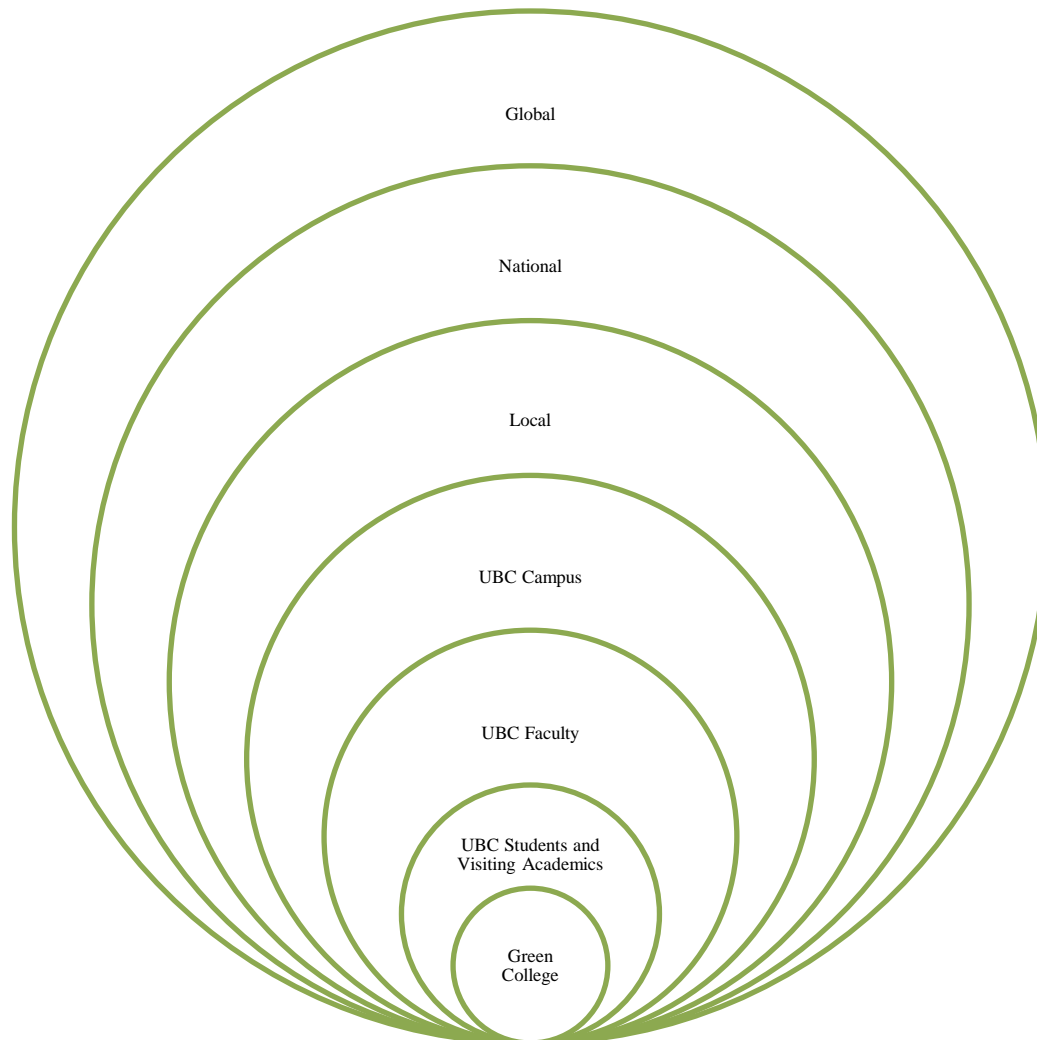


FIGURE 2. LAYERS OF COMMUNITY AT GREEN COLLEGE.

Green College's first and most integral layer of community is its residents, comprised of graduate students, postgraduates and visiting scholars. Without a receptive and engaged community of residents, these additional layers connecting to them lose their common bond with the activities of graduate students and visiting academics at large at UBC.

Members of Common Room (Green College volunteer faculty) connect the first layer of community; in this mutual relationship faculty engage with residents and other academics at Green College over dinner or through the development of the College's academic programming. It is a mutually-enriching experience bridging student and faculty communities together. Green College does not offer any courses for credit nor employ any teaching staff for the residents. It contributes only to university extension by bringing the knowledge of the university to the wider community through its academic programming. This lack of curricular involvement places Green College at a disadvantage, being peripheral to the aims of the University's main academic mandate and thus

adds greater importance to the maintenance of relationships of both resident and faculty community members.

All residents and faculty are part of the university, and their network and shared experiences at Green College connect to the activities of the university, contributing to and bringing information back to each group. Word-of-mouth helps share experiences about Green College to other academics about the activities at Green College, assisting with the recruitment of new members and enriching interdisciplinary conversations at the College and across campus. New research questions and insights may begin at Green College but it is unlikely they end there, instead passed to other colleagues across the campus. Residents, staff, and faculty invite others from the university community to come to Green College, hosting them so they can participate in the College's academic programming and in the stimulating and intimate conversations in lectures and over dinner. This layer extends the College's reach into the minds of members across the university to establish the unique character and relevance of its activities. Faculty bring news of the efforts and knowledge of the wider university back to Resident Members, and through the academic programming bring it to the campus community and beyond.

Green College and UBC's layers connect with the local region and this is where the activities at all of the preceding layers may also interact. The reach of the College's academic programming and its own members extends invitations to the local community to come to Green College just as members of the university community, but to also extend the College's presence in sending academics to perform lectures and share their knowledge elsewhere in Vancouver. The College's lectures are advertised widely and are free to attend.

Finally, the national and global community is implicated as residents and faculty contribute to a larger body of knowledge – many coming from and going to places after Green College outside of Vancouver and bringing with them the networks they gained through all the other layers. Outbound, when active membership ends – the end of residency or appointment – members continue to grow in their careers locally, nationally, and abroad. Inbound, this layer is where the College's Advisory Board (see Appendix B) serves to help connect Green College and its layers to broader trends and resources.

2.2 Understanding Membership

Green College is a membership-based organization, where individuals apply to be members. There are four main types of member: three “active” forms and one honorary one. The affiliation varies depending on their connection to Green College. Membership and the terms given to people have changed since the College's inception, and are still subject to further evolution.

The core community is comprised of Resident Members who are granted residency for time-limited periods ranging from 1-4 years. They apply to live at Green College through a membership application process as graduate students studying at the university or as postgraduates employed by the university, submitting transcripts, reference letters, and a statement of interest to the College's membership committee; the committee is comprised of the Principal, Resident Members, and Members of Common Room (faculty). Membership approval is judged on academic excellence and community orientation, rarifying resident membership to include only the best of possible applicants. These members may also bring partners. Upon the end of residency, Resident Members become known as Society Members.

Members without residencies include staff and faculty. Staff Members are members by virtue of their employment at Green College and upon the end of their employment they become Society Members. Members of Common Room (MoCR) are faculty at UBC, connected by appointment by the Principal. MoCR members are expected to interact and be mutually enriched with Resident Members at the College, assisting in bringing distinguished academics to the College via its academic programming (public lectures). Members of Common Room also transition to a role of Society Member once their more direct connection with Green College ends.

2.3 Maintaining Relationships

Green College operates as the central and unifying unit and identity of Green College as an institution, managing relationships and enriching them. This process creates an “output” of a network of students and scholars, though it had no direct hand in their curricular endeavours. This core then connects three components as diagrammed in figure 3: partner-unit commitments, *pro bono* faculty and visitor contributions, and *pro bono* member contributions. The focus of this project is on the latter, of member contributions.

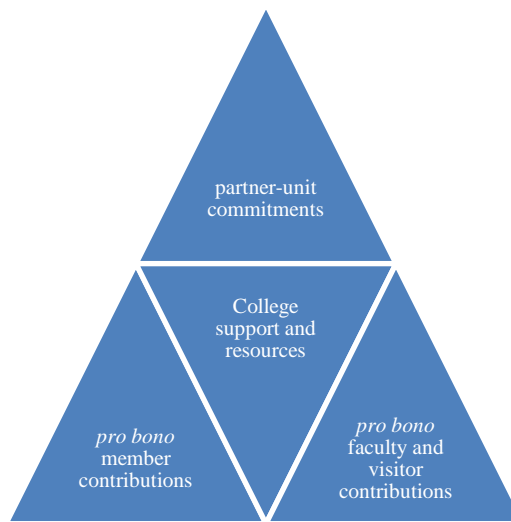


FIGURE 2. GREEN COLLEGE'S VITAL RELATIONSHIPS.

In the first relationship set, Green College depends on partner-unit commitments from organizations such as the Green College Dining Society (GCDS) and Student Housing and Hospitality Services (SHHS). The first and from the College’s initial inception is the GCDS. This is a non-profit society created with a mandate to provide meals to residents of Green College, operated by an executive comprised of Resident Members. Resident Members are compulsory meal service participants, and this compulsory requirement is extended further to guests and special visitors by Green College, including the invited lecturers and distinguished academics brought to live at Green College for periods ranging from a few nights to a year.

The GCDS mandate fails to express the underlying importance and unifying action of the meals provided at Green College. All Resident Members of Green College are, by virtue of their residency, GCDS Members and share a common responsibility to operate the business. The GCDS represents one area where Resident Members have power to alter their environment. This power is tempered in its close relationship with Green College, for without Green College the GCDS has no need to exist and so consequently the GCDS’s business must ultimately align with the goals and directions of Green College. That implicitly extends the mandate from serving meals to residents but to guests and others brought to Green College through business and extension. Collectively the GCDS decides what to eat and how to feed the community *and* guests.

The meals provided are the distinguishing platform for building community and academic commensality. Likened to a family that eats together, the function of the meals at Green College brings people together in a way that not only shares meals but also ideas and networks. Additionally, the GCDS provides quality catering services that help facilitate Green College in its

hospitality role to host conferences, colloquia, banquets, meetings and retreats. Shared reputations for Green College and the GCDS for high-quality catering has been one way for drawing the wider UBC community into Green College and expanding the College's cross-campus network.

The second relationship with SHHS is central to the College's purpose in a different way, bringing with it a wealth of expertise and resources in managing student residences. SHHS maintains the *facilities* of Green College, from foundation to roofline, and receives all of the rent revenues from the Resident Members. Green College's administration would be poorer without the benefit of experience and central connections to the university from their expert staff for both student support and facility management.

In the second set, Green College depends on sustaining relationships with the *pro bono* efforts of faculty and visiting academics. Green College's academic program is coordinated by a number of faculty members known as series convenors. These convenors use their networks to attract scholars from around the world to come and visit Green College and perform a public lecture as part of a series of lectures run over one or multiple years. This work is all done *pro bono* as volunteers; these convenors gain from the experience in coordinating such a series, as well as in growing those global academic connections in and across disciplines. For the College, these visitors enrich the resident community in the lecture and over subsequent meals and conversations with these guests; many of them (and it is certainly preference) stay at Green College in the Guest House. Even the invited scholars are frequently unpaid for the lecture, with no honoraria, and are reimbursed only for their travel and accommodation expenses. Specially invited visitors in programs such as the Liu Visiting Fellow and the Justice in Residence programs bring academics and Justices to the College to live from a few days to a few months in the community and make connections with residents and beyond.

In the third set, Green College depends on sustaining relationships with the *pro bono* efforts of its residents. The activities within the community are spread across multiple resident committees. *The College's community is distinctly participatory*, enjoying many degrees of freedom to create and innovate in ways that make it its own target for volunteering efforts; like the GCDS, this is an area where residents have power to shape Green College. Organized at Residents' Council, these committees animate the community by organizing a range of academic, operational, sporting, theatrical, and outreach events. Members have their own convenors to run their own academic lecture series, drawing on the knowledge within the resident body as part of the academic programming. This series provides opportunities for presentation and coordination experience to members as they work to complete their degree. Operationally, members share responsibility for maintaining common spaces such as the Reading Room and Common Kitchen and serve to work and keep those spaces organized and safe. Members generate activities that help animate the resident community. In sum, the residence is dependent on the goodwill and efforts for residents to volunteer and make these activities happen to activate and engage members. Without an active, engaged and satisfied resident community, the other relationships the College maintains become less self-promoting (re: other Resident Members), more difficult (re: GCDS and SHHS) or less meaningful (re: faculty).

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The following literature review provides an overview of volunteerism and the social constructionist framework used in this study. This section first presents a short history of volunteerism research and the concept of altruism. Next, it outlines one major source of disagreement of volunteerism – its definition. It includes a short review of the foundations of social constructionism and how it relates to the study of volunteerism. Finally, three different volunteerism models are presented for illustration purposes.

3.2 Altruism and Volunteerism

We are reminded, whenever we think about the meaning of customs in historical civilisations, of how much we have lost, whatever we may have otherwise gained, by the substitution of large-scale economic systems for systems in which exchange of goods and services was not an impersonal but a moral transaction, bringing about and maintaining personal relationships between individuals and groups. – Titmuss, (1997), p. 125

Titmuss' work touched upon parallel concerns to Green College's macro-level relationship to the corporate university and government and its micro-level relationship with its local community, on the importance of *the relationship*. Titmuss argued that the differences between British and American blood transfusion services was due to the effects of a profit motive. Volunteering to give blood was considered the purest form of altruism, giving without the expectation of something in return. He argued that a competitive and materialistic society based on hierarchies of power and privilege perilously ignored the importance of life-giving altruism (Titmuss, 1997, pp. 7-8). He argued that altruism was a human need for both the giver and the beneficiary, and that the state must consider *both what it gives and the opportunities it creates for giving*; underlying this was a sense of duty, in the absence of pure altruism, to create agreement or interest in the giver (Haski-Leventhal, 2009, p. 290). Green College bears this sense of duty to give and create opportunities for its members to volunteer, and in this responsibility remain wary of profit motives that may undo the relationships the College depends on as outlined in the background section of this paper.

Debbie Haski-Leventhal (2009) describe altruism as an emphasis of an orientation towards the other. Altruism and volunteering overlap but very little has been written about both concepts together (pp. 271-272). Altruism is predominantly defined as acting on behalf of others, and across disciplines it assumes one is *egoistic* and acts rationally to fulfil their *own* needs and interests. She suggests too much emphasis has been on the self and proposes re-opening thinking about altruism to include the other (e.g. care about humanity), describing altruism as a continuum of care from egoistic to alter-centric focus (p. 289-290).

A nature versus nurture lens suggests there may be two types of altruism - evolutionary and vernacular; the former is primitive, impulsive, and perhaps genetically inherited, while the latter is learned (Piliavin & Charng, 1990, p. 31). Evolutionary altruism is described as *an essential characteristic* of individuals and helps explain spontaneous giving. Vernacular altruism is described as a learned behaviour, conditioned in yet-to-be-discovered circumstances. The latter is supportive of Titmuss' view that giving opportunities must be created to create agreement or interest in the giver.

Daniel Bar-Tal (1986) defined altruism noting two main social psychology approaches. A behavioural approach focuses on outcomes and consequently places emphasis on the costs and rewards of the action. Such an approach allows for a wide range of helping behaviours that may be unintentionally, involuntarily, or consequent of different motivations like indebtedness compensation and the expectation of future rewards (pp. 4-5). The motivational approach to altruism focuses on how and why there is helping behaviour.

Under a motivational approach, a definition of altruism requires altruistic behaviour to (1) be a benefit to another person, (2) be performed voluntarily, (3) be performed intentionally, (4) be the ultimate goal and (5) be performed without the expectation of an external reward (pp. 4-5). Haski-Leventhal (2009) suggests the concept of free will (“performed voluntarily” in Bar-Tal) is absent in altruistic definitions and posits altruism has more to do with sociological and social-biological reflexes for group and gene preservation (p. 272-273). This suggestion supports both primitive and vernacular concepts altruism discussed by Piliavin and Charng.

Bar-Tal (1986) found that definitions that preclude the possibility for internal reward problematic: first, operationalizing internal reasoning and intent can only be obtained through self-report and may be biased; second, the definition of altruism may be tautological – individuals may behave altruistically for reasons of self-reward and self-reward is the only consequence of altruistic behaviour; third, altruistic behaviour has been demonstrated to be a reward in itself by generating good feelings and thus generating self-gratification (p. 6). This problem of internal reward continues when defining volunteers as you’ll read in the next section.

Volunteering is a cluster of proactive helping activities requiring commitment of time and effort, and an extension of private behaviour into the public sphere (Wilson, 2000, p. 216). For example, the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating groups giving money and time to charitable organizations and direct help to others in the community (Hall & Statistics Canada, 2009, p. 5). Altruism is the concept of need, motivation, or condition to help explain volunteering behaviour.

3.3 Challenges to Volunteer Definition and Theory

Voluntarism and volunteerism are different though they are often used interchangeably. Voluntarism is the system of doing something by “voluntary” action (“Voluntarism | Definition of Voluntarism by Merriam-Webster,” n.d.). Ellis (n.d) suggests it encompasses the voluntary sector, as opposed to the public and private sectors (“Volunt/ar/eer/ism: What’s the Difference? | Energize: Volunteer Management Resources for Directors of Volunteers,” n.d.). Volunteerism is the act of volunteering in community service (“Volunteerism | Definition of Volunteerism by Merriam-Webster,” n.d.).

More specific definitions of volunteering vary. Volunteering needs to be defined and made distinct from other similar phenomena, but where does one make the distinction? Is it volunteering to spontaneously help a fellow member source a flight to a conference? To commit time each week towards teaching children (unpaid) at an elementary school? To engage with a group of others to generate ideas for a social event? Failure to clearly define the phenomena leads to a set of problems, including an inability to compare studies across surveys (not generalizable) or time (not replicable) (Musick & Wilson, 2008, pp. 34–35).

Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996) tried to address this definition gap. They surveyed 514 participants on their perception of volunteers. Participants rated possible examples of volunteer behaviour such as a CEO volunteering on an executive board, working overtime without pay, and giving time at a Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization (pp. 375-376).

Their findings suggest that we perceive volunteers based on the net cost of the action where there is a higher cost to the individual (p. 373). This perception is organized on four dimensions (see table 1). These dimensions are very similar to the altruism definitions provided earlier by Bar-Tal. The dimension of *free choice* refers to one’s personal freedom and agency in actively volunteering. *Remuneration* refers to the benefits one receives for volunteering, specifically payment. *Structure* refers to the context of volunteering and whether volunteering is done formally through an agency or organization or informally on their own. *Intended beneficiaries* describe who will benefit from the act.

TABLE 1. DIMENSIONS OF WHAT IS CONSIDERED VOLUNTEERING.

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Categories</i>
<i>Free Choice</i>	1 Free Will (the ability to voluntarily choose)
	2 Relatively Uncoerced
	3 Obligation to Volunteer
<i>Remuneration</i>	1 None at all
	2 None expected
	3 Expenses reimbursed
	4 Stipend / low pay
<i>Structure</i>	1 Formal
	2 Informal
<i>Intended Beneficiaries</i>	1 Benefit / help others / strangers
	2 Benefit / help friends or relatives
	3 Benefit oneself (as well)

From (Cnaan et al., 1996, p. 371)

Participants were more likely to agree that a behaviour was volunteering if the behaviour followed the strictest or “pure” definition in each dimension. For example, free choice may be pure if it includes only a choice made by the individual, but it can also broadly include deciding to volunteer while feeling some obligation from someone or something else (like family or school). Purer dimensions are more difficult to achieve and to objectively prove. Practically speaking, how often does one have the chance to have total freedom to volunteer without considering one’s relationships to others or even the volunteer organization? Variation in consensus reflects the social nature of the volunteer definition’s construction.

Volunteering from a purist perspective is “not” a lot of things: it is not paid labour, not slavery nor forced labour, not kinship care, not spontaneous help, not membership and not activism (Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010, pp. 412–413; Musick & Wilson, 2008, pp. 18–19). Acceptance of these

limits is not universal, however. Musick and Wilson (2008) describe membership in broad terms of association, where membership alone is insufficient to be a volunteer. In these memberships one can belong and reap the benefits (“free-loaders”) without ever contributing and it is the corresponding actions to contribute that matter. Caring for others is currently debated as volunteering (Wilson, 2000, p. 216). Musick and Wilson also take issue with the volunteering definition requiring one to volunteer for an organization; they consider that there are many other helping behaviours that can and do occur outside an organization that ought to be considered volunteering (p. 13).

The challenges of defining volunteering extend to theories about it. Wymer et al. (1997) suggest a lack of unifying theory from multiple disciplines has diminished the appeal of research in the area, despite longstanding interest in the topic (p. 17). Hustinx et al. (2010) describes three major challenges: complexity, disciplinary perspectives, and research bias. First, volunteering is a complex phenomenon that spans a range of activities, organizations, and sectors without clear or agreed-upon definitions. They consider volunteering as a social construct with multiple definitions, and claim that in some cultures *no construct even exists*; volunteering as a concept does not exist in Russia or India (in the latter it is “social work”). Second, volunteering is an interesting concept spanning multiple disciplines with little consensus on theoretical perspectives and different meanings on similar language (jargon). Third, theories are biased towards empirical approaches and are preoccupied with finding the occurrence or non-occurrence of the phenomenon (pp. 410-411).

From altruism to volunteerism and from Bar-Tal to Hustinx, we begin to see a definition of a helping behaviour that is mired in subjective conditions with little consensus or shared language across multiple disciplines. Cnaan et al.’s research design reminds us that, by the perception of others, we can begin to approximate a definition of volunteering. Hustinx et al. reminds us that volunteering is a social construct and that it is not universal. From here we begin to see how important social constructs are to this project’s conceptual framework.

3.4 Social Constructionism and an Interpretive Paradigm

Volunteering is a social construct, with multiple possibilities as found and aggregated in Cnaan et al.’s work. In defining what volunteering is, which one is valid? In exposing the variety of possible definitions, we begin to expose the underpinnings of social constructionism.

Social constructionism is a theoretical orientation that comes from a number of sources, with no single progenitor (Burr, 2015, p. 12; Galbin, 2014, p. 87; Lock & Strong, 2010, p. 6). This mixed provenance might better explain why Burr (2015) suggests that no single description can describe it nor can a single feature be used to identify it. Loosely, four key assumptions of social constructionism are (1) a critical stance of assumed knowledge, (2) that knowledge has historical and cultural specificity, (3) that knowledge is sustained by social processes, and (4) that knowledge and social action go together (pp. 2-5).

Lock and Strong (2010) outline similar tenets. First, assume that meaning and understanding is connected symbolically to language and human activities. Second, meaning and understanding are tied to social interaction. Third, embedded in social interaction, meaning and understanding are then historically and culturally specific where different times and places may have different meanings and understandings. Fourth, it rejects essentialism – that there is a predetermined essence about things – in favour of a variety of possible interpretations. Fifth, take a critical perspective

that is concerned with revealing invisible structures of power and emancipating people from them to make things more just (pp. 6-8).

Social constructionism thus focuses on the processes where meaning and understanding are created, sustained, and modified. Social constructionism denies that knowledge comes from a direct perception of reality, and that our perception of reality is constructed between us; there is no objective fact to be discerned, and all knowledge comes through one perspective or another and that some perspectives are in the service of some interests more than others (Burr, 2015, p. 9). A social constructionist permits multiple realities to be co-created and to co-exist, and thus for multiple definitions and reasons of volunteering to be permissible.

The strength of social constructionism is in its relativist possibilities. Gergen argues these possibilities are provided by limitless alternate views and consequent continual possibility of debate (as cited in Burr, 2015, pp. 105-106). Working against reductionist tendencies, social constructionism expands the number of possible interpretations. Though not explicitly interdisciplinary, it fosters review of possible explanations from multiple perspectives both from extant literature and in the project findings. It has a curious stance towards knowledge, and in that curiosity promotes reflexive examination and interpretation or synthesis.

The strength of social constructionism is also its weakness. Social constructionism questions the very categories we use to assess what we observe, making difficult the process of judging *which* possibility is true. Nothing is definite. One of the criticisms raised by Andrews (2012) is this tension between realism and relativism. Realists posit a knowable and independent reality. Relativists posit there are multiple realities and that nothing can be known as definite (pp. 41–44). Researchers must then make convincing arguments for one form of knowledge over another, and that can make the findings more contentious and subject to criticism.

To help resolve this realist-relativist issue, Berger and Luckmann (1966) note that social constructionism makes no ontological claims (p. 34). The social construction of knowledge can only make epistemological claims. That is, reality can still exist independently of relativist interpretations, and it is our social construction of knowledge about that reality that is the domain of social constructionism.

Relativist interpretations are the domain of a rational choice theoretical approach. Chai (2005) states rational choice directs researchers to a common concern about preferences, beliefs, and the driving forces behind action. He states rational choice assumptions posit “actions are on the optimization of expected utility under the constraints of beliefs” (p. 1). A rational choice approach puts the theorist imagining themselves as the subject and subsequently trying to predict, prescribe, or understand the subject’s actions (p. 1, 14). This project attempts to understand volunteerism and the community at Green College and thus follows an interpretive paradigm from a rational choice approach.

3.5 Theoretical Perspectives on Volunteerism

The study of volunteerism has involved a range of disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches (Musick & Wilson, 2008, pp. 177–178) and their book *Volunteers* is a comprehensive resource on volunteer research. For reasons of scope and space this literature review will not delve into much detail and instead refer readers to the material covered in the book. Instead, theoretical perspectives and highlights of some illustrative volunteer models are covered.

Wilson (2000) suggests grouping theories of volunteering loosely by two for their emphasis: one emphasizes motives and self-understandings and the other emphasizes rational action, costs, and benefits. A third group complements these two groups by focusing on individual level factors such as social ties and organizational activity (p. 215). Emphasis on motives assumes a complex inner-working of an individual and treats the context of volunteering as secondary; emphasis on rational action and cost/benefit assumes fairly simple mechanisms in an individual and treats the context as complex (pp. 217-218).

Greenslade and White (2005) group theories similarly with more defined theoretical lineages: the theory of planned behaviour and the functional approach. The theory of planned behaviour posits that people make rational decisions systematically based on available information. Under this theory, determinants of volunteering behaviour include (1) the person's attitude (simply positive or negative) towards performing the act, (2) the subjective norm (perceived social pressure), and (3) the perceived behavioural control for the individual to make the decision (p. 156).

The functional approach posits that the decision to volunteer is a rational process preceded by some cognitive assessment of the benefits of the action (p. 157). This theory recognizes that apparently similar acts of volunteering may have different underlying motivational processes. Clary et al. (1998) created the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) and suggest the functions served by volunteering show themselves in a show of helpfulness and they influence the initiation and maintenance of voluntary helping. Six of these functions were identified. Volunteers may volunteer as it is seen as: an expression of their values (values); as a means to permit new learning experiences and exercise knowledge, skills and abilities (understanding); as a social opportunity to be with one's friends or be seen favourably by others (social); as a way to obtain career-related benefits (career); to protect the ego by reducing guilt (protective); and, contrasting guilt, a means to sustain positive affect (enhancement) (pp. 1517-1518).

3.6 Volunteering Model Examples

The following three volunteer models are illustrative of the range and complexity of volunteering. They highlight different areas of importance for Green College; these models might provide the framework for future volunteerism research at Green College.

3.6.1 MODEL FOR DETERMINANTS OF VOLUNTEERISM

Wymer et al. (1997) attempted to blend a framework of sociological and psychological concepts (see figure 4) on the determinants of volunteerism, organized in four groups: person, social interactions, efficacy, and contextual. The person group included concepts of personality, values (including motivations to express or align with those values), and attitudes in helping determine whether one would decide to volunteer. The social interactions group included more situational (sociological) concepts, of previous and current social influences on the person and the desire to create future associations with others. Efficacy groups concepts of demonstrated and desired efficacy, where the person volunteers to either express their skills and abilities or to help build them. Finally, the contextual group is less about factors that lead to a decision but are rather

barriers. These contextual items include limits of time, money, or psychological cost (such as in volunteering in stressful situations).

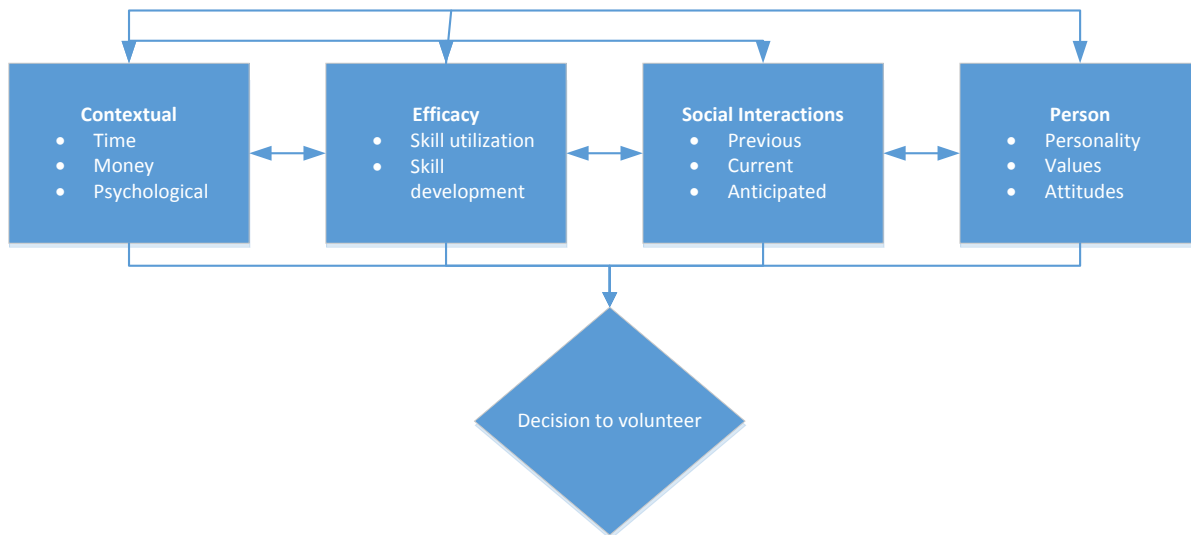


FIGURE 4. MODEL FOR DETERMINANTS OF VOLUNTEERISM.

Adapted from Wymer, Riecken and Yavas (1997, p. 6).

The advantage of this model is in its simplicity, where each of the four groups can be examined in the Green College environment. For example, the College could add to its internal processes contextual considerations of volunteer time and capacity during the natural rhythms of the academic year, or survey more closely the effectiveness of select College activities and adjust them to advertise and assist one’s efficacy.

3.6.2 VOLUNTEER PROCESS MODEL

Snyder and Omoto (2008) created the Volunteer Process Model (VPM) as a broad framework where volunteerism is considered a *process* that unfolds over time. Their model encompasses more contextual details, seeing volunteerism not as a singular decision but a series of them to be re-evaluated. They define volunteering towards the “pure” end of definitions along six dimensions: (1) actions must be voluntary and not out of obligation or coercion; (2) the act must come from contemplation and not reflex; (3) the activities must be over a period of time and not be spontaneous; (4) the decision is made out of personal goals without regard for rewards and punishment; (5) volunteering serves people who want help; (6) volunteerism is performed on behalf of people or causes through agencies and organizations (pp. 2-3).

VPM frames volunteerism in stages of antecedents, experiences, and consequences, and is illustrative of a number of conditions that affect a volunteer’s decision to volunteer and remain as one (see table 2). Antecedents refer to personality, motivational, and situational characteristics of individuals that help predict if they will volunteer. Experiences pays particular attention to the behavioural patterns and relationship dynamics among current volunteers, between volunteers and agency staff, and between volunteers and recipients of the volunteering benefits that support volunteers to continue service. Consequences focuses on the impact of volunteering, specifically

changes in attitudes, knowledge, and behaviour (pp. 7-8). Understanding both the process and changes over time appears important for how a volunteer gives and *keeps* giving.

Snyder and Omoto also mention the role of community in volunteering. Like Green College's layers of community described in section 2.1, VPM acknowledges the layers of influence of individuals, others, groups, and social systems. Omoto and Snyder (2002) emphasize the role of community as an important context that shapes volunteering for both the individuals and the organization. Community can both be the influence and the target of volunteer efforts (p. 863).

TABLE 2. SCHEMATIC OF THE VOLUNTEER PROCESS MODEL.

<i>Levels of Analysis</i>	<i>Stages of the Volunteer Process</i>		
	Antecedents	Experiences	Consequences
<i>Individual</i>	Demographics	Volunteers' choice of role	Changes in knowledge, attitude, behaviour, motivation
	Prior experiences	Volunteers' performance	Identity development
	Personality differences	Relationship with client	Commitment to volunteering
	Resources and Skills	Satisfaction	Evaluation of volunteerism
	Motivations	Stigmatization	Commitment to organization
	Identity concerns		Recruit other volunteers
	Expectations		Length of service
	Existing social support		
<i>Interpersonal / Social group</i>	Group memberships	Helping relationship	Composition of social network
	Norms	Collective esteem	Relationship development
<i>Agency / Organization</i>	Identify volunteers	Assign volunteers	Volunteer retention
	Recruit volunteers	Track volunteers	Work evaluation
	Train volunteers	Delivery of services	Fulfillment of mission
<i>Social system</i>	Social climates	Recipients of services	Social diffusion
	Community resource	Volunteers' social network	Public education
	Cultural context	Clients' social network	Systems of service delivery

Adapted from Snyder and Omoto (2008, p. 7), and Omoto and Snyder (2002, p. 849).

Use of VPM at Green College would divide the phenomenon into antecedents, experiences, and consequences and thus compartmentalize investigation at each stage. For example, antecedents as predominantly personal characteristics may suggest particular qualities that the College could more explicitly market for and make part of the membership committee's selection process. Attitudes, motivators, and other characteristics could be methodically surveyed from College applicants. These characteristics could be repeatedly surveyed at later stages to examine any changes and thus begin to reveal a baseline of volunteering data and health of the community.

3.6.3 VOLUNTEER STAGES TRANSITION MODEL

Debbie Haski-Leventhal and David Bargal (2008) conducted an ethnographic and organizational behaviour study and proposed the Volunteer Stages and Transition Model (VSTM), another cogent process-oriented examination of the stages a volunteer undergoes. Their study focused on volunteer perspectives on changes as a volunteer, and using grounded theory present a theory anchored to specific *transition events* over time as summarized in figure 5 (p. 71-74).

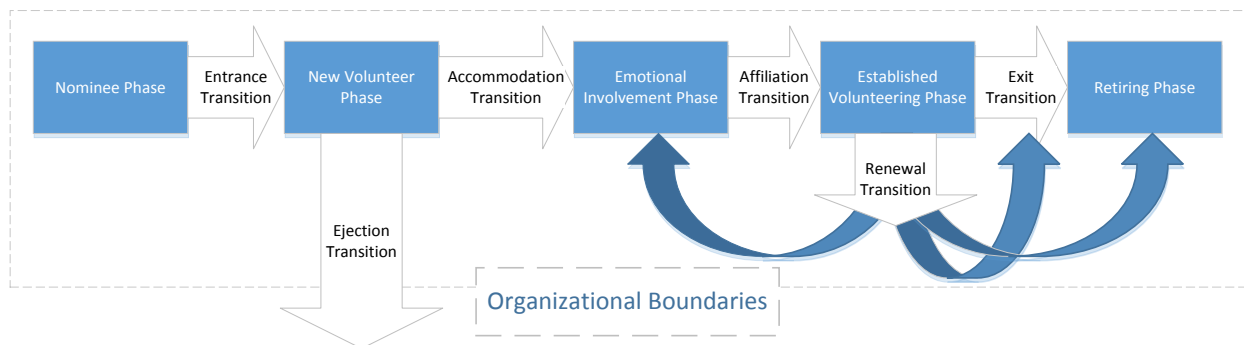


FIGURE 5. VOLUNTEER STAGES AND TRANSITION MODEL.

From Haski-Leventhal and Bargal, 2008, p. 74

There are five phases of the VSTM model – nominee, newcomer, emotional involvement, established volunteering, and retiring, each described on five dimensions of emotions, relationships, motivation and commitment, attitudes and perceptions, and costs and benefits (see Appendix C). Between each phase, transitions are tied to events and processes that unfold over time (p. 75). Each phase's characteristics, including emotion and commitment level reveal a deeper understanding of the process and changes a volunteer goes through.

Use of VSTM at Green College would prioritize the examination and maintenance of relationships. Unlike VPM, VSTM is most in line with a social constructionist perspective, with an emphasis on relationships constructed between people rather than internal motivations and transformations. This focus on social transitions may be more directly observable than internal motivations and transformations. Volunteerism is both an expression of community, and a ritual to develop relationships in the community. The community can be seen as a relationship between individuals, groups, and the organization.

Use of VSTM ought to focus on the organizational socialization. This focus may yield additional insights not generated by previously mentioned models. For example, the entry into the model may map either to the application for residency or more generally when recruited to volunteer and contribute to the community. This differing entry-point may engender different allegiances and role-models to supervise their growth, the former entry-point loyal to the institution and staff of

Green College and the latter to the community and its student leaders. Therein lies perhaps one risk for miscalculation, on who volunteers refer to for support and information.

3.7 Conceptual Framework

This project is driven by pragmatism and social constructionism within an interpretive paradigm. For pragmatism, the research sought practical insights to inform and take present and future action. The research solicited multiple personal perspectives and experiences and used the inquiry as a means for community engagement and the adoption of any changes. Such a research question aligns with pragmatists, who value the nature of experience over the nature of reality, outcomes over the nature of truth, and shared beliefs over individual beliefs (Patton, 2015, p. 152).

Social constructionism matches the ambiguity in definition and theory of volunteerism and the goals of the project such as the nature of the question, the emancipatory effect of the research, the College context, and the method. Soliciting multiple views, the research may help expand knowledge on the subject while, in the process, share that knowledge with participants. Because multiple perspectives are encouraged, no single perspective is forced, leaving the interpretation of the information to participants. In sharing that knowledge, the emancipatory effects for social action and the possibility for change was seeded. This involvement of others in interpreting and participating as democratic action was also sensitive to the context of the College's interdisciplinary focus and shared governance with its various committees.

4.0 Methodology and Methods

This project used a custom qualitative research design, adopting elements of an action research and appreciative inquiry methodology to fit the documentary and engagement goals. This section describes why and how they were used.

4.1 Methodology

A qualitative research design was chosen to fit with the exploratory and engagement needs of the project. The researcher’s relationship to the community and its participants made designs requiring objectivity difficult and, in the need for engagement, insufficient. A qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to begin from a position with few preconceptions; to allow for subjective interpretations; to embrace the experience and knowledge of the researcher rather than try to minimize it and interactions with participants; to increase understanding rather than prediction of events; to focus on the local context rather than on generalizability of the findings to other environments (McNabb, 2008, pp. 273–274). Additional rationale is outlined in table 3.

TABLE 3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND REASONS FOR ITS SELECTION.

<i>Philosophical Foundations</i>	<i>Qualitative Design Characteristic</i>	<i>Reasons</i>
<i>Ontology (Perceptions of Reality)</i>	Multiple subjective realities possible	The decision to volunteer is a personal one, not an organizational one. Those personal reasons may vary.
<i>Epistemology (Roles for the researcher)</i>	Direct interaction between researcher and participant	There were no records documenting individual decisions to volunteer to analyze as an alternative to limit observer interactions and maintain objectivity.
<i>Axiology (Researchers’ values)</i>	Acceptance of inherent researcher bias and values	Researcher cannot be removed from the community studied nor erase experiences working with it. Impartial, value-free examination not possible.
<i>Rhetoric (Language styles)</i>	Use of personal, informal and context-laden language	Report must be interesting to read or it may be ignored by stakeholders and defeat engagement and longer-term objectives Report is sensitive to the variety of stakeholders and their backgrounds so language must minimize jargon
<i>Methodology (Approaches to research)</i>	Use of inductive methods, multiple variables and find results that are often specific to just the area studied (context-specific).	Individual variables difficult to isolate in the complexity of both personal reasons for volunteering as well as the Green College environment Project goals focused on the client. Findings not intended for greater extrapolation and application in other communities.

McNabb outlines three classes within qualitative designs including explanatory, interpretive, and critical research. This project follows explanatory traditions to match objectives of describing the community phenomenon, interpretive traditions in the formation of a community narrative, and critical traditions to help the critical (transformative) efforts of the community to generate recommendations. Explanatory research is used to build theories and help explain the phenomena while critical research is used to help people change by helping them become aware of subconscious bases and distortions found in their actions (McNabb, 2008, pp. 277–278). The expertise of the researcher brings an interpretive lens to help participants see their volunteering efforts and community in a different light.

4.1.1 ACTION RESEARCH

This project design draws upon an action research methodology to meet the critical nature of the inquiry. Action research has roots with John Dewey, who was concerned with the role of education in the process of becoming socialized and with Kurt Lewin, who was concerned with citizen's participation in solving community problems (McNabb, 2008, pp. 339–340). Action research brings change through intervention in social systems (such as communities) by involving members of the group in the research process. Dewey and Lewin's original concerns echo the project; how does the Green College community socialize to create such a culture of volunteerism, and how can it be engaged to find ways to sustain it? Action research brings people to change through collaborative engagement, a collaboration that fit well with the collaborative nature of the community.

McNabb (2008) indicates that action research's emphasis makes it very interesting for public administrators, however very little research uses a pure action research method. It is widely accepted among social psychologists, sociologists, and educators. As first used by Kurt Lewin in 1948, action research usually takes place in four distinct repeating steps of planning, executing, reconnaissance, and evaluating. It was an empirical, applied research method with a practical, participatory democracy focus (p. 335).

4.1.2 APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

This project design draws upon an Appreciative Inquiry approach. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has roots with David Cooperrider from his 1980 Cleveland Clinic Project (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011b, p. 24). Since then it has matured from a generative theory into a strategy for organizational change (p. 25). Mishra and Bhatnagar (2012) state that AI focuses on *what is right* in an organization rather than on problems, the latter approach more fitting for Action Research (pp. 543, 554).

A positive-focus explanation is common, however it can overlook the roots of AI. Bushe (2010) reminds us that Cooperrider's development of AI was rooted in flipping problem-centric organization research (theory, behaviour, and development) to not a "positive" metaphor but to question *what gives life* to organizations (p. 235). Truly, *what is right* and *what gives life* is at the heart of the project's objectives in understanding the Green College community; what is already working to yield the current state, and what encourages it.

4.1.3 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

There were three main design issues that needed to be resolved from the methodology. They include scope, authority, and focus.

For scope, in the original traditions of action research many follow an iterative process and very broad involvement from most if not all stakeholders. The repetitive process and corrective action ought to involve the entire community, something that was beyond the limits of the time and resources available for the project.

For authority, action research and AI are often considered not complete until changes are made. For those actions to maintain some degree of democracy, this degree of authority would require the entire Green College community to be engaged. The community leadership changes every year, complicating the timing of the research. More systemic recommendations for change that would interact with UBC's policies and procedures would be even further out of reach, requiring other offices to be involved. Though the desire is that recommended changes can be implemented by those involved, pragmatically the project does not have the commensurate scope and authority to push them through. Recommendations rather than full commitment to change is sufficient.

Finally, the focus of the project is considered sensitive. There was something fundamentally incongruent with a problem-focused design. The External Review of Green College was very positive in its praise, and researching the community with a problem-focus seemed contrived and, at worst, dangerous. With a qualitative focus and with direct interaction between the researcher and participants, there is risk that the problem-focus could tip the community focus away from the very energies that made it so positive in the review. The researcher couldn't imagine a situation where he could go to the community and say in one breath that the External Review thought the place was amazing, and then in another tell them that it was broken and "we" needed to fix it. Neither the broad direction of NPM nor a specific problem in the community was manifest enough to community members for the research to have any credibility. A more positive frame would also help avoid ethical issues of the community feeling blamed or otherwise responsible for a "problem."

4.2 Methods

One of the project's objectives was to help engage and educate members about the importance of their volunteering efforts, of themselves and of their peers and their effects in the community. In this way, the objective had an underlying appreciation for the volunteering efforts of its members. The challenge was to discover some of the ways this was being done, to help future leaders shape the College in a way that could keep that "positive" or good alive.

4.2.1 ADAPTED APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

The research design was customized using an adaptation of the Appreciative Inquiry 4i model shown in figure 6 below (Coghlan, Preskill, & Tzavaras Catsambas, 2003, p. 12; Mishra & Bhatnagar, 2012, p. 547; Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011a, p. 91).

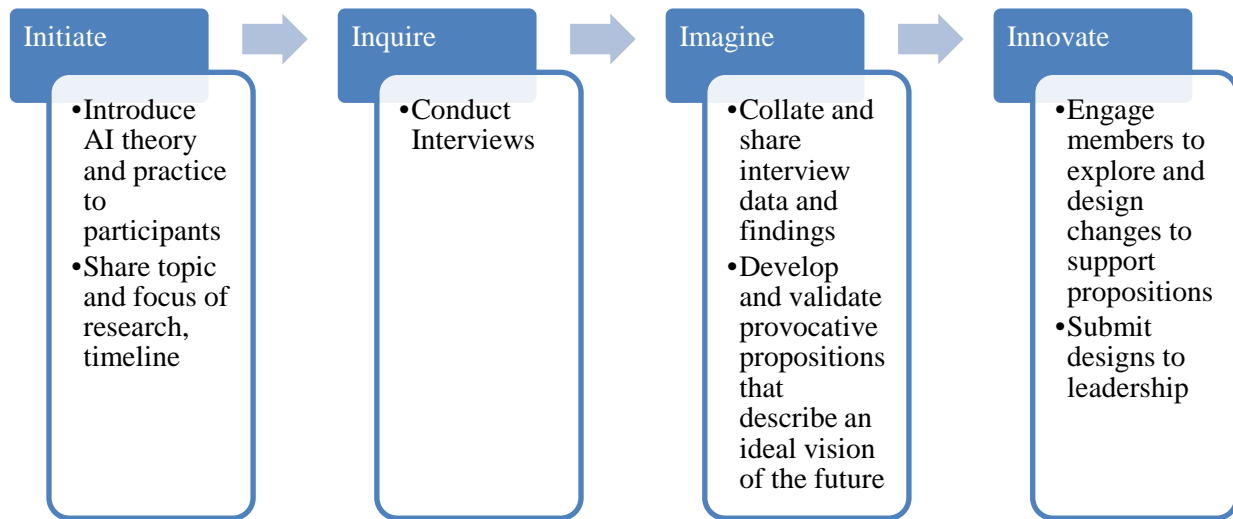


FIGURE 6. ADAPTED 4I MODEL OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY.

Using an AI frame, the researcher:

1. Provided a brief overview of AI to participants;
2. Interviewed participants in a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions to discover what gives life to the community and participation in it, inviting them to discuss their peak experiences and what enabled them;
 - a. Created an illustrative narrative of the community phenomenon;
 - b. Analyzed and coded interviews for content relating to volunteering decisions;
 - c. Revisited and verified transcript and coding with each participant;
3. Conducted a focus group with participants to share findings from interviews and generate ideas for how the community can maintain and improve volunteerism.

Adaptations to the traditional 4i model of Appreciative Inquiry lessened the research direction from the community and placed it more with the researcher, with changes in the format in the interviews and meetings. The first adaptation used the researcher as the sole interviewer. Interviews are normally done in paired-groups by the participants themselves. Researcher-only interviews ensured consistency in the interview data, to utilize the expert knowledge of the researcher, and to provide data for both the creation of a quotable community narrative and to allow for independent content analysis. This reliance on the researcher also shifted the design away from a priming workshop about AI into a shorter preamble delivered at the start of each interview.

Interview transcripts were sent to participants to verify and provide opportunity to strengthen the content and early analysis results. This allowed for greater control by minimizing some of the variability between participants, providing clear transcripts to review for content analysis, allowing for aggregation of all participant stories into view of all participants later. This aggregation foils all of the experiences rather than multiple pairs of experiences and brings the total experience of interviewed members to view for the final focus group.

In Appreciative Inquiry, the researcher is inextricably both an instrument and a participant. As an instrument in qualitative research, the findings of the researcher are tied to the researcher's credibility, competence, thoroughness and integrity (Patton, 2015, p. 73). Uniquely, the researcher has also been in the Green College community in a leadership role since 2006; they can focus the

research questions and conduct the interviews with extra contextual credibility, but also contribute reflexively by contributing their own views and understanding of the College’s structures.

The second adaptation includes using a smaller focus group instead of a summit meeting to generate suggestions. This was a compromise around practicalities about the number of participants and how their diverse schedules may not align for a single meeting together. The democratic nature of AI and even Action Research would require that the stakeholders capable of taking and implementing the final recommendations be present, and this was reflected with only a small sample of stakeholders. With the implementation of the recommendations outside of the scope of the project, the involvement of all stakeholders was less critical than the process of engagement with community members.

4.3 Participant Selection

The research was designed to only include key informants from three target populations: Resident Members, Society Members, and Staff Members (see table 4). Invitations included members of these populations over a three-year period (2013-14 to 2015-16). Key informants from Resident and Society Member groups were defined as those who had contributed as a volunteer in an obvious and public way on one of the College’s committees, and be recognized for that effort in the Green College’s *Annual Reports*. Contributions from non-volunteering members were considered but not included, to keep focus on *what is right* and *what gives life* – a focus on those who had volunteered as examples of a working volunteer system.

TABLE 4. GROUPS, DESCRIPTIONS, CHARACTERISTICS AND COUNTS OF INVITED PARTICIPANTS.

<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Total Invited</i>	<i>Total Participated</i>
<i>Resident Member Volunteers</i>	Residents living at Green College	Masters through PhD.	Lived and anticipated experience as a volunteer	31	10
<i>Society Member Volunteers</i>	Former residents of Green College	Masters through PhD.	Previously lived experience as a volunteer	18	4
<i>Staff Members</i>	Current permanent-hire staff at Green College	High school diploma through PhD.	Administration experience	6	4

Invitations to target populations were sent by the client, inviting them to contact the researcher and indicated that participation was voluntary. Fifty-five invitations to participate were sent by the Green College office, and of those eighteen participated. Because membership terms last 2-4 years and volunteers occupied committee roles over multiple years and multiple committees, there were more Resident Members than Society Members invited to the study.

4.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews were held in April and May 2016 at Green College or by phone or Skype. Interviews began with participants signing the consent form. Interview questions were preceded with a short discussion and reflection period on the difference between AI and traditional deficit-based inquiry, the goals of the research, and the research process.

A customized interview protocol was developed and used by the researcher, adapted from AI's four generic questions which asked participants about their best experience, their values, a core life-giving factor or value about the organization, and three wishes (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011c, pp. 155–156). The four questions were designed to engage the participant in a way that focused their attention on positive experiences and personal motivations and values. Additional questions solicited personal experiences about their work or study to help positively centre their thinking, their sources of motivation, and some core experiences they would want to ensure future residents to have.

4.4.1 STORIES AS NARRATIVE

Interview questions probed for peak positive experiences at Green College, revealed through stories, and provide the first deliverable of the project in providing illustrative examples of the community. These stories provided a rich data set to use in an aggregate re-creation of all participant experiences. Stories can reveal how participants construct their past and future life experience at given moments in time and explain their situation and explanation of (social construction) that experience; moreover, since lives are understood as and shaped by narratives, narratives from research help remove the artifice of research processes and present information in a naturalized way (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 162-164).

In the theories of change behind AI, stories and how they are told are a means to change. In the context of this project, the change is to ensure participants as volunteers gain personal insight into their lived experiences as volunteers and recognize those efforts. Bushe (2001) identifies five theories of change in AI, and of those the *social construction of reality* and the organization's *inner dialogue* highlight the value of narratives. On the social construction of reality, where language and words are the basic building-blocks of social reality, the narrative and its focus on the strengths not only affects what we see and discover but also influences the everyday language of members afterwards. Bushe also speaks of change in an organization's "inner dialogue." Congruence between the stories we tell ourselves as inner dialogue and the stories told by an organization is necessary to organizational change. He suggests that for AI it is important how stories are communicated; avoid a reduction to "quotable quotes" and instead provide a richly woven and crafted story that is enjoyable for those who read them. Bushe also cautions that data be not anonymous, though for reasons of avoiding power effects of the researcher over participants the narrative created must rely on the resonance of the description with their lived experiences and subsequent identification with the story rather than the participants directly (pp. 121-123).

4.5 Content Analysis

The researcher recorded and transcribed each hour-long interview for organization and management in NVivo 11. NVivo software was used to organize each of the 18 transcriptions and pull manually-coded text into intelligible reports for later refinement. NVivo reduced the effort required in organizing and refining hundreds of coded passages. Matrix coding was used to

discover overlapping codes and identify where further refinement and greater definition was required. Auto coding, word analysis, and other quantitative features in NVivo were not used.

The researcher coded in NVivo all transcripts, reviewing and interpreting the text as it could hypothetically relate to one's decision to volunteer. Passages of text were flagged as relevant, including a mix of emergent and fixed codes. Emergent codes were first influenced by the model proposed by Wymer et al. (1997, p. 6) and subsequently revised over time towards a social constructionist arrangement of self, environment, and others. Emergent codes required considerable judgment and interpretation; the researcher re-coded the passages three times before selecting a final version. Fixed codes grouped notable quotes for use in the community narrative and specific answers to the core experiences and three wishes questions. Upon completion of the coding, the individual results were shared and verified with each participant.

4.5.1 ANONYMIZING

Maintaining privacy was important and it was a privilege to have had the interviews and to hear their stories. Participants had control over how much of their identity could remain in the transcripts. In a small community, complete anonymity is difficult to achieve. Participant identities could be determined with insider knowledge and if their entire transcript was read. Consequently, data is presented in this project report in aggregate and with minimal attribution to individual contributions.

The researcher changed in the transcription names of persons and connecting structures such as committees to help anonymize any text used in the project's final report. Participants were asked to verify the transcripts for accuracy and the degree of anonymizing they were comfortable with. The majority of participants were not sensitive to the anonymity of their transcript and were comfortable with basic edits. Participant sensitivity ranged from increasing the specificity in the examples (e.g. more detail that would reveal their identity), to complete omission of large sections of the transcription. Coded passages considered important by the researcher that participants wished removed were discussed with (where possible) suggestions for rephrasing and retention. Participants ultimately had control to change or remove these passages.

4.6 Focus Group

A focus group was held in October 2016 in lieu of an AI summit, comprised only of Resident and Staff Members. As anticipated by the design, it was difficult to coordinate a meeting with participants. Four participants met to review the project findings, imagine an ideal Green College community, and make recommendations on how to achieve it.

4.7 Project Limitations and Delimitations

The broader social constructionist frame accepts different viewpoints, and in aggregate generate a view of the community and its volunteering efforts. These multiple views cannot be objectively measured for truth or eliminate participant and researcher bias. Similarly, any findings are specific to the particular time and place the research was undertaken; the value and accuracy of any findings may not be as relevant or meaningful as time and intervening events occur at Green College. The qualitative methods chosen are also very specific to the Green College environment and cannot be compared with other environments.

One common critique of Appreciative Inquiry suggests that it fails to recognize the negatives. Mishra and Bhatnagar (2012) explain that focusing on strengths may not lead to the best performance, and that some recognition of the negative may be needed (p. 554). Bushe (2010) counters this critique as an oversimplification of AI, stating that AI was designed for generative research on *what gives life* to an organization and that by moving from a problem-solving to an appreciative framework that it has somehow been translated into only what is positive (p. 235). Bushe reminds AI practitioners that focusing on the positive can have a paradoxical effect and bring to awareness the negative, and that one person's positive could be another's negative (p. 234). Multiple interviews with open-ended questions with the space for fully considered answers ought to reveal a more holistic view of the total experience with room to acknowledge any negatives that surface.

The relationship of the researcher with the community poses a significant threat to construct validity. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) draw attention to three social threats; participants may try to guess the hypothesis and skew the answers, be apprehensive of the evaluation (apprehension of the negative) or expectantly lead their conclusions (seeking to look good) due to the influence of the researcher's position (pp. 79-80). Additionally and inherent to qualitative inquiry, Patton (2015) describes qualitative research as inextricably personal where the researcher is the instrument (p. 3). In this project, the researcher is a member of the community and occupies a position of authority in it. The researcher is both instrument and contributor. The methodology chosen embraces the researcher's expertise and position. The positive and inclusive focus should lessen the social threats, where these threats may be exacerbated by traditional problem-solving focus. Appreciative Inquiry may also help avoid defensive behaviours (Shuayb, 2014, p. 301).

Sample methods, size, and composition limited the form of final group engagement in generating recommendations. Full Action Research and Appreciative Inquiry methodologies are more thorough in their engagement and include the implementation of recommendations, whereas the methods for this project are reduced in scale and scope to the delivery of recommendations. The final focus group would be constituted of a smaller subsection of available participants, relying upon the aggregate findings of others rather than the direct dialogue with them in the generation of recommendations. Three residencies ended over the course of the research, and from scheduling conflicts made it difficult for participants attend. Though small, the final focus group proportionally represented roughly a third of the interviewed and eligible participants, containing three Resident Members (3 of 7) and one Staff Member (1 of 4).

5.0 Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of the data collected followed by discussion. The findings are organized first by an examination of the collected data sources. Second, answers to explicit interview questions about desired experiences and wishes for the community are presented. Third, the results of content analysis of the interview transcriptions outlines areas considered influential a member’s decision to volunteer. The following section (6.0) contextualizes these findings by illustrating the culture and activities of the community in a community narrative.

5.2 Data Sources

Data was collected in 18 interviews across the three target populations (see table 5). Females are disproportionately represented in all three populations, at ratios ranging from 2:1 (Staff Members) to 3:1 (Resident Members). Participation rates varied and appear proportional for Resident and Staff Member populations, however the Society Member participation does not represent any males. All members who met the target population criteria set in 4.3 were invited, so this gender bias is endemic to the volunteers for at least the target years.

TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF TARGET POPULATIONS BY PARTICIPATION AND GENDER

<i>Target Population</i>	<i>Population Representation</i>				<i>Gender Proportion by Population</i>	
	<i>Invited</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Sample / Invited Representation</i>	<i>Sample Population Representation</i>	<i>Invited</i>	<i>Sample</i>
Resident Member	31	10	32%	56%		
Female	23	7			74%	70%
Male	8	3			26%	30%
Society Member	18	4	22%	22%		
Female	13	4			72%	100%
Male	5	0			28%	0%
Staff Member	6	4	67%	22%		
Female	4	3			67%	75%
Male	2	1			33%	25%
<i>Total</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>100%</i>		

5.3 Focussed Questions

This section includes findings from two focussed questions in the interviews arising from AI’s generic questions (see 4.4). The core life-giving factor and three wishes questions provided answers that contribute to an understanding about *what is right* and *what gives life* in the organization, and importantly what to sustain and plan towards. Each interviewee was asked what one to three “core experiences” they would like future residents to have. These experiences revealed what members of the community value highly, and suggest what they would desire to

preserve and maintain if circumstances were to change. These experiences also informed the later focus group when they created their recommendations. There was a lot of similarity in the answers given.

Participants were also asked what “three wishes” they would use to strengthen the community. These wishes concluded each interview and shifted the focus towards the future. Wishes have an element of suspended reality where anything is possible. They provide an end-point needing a plan. Not all participants gave an answer or a total of three wishes. Unlike the core experiences question, the distribution of the answers across participants was much more diffuse with relatively unique wishes proposed.

5.3.1 CORE EXPERIENCES

The researcher found consistency among the answers received yielding three core experiences: to experience the sense of community, to establish relationships, and to be enriched. Nuance in the definition of those answers were noted as definition dimensions (see table 6). Most answers were given in general experiential terms, however some participants provided a short list of activities. Suggested activities (table 7) were grouped by their primary method: team play, committee involvement, mealtime conversations, and lecture involvement.

TABLE 6. CORE EXPERIENCES DESIRED BY PARTICIPANTS FOR FUTURE MEMBERS.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>References</i>
<i>Core Experiences</i>		18	50
(Suggested Activities)	Activities suggested as part of a core experience for members.	10	19
<i>1 Be enriched</i>	<i>Be exposed to and engage with new ideas, perspectives, and experiences.</i>	9	11
Do something new	Do something new and never done before, and to share something new to others. Maintain openness to try new things;	2	2
Engage in conversation	Be exposed to and engage in conversation, either personal or academic and cross-disciplinary topics. Explore ideas. Learn new perspectives. Question and change the way you think about things. Remain curious and open;	5	6
Learn from and appreciate differences	Learn from others through contrasting differences in their backgrounds, talents, and privileges. Be surprised. Experience gratitude;	3	3

<i>2 Establish relationships</i>	<i>Build a variety of strong, deep, and lasting relationships.</i>	9	12
Build deep and lasting relationships	Making strong, deep, and enduring friendships that impact one emotionally, physically, and mentally. Connect with people on an intellectual level that expands your horizons;	3	4
Find and make friends quickly	Making friends quickly as strangers in a new place while being your authentic self;	4	4
Learn about cultures and relationships	Connecting with people of similar and different cultures, interests, backgrounds and disciplines. Understand people and break stereotypes. Learn how to manage relationships;	2	2
Make connections to the wider community	Make connections to Vancouver and beyond, including Society Members;	1	2
<i>3 Experience Community</i>	<i>Experience a sense of community.</i>	9	10
Experience sense of community or family	Experience a sense of community, family, and belonging. Feel safe and comfortable. Feel that you can be yourself, unrestrained, to give opinions but also be forgiven for missteps;	3	3
Feeling connected to others	Never feel lonely or have to be alone. Helping others. Building friendships through like-minded connections. Connecting in an open, friendly, and informal way;	3	3
Working together, giving and receiving community support	Addressing problems together. Discussing ideas and working together to achieve them, or helping and receiving help. A flexible and built-in support network for new members. Generosity;	4	4

TABLE 7. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES TO FACILITATE CORE EXPERIENCES

<i>Suggested Activities</i>	
<i>Team Play</i>	Ping pong, Wreck-Tower Cup, playing on a sports team, acting in a play together.
<i>Committee involvement</i>	Get involved with any committee or the Green College Dining Society and shape the future College.
<i>Mealtime conversations</i>	Have stimulating conversations about the serious and the absurd.
<i>Lecture Series involvement</i>	Participate in a Members Series' talk to build your communications skills and confidence.

5.3.1.1 CORE EXPERIENCES DISCUSSION

The core experiences solicited what participants desired future members to experience that they had enjoyed themselves. These questions shifted the focus from their lived experiences to a future hope by helping them clarify what they valued in their experiences. In line with AI, these are the things that are “right” in the environment and are the strengths to build upon. These are the things to not lose sight of when the College and its committees change parts of Green College.

Participants expressed a desire for others to feel the deep connection and *sense of community* they had. This connection was generally described as a sense of family, where one felt welcome, connected, and supported. One never needed to be alone, and could rely on others to help problem-solve all kinds of issues. However, in this sense of family participants also expressed there is a sense of identity and belonging where one could grow as an individual and grow together with everyone else. There is a pervasive and positive sense of community that participants experienced.

On *establishing relationships*, participants desired for others to establish quickly deep and lasting friendships with others. This experience moves from a sense or feeling of community to direct relationships with others. Participants expressed that they had formed friendships at the College that would last for years, some expressing sentiments of “for life.” Participants described these connections in terms of diversity, learning comparatively in the similarities and differences between members. They described the connections in terms of authenticity, suggesting their relationships were deep and not superficial. This connection may have formed through getting to know other members on personal and professional levels.

On *being enriched*, participants described their experience at the College as a place to try and see new things. In the diversity of membership mentioned in the connections and relationships above, participants saw this as a way to broaden their own perspectives. Similarly, this is also connected to a sense of community – to maintain a curious and open mind towards new ideas and perspectives individually and as a group. As a place to try something new, for participants Green College was a place to explore and overcome challenges. In that effort, participants could test their own values and refine their perspectives on what they appreciate and value.

These three core experiences were associated with a number of specific activities at Green College, in four main types of activities. There were only 18 interviewees from a community of at least 100.

These suggested activities are not exhaustive, and a separate and future community-driven analysis may better reveal others and new opportunities to reinforce the three main themes. Given how much of the resident committee activities are up to the convenors with few guiding principles, insight into a particular kind of activity or experience is particularly valuable in informing more impactful activities.

Participants saw team play experiences brought smaller groups of the community together to cooperate, compete, and work towards a common goal. They mentioned activities such as the Wreck-Tower Cup, ping pong, sports, and theatrical productions. Second, participants saw their committee involvement as a contributor; participating in a committee broadened their perspectives to see more of the College experience and to steward an experience for others. It allowed them to take responsibility to shape and affect the lives of others in the community, while learning or demonstrating their own talents and abilities. Third, mealtime conversations were seen as a large part of how members interact. The conversations there vary from serious academic debate to absurd questions, and both stimulate members to engage with each other. A range of conversations allows for a range of members to find space to reveal something about themselves and contribute to the group. Finally, members described involvement in the College's lecture series as a means to build skills and confidence. Members share something of themselves and their academic interests with other members and experience group support from other members through curious engagement in the material presented.

5.3.2 THREE WISHES

The three wishes questions were meant to shift participant focus to the future, to wishes they had to strengthen the community. Participants had difficulty providing answers to this question, likely from a disconnect between the inflexible rules of reality and the flexible rules of dreams. The questions stretched one's imagination, focusing on the broader community and not exclusively on volunteering. Answers revealed gaps where their core experiences were hindered; participants problem-solved from the strengths of their core experiences any barriers and hindrances to their otherwise positive experiences. Answers to the question were conceptually grouped into desired changes to people, processes, and the environment and are presented in table 8.

TABLE 8. THREE WISHES TO STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>References</i>
<i>Three Wishes</i>		18	54
<i>1 For conditions to be different</i>	<i>Desire that if conditions for being at the College were different it could make the community stronger.</i>	9	13
Activity conditions	Increase the number of activities to create more opportunities to bond together and grow closer as a community. Make those opportunities more team-oriented, challenging, and cooperative. Add additional equipment such as a basketball hoop for more opportunity. Increase engagement across disciplines with the sciences for variety of exposure. Increase forms of recognition for members and their contributions;	6	7
Building conditions	Find ways to ensure the buildings stay safe. No more disruptive construction. Increase the size of the common kitchen for more prepared shared meals;	4	4
Financial conditions	Reduce the rent and dining fees and consequently reduce stress, to allow them to concentrate on other things. Give scholarships;	2	2
<i>2 For people to be different</i>	<i>Desire that if people could be different the community could be stronger.</i>	12	17
Be community-minded	Remain welcoming and friendly and include to others after the novelty wears-off. Remain aware of the greater whole of the community;	4	4
Be engaged	Remain present, attentive, and appreciative of the work people put into the community;	4	5
Be positive	Keep a positive outlook towards things;	1	1

Be trusting	Enter the community already trusting others. Trust their own gut when things do not seem right;	2	2
Be understanding	To express patience, openness, respect and generosity towards others around differences and disagreements. For others to understand Green College better;	5	5
<i>3 For processes to be different</i>	<i>Desire that if an existing process or activity were revised it could make the community stronger.</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>24</i>
Academic Processes	Increase discussion around the academic programming about both who and how it works with the community; Improve the integration and welcome of visiting scholars with the community. Move the 5pm lecture slot, to a time that brings more people to see the lecture. Increase the number of lectures and connections with other academic units;	5	8
Community Process	Find a way to prevent seclusion / encourage participation in the community. Do not permit abstinence from dining participation. Find a way to have honest conversations with the whole community about the community;	2	2
Membership Process	Research new assessment methods to increase likelihood a new member will be community-minded. Rebalance membership acceptances towards equal-parts humanities and sciences and to allow more creative or non-traditional people to live in residence;	4	4
Residential-Administrative Processes	Find ways to continue activities people created from one year to the next when interest isn't high. Maximize and not waste resources. Improve planning and connections among committees with team-building and retreats. Create a financial and mental health support strategy for members; Find ways to eliminate how members can seclude themselves and ignore the community;	4	7

Society Member Processes	Find ways to bring back and engage Society Members with things like reunions, invitations to special events and Galas, and lectures;	3	3
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5.3.2.1 THREE WISHES DISCUSSION

CONDITIONS

The first group of wishes were centred on desired changes to the conditions and environment. Within this group there were financial conditions, building conditions, and activity conditions.

For financial conditions, two wishes desired to reduce the financial burden of living at the College and studying at the university. The intention of both of these was to reduce the financial stresses one feels and thus free-up more time and energy towards experiencing and volunteering in the community. One wished to reduce the costs associated with living at the College in the rent and dining fees. The other wishes to increase the money available to students in the form of scholarships and other awards. While reducing the costs may not be feasible, awards and other scholarships are possible with fundraising and future Society Member involvement.

For building conditions, the wishes gravitated towards eliminating risks and nuisances. Generally, the wish was that all of the buildings at the College stay safe; built on the edge of an eroding cliff in an area with a history of lost-land to gravity and the sea, Green College’s property is always at risk. Another wish (and at odds of keeping the buildings safe from a maintenance perspective) was for no more construction; recent construction in the residence on deferred maintenance issues including shingling the roof, replacing rotting walkways and deteriorated water membranes, room renovations with new bathrooms and flooring, etc., have tested the patience of many residents over the last several years. The wish challenges the way maintenance is performed by SHHS. Finally, a wish to increase the size of the common kitchen and/or common cooking facilities was to reduce any tension and increase the opportunity for members to bond over the preparation of shared meals.

Perhaps overlooked, members bond with one another over their own preparation of meals in the shared spaces and not just through the meals provided by the GCDS. The 10 meals provided by the Green College Dining Society (GCDS) miss 11 others (based on three meals per day) that must be prepared elsewhere. The participant making the wish believed that there was an equal if not more powerful bond created on the weekends for these non-GCDS meals between members when preparing and sharing a meal together; creating capacity for more shared meals together could create more opportunities for bonding among members. Expanding this capacity too much, however, may make diffuse those opportunities, and so a balance must be found.

For activity conditions, a number of wishes recalled earlier interview epiphanies and gratitude for the events and activities volunteers were involved in. These wishes sought ways to maintain and enhance those events. Some wishes wanted to increase the quantity of opportunities for members to bond together, though others shared this desire and retracted it recognizing that more events would be “chaotic” and make the challenge of communicating to members what is going on even more difficult. Other wishes sought to increase the quality of the activities, instead focussing on opportunities that are more team-oriented, challenging, or cooperative; these types of activities were seen to create stronger bonds among members than other types of activities.

Two activity wishes were specific. One wished for the addition of a basketball hoop for team play (social), while the other wished for more of the College's academic lectures to engage in cross-disciplinary work with the sciences (academic). The former is reflective of a desire and keen interest in competitive sport by Resident Members unmet by any facilities at Green College; members must go to other places on campus for sports. The latter reflects an observation that the majority of the College's lectures are drawn from the humanities and underrepresent the sciences. The wish demands more to be done to ensure better representation from the sciences.

The final wish in this group sought to reward and encourage and/or entice volunteers. They wished for additional kinds of recognition for members and their contributions. Green College has the William C. Gibson citation to publically and annually recognize key community contributors, though from this wish there appears to be more room for improvement. Because the citation is an annual form, perhaps a more consistent form of recognition would be more helpful in reinforcing volunteering efforts over the entire year.

PEOPLE

Desired changes to people highlighted some of the barriers participants saw in others. These wishes desired people to be more community-minded, more engaged, more understanding, more trusting, and more positive. When wishing members were more community-minded, participants described it as wanting other members to be more aware of the community (and by implication, be less self-focussed in their interests and activities).

In addition to self-focus, participants lamented a change in dispositions towards others; once a member settles into life at the College, the warm welcome and friendliness towards others lessens. Members desire more of that welcoming and friendly disposition towards others. By wanting more engagement, members also expressed a similar tendency where member attention and appreciation declines over time; participants wished others were more present and appreciative of the work all people do for the community. We see the wishes for engagement and for community-minded thinking require more awareness about the community – who is in it, what is being done, etc., and with it implications around the importance of communicating information among community members to share, engage, and appreciate.

Wishing more understanding, trusting, and positivity from members were also similar in their implications about improved communications. For understanding, members expressed wishes that they could more consistently communicate among other members about their differences. From the context of the interviews, members saw this from difficulties in intellectual discussions over dinner; the wish seeks to perhaps temper judgement and listen to other points of view. The implication here is that some of those conversations were seen to be more difficult with some members, and a remedy might include workshops or other training on accepting other views or on giving constructive feedback.

For trusting, members expressed two elements; one element desired that members came into the community already trusting others so that they could conceivably integrate into and benefit from the community faster. Basically, diminish the need for trust to be built-up or earned. The other end was for a kind of trust directed towards the self and in a negative frame, where one would speak up and act if something didn't seem right – a kind of self-trust and confidence that one innately knows what's right. These wishes for trust demand confidence in the community and within the

individual. Excess confidence in one's own views could counteract the previous wish for more understanding.

The last wish for others – to be positive – frames a general disposition towards positive interpretations to people and things in the community over the course of the year. Such a disposition bolsters a trust towards others but may obscure the skepticism that would spot when things didn't seem right and slow potential action to fix it. As one member described it, a “herd mentality” can be experienced at the College.

PROCESSES

Desired changes to processes were divided into changes to academic, membership, and residential-administrative, Society Member, and community processes. For academic processes, members expressed interest in improving the way the academic programming at the College happens. In particular there was a general lack of awareness about how the lecture series and special visitors come to be at the College. Further, there was an interest in improving the integration each of these academic visitors have with the community – there was a sense that many slip in and out of the community without notice, and improving the way they are announced as they arrive and stay at the College could help improve this awareness. These two – how the academic programming works and improving how lecturers are brought into the community are connected overall to improving the link between the academic programming and the resident community. There's a need to improve the process such that the resident community is more directly involved with the lecturers. This wish is a call towards enhancing the quality of the relationship visitors and lecturers have with Resident Members.

For membership processes, participants wished that the College had better control over the membership process. First, there was a desire to see research into new assessment methods to increase the chances that new members will be community-minded. This wish targets the “free rider” problem in the community where some members of the community do not engage with others or participate in the community. With much of the consistent work done by a small group of members in the community, this wish tries to remedy the situation at the root and ensure the community is composed of more community-minded individuals.

Second, there was a wish that the College could better balance the community with equal-parts humanities and science students as well as incorporating non-traditional students into the community for variety. The participants observed that the community (and not just the free public lectures) was biased towards the humanities. Tangentially, the same participant also observed that in many of the Members' Series lectures the regular audience members were from the sciences. Another participant had an appreciation for students whose applications were creative and did not follow the standard templates, while others expressed gratitude for being able to make strong connections to visiting scholars such as those invited through the Writer in Residence program. These wishes all group around better balance and control of how the College selects members for the community.

For residential-administrative processes, these wishes group along similar lines of better control as the membership processes with one notable outlier. Participants wished for a way to continue the legacies of former residents in continuing the activities they created in previous years. Interest and abilities change with each year, leaving the pioneering or renaissance efforts of members to

begin new or resurrect old traditions to chance on whether a new member will continue it for future cohorts.

A parallel wish to maximize and not waste resources (as opposed to relationship opportunities through member selection) came in the context of the College's Resident Committees. Those committees (see Appendix A) are assigned a budget pool each year to share among others and it frequently does not spend its full allocation. Additional wishes and perhaps solutions to the previous wish centre on committees to improve the planning and connections between members of those committees, perhaps with team-building and retreats. Outside the context of the Resident Committees, one wish desired a clearer and more robust mental health and financial support strategy for Resident Members; the university provides this kind of support for students, however the wish desired more local support within the community.

The outlier to these residential-administrative processes echoes part of the first wish from the membership processes above: to find a way that would eliminate how members can ignore and seclude themselves from the community. This last one exposed frustrations from some participants on how they have seen others completely unaware of the activities around them in the community that are organized by fellow members. This ignorance was insulting to contributors and was seen to actively diminish the possible richness of experience members could have. This outlier echoes prior wishes about people and the need for better communication. There are undoubtedly serious challenges to be explored in getting and maintaining member attention.

For Society Member processes, there was a desire to see more involvement between Society and Resident Members. During the interviews, many members began to problem-solve or reality-test some of the wishes, and for this one members gravitated towards the existing Gala dinner formats. These dinners are four times a year and saw this is a way to invite Society members back in a format that was special and familiar, but recognized the limits to the size of the Great Hall; gala events with Resident Members and faculty fill the Great Hall to capacity with little room for Society Members. Though the existing Galas and their guest lists may not accommodate Society Members to the degree imagined, Gala-like activities that bring Society and Resident Members together such as wine tastings or cooperative/competitive challenges might suffice. This style of engagement expanded to reunions (e.g. the cohort of 2015) and special invitations to lectures. Regardless of the method used, there is a clear desire to see more collaboration between Resident and Society Members.

For community processes, two wishes split with an outward and inward focus. The outward-focussed wish was to increase the number of outreach activities from the resident community to the rest of the university and beyond. The wish of this outreach effort was that it would be visible to others, such that others in the university could see the kind of care and leadership that exists at the College. The inward-focus echoed previous wishes about people and trust; the wish was for there to be way as a community to have honest conversations *with the community about the community*. The implication is that the way that the community works is not transparent. The fear was expressed that in making it more transparent, the community might be misunderstood or exploited and run counter to previously mentioned wishes about trust. There was a desire for a way for members to speak to each-other about the community they live in, in a way that had the trust necessary to have those conversations. These conversations were in the context of behaviours and actions taken in the community in a desire for a more coordinated response to community crises.

5.4 Content Analysis

The social constructionist framework influenced the broadest code groupings of self, environment, and other people. From a social constructionist view, factors that lead to a decision to participate and volunteer are co-constructed with others. They are created in interactions and the spaces in-between, represented by the diagram in figure 7. These interactions between the self and others take place in an environment which can facilitate that creation through things like a process/activity and the actual space. This added a third referent group, the environment. Though constructionism emphasizes the *social* nature of how reality is created, the environment here is included for the practicalities it offers in triangulating where interactions occur. These groupings were to better reflect the constructivist view that reality is co-created, accepting that many of the items coded may belong in other groups depending on how one considers the situation.

For illustration, one interviewee stated “you can’t succeed unless your entire community succeeds.” This can be viewed as a condition of the self: their personal motivation for volunteering might be rationalized as a way to meet their personal need to remain consistent with that attitude. It could also be viewed as a condition of the environment, where cultural and environmental expectations influence the volunteer because that’s what everyone expects. Finally, it could be viewed as pressure from others, not just from the community but from the person who isn’t successful in their unmet need for support. Each interpretation is valid as a construction.

There are some important caveats to consider when reviewing the content analysis findings tabled in Appendix D. The number of sources (participants) and references (coded passages) cannot reliably make claims as to the relative importance of each factor identified. Volunteering is a personal decision based on personal factors, and there are no doubt personal differences in the weighting of each factor that cannot be determined because of the way this data was collected. Moreover, the project interviewed only key informants – volunteers – and overlooks perspectives of non-volunteers and what might have motivated them to participate. References indicates only the number of passages highlighted, and within one interview multiple passages may reflect the fractured quality of the quotable material or repetition of it as a recurring theme and might not reflect new dimensions to the coded concept. Sources may more usefully understand how widespread the idea is shared across participants, though one again must remain critical of the reliability due to cross-interview effects by both the researcher in the delivery of questions and conversational probes as well as uncontrolled inter-participant conversations about the interview content.

The primary value is in exposing the raw concept for examination and give a *rough sense* of importance; these findings and discussion make weak claims as to the strength of each factor identified. Future and further ranking of factors among volunteers was out of scope for the research, and a good avenue for further research within the community. The following examination and discussion of the factors is presented with cautious claims of relative importance.

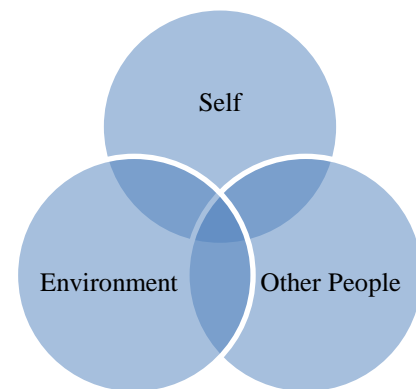


FIGURE 7. CO-CONSTRUCTION BETWEEN THE SELF, OTHERS, AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

5.4.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Factors that helped lead members to a decision to volunteer were grouped in factors of self, environment, and others and were found to follow that order of decreasing quantity and distribution across participants. Of the 18 sources (interviews) and 371 total references (coded passages), the self was 18/155, the environment was 18/137, and the others was 16/79. These are all tabled in Appendix D, and a more detailed examination of the factors continues in 5.4.2-5.4.4.

Under self, motivations had the highest distribution and frequency; specifically, the motivation of efficacy in the application of skills or talents (17/71). Subsets of this factor included the application of a skill, the learning of a skill, or fulfilling an external need for experience and skill. Members' freedom to express themselves facilitated by having more control of their environment might support this motivation.

Under environment, activities had the highest distribution and frequency (17/76). Many were revealed, however the most mentioned was the element of shared meals together (10/16) followed by the Wreck-Tower Cup (7/10) and unattributed (general) activities (7/9). This influence of the activities in the environment supports the idea that they help facilitate self-expression and self-efficacy.

Under others, examples set by others (12/29) had the highest distribution and frequency. This was followed by a very similar and parallel idea of the example of others in *supporting* the efforts of volunteers (12/26). It's not just seeing examples set by others, but also seeing volunteers be supported. The influence of others modelling volunteer behaviour and in observing reinforcing behaviour from other community members may be a self-fulfilling propagation of future volunteers; participation is driven through example and encouragement and creates social momentum, and momentum assists in keeping a critical mass of volunteering participation.

I would have still volunteered because I got excited again. It was that feeling of possibility and what we could do and how it would be so instantaneous (Participant 6).

In a way, you almost get recruited when you're in your second year. At least I found that. "Ok, you did this Coffee House thing. Now you can lead this music team." That's just how volunteering ends up happening. You're more than happy to do it, but sometimes people just seek you out. And that's why you put yourself out there (Participant 6).

I think welcome month, actually. That was the beginning of this year. I felt connected and purposeful. I felt like "you know I had benefitted so much from living at Green College, personally and professionally in the year before that I wanted to give-back and convey to people this is a place where they could also benefit in those ways" (Participant 10).

Even though a person might not be as open or as engaged previously, but just looking at people behave because I mean imitation is also part of a social process. People are looking and starting to imitate - in a way that's peer-pressure in a good sense. They are peer-pressured in being more open, more friendly, more ready to participate in stuff. Because otherwise if you don't... I mean you're very fast to see who is falling-out right? (Participant 11).

These three major factors of self-efficacy, activities together, and the observation and influence of modelling and community reinforcement may combine in a cycle. Volunteers create the opportunities for activities together, activities together create opportunities to see this behaviour

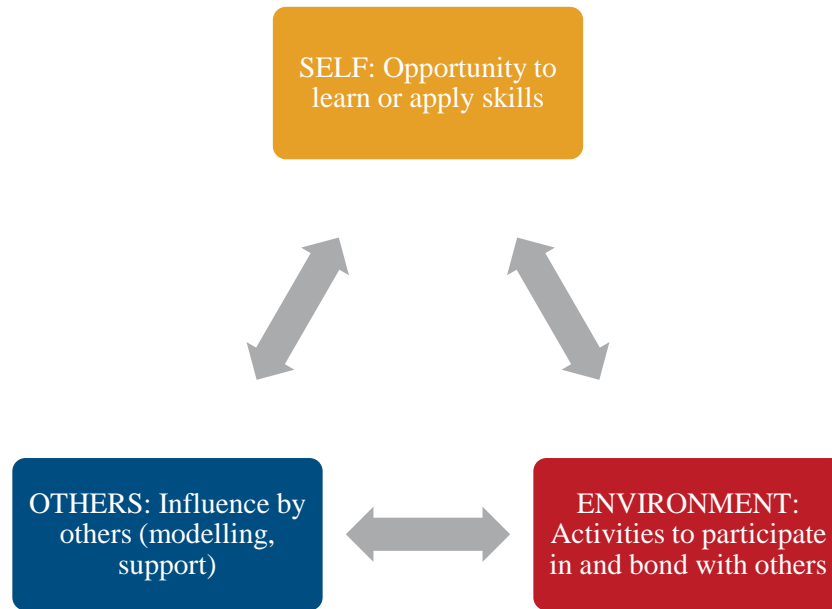


FIGURE 8. CYCLE OF VOLUNTEERING AT GREEN COLLEGE

performed and supported by others, and observation and influence of others encourages volunteer participation. The combination of self-efficacy with social pressure or inspiration of others creates the volunteer at Green College; knowing the latter has a momentum aspect, one wonders what the threshold is for participation. In other words, if momentum is lost, will there be enough to sustain a volunteering community? The project data does not have reliable data on this, but it does help provide evidence to direct future questions and research.

5.4.2 SELF

The first major group clustered factors relating to the self that would influence members to participate and volunteer, yielding 155 references across all 18 participant sources. Within this group, information about their identity, personal motivators, past experiences and personal values emerged.

IDENTITY

Sometimes when you're proud of being part of something, I think it becomes much easier to be selfless in a way. You can identify with it, and once you're identifying with the College then you're not really being selfless. (Participant 9).

Members raised the importance of attachment of one's identity, to either the College or to the role they volunteered for. By associating oneself with something bigger one can establish their connection to something else, whether it be as captain of a sports team or as committee chair for a committee. It expands their commitment beyond the self to something larger, and in doing so improve their sense of self-worth and status with the community. This is a two-way relationship, where the actions of other members can also affect how good one feels about the association; if the community is doing good things, then by association one can share the sense of it. It creates a layer of accountability to others beyond one's own needs and allows one to be caring and supportive to others.

MOTIVATORS

The interview questions probed for motivations to participate and volunteer, and a diverse range of them came from the interviewees.

Application of Skills or Talents: This group of motivations are clustered from a need or desire to apply and grow their own skills. This cluster of motivations to participate included base external requirements, such as putting the experience on their CVs for their career advancement or award applications. Members gave a sense that they contributed because they had skills and wanted to apply them, giving them both opportunity learn and improve in the application of those skills (a sense of mastery) and to a sense of purpose or agency in doing something. Extending the idea of a sense of agency, members also suggested a thrill in contributing to something new and changing the way things work.

Belonging and Relationships: They included a motivation for maintaining relationships and a sense of belonging. Members are motivated to build social relationships, but to also fit-in with the wider group. The connections made in those relationships are identified as the reward, and one is motivated to maintain them. This motivation was noted to have a *negative* element, of a “herd mentality” that can come from pressure from members to be of similar mind. One member highlighted this sense of belonging and of the importance of relationships may be due to the relative absence of those opportunities elsewhere in their experience at the university.

Curiosity: Some members describe their willingness to participate and volunteer was sparked by a curiosity. That curiosity stemmed from a willingness to try something new, or from the self-satisfaction or thrill of experiencing something new.

Duty: Members expressed a motivation to participate and volunteer simply on the basis that “it needed to be done” and the implication that no-one else was going to do it. Members take on a degree of responsibility and from that are compelled to act based on a sense of duty to meet that responsibility. Members felt that responsibility both to the College and in a wider worldly context. For some that was supported by their position and resources and there was some obligation to act. For others they suggested a personal responsibility to the world to apply their talents and use their privileges to lift others up and to set a standard for others to be inspired to model after.

I think you have some people that do really want to improve the community and have good things happen. I think you have some people that have that bent of "this needs to happen. I want it to happen. So I gotta make it happen."(Participant 13).

Fun: Members expressed both personal and relationship-based motivation for fun. For some it was motivating to themselves to participate and volunteer as it was expected to be fun or it was fun because it was done with others they had a friendship with. For others it was to try to help spread the fun and benefit to others. Fun is core to the motivation, though it appears that it could also be related to others such as belonging and relationships or duty.

Intrinsic Value: Members expressed a motivation that is inherent to the activity that makes them feel good in doing it. This includes prosocial things like helping others, where the act of helping another is itself a “good thing” and the member feels good for contributing or associating with it. Others are very attached or passionate about the activity, where the activity has some intrinsic value to them. In both examples it is possible members are identifying with the good of the activity.

PAST EXPERIENCE

Possibly what got me initially involved was the previous volunteer experiences. Previously I found volunteering to be a rewarding, often interesting experience. It seemed like a good thing to continue on at Green College. (Participant 9)

One's past experiences and memories may drive volunteer behaviour. Members expressed having previous positive volunteer experience or experience doing the work involved. This experience included things both before and during their time in the community. If members did not have the experience before they may gain it at the College. Motivations to apply one's skills have a role here, including participating due to missed past experiences. For one member, past experience also drove a kind of optimism about the efforts required such that they had confidence and/or a lessened fear of failure.

PERSONAL VALUES

Members gave many examples of values. Values are expected to underlie actions of its community members. These values are a mix of those volunteering members believed for themselves and for those around them. Members generally believed others shared the same values.

I believe in treating other people with respect and love. Being generous. Empathy and being empathic. (Participant 4).

When I make other people feel happy that makes me feel happy. That's something in a sense that I guess is self-serving. (Participant 13).

You can't succeed unless your entire community succeeds. (Participant 0).

Work ethic is a big value here. I've never ever seen people this committed to work in my life. (Participant 0).

So not pre-judging people, but letting people come in and present themselves and having their opinions and attitudes. I will say, in terms of things like religion and politics, most residents have pretty similar compatible views. (Participant 7).

Most volunteer values involved being kind, open-minded, tolerant, fair and cooperative, and being diligent. These values reflect the sense of community many members spoke of, where people were kind and generous towards others, tolerant of different views and open-minded enough to receive them. Fairness and cooperation with a hard-work diligence or industriousness promotes a kind of responsibility or accountability towards contributing a "fair share" for the good of the community while distributing the benefits proportionately.

5.4.3 ENVIRONMENT

The second major group clustered factors in the environment that would influence members to participate and volunteer, yielding 137 references across all 18 participant sources. Within this group, information about the physical structure, processes, and wider social context emerged. This wider social context is separate from the last major group (others) as a more diffuse sense of culture.

PHYSICAL CONTEXT

Members suggest that the physical context of the College supports the connection of the community. From the interviews, three dimensions of this physical context surfaced: privileged spaces, remote spaces, and shared spaces.

Privileged Spaces: Several members reflected on the unique character of the College, describing it in magical terms like “Hogwarts” from Harry Potter and in (fondly) nostalgic and personally-significant terms like a summer camp or campground. These spaces have a unique or rare character about them, and members suggest an attachment to them. Membership permits a select group of members to occupy these rare spaces as a privilege, making their time at the College seem more special than if it were a more common environment.

Remote Spaces: Members suggested that the College’s relative remoteness to other areas of activity on campus isolate it and, consequently, require members to be active in the College’s spaces. That activity helps form the bond among members. The remoteness creates a barrier to members to engage with the rest of campus, where they might otherwise go about their various ways and not engage each other at the College. In that remoteness members find activities and friendships close to home.

Shared Spaces: Members commented on a range of shared space concepts. First, members recognize that the College’s buildings are built in a kind of “circle,” with all the residential rooms built around the Common Kitchen and that supports a kind of togetherness. Not mentioned by interviewees, such a circle would also share the benefits and drawbacks more tightly among residents, where both fun and nuisances are shared and thus promotes a shared responsibility to behave in a way that does not detract from the community at large. Members may share bathrooms with another roommate and lounge and study spaces in Graham House, and must have a healthy relationship with someone else to use those spaces. Meals are shared together in the Great Hall. The College’s spaces are designed to be shared, and even the (commercial) kitchen of the GCDS is mentioned by members as part of this shared experience – those spaces were offered up for some activities led by Resident Members.

PROCESSES

Within the environment at Green College, there are general processes and activities that take place. These were divided into activities and to adjustment, membership, and organizational processes.

Activities

I think that that's what the volunteering at Green does. It creates a community, and it is one that you don't get to leave. (Participant 0).

Members mentioned a significant number of activities that occur at the College that promote the bond among members, activities that require members either to help create or participate in. The action and impact of each of these activities varies. Members suggest these activities create a bond among members and create the community. By working together for a common purpose members liken it to a team-building exercise on a community scale. These activities permit one to have input into how things are done in the community, to derive some benefit from the effort, to identify with others and the community, and to deepen the level of trust and friendship among members. Doing

things together helps members relate by seeing what's common between them and share experiences to new and interesting things.

Academic Programming: The College's academic programming is comprised of non-curricular lectures on a variety of topics and attendance is not compulsory. This activity is engaging both academically and socially. Interviewees focussed mostly on the Member Series' talks where Resident Members present their own topics as a way to see another "side" of a member. Additionally, attending these lectures is seen as a showing of support for their friends and is a kind of peer encouragement for sharing ideas. This exposure to knowledge helps members see common interests and expose them to new ideas and inspiration for their own studies. The Resident Members' Series has low expectations so the lecture itself is not intimidating to the presenter and allows for trust to be built with the audience – an audience including friends and many other attending Resident Members. It also satisfies motivations for public speaking practice, something Members need in their teaching and research careers.

The academic programming is one area where non-Resident Members participate. By design, the College appoints interested faculty as series' convenors to run a series of lectures. They are then given support to help bring scholars to the University and share their knowledge to the wider public. The cross-disciplinary exposure in these lectures helps spur new ideas and connections.

Coffee House: The College's Coffee Houses are an opportunity for members to share their talents and abilities with the community. One assumes the primary motivation is for members to have fun together. Members describe this activity as a place where people can take pride in the community for the talents seen. The very act of performing at a Coffee House is a moment of faith, where one trusts that they can share their talents without being judged badly, to do it in a "safe" environment, and in return members can feel a closer bond to be one of the group. It is a fun activity where members can come together and form friendships and to be entertained by each other.

GC Players: Resident Members create their own theatrical group called the GC Players, and it is a tradition that goes back to the early years of the College's formation. The activity is parallel to other kinds of sportive team-play, where members come together with a shared purpose. It allows for members to bond together, for a production that will ultimately be viewed over several nights to community members and the wider public. The casting is not traditional; members are cast based on their personalities, as some members do not have previous acting experience. Much like a Coffee House, the production is a moment of faith where volunteers put their time and effort into something that will be judged. Unlike a Coffee House, the production involves significantly more coordination among members to pull it off, and the production is open to the wider public and not just an audience of fellow community members. The stakes and pressure is much higher.

The play is a contribution not just to the resident community but to the wider public who attends, and can be seen both as an egoistic and alter-centric expression of the community. As an egoistic expression, the play is a selfish pursuit of personal mastery in the arts including both the dramatic as an actor and the technical as a producer or stagehand. As an alter-centric expression the play is a gift to the community in the form of entertainment.

Shared Meals: Quite possibly the most important opportunity for the community to bond, but not necessarily an opportunity to volunteer, is the shared meals together. Members widely regard this as most like dining together with family. Members share their meals in the Great Hall 10 times per week for breakfasts and dinners, or are prepared and shared together in the Common Kitchen.

These meals are served at fixed times, where breakfast and dinner are served within approximately a 2-hour window of time. One can volunteer to support the dining experience through involvement with the Green College Dining Society, a non-profit society run by Resident Members.

To have other people and to talk. That's something that reminds people of family. Family dinners, right. (Participant 11).

I think it's really important having the communal dinners and breakfasts. Many of us are really quite busy, and it forces us to interact. I think many of us are on different schedules and so on, and I can imagine that if this were a regular residence I wouldn't know a quarter of Green College. I think having had discussions with these people and sharing a drink some evenings is where you get to know these people really well. (Participant 9).

The conversations facilitate and reinforce relationships among members. Relatively speaking, members have the opportunity to interact with each other at least twice a day on meals alone over the course of one or more years. The frequency and regularity of these encounters when members are quite busy in their studies elsewhere on campus creates one of the few mandatory experiences at the College everyone must share.

If you don't get to pick who you sit next to, each day you have to be nice to everyone. Otherwise you're going to have really awkward meals. I think what happens in those meal spaces is we make connections and we make friends and we make loyalties. (Participant 0).

Tradition in the Great Hall is to “fill in the tables” and not break out into smaller groups. This forces one to converse with other members, often a random member, and allows one to get to know a variety of members. It establishes an awareness of others, an awareness of any commonalities in shared interests and experiences. Dinner often follows the 5pm lecture from the academic programming, and the topics of conversation can extend the knowledge shared there. Other important conversations about activities happening at the College are shared, exposing opportunities for members to find something of interest and get involved. It exposes members to seeing their friends and others getting involved.

Sports: Like the GC Players experience, members participate and volunteer their time and energies in team play activities. These experiences include Co-rec teams hosted by the university, pick-up games on the College's lawn, and playing ping pong in the Great Hall after dinner. Playing competitively as a team draws members together to a common purpose. Members mention the sports act as an “icebreaker” to get to know others. Relationships among team members during practice and games are described on a different level from normal friends, though those qualities are not explored. Members share in triumph and defeat, impacting their sense of pride through their shared identity as a team and in representing the College.

Welcome Month: Welcome Month is a major coordination of activities put together by a significant number of resident volunteers. These volunteers organize a number of mini-events and activities in a competitive format that wraps-up at the end of the month. The events are varied such that there's conceivably something for all members. Members regard this whole program of events over the month to not be possible unless everyone got involved. The administration supports it, and trusts that the activities will all be held responsibly and inclusively. Every committee at the College has a place in the month's activities, and members are given opportunities to see and participate in all of them in their first month of residency. Within Welcome Month, there is an

open committee night where the committees are explained to attending residents. Many members mention their positive experiences during Welcome Month as reasons for them to want to “give back,” get involved, and return the experience to new members.

Wreck-Tower Cup: Another major event like Welcome Month, the Wreck-Tower Cup is a college-wide competition held twice annually with St. John’s College, UBC’s second graduate residential college. Volunteers participate in the team and to coordinate the hosting and events of the challenge. This competition brings together the entire membership, uniting the College against a common opponent and giving it a shared goal to win the trophy and a place engraved on its base. The trophy, as a physical artifact, is a visible reminder of the community’s efforts and triumph. The challenge creates an opportunity for further investment into a shared identity with the community. Unlike activities that are largely internally-focussed, the Wreck-Tower Cup is a very visible and external community challenge; there may be a sense of duty also invoked in representing the community.

From the event I would say the competition. There's a lot of energy and work that went into it, and it was cool to a) see it pay off and b) see so many people invested in it....Even the trophy at the end is a lot of glory, and don't get me wrong the game is great. I think tangibility is something that can be effective. (Participant 1).

I think the Wreck-Tower cup is really important in promoting College spirit. Even doing the art nights. I know that was huge for a lot of people to de-stress. I know originally that wasn't even part of a committee, That was just someone's idea. I think recognizing again the talents and the values that you bring and pitching it to the community. (Participant 6).

Adjustment Processes

There's this whole process that you go through. You get there and you're sort of overwhelmed, you meet people, but everybody's included to sort of introduce themselves to find out who you are, get sort of comfortable with who you are, and then once that process has reached a cresting point then people are comfortable to start having these conversations. (Participant 17).

Members describe a process of adjustment to new surroundings. New members will have left behind familiar surroundings, and need to seek out new connections and build a new life. This new life is described as one that is integrated, across domestic, social and academic lines where there is little separation. This integration forms a powerful bond to both members and the community. Over time, members become more comfortable with their sense of self and abilities and be able to comfortably contribute.

Membership Processes

None of us chose to have these 100 friends. In that sense we're thrown in with these people. (Participant 9).

Members mentioned two membership processes, the application itself and the process where members are assigned roommates. Through the membership application process they are required to state how they might contribute to the community, which forces members to begin imagining a place and a contribution they could make. One member expressed interest in interviewing new members rather than rely on statements, to see and more closely assess just how much the potential

member would contribute. Ultimately, the membership process selects only members who can demonstrate a community-minded focus or at least present a convincing one to the committee.

The room assignment process is also mentioned. While it is true that most members do not have a choice who they share the College with, all members are selected for residency based on shared criteria. Staff make the most of what information they do have of new members when assigning them. Staff make educated guesses on roommate selection, and it is regarded to have a significant impact on the College's community environment; roommates who do not get along will waste their energy and efforts fighting and focusing on themselves rather than contributing to the greater community. Poor relationships set from the beginning delay or hinder member opportunities to establish themselves and to identify with others in the community. The ideal amount of tension in this area is not clear, as one may also assume that some tension may be beneficial in making salient the importance of maintaining good relationships in community living and without it may be overlooked or taken for granted.

Organizational Processes

I think to a certain extent, there needs to a certain degree of organization. You get a bunch of people in a new environment. It's great if there's degree of resourcefulness, but no matter how resourceful they are - if they're making a bunch of pizzas in different directions - it's not going to go off. There has to be a certain degree of organization. (Participant 9).

Members mentioned general organizational processes that facilitate involvement. The general organization of the College's committees and structures is also mentioned, noting that all of the resourcefulness and labour would be nothing unless there was some sort of organization to coordinate it. In the quote, this organization was referring to a large effort by members to hand-make pizzas as part of the hospitality offered to the competitor at the Wreck-Tower Cup, but could be extended to all volunteering at the College. The committees are integral to organizing the events that bring members together.

Members mention support comes from staff, in a supportive yet "hands off" sort of way. Resident Members are given creative freedom to create whatever activities they like, and the office helps provide information and resources to help make them possible. It does so in a way that demonstrates trust and allows the volunteers to be responsible for the creation and success of each member activity. A more controlling administration might dampen those creative forces and consequently dampen the scale, scope, and number of events members volunteer to create.

From the interviews, peer nomination is common; members are nominated by others to roles, and are given the confidence by their peers that they are both suited to the role and belong to the group. There is not a clear sense of how much peer nomination is used in the recruitment of volunteers, but it does appear to be significant. Such a recruitment method has little involvement with Staff Members, and has implications about where Green College must focus any improvement efforts in attracting and retaining volunteers.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

The social context grouping of factors includes things about the general social sense of the environment all of this activity takes place in. It is less of a group about direct social experiences but one more of the general feelings members expressed about the community environment. These factors may blur with the third major grouping, other people, as the social interactions included

there may contribute to the broader sense of the social environment covered here. Factors identified in the social context include common experience, openness, sense of home or family, and trust.

Common experience: Members commented that within the community there are shared common experiences. First, for some there is a general “in it together” sense about the community where members know they all must implicitly get along though they do not have to agree. The origin of this sentiment is unclear, whether seeded by more experienced Resident Members or simply understood through observation. There is a common vulnerability among new residents who are new to the environment, and in knowing others are settling in there is a shared comfort.

Over time once a member loses some of that vulnerability, common experiences from activities together bring about a set of shared experiences with others. That exposes members to potential commonalities with other members and future opportunities to grow new relationships with them on that common ground.

Openness: Members describe a general culture of openness that is taught or somehow passed-on to new members. This openness is not well described, but one might deduce it is related to the personal values of curiosity and tolerance in allowing one to be comfortable with both the College and with themselves.

Sense of home or family: Most members identify and relate to the experience at Green College as if it was one big family. The description of family suggests that members are there simply because they are there, bonded by simply being there. This bond has members treat others in a kind of familial respect and automatic inclusion that gives them space to be themselves and contribute as they can. It is home with family. Notably, one member described bringing back a former member into the community – members can leave but can also be socially reincorporated.

Trust: Members describe a sense of trust among members of the community. This trust permits members to show themselves to others, letting members be momentarily vulnerable to others while doing so. In return, some members find new connections with others who seek out the member and appreciate what was shared. For every moment of vulnerability, members begin to trust each other to know that they will not be judged as any less a member of the community. The trust also permits members to volunteer into positions without requisite skills. They are trusted to contribute however they can, even if there might be someone with greater skill – interest alone can suffice and trust can make up the rest of the deficit. One possible but unfortunate consequence to this trust is that it is perhaps too trusting, that members trust each other too much and be blind to risk.

5.4.4 OTHER PEOPLE

The final major grouping includes interactions with others, yielding 79 references across 16 of 18 participant sources. Members exert influence over others in the community in many ways. Members support and encourage others, set examples to others, set expectations for others, and have a duty to support others.

SUPPORT

Members show support for others by showing encouragement, experiencing positive reactions/success and in showing confidence in other’s abilities.

Encouragement: Members widely describe the encouragement of others to contribute. Encouragement manifests between co-chairs of various committees, to help the committee push

and create events and activities for other members when motivation and time may be lacking. Members motivate one-another to also push through times of low-energy, to contribute and take action. Members encourage others through the power of suggestion to take-up new activities.

Show of confidence: Members expressed that many of them contribute and volunteered through specific encouragement from individuals, by being asked by other members to contribute. For some, this comes in the form of peer nominations as a show of confidence from others in the members' ability and fit for the role. For others, they are asked and trusted to carry out a task. Members are appreciated for their current efforts and that motivates them to continue to contribute.

EXAMPLES SET BY OTHERS

I think when you come here, you see how active everyone is. You want to have a part in it. You want to be involved. (Participant 15)

Examples of contributing and volunteering are patterned in the community, and members notice this and want to contribute as well. Members suggest this is a process of imitation through peer-pressure, but also as a sense of gratitude or appreciation for the space. For those new to the College, imitation would help one begin to fit-in with the new community. For those who recognize and receive the benefits of participation, they may be inclined to participate in gratitude and reciprocate. Members are influenced by seeing others' commitment and perhaps perseverance in working through challenges. Free-riders – those who do not contribute – are seen as a dead-weight and deterrent to getting involved so the more members of the community participate perhaps the greater the influence of this imitation or modelling effect. Volunteers may see free-riders with some derision. Such free-riders may also be examples members model after, and a critical mass of volunteers might be a necessary part of the social momentum mentioned in 5.4.1.

Example of friends: Some members were not shy in indicating their participation was because it was a way to do things with their friends. Simply put, members will prioritize hanging out with friends over other people. This friendship underlies the importance of creating bonds between members – more friendships means more opportunities for “doing fun things with friends” and can become the baseline motivator for participation. For some, this friendship connection made invisible the volunteering effort for the greater benefit of the community. One can also imagine the negatives that come from College activity dominated by friendship-groups, where dominant cliques may discourage others from getting involved because they don't fit implicitly or explicitly with the other group(s).

Example of who came before: Legacies started by previous members of the College are suggested to have set a cascade of generationally-reciprocated volunteering. As members leave the College, someone must step-in to replace them and their previous efforts. As some members remain for multiple years at the College, they have opportunity to step-in having seen and experienced the benefit themselves. There is a consistent desire among members to reciprocate to return the favour, to “pay it forward,” and to show appreciation for the efforts of others by continuing their legacy. Again, there is more support for social momentum being key to the volunteering community; volunteer precursors set the example and the community is working from generations of successively modelled volunteers.

EXPECTATIONS FROM OTHERS

That was probably one of the hardest parts of Green, just the balance between being here for school but also being part of the community. Sometimes more it was a stressor to feel that I was supposed to be doing all that extra stuff. (Participant 14).

Members describe a pervasive expectation to participate and contribute, a kind that is stressful to others. This expectation to contribute provides the confidence to some, such as the GC Players theatrical productions, in knowing there's both cast and audience for their work. This expectation is obvious and attached to all committee roles. This expectation exists in a power relationship between generations of residents, where "you don't say no" to people who are older and have been around the College for longer; while there's an appreciation and desire to continue the legacy and commitments of others that came before them, members communicate expectations to others to keep it up. Not meeting expectations is likened to letting the team down and that pressure to perform may not be welcome by all members.

DUTY TO SUPPORT GROUP RELATIONS

The idea that there's a sacred gap between people and you have to tend it. I think that Green tends that gap really well because we eat together, we live together, we see and all know that grad school sucks. We learn and create a community where someone puts their hand up and says I need help, people do. (Participant 0).

I think because we share space, we share meals, we are resident members with a personal responsibility to be good to each-other. To be kind and understanding of each other and our differences. We're connected by the fact that we live in this unique space. (Participant 10).

Some members commented about a kind of responsibility or duty in their relationship with other people. There is overlap between this as a factor from others and as a motivator (duty) from the self. Shifting perspective to the other, these members have a strong sense of commitment and duty to the community and to others. This commitment is also expressed when managing relationships, ensuring people make amends when there are serious disagreements or to volunteer for tasks and projects that might not be enjoyed but are considered necessary for the benefit of the community. This cooperation is described as looking after one-another as a neighbourhood. They may have incorporated a broader community identity into their own and act partly out of self-protection as much as extending kindness to others.

The following community narrative contextualizes many of the aforementioned factors found in the content analysis, illustrating both the community and the volunteering behaviours in it.

6.0 Green College: A Community Narrative

It takes many words to explain Green College. (Participant 9).

I think a lot of people would agree that it is a unique space to live in. That it is quite the opportunity to live here in the way that we get to live with each other in this scholarly and social community. I think people want to preserve that sense of uniqueness. That little sense of magic or mystery. And that guides their actions in a lot of ways. (Participant 10).

One objective of the project was to capture illustrative examples of the community phenomenon. Powerful examples from the interviews capture historically and generationally significant examples of life for current members. It is a record for members to others about how things were.

It takes many words to explain what Green College is because it is different for everyone. Members of the community create and re-create the College with each passing year from their contributions. No single year is quite like the one before it. Through the interviews, words to explain Green College come from the voices of many of those members.

The following three sections are created from the experiences shared in the interviews and the experience of the researcher as a member of the community (Staff Member). Each narrative is framed in the same constructivist groups of the environment, the self, and others.

6.1 Environment

It's not a scary thing to contribute to the College. It's whatever you're able to contribute you are welcome to. It's not anything goes, but... almost anything is good. (Participant 10).

The culture is not invasive or force you to do these things at those times all the time. ... The culture is there and it's what you make of it. ...It gives people the freedom to make of it whatever they want to. (Participant 1).

Members describe the College community as a space where (almost) anything-goes, where contributions are welcome and supported. One should be clear when we speak of contributions that they are synonymous with participation in coordinating activities at the College. They are a form of generosity towards others through their membership in the community. They are not contributions of a financial kind one might find paired in an academic paper on volunteerism.

These contributions reflect a range of possible interactions available to all members. Participants spoke of a variety of activities that they as a volunteer organized and executed for others. These events included a range that could suit both introverts and extroverts, from a low-key board-game activity to an inter-college challenge with the Wreck-Tower Cup. In particular, team-based (and team-building) competition and cooperation develop cohesion among smaller groups within the community while united for the cause or challenge. The distinction between social and academic events is meaningless, when even academic events are social occasions for Resident Members. As you'll read later in this section, Green College life integrates domestic, social, and academic experiences.

Contributions from other members should also be noted for another characteristic – quality. Members are granted residency at Green College largely in part due to their academic excellence and achievements. Prospective members are required to submit a personal statement, their *curriculum vitae*, transcripts, two academic letters of reference and a personal letter of reference

to be considered to residency by the Membership Committee (“Apply for Residency | Green College,” n.d.). Consider then the implications when grouping people of academic excellence and of achievement together in an almost “anything goes” environment. The potential for outstanding contributions is high, yet among members the expectations are low. One participant commented and compared their subsequent experience in an American College, believing that the difference in the feel was due to the American College being too attached to prestige and consequently afraid to fail and take risks. This tendency to not take things too seriously needs to be explored further lest the College raise the bar by standardizing contributions for members and in marketing the prestige of the College.

Helping people to recognize that they can do whatever they want and then helping them get to a space where they can make a plan and they can do it. That is the work I love. Green gives me a space to do things like that outside of my PhD. (Participant 0).

There are possibilities here because the structure here allows for a particular community development. It allows for the intensity and sense of purpose that is much more diffuse in other settings in the communities. The academic program, but the social program - the promotion of sociability through Coffee Houses and relaxing together. (Participant 16).

One important distinction several participants made is comparative; Green College provides the opportunity for members to have experiences *one cannot get elsewhere at UBC*. Two features emerge, first that the community development at the College is both more intense and more focused than elsewhere and that the Green College experience is an extracurricular one. The Green College community is a complement to the university experience provided at UBC and a platform for participation and exploration of interests.

I think here it's so easy to find and try so many different things. In terms of volunteering, or trying different sports, board games, musical instruments, etc. That's something. There are so many new things that you are exposed to that I think that makes it even better is that you can do it with people who are close to you. (Participant 3).

In a positive loop, members are able to find different things to do that may be of interest to them and in doing them form friendships; those friendships then facilitate finding and doing more interesting things together. Commonalities and shared interests are discovered in these opportunities as members enjoy themselves. Those relationships that make sharing together desirable and even more enjoyable and natural in the future as members expressed that it is simply more fun to do things together with friends.

These committees and activities in the community are dynamic, where there's something for everyone and if there isn't, there's the ability to make them through a committee sponsored event. Members can approach committee chairs with ideas for activities throughout the year, and the committees themselves can also change. The informal Resident Committees (see Appendix A) can be created *ad hoc* from year to year to align with the interests of the community at large and are not fixed, though by tradition many of them continue from year to year (“Green College Committees | Green College,” n.d.).

The function of events (and as you'll read later of structured dining), appears to be integral in providing the structures that enable these social interactions. These interactions are a means for members to connect with others, both for support when in need and for growth, to become a better version of themselves. These interactions are not just socially focused, but also academically

focussed. Organizing social events however are seen to have the lowest barriers, where participation takes less effort as it is seen as simply doing things with or for friends. Such events may not have the community explicitly in mind for some of the volunteers organizing those events. This implies that academic events might be more difficult to organize and have successful levels of participation unless there are other equivalent incentives to appeal to members.

We were sitting down to dinner and the kitchen had just closed. A resident had come up a minute or two too late, and had a long day and this was sort of the last thing that he needed. He came somewhat dejectedly and sat down at the end of one of the long tables, and we got a plate. Basically, the plate went down the length of the table and there was a plate of food at the other end. It was quite an amazing experience I think. It certainly affected me quite profoundly. Green College really gives one a sense of community, or it's given me a sense of community that I don't think I have experienced elsewhere. ...

I think it's really important having the communal dinners and breakfasts. Many of us are really quite busy, and it forces us to interact. I think many of us are on different schedules and so on, and I can imagine that if this were a regular residence I wouldn't know a quarter of Green College. I think having had discussions with these people and sharing a drink some evenings is where you get to know these people really well. (Participant 9).

Quite possibly the most striking vignette of a members' experience at the College, from this example one sees a culture of group problem-solving and generosity. For context, the length of one of the long tables in the Great Hall typically seats approximately 16-18 people. One might imagine a few closer friends sharing from their plate for this member, but an entire table contributing is a more significant gesture.

It is a touching and inspiring experience for a member to see fellow community members support someone like that. It is both invigorating for more skeptical hearts and inspiring to others to pay-it-forward. It fosters a kind of connection among members.

The thing that's most important, and most important here, it's really all about the relationships that develop between people. That's what's important. If things aren't going as well as they might, and you and I might perhaps think about December when things weren't going as well as they might, you're buoyed up by the fact that you've got all these wonderful people that believe in the College. (Participant 16).

Most of the processes in your life at this point are connected to Green College. You live here. You eat here. You study here. You don't technically study here, but it is on the campus so you study close enough.... Green College expands into every sphere of your life. ...

When I moved to Canada, I literally knew no-one in this part of the world. In one year, due to Green College, I was able to develop relationships that are so deep and so complex (in a good way). It's Green College and its structures and the things you do here that enable you to move forward so fast. It can take ages in a different setting. If you're just working somewhere, you don't do stuff together with other people and it can take much longer. It's like team building - when you do stuff together, you really get close. (Participant 3).

Resident members experience life at the university differently at Green College; life is more integrated, facilitated by the conversations and relationships they make. Members compared life at the College with team-building exercises where doing something together one gets close to

others. On a community scale, the number and strength of relationships creates a rich tapestry of threads connecting each member. Recalling the complementary and extracurricular nature of the College in relation to UBC, this tapestry may feature Green College experiences but is constructed with the rest of their UBC experience.

Members can in some ways “live” life in an interdisciplinary way with such integration. In interdisciplinary work one integrates knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. In community life at Green College, members integrate their personal, social, and academic experiences. This integration creates a depth of experience and of sharing that fosters a closer bond. It enriches the entire experience at Green College and UBC. One can grow as an individual and broaden their intellectual horizons with others as they grow and learn. The experiences in the community seem to hasten members towards personal development.

It just ... taught me to appreciate different perspectives in ways that I just didn't realize I could appreciate. Just all of the different social walks of life - so much of living at Green College is not only academic but it's also the people you meet, the friends you meet. The opportunities you take to get to know people. I've just never met such a diverse group of people before. And that changed me - for the better. (Participant 10).

I think the number one experience that everyone has and should have is that experience of going into that dining hall, sitting down with whoever happens to be there, and having all manner of conversations. You can talk about science. You can talk about social justice. You can talk about history. You can talk about politics. You can talk about anything with anyone. It's a space where you don't even have to hold back in the conversations. You can say controversial things in conversations with the people we have here, and by nature of who applies here in the first place you have people who you'll get argument and discussion and I think everyone comes away with something from having dinner as a group. And it's a great social experience as well, aside from the kind of conversations you have. (Participant 15).

I don't want to make it sound that Member Series is a transference of information because it's so much more than that. It's like this culture in which everyone is excited to learn about things that might not be central to them personally. Everyone is so excited and open to learn about these new things. It's just genuine like-mindedness and appreciation for people's work. (Participant 1).

In my years at Green College, I don't think I've met a single person who was in my discipline or in my school. I remember once talking with my friends in my masters. We were talking with people in my cohort when it would socialize. Sometimes they'd be like "you know, we should go out and meet people in different programs" but that never really happened. It was at Green College it was almost effortless to meet people from really different disciplines and with different perspectives. (Participant 7).

These opportunities for learning and growth are reinforced daily over the membership term of each member. They learn of other disciplines without being in them and engage in debate. They question their own perspectives as well as those of others. In their own disciplines they are taught within the lines of their discipline, surrounded by others learning the same material – a process that strengthens the learning of that material but does little to foil that learning against other lines of inquiry. For one member, the departmental silo for learning was effortlessly overcome by living

at the College. While learning about their own disciplines, members and guests at Green College have a unique opportunity to test and learn other bodies of knowledge so long as they remain open to the experience.

One might imagine any other student residence full of students from multiple disciplines ought to be able to achieve the same experience, but the sense from members is that this experience is unique here. Perhaps it is this “culture of learning” in all of its expressions paired with a small resident community of 100 that makes the difference. The culture of learning quote references the College’s Member Series lectures. These lectures are performed by Resident Members on a range of topics to a relatively small audience (approximately 20-30) of other members and the general public. Here members get to share their passion for knowledge by presenting information in their own disciplines.

The other quote on conversations at meal times highlights how the dinner table becomes a feast for the mind. One can find conversation topics ranging from the serious to the absurd; described in the interviews they range from the history of violence to unorthodox explorations of metaphysics to what you would name a pirate ship. Few of these conversations would be possible if there wasn’t a curiosity matched with an environment safe enough to be unconventional and receptive to new things. Perhaps it is this undirected openness to share, challenge and be challenged, and do so in a way that does not take itself too seriously that keeps the “bar” low enough for most people to be able to contribute any kind of conversation. This environmental combination allows the community to engage in what it is interested in most without fear.

Serendipity is tremendously important. The most important things happen when we least expect them in this process. (Participant 16).

In a culture of learning or of curiosity, a member highlighted another dimension. Serendipity is a capacity for seeing connections not actively sought. One may actively try to work in their own discipline or task but see and make a connection to another unrelated process. Academically and socially it happens at the public lectures and at the dinner table. As you will read next, the tradition of “filling in the tables” at dinner allows for random connections.

I think the dinner tables are a really good way of measuring the temperature of Green. You can see if we're all playing nice, or if we're starting to have factions. That's why I think that we're lucky in that way that we've got a visible community. Other people don't have that opportunity... If you're part of the group that decides not to fill in the table, you get isolated in the wider community. (Participant 0).

In addition to serendipity at work at the dinner table, the relative health of the community at the College is visible to everyone and with it. The dining experience is mandatory, and interviewees described a tradition of “filling in the tables” instead of breaking out into small private groups. When one dines one does not split-off for private dining away from the main table; one takes the next available seat in line at the table and thus may have a different person to sit next to every meal. This creates a clear cause-and-effect if the expectation is broken. This visibility might not be available in larger residences or where a meal plan system permits dining in multiple locations across a broad band of time (the GCDS meal plan is not transferrable to other locations and restricts dining to 6:15-7:30pm Sunday-Thursday).

This community-health visibility provides feedback to community members that relationships need repair or that individuals might need some support to get through external stresses in their

studies. The visible community at the table may create opportunities for stronger community-minded and altruistic individuals to intervene and try to repair any rifts. The compulsory and somewhat inflexible dining experience is an integral feature in creating a sense of community.

It's a history of cooperation that makes it possible in the present. It's a continuation. And I think too that's also supported by the administration who encourages these committees to be formed. It takes a hands-off approach in the sense that "this is your College." In a sense you get to shape it however you want, in the image you want, and we're here to support. Obviously you don't get to run the show fully, but there are opportunities to make it your own every new year. I think that's what's also interesting about the College is that it can be recreated, almost every year, with new people, depending on the turnover and the new batch of residents. Depending on the kind of roles people step up to do. It makes it really dynamic in that sense. That's something I don't think you get in other residences. (Participant 10).

To conclude, members are aware of their place in the history of the College. We too cannot forget the narrative of what came before; we are a product of history. The community story is entrenched in a history of a self-narrative, given the opportunity every year to change and revise the present and future community. The community maintains a particular form by choice in maintaining committees, re-creating the structures year after year and paying respects to former members' and their efforts by adding to what was done before. It continues a kind of support and generosity to other members, paying it forward not just within the year but to the next generation of members.

Committee activities are permitted to run with minimal interference. This "hands-off" operating freedom gives members a sense of control and responsibility for the success of the activity, while the administration provides by example a trust and generosity towards others. That example of trust is mimicked by members in their interactions with each other, where members trust each other to create something new.

To preface the next narrative frames on the self and others, one may define Green College *as* its groups, in isolation, such as Resident Members, Staff Members, and other constituents, but that does not capture the essence of what *happens* in the space. The "magic" or "mystery" of Green College is not *within* one of the College's constituencies but rather *between* them. A "hands-off relationship" or perhaps more positively a *laissez faire* management style is a reflection of trust that fosters the cooperation of people and their abilities. Living in close proximity requires a particular personal character among members, which leads us to the second narrative frame.

6.2 Self

I think that the idea that 'as a community we are responsible' is how a lot of people come to volunteer. A lot of the people who volunteer see that we're responsible for the community. (Participant 0).

The almost "anything goes" is limited by a sense of personal responsibility. Without personal responsibility, one can imagine a self-serving anarchy. Resident Members demonstrate a level of personal responsibility for their contributions to others and to the administration. They show it in their participation in the College's committees, committees that animate and shape what the community does in any given year.

This researcher's experience sees a tendency for others to pass responsibility to someone else: cleaning is for custodial staff; caring is for counsellors; enforcement is for the authorities. If there's a mess, someone else will clean it. If someone's hurt, someone else will heal them. If someone does bad things, someone else will take care of it. Though this tendency always seems to exist to some degree in the community, it rarely stays that way. These passing of responsibility tendencies seem to be countered at Green College by encouraging this personal sense of responsibility to the community, to an alter-centric point of view.

The College and its community extend responsibilities from a higher standard, physically and socially. Their 2015-2016 Resident Handbook makes frequent mention of personal responsibility, whether it is keeping the community "common kitchen" clean and orderly, or in Graham House covering and cleaning the piano after use, returning furniture to its original configuration, or keeping someone responsible if a fire is lit in the fireplaces. Graham House is a space one might casually think is taken care of by the institution and leave a mess. This is a space that is a commons block equivalent in other residences, but it does double-duty and is used as a shared space for hosting departmental meetings and visitors, for catered receptions, and for intimate conversations with scholars in a fireside chat format. The space has a historic and charming character to it in its architecture that perhaps also sets it apart from more modern institutional spaces. It feels more like a home, and one that everyone has a role to play to maintain it.

Extending social responsibilities for care for members shows through in programs like the Green Lanterns and in special efforts in the Community Values project. The Green Lanterns are independent but peer-nominated peer listeners that extend a layer of support between friends and other authorities. The Community Values project ("Community Values | Green College," n.d.) in 2015-2016 extends the responsibility of the entire College community in communicating what values members are expected to demonstrate while in residence. Neither of these extensions are truly necessary as there are supports elsewhere. For personal care, there are supports in their home departments and centrally at UBC. For values, there are rules for conduct in things like the Residence Contract and UBC's Student Code of Conduct. These programs and projects demonstrate creativity in extending responsibility towards others, in going beyond what is strictly necessary.

Work ethic is a big value here. I've never ever seen people this committed to work in my life. There are people who get up and are at the lab by 7:30 in the morning and come for dinner, and then they organize an event for that night, and then they go back to the lab. The work ethic is insane with some people. (Participant 0).

How does one do more than what is strictly necessary? Responsibility can be taken too narrowly, selfishly, leaving a "tragedy of the commons" situation. A strong work ethic to persevere and make things work perhaps broadens responsibilities and be more inclusive in what one is willing to look after. Recalling that Resident Members are selected for their academic and community achievements, the College population is skewed towards people with demonstrated work ethic.

This work ethic may be behind what helps reinforce members in their efforts in various committees. For Resident Members, it can take extra motivation and determination to carry out organizing an event, long past when the initial spark of inspiration brought it to life and when other priorities may have overtaken it. The quote reminds us that for some, their work ethic is spread across their work, school, and social lives. Any number of hazards in balancing those might deter someone. It takes effort to maintain relationships and all the other responsibilities in one's life.

Members must navigate the potential successes and failures of their contributions when trying something new, and of living with the results. It takes effort for members and staff to take the time to fully communicate risks, rewards, and responsibilities. With every new idea sparked every old idea and process must be defended. It is taxing to operate in a place that can repeatedly call the status quo into question, questioning the ideas that perhaps inspire but also questioning the rules one must uphold. Green College's Resident Committees are completely *ad hoc*, created and re-created with each year but they leave little documentation behind. Perhaps these changes and slowness in writing things down transparently for others has something to do with this priority for permitting change and in the vagaries of it all members are forced to be curious to find things out in conversation.

I moved here wanting to make friends and have that social life. I think that can be hard, especially if you're moving from outside Vancouver and going to grad school. How am I going to meet people? So this is a good answer to that. But also maybe valuing your work or your department more can also draw you away from the College community a bit as well. I found it quite challenging to attend the dinners especially towards the end, when you have so many other commitments and what shifts in your life. (Participant 14).

It is not just the community at Green that will exert an influence on a member. Their scholarly work in their department may also pull them away. Balancing the two can be a point of tension and friction. For members that integrate more with their academic department, the community may become a more distant priority. The same pressures within the community to participate that are a strength for some may be more repellant for others who cannot or do not want to divide their efforts between the College and their peers in their department.

You don't exist by yourself anymore, you coexist along with 99 other people. What does that mean to you? What does that mean in terms of participating in events, meetings, and being cooperative? Having a good time. Being cooperative while retaining some sort of personality and things like that. (Participant 4).

It's kind of like your neighbourhood too. When I was growing up, our neighbourhood was one little community. I lived on a dead-end street. Your parents looked after me. Those parents looked after you. You know. It was like a community, and I see this as a community. Everybody looks out for everybody else. It's your neighbourhood, right?(Participant 5).

When Green College gives you an atmosphere that perpetuates those ideas, like family and community and openness and friendliness and what-not, people automatically and positively respond to it. They want to keep it up. Even though a person might not be as open or as engaged previously, but just looking at people behave because I mean imitation is also part of a social process. People are looking and starting to imitate - in a way that's peer-pressure in a good sense. (Participant 11).

I think people are very respectful of other people's time. That's one thing Green College does very well. They recognize when something takes a lot of effort. Green College as a whole does a good job of showing up to events when they should. (Participant 1).

For those that do align themselves with the community, some members have an awareness beyond their own sense of self, of others and their impact on them. There is deliberate effort put into maintaining relationships and care of others. Where does this come from? We recall the actions of members described in the first narrative frame, where the welcoming nature and reciprocation of

good deeds seated in a culture that promotes generosity keeps the opportunities to change and participate open. Members have power. Members describe a community that has members who look out for the benefits of others.

Members show care for others not just for tending to their needs but also for showing support. Members participate with others in their events; from the interview quotes, members recognize the effort and generous gesture and find a way to encourage it with their support. In showing their support the implication is that they might have given up some other opportunity to “do the right thing” and return the gesture.

There are personal values, but they interact with our community. A lot of the things I personally value like intellectual conversation and communication and compassion and acceptance. Those are definitely things that are important to me, and is why I enjoy the College so much because I would say that they are also important to Green College as a community. (Participant 8).

Sometimes when you're proud of being part of something, I think it becomes much easier to be selfless in a way. You can identify with it, and once you're identifying with the College then you're not really being selfless. (Participant 9).

Involvement as a reflection of gratitude for the space. (Participant 10).

So that's the trade-off. We have this open community where we trust each other, but people can take advantage of it. (Participant 17).

Some members form a connection with the College community such that it becomes congruent with and part of their self-identity. This connection forms from the aforementioned activities together, but also due to an alignment of values. When members identify as part of something larger, they can overlook their personal circumstances and be more selfless. In gratitude for what they get for being part of it, they give and are trusting, and do so with risk that by being open and giving they can be taken advantage of. Everyone has an implicit responsibility to not break that trust, for breaking it would damage one's sense of self.

I think that whenever you are in a new situation and trying to find out how you belong, you might have a bit of impostor syndrome. That's definitely what I had when I came to grad school. I thought 'I'm not good enough to be here. Everyone else around me is amazing. I don't deserve to be here.' I'm a very positive person, and I think I was searching for that flipside. I had that shadow, but I wanted the light. Maybe if I find that then I'll feel confident in my graduate work, and I won't be afraid to do certain things or to speak up. I think there was definitely that element. (Participant 6).

I thought about that a lot because I was expecting to find something similar here (another College) that I didn't find. This is purely conjecture on my part, but I think the inhibition of it here comes in part from this serious prestige-related imposter syndrome that everybody has. And so everyone's terrified of sounding like an idiot so no-one's brave enough to have interesting conversations. Again, vast generalization. And people at Green didn't have that. Nobody was nervous about their intelligence. They just wanted to talk about interesting things. (Participant 17).

To close the personal characteristics narrative frame, we end with a return to responsibility of a kind – of a kind of responsibility to one's authenticity. Academic stresses felt by members of this

“imposter” syndrome in not feeling intelligent enough to match their program peers – and in Green College, the work ethic and intelligence of other members – is a poignant reminder of the fragility of community members. The foundations of one’s physical and emotional needs are uprooted by moving to a new University, and their own intelligence is repeatedly challenged by new information in their program and by their peers. In time these foundations find a place to be re-made within the College’s community supports and provides members an opportunity to re-make themselves. Members need an attitude that fosters resiliency, to face the unknown resolutely and with a secure sense of themselves. Without it, there might not be members confident enough talk freely.

6.3 Others

The majority of people came from different universities. People leave their familiar area they were at, and they come here and are new. Whenever you are new I guess you are automatically looking for something to associate with. You look at people who are like-minded. You look for ideas that correspond to what you are used to, and so on. Something familiar. (Participant 11).

There are people who said "what can we do to help? And how can we do it?" And they got involved to the level where you had alumni and current members saying let's have a discussion, let's try to make something work. I think the reason that struck me is that normally when people leave the space, they leave. (Participant 0).

I want to say place is very important but I don't want to limit it to these grounds because I know that it goes beyond it. That's something people need to be aware of. It is kind of cultish. Once you're here, it is part of you. You can't spend a year with a hundred people in a space like this and not. It's generational. (Participant 0).

From the beginning, members are uprooted from other universities and environments and move to the College and in that process seek to establish new connections. Approximately half of the College is “new” every September and it forms connections both with new people and those who came before them. Each new resident integrates as a matter of process with members who had lived at the College before them. To those new to the College, everything is new. But to members who had lived there the year before, new members need to be introduced and shown how the community works. There is a precedent for teaching the ways of the community within the community, so for Society Members to continue to reach back and teach it is a familiar mode.

It is hard to imagine what Society Members would have to gain personally by reaching back to the community they left behind. Though welcome, improvements and activities coming from that interaction would be of benefit to current residents and less likely to them. What is it about the way the relationships are formed that has Society Members still wanting to be engaged? Is it the kind of person? Is it a developed sense of altruism after years of living at the College? Is it loyalty? Or are they still seeking something familiar to associate with, as they had when they began at the College, and are unable to find it?

As A-Type personalities we are very achievement driven and I think that because we're achievement driven we like to see things happen and we like to see things completed. If you challenge us to do something, someone's going to step forward because we all are wired that way here. (Participant 0).

It's been over a number of years. Even if they were all in the same place together, they would be very different. And I think that's what's so cool about it. There's not necessarily similarities. It's not that there's a type of person that will be the one to reach out and do that. It's "oh, I didn't expect that from you" kind of. (Participant 13).

Green College changed me, but that story just made me realize that you often think that being part of a community means restricting yourself to a certain number of features that fits that group. And that's just how it goes. I guess this episode is where we can look at and see that you don't have to restrict yourself. You can actually do something outside of the borders. You can cross those borders and have a positive result. (Participant 11).

Some members have theories about the membership of the College. One is that members are all of a type – A-type. They are all high-achievers. This is not a new observation, but it is a recurring one and matches the work-ethic observation mentioned in an earlier frame. The tension among dominant A-types may hold the community at equilibrium until something exceptional or office intervention moves it. If infused with a strong sense of responsibility, A-types may function as a sort of community moral compass.

Alternatively, the variety and development of types may be a factor. Members who are comfortable enough to strike out and make their mark offer up some vulnerability (any call for help) or talent (sharing their personal passions) and these may inspire others to support and get involved. Members can be themselves in a way that is unrestricted, in a way that promotes them being their authentic self and not a version that would fit only the community. For those who are less extroverted but perhaps still achievement-driven, the inspiration and modelling provided by others may be just the encouragement needed to allow them to contribute in their own way. In turn, this opportunity to grow creates a debt of gratitude towards the College for its role in their personal development. Instead of just A-types, the community is a blend of all members who are encouraged and inspired by seeing others self-actualize.

There's not one aspect of this community that I can pinpoint where I would want to say 'no, I'm not from Green College.' I would never say that. I think that's because we are authentic. We do what our motto says. I think that's carried through from when I was a resident to now, maybe more so in my second year at the College. When you want to show the new resident what the community is about, you take a certain sense of pride in being a leader. (Participant 6).

I'm often quite struck by people's generosity and people going the extra mile to make things work. Really sort of contributing more than that is reasonably expected. I think people have a degree of pride. Through this pride they feel the desire to just make things work. I think that's perhaps one of the things that makes the place quite exceptional is people's willingness to make things work without expecting others to do it. They themselves make it work. (Participant 9).

The idea of the authentic self and attaching one's identity in some way the College is supported by other members. The influence of the community experience leads others to pitch-in and work together that would not have been possible without shared identities and goals. In contributions of this kind, the community is able to produce something out of the sum of its constituents and move beyond individual contributions. We return to the idea that members have a sense of agency or power, of responsibility, to get things done.

When you do something, if you don't share it with anyone you won't have the shared memory to talk about it. You can tell someone that I was there and had done that, but it's not the same when you remember together. It's this connection that forms. (Participant 3)

I think what happens in those meal spaces is we make connections and we make friends and we make loyalties. (Participant 0).

When I look back on my time at UBC I'm not thinking about the events in my program - I'm thinking about the Green College friends I've made. I've already thought ahead of whose weddings I'm going to. This summer I'm going to one. It's those connections where you're not just exchanging academic ideas but you're making friendships that are going to last. (Participant 6).

I don't think it would be possible to live here without being changed just a little bit. Yes, definitely. It's certainly changed myself, and given me new experiences with things that I've had experiences with. I can't fail to see how it would be any different for anyone else. (Participant 9).

The community is a transformative agent in its influence of memory. While a resident, there is an additional bond created in the shared experiences. Retelling a memory is a different experience when the memory was shared with someone else, and a validation of the connection made then made apparent in the present; the primary bond comes from the initial experience and a secondary one is created when remembered later. The integrated nature of their experience and the variety of opportunities they have to interact with each other provides a rich inventory of experiences to re-validate for Society members.

The memory of the experience at the College for some supersedes the memories they have of their time at UBC. The strength of the connections between the person and the College is fundamentally greater than some of the other connections they have while earning their degree. The influence of living at Green College comes from an enduring mark it made in their lives and personal development.

I felt like that kind of positive, buzzy energy let me be comfortable and happy with who I wanted to be. I felt like it made me a better version of who I was. (Participant 17).

For some, the influence of Green College in the transformation can be profound.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This project had five objectives. First, to obtain illustrative examples of the community phenomenon. This is captured in section 6 in the community narrative. Second and third, to identify present and ideal factors that promote and sustain involvement in the community. These were captured in section 5 in answers to the core experiences and three wishes desired by participants and in the content analysis of the interviews.

The last objectives sought to engage members in the process to generate recommendations and provide them to Green College's leadership. A focus group consisting of Resident and Staff Members was held in the fall of 2016 and generated recommendations based on the findings (community narrative, core experiences, three wishes, and content analysis) and community narrative. The focus group integrated their personal experiences with the collective experiences aggregated in the findings, and were tasked to generate a guiding vision statement, distill core values, and make recommendations on how to strengthen the volunteering community at Green College.

7.2 Focus Group Results

7.2.1 VISION STATEMENT

The focus group generated a vision statement, from which future thinking about Green College by its members can be centred:

We envision a College that exemplifies values of reciprocity, embraces interdisciplinarity, and encourages and supports members' personal and community initiatives. We foster an environment that enables people to become better versions of themselves. We will engage the past, present and future members of Green College to create change in the community and the greater world.

The focus group's vision statement specifies an environment not dissimilar from how Green College is now, as an exemplar of reciprocity, interdisciplinarity, and support. This vision is of an environment that enables personal growth and betterment, and boldly articulates a future Green College community that ambitiously and inclusively engages three phases of membership – past, present, and future members. The vision statement places firmly the emphasis of the work and activities of the College on its members. Finally, the statement is clear in positioning Green College as a creator – a catalyst – for change in the community and the world.

7.2.2 IMPORTANT CORE VALUES IDENTIFIED

The following three core values were distilled from the findings by the focus group. These values encapsulate the behaviours necessary for members at Green College to sustain and improve the future Green College community. They are a reduction of all of this project's findings to what the focus group considered essential. These are qualities that they expect all members of the community to demonstrate, and for the College and its community to act in ways consistent and promotional with these themes:

- Reciprocity: people are there for you, you are there for them when you can (community-minded);
- Comfort in interdisciplinarity and differences (fair-minded);
- Taking initiative including follow-through (proactive-thinking and action)

By varying degrees, all three core values have an empathic and alter-centric element to them. The focus group's first core value was reciprocity. This was elaborated upon with important distinctions and caveats. This aspect is less about "returning the favour" and more about responsibility and preparation. First, reciprocity in this context has the implication that people are there for you to support and assist you. This aspect suggests that members ought to see themselves as being responsible for being part of and participating in a safety net for other members. Second, reciprocity is self-limiting in its protection for the giving member – members are expected to support only when they can. Reciprocity is equal exchange, where one receives the benefits of a community and gives back to others accordingly.

The second core value involves a multifaceted idea of comfort in interdisciplinarity and differences. This comfort in differences is complex, including things like being "open-minded" as in accepting of alternate views, "fair-minded" as in being impartial and unprejudiced, and "curious-minded" as in innately interested in new or different information. Comfort includes things like relief and relaxation, like contentment and satisfaction, and like confidence, tolerance and safety. It has connotations of home and family, of nurturing one's well-being and that of others. This aspect suggests one "takes comfort in" both the environment of interdisciplinarity and differences and in the support to and from others. One should find comfort and sense of ease in that diversity of ideas and context. It is a tension of allowing one to have different views and be unlike others, yet find confidence and commonality to support the well-being of everyone in the community. Loyalty, too, may also be derived when combining responsibility in reciprocity and connotations of home and family.

Finally, the core value of taking initiative may be seen as a necessary complement to the previous two, of comfort and reciprocity. Once a safety net is established and the bonds between members is seated in comfort with oneself and others, members are expected to *do something*. A safety net and comfortable home enable members to step up and take initiative to support or enhance the community or take those talents and share it with other communities entirely. This aspect of initiative is an enabler of taking responsibility, a key element reflected in the community narrative whereby members see something that needs doing and just do it. It is also an enabler of the first aspect for reciprocity – if someone is in need, act and assist. This aspect of initiative reflects a kind of active rather than passive way of experiencing living in the community. It includes an element of dedication – to see an initiative to the end – reflecting a recognition that taking initiative is not nearly as helpful as taking initiative and seeing the task or effort to its conclusion.

7.2.3 RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTIONS

The focus group reflected on the findings and narrative, core experiences, and three wishes findings to generate a set of recommended actions. These recommendations follow the vision of Green College set forth by participants and with the view of sustaining and improving the College's community of volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

Research and redevelop the College's communication systems. Members recognized that Greenchat, a resident-managed and optional listserv, is a pivotal tool of informal communication among Resident Members. This tool communicates volunteer opportunities, and is used for spontaneous gatherings, events, and requests for help. As such it is a key piece in communicating recruitment messages, invitations, and general advertisement of activities for members to participate in and should be reviewed closely to understand and use it more effectively for both individuals and the organization. The focus group was interested in quantifying its current utility. They wanted metrics such as response time, number of responses, how many requests for help were made and successfully answered, and any correlates between who is on and off Greenchat.

No examination of Greenchat would be complete without a similar examination of the College's other means of communication with members including the GC-Residents Listserv (a mandatory list for official announcements and College communications), GC-Society Listserv (for communications with Society Members), and the relatively recent additions on social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. All of the College's communications systems ought to be reviewed in the context of how effective they are, which may include determining how aware members are of those channels, how much they use them, and if there are other means of communications that may be more effective with them.

RECOMMENDATION 2.

Amend all introductory and welcome materials to prominently and consistently reinforce the three core values identified in 7.2.2. It is essential that the three values are instilled early-on in the life of a Resident Member, and ideally so during the events and integrations that occur during the first month of their residency. In addition to knowing what is valued and expected of them in their actions as a new member, they ought to also get an early sense of what opportunities are available for them, how they can get involved, and where to find that information over the course of the year. Much of this important information ought also be clearly communicated and inconspicuously posted and referred to over the course of the year.

RECOMMENDATION 3.

Encourage and promote connections on and off-site among members through mixed-member events, competitions, and academic visitor interactions. The focus group suggested three kinds of enhancements. First, add and sustain mixer events with other members. These events would be predominantly social events, and would bring together Resident Members, Society Members, Members of Common Room, and staff. Events like wine or food tastings share a common interest and conversation starter for those in attendance. Second, the focus group raised the idea of instituting themed competition events between Resident Members. The primary example of this included modelling after the "Three-minute thesis competition" seen elsewhere at Massey College. The award for best Resident Member Series' lecture was a previous example of instilling a healthy academic and competitive spirit. Finally, they suggested paired Resident Member Series' presentations to encourage not only sharing of one's discipline but also explicitly sharing the presentation with another member and thus force finding commonalities and differences.

The focus group also suggested tighter connections be made with visiting academics. First, they suggested improving integration with the Leading Scholars' program participants and members

with more explicit and intimate interactions. Second, for visiting academics, they suggested a similar “dinner buddy” system used during Welcome Month among Resident Members to better welcome, integrate, and appreciate these visiting academics and the knowledge they bring. Such a connection would better bridge the connection between the visitor and the community and improve community awareness of these scholars’ visits and the opportunities they present.

RECOMMENDATION 4.

Organize and promote structure for engagement with Society Members. The focus group suggested reunions, more events, and mixers to connect Society Members with the community. The creation of recognized and published area chapters for Society Members outside of the Greater Vancouver Regional District would help Resident and Staff Members with communicating, connecting, and organizing events involving Society Members.

RECOMMENDATION 5.

Develop an explicit program for Resident Members to engage with communities outside of Green College. The focus group suggested a need for the community to engage the wider community and to take the initiative to share with the rest of Vancouver. The focus group suggested events downtown, with Simon Fraser University and their centre for dialogue, and for other kinds of cross-institution student collaborations.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Pilot initiatives to challenge calcified social clusters within the College to be more open to and receptive of others. The focus group recognized that, over time, the community becomes less-receptive to meeting new people and making new connections. The focus group sought to re-create the more fluid and formative periods where members were friendlier and more receptive others by finding ways to “reshuffle” some of the formed groups. The focus group recalled icebreaker-style events and team-based competitions. The focus group fondly recalled a brain-bending treasure-hunt prepared by a Society Member that combined members from Green College and St. John’s College. Such events encourage members to interact outside of their normal patterns.

7.3 Recommendation Caveats

Historically, funding has been a challenge at Green College and some recommendations may increase costs. In Green College’s *External Review*, Kidd, Woodward and Gallini (2012) noted risks of a future where the effort by Principal and staff may be difficult to sustain due to funding scarcity, among other reasons. (p. 4). The review called for a restoration of the College’s budget and to add additional funding to support it and for new growth, and funding never materialized.

Such funding challenges may be explainable as a function of public management reforms over the last several decades under New Public Management (NPM) where there is a drive for “value for money.” NPM assumes efficiency and effective service delivery can be achieved through the adoption of private-sector management techniques that include performance measurement, a decentralization of decision-making, and on creating competition within and from outside competitors for clients (Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, & Carvalho, 2010, pp. 3-4). As part of a public institution is supported by public dollars, Green College must also consider value for money when further exploring how to operationalize any recommendations.

8.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to engage members of Green College to identify what supports volunteerism, demonstrated as community participation, and what could be done to maintain and improve it. The project engaged members in the research process and raised awareness about the efforts and supports of volunteers in the community. The connections between Green College and its volunteers may be broken amid political or financial pressures in institutional drives towards efficiency to do “more with less,” and to do so with minimal consultation. Green College must manage internal and external pressures for innovation and change to remain socially and organizationally relevant, and needed a better understanding of its volunteering community to begin building a broader strategy to help cope with those pressures.

The project assumed that the volunteering community was working well but could not explain how. In interviews, participants focussed on what was working well and their peak experiences at Green College. The Green College volunteering community is central to the experience at Green College. Experiences of this kind are what differentiate the space from simply a place of residence – a place to rest your head – to a place to authentically connect with people and ideas. The College’s more democratic and participatory structures provide opportunities for its residents to try new things – to succeed and to fail – in an environment that provides its members a safety net, filled with members who will take the initiative to act rather than wait passively for someone or something else to take action. It is an environment that accepts differences and finds comfort in those differences in ideas and between people.

In a focus group, participants reviewed aggregated data from the interviews and generated a vision statement, three core values that members are expected to embody, and a set of recommendations. The vision, values, and recommendations from this project begin to set the foundation for a strategic plan for Green College in a way that helps it defend and increase resiliency against internal and external pressures. For example, Goodsell (2011) highlights three needs to defend against defunding: eschew complacency and assumed justification for being with clearer mission articulation where an organization’s purpose must be unmistakably linked to its value in meeting public need; build upon strength of an organization’s unique competencies to create a robust organizational culture that can retain key talent during cuts and remain poised to rebuild with an intact reputation; finally, for an organization to show it is willing to change and is not stuck in tradition (pp. 476-477).

The focus group’s vision statement frames Green College as a catalyst for change *across time* for past, present, and future members and *across space* for members at personal, community, and global foci. In all, Green College is challenged as a support role, to foster an environment for others to help them become better versions of themselves. To support this vision, the focus group suggests members embody three core aspects: to reciprocate support for others from the benefits of the community, to take comfort in interdisciplinary and differences, and to take the initiative. These core aspects are complex and difficult to simplify further, a task perhaps for the future Green College community.

Six recommendations from the focus group emphasized different elements to be strengthened to support the future community. First, it identified the communications systems as needing a more thoughtful and collaborative examination in order to better connect with members. Second, it recommended that the core values identified be better and more harmoniously integrated into all

Green College materials to better establish these as expectations for members to both receive and to uphold with each-other. Third, it recommended bringing all types of members closer together to the degree that current Resident Members experience and to bring out the strength of all members for the good of the community. Fourth, it recognized the lack of structure for Society Members and recommended organizing chapters to facilitate all members in linking with each other. Fifth, it recommended that Resident Members look outward to engage and share their strengths in places outside the Green College community. Finally, it recommended Resident Members look inward to develop ways to invigorate the community mid-year and promote new connections among Resident Members.

Each recommendation will require significant consultation and concentration for Green College. Green College would benefit from first examining its communication systems and updating them to better reach all its members – there is clearly interest and goodwill from some Society Members to continue to contribute to the Green College community, and an eagerness among Resident Members to make quality connections with Society Members and with visiting academics. Society Members hold the keys to connecting with other communities and in extending Green College. The last recommendation, to invigorate the community mid-year, will require some further research, supported in part by the content analysis and core experiences findings in this project. All recommendations may have budgetary implications and will need to be carefully considered in the context of value for money, both for the College and the university's accountability in the use of public funds.

In a full Appreciative Inquiry or Action Research framework, the generation of recommendations would have both included the leadership and taking action of the recommendations. In Appreciative Inquiry this might have been an agreement to take action, while in Action Research this might have involved repeated cycles of planning and action. For reasons of scope and practicality, this project did not involve leadership in the generation of recommendations and as such they stand alone in this report, to be taken-up with continued conversation around the ideas and practicalities of making (or not making) each happen.

The methodology included only members who have volunteered and the peak experiences they had at Green College. As such they may represent a “model” of what all members might strive to be like, but may also fail to represent the remainder of the community who did not volunteer in the same manner. What motivates and encourages that remainder is unknown, and there is much that could be learned. Comments from participants when answering the three-wishes questions recognized that more committees and more participation will not necessarily strengthen Green College; it would be “chaos” to have so much going on and could divide attention too much. Better knowledge about what might motivate those who did not actively participate might best have the aim of finding what could encourage them to participate, to assist or show support in the efforts of others or to be prepared to volunteer to take the burden off other members who may be fatigued or overwhelmed.

In examining member experiences of the volunteering community, it revealed other areas for further examination. First, more work can be done to determine the relative priority of the factors identified for both volunteering and non-volunteering members. Second, (starting with the activities suggested in section 5) examine more thoroughly how specific activities promote a sense of community and encourage participation. Combined, these efforts could help better organize the College's membership, application, and residential committee processes.

This project covered a lot of material to better understand and find ways to sustain the Green College volunteer community. Member stories were aggregated to socially construct a narrative of how the community has been working. This narrative provides a snapshot of a changing community, appreciating the efforts of current volunteers and providing reference to future members about what was before them. Content analysis suggested a cycle of factors influence volunteers to participate, and raises questions about the necessity and fragility of social momentum in propagating the volunteer community. Content analysis leaves data where there was only intuition before about the community, to help inform decisions and strategy at the College. Finally, it provided a platform for members to better understand their environment and set forth a vision, values and set of recommendations on how it can focus efforts to sustain *what is right* and *what gives life* at Green College.

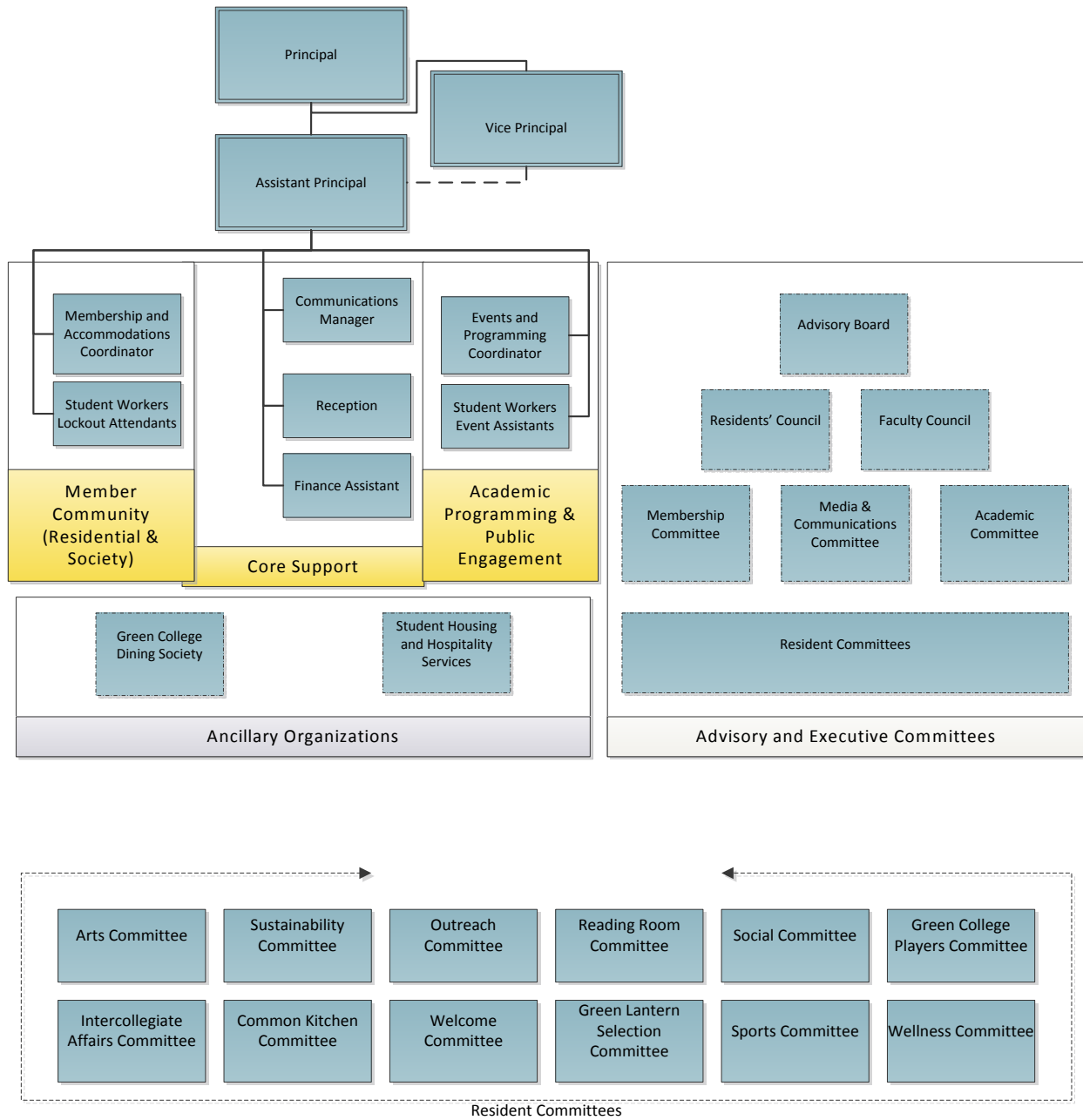
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Appendix A: Green College Organizational Chart



Appendix B: Green College Advisory Board 2015-2016

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
<i>Airini</i>	Dean, Faculty of Human, Social and Educational Development, Thompson Rivers University, and Green College Society Member
<i>Hugh Brock</i>	Associate-Provost Academic Innovation, University of British Columbia
<i>John Diggins</i>	Chair of the Board
<i>Rebecca Gibbons</i>	Co-Chair of the Green College Residents' Council
<i>Hugh Segal CM</i>	Master of Massey College, University of Toronto
<i>John Gilbert CM</i>	Principal Emeritus of the College of Health Disciplines, and Green College Society Member
<i>Christopher Grauer</i>	Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia
<i>Arnab Guha</i>	Partner, Phase 5 Consulting Group Inc., and Green College Society Member
<i>Judith Hall OC</i>	Emeritus Head and Professor of Pediatrics, and Foundation Fellow of Green College
<i>Nicola Hodges</i>	Faculty Member of Common Room, and Green College Society Member
<i>Denise Lievesley</i>	Principal of Green Templeton College, Oxford University
<i>Scott McIntyre</i>	President of the Vancouver Institute
<i>Beverley McLachlin PC</i>	Chief Justice of Canada, and Foundation Fellow of Green College
<i>Martha Piper</i>	Interim President and Vice-Chancellor, University of British Columbia
<i>Angela Redish</i>	Provost and Vice-President Academic pro tem, University of British Columbia
<i>Joshua Scurll</i>	Co-Chair of the Green College Residents' Council
<i>Ronald Wright</i>	Author

Appendix C: Change in Aspects through VSTM stages

Themes / Phases	Activity	Emotions	Relationships	Motivation and commitment	Attitudes and perceptions	Costs and Benefits
Nominee (1-2 months before entrance)	Applying to volunteer	Excitement mixed with fears and fantasies	Some have relationships with other volunteers; Attraction to target population; Attraction to organizational image	Motivation to volunteer: altruistic, egoistic and social; Low commitment	Romantic idealism; High ambiguity; Low satisfaction	A good feeling emerge as one applies to volunteer
Newcomer (1st months)	Entering the field; Trying to help as many as they can	Avoidance and frustration	Marginal members of group and organization; Recipients distrustful; Helping by 'being' and focusing on quantifiable factors of help	Contract commitment; Do not feel particularly needed	Limited idealism; High ambiguity; Low satisfaction	Emotional strain Frustration and sadness
Emotional involvement (4-8 months of volunteering)	Giving actual help	'Ups and downs': deep sadness with high satisfaction	Close relationship with recipients may cause dilemmas; Helping by 'doing', focusing on quality of help. Important group members.	Highest commitment; Identifying with organization and clients	Sober idealism causes sadness; Low ambiguity High satisfaction	High emotional costs and secondary trauma mixed with feelings of satisfaction and meaningfulness
Established volunteering (1+ year)	Giving actual help to fewer clients	Detached concern, burnout and fatigue	Close relations with fewer clients, no new contacts. Helping by 'being'; Central and influential group and organization members	Levels of commitment and feeling needed are low again	Realism, cynicism; Low ambiguity (mainly regarding long-term results)	High awareness of the variety of costs and benefits related to volunteering
Retiring (1+ year)	Separation from organization, group, and clients	Sadness mixed with relief	Separation and rites of passage. Remembering the clients	Commitment to volunteering in general and to social change	Gain some general idealism	Putting all they gained from volunteering into perspective; Hard to let go

from Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008, p. 76)

Appendix D: Content Analysis Table of Findings

<i>Coding</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>References</i>
Content Analysis		18	371
<i>1 Self</i>	<i>Factors about the self that drive the individual towards a decision to participate and volunteer.</i>	18	155
a) Identity	A disposition towards a particular responsibility or group	6	9
b) Motivators		17	71
i) Application of skills or talents	A motivation from a sense of efficacy, agency, or mastery in participating	14	34
	Applying skills	5	8
	Learning skills	3	4
	Needed Experience	5	6
	Potential to make change	9	16
ii) Belonging and relationships	A motivation to participate to maintain relationship status.	5	6
iii) Curiosity	A motivation to satisfy curiosity.	4	4
iv) Duty	A motivation from a sense of duty or expectation.	8	12
v) Fun	A motivation to have and help others have fun.	5	8
vi) Intrinsic value	A motivation from the intrinsic value of the action.	5	7
c) Past Experience	Previous experience that influences the decision to participate or volunteer.	7	9
d) Personal values	Personal values that encourage participation and volunteering.	17	66

i)	Being competitive		2	3
ii)	Being diligent		8	9
iii)	Being fair and cooperative		5	9
iv)	Being honest		1	1
v)	Being kind		8	11
vi)	Being open-minded or curious		7	10
vii)	Being respectful		6	6
viii)	Being tolerant		8	13
ix)	Being welcoming		4	4
<i>2 Environment</i>		<i>Factors in the environment that support and encourage the decision to participate and volunteer.</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>137</i>
a)	Physical Context	Elements of the physical environment that contribute to participation.	9	17
i)	Privileged Spaces	The relative uniqueness and rarity of the spaces enjoyed by members.	4	5
ii)	Remote spaces	The relative remoteness of the College to the rest of campus.	1	3
iii)	Shared spaces	The shared nature of the use and layout of the College's spaces.	6	9
b)	Processes	Processes that occur in the environment.	18	95
i)	Activities	Activities that occur at the College.	17	76

	Academic Programming	The College's public lecture programs.	4	11
	Activities (general)	General observations about how the activities impact members.	7	9
	Coffee House	The College's resident-led talent show.	3	6
	GC Players	The College's theatrical group.	1	5
	Shared Meals	Experiences of dining together at the College.	10	16
	Sports	The College's participation in various team sports.	6	10
	Welcome Month	The College's resident-led welcome program of events.	4	9
	Wreck Tower Cup	The College's resident-led team competition against St. John's College.	7	10
ii)	Adjustment Processes	Processes of adjustment for new members to the College.	4	4
iii)	Membership Processes	Processes relating to the College's administrative work with members.	6	7
	Application Process	The College's membership application process.	4	4
	Roommate Selection Process	The College's roommate selection process.	3	3
iv)	Organizational Processes	Organizational processes within Green College.	5	8
	General Organization	General organizational processes without a clear activity.	2	2
	Minimal interference	Members are permitted freedom to create with minimal interference from the administration.	3	3
	Peer nomination	Members are peer-nominated to volunteer roles.	2	3
c)	Social Context	The general social environment	10	25
i)	Common experience	A community sense of a shared experience or difficulty.	4	7

ii)	Openness	A community sense of welcoming and openness that permits one to be a part of and contribute to the community.	3	3
iii)	Sense of home or family	A community sense of home or family relationships with other members.	3	6
iv)	Trust	A community sense of a trusting environment that will support and defer judgement for members.	6	9
<i>3 Other People</i>		<i>Factors from other people influencing the decision to participate and volunteer.</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>79</i>
	Duty to support group relations	Influence of feeling a sense of duty to maintaining group membership and relations.	7	14
	Examples set by others	Influence of others set by their example of volunteering and participation.	12	29
	Example of friends	Influence of friends to get involved.	5	8
	Example of who came before	Influence of other people and continuing their legacy of effort.	5	11
	Examples of others (general)	Influence of other people (in general).	8	10
	Expectations from others	Influence of need to fulfil expectations held by others.	6	10
	Support	Influence of others to support participation and volunteering.	12	26
	Encouragement	Encouraging follow-through in the effort.	10	18
	Show of confidence	Explicitly asking or showing confidence in an individual.	5	8