The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

Churchill Fellowship 2003

The Monash University Fellowship to Investigate University- Community Partnerships in the United States and Canada.

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Signed   Dated.

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1. Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to Monash University for sponsoring this fellowship in university management, to the staff of the universities and community groups who identified relevant people for me to meet and places to visit both on campus and in the community, to my family who bravely coped with the extra load while I was away, and to the Churchill Trust for this exciting and unique opportunity.

2. Executive Summary

My name is Sandra Stoddart. When I was awarded my Churchill Fellowship I was employed by the University of New England as their first Community Liaison Officer. In January 2004 we relocated to rural Victoria where I am working with several universities and community groups, metropolitan and rural, to share what I have learned and support the development of further university – community partnerships.

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2.1 Project outline

My Monash University Churchill Scholarship enabled me to visit universities in the United States and Canada to investigate how they have developed and managed university-community partnerships. I visited metropolitan and rural universities in Pennsylvania, New York State, Massachusetts, South Dakota, Wyoming and Oregon and, in Canada, Prince George and Vancouver.

2.2 Fellowship Highlights

1. University of Pennsylvania: time with Isabel Sampson-Mapp Ass. Director of the Centre for Community Partnerships. Two days of meeting community groups, community-university projects (including the restoration of the Paul Robeson House) and discussed how the university interacts with its local community.

2. University of Massachusetts: shadowing Professor Linda Silka, participating in community meetings, student presentations of community projects and observing the management and development of these partnerships.

3. Cornell University: Meeting the staff of CaRDI (Community and Rural Development Institute) and visiting some very poor communities in New York State.

4. Spending time in small rural communities in South Dakota with similar problems and ambitions to rural communities in Australia

5. Meeting residents of an Indian reservation in Wyoming and driving throughout the state (including through Yelllowstone National Park), meeting extension officers.

6. At Portland State, seeing the way that community – university partnerships can work effectively and meeting Dr Judith Ramaley.

7. Driving through northern British Columbia, meeting the dedicated UNBC team at work with their First Nations People – who cooked me a moose and wild salmon dinner!

8. Vancouver: concluding my tour in such a beautiful place and meeting the dedicated staff who believed in the importance of working well with their communities.

2.3 Findings and conclusions:

❑ There are two main types of university – community engagement, transactional and transformative.
Transactional relationships are more common in Australia – they are task (or grant) oriented with perhaps no plan for follow up or the development of an on going relationship.
Transformative relationships on the other hand are less carefully defined, open, fluid in planning and define an on going relationship to achieve long-term goals.[1] Most community – university partnerships begin as transactional but, ideally, should become transformative as the level of engagement matures.
Most universities in Australia are still at the transactional stage.
❑ Changing expectations of government and community are placing pressure on universities to broaden their traditional scope.
❑ There are pockets of resistance to change in all universities, both here and in North America.
❑ Those universities effectively engaging in transformative relationships have taken at least 10 years to get there and have been led by strong, enthusiastic, academically credible staff.

2.4 Seminars:

❑ Invited presentation of the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA), July 16th 2004
❑ Meetings with Institute of Community and International Engagement, Victoria University;

2.5 The media

❑ Interview by Lyn Haultain, ABC Radio, Friday 21st July in weekly Communities segment and another on ABC regional radio NSW,
❑ It is proposed that I write several community columns for several regional newspapers in regional NSW.

2.6 Other

❑ I will be working with several universities assisting in the development of strategic plans and talking to staff about community engagement development.

2.7 Lessons learned

❑ The most successful engagement was seen at universities where community engagement was driven from the office of the President of the University.
❑ Every person I met who was actively involved in community engagement, did so with great passion and commitment.
❑ Successful interaction between universities and their communities needs funding and budget support.

2.8 How I intend to apply this research

❑ Working with regional and specific urban communities.
❑ Encouraging Academic staff to find ways to incorporate Service Learning into their programs.
❑ Supporting universities developing strategic plans which include transformative community engagement in their model.
❑ Working with communities and universities in their planning.

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[1] Sandra Enos and Keith Morton. Chapter in *Building Partnerships for Service-Learning*, p 24

3. Program

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania   2 May – 4 May 2004
- ❑ Centre for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania
- ❑ Meetings with local community partners

Ithaca New York State   4 May – 7 May
- ❑ Community and Rural Development Institute, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Public Service Centre,
- ❑ Extension officer Larisa Avallenda in Tioga County, Local Government Legislator, Mark Trabucco and Economic Development Officer Kaye C Newbury.
- ❑ Attended the opening of a local Health Centre funded by local fundraising.

Lowell Massachusetts   10 May – 14 May
- ❑ Shadowing Professor Linda Silka, Professor in the Department of Regional Economic and Social Development.
- ❑ Participated in community-university partnership meeting, grant application processes, attended Service Learning presentations of both graduate and undergraduate students. Visited the proactive faculty – in Department of Psychology, College of the Arts and Sciences, Department of Regional Economic and Social Development, Community Groups: Youth Empowerment Services Director, Coalition for a Better Acre, Centre for Community Health, Lowell.

Vermillion South Dakota   14 May – 22 May
- ❑ Shadowed Professor Robert Tosterud, Freeman Chair of Entrepreneurial Studies and Professor of Economics
- ❑ Meetings with community leaders in several towns, Viborg, Freeman, Allingham and Alcester observing the "CAFÉ" program in progress.
- ❑ Farber Center for Civic Leadership, The School of Business, South Dakota Council on Community Education, local farmers and graziers.

Laramie Wyoming   22 May – 30 May
- ❑ Hosted by the Wyoming Community Extension Service. Director, International Programs, Wyoming Economic Atlas Project, College of Agriculture.
- ❑ Visited extension officers in Jackson, Cody and on the Wind River Reservation.
- ❑ Met with local indigenous tribes.
- ❑ Met with University of Idaho Extension Officer visiting Wyoming – opportunity to get broader view.

Portland Oregon   30 May – 5 June
- ❑ Hosted by Director, Community-University Partnerships for Learning.
- ❑ Met with Sherril Gelmon, Professor of Public Health, Michael Taylor, Professor of Child and Family Studies, Ginny Peckinpaugh, Executive Director of Campus Compact, Ron Witczak, Education Abroad, Ed Washington, Community Liaison for Diversity Iniatives,
- ❑ Spent time with Judith Ramaley, Associate Director Directorate for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation and former President of Portland State who led the community engagement iniatives.

Prince George British Columbia Canada   5 – 10 June
- ❑ Hosted by Geography Program UNBC
- ❑ Met with senior faculty, President and two Vice Presidents,
- ❑ First Nations people on reservation at Fort St James
- ❑ Visited International Studies program, Director Regional Operations, First Nations Studies Department, Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Research Forest Manager, office of University Development.

Vancouver British Columbia Canada   10 – 16 June
- ❑ Hosted by UBC Learning Exchange, TREK Volunteer Program.
- ❑ Visited Community Programs,
- ❑ Met with various program directors across the campus,
- ❑ Observed a cross-institution student community project report.

4. Churchill Report

4.1 Background: The current situation in Australia.

Universities have seen teaching and research as their main focus, but community engagement is emerging as the ""new scholarship - though it remains on the margins. There has been some resistance to bringing it into the mainstream. A number of academic staff in universities have long been engaging with their communities but this has been over and above their core workload and has been ancillary to their core work and not considered in tenure and promotion

Universities today face tremendous challenges–
- ❑ The need to be seen as traditional educators but as relevant to our modern society.
- ❑ They cater for a new type of student with diverse interests who want courses to lead to potential employment opportunities in the 21st century.
- ❑ There is increasing pressure from state and federal government to share resources and skills more widely to address social and economic challenges *and* to produce graduate students prepared to work in the new global economy.
- ❑ Universities are no longer bound by place – distance education and new education providers puts more pressure on the university to change and relate to the communities in which they are located.
- ❑ The Federal Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) has recently commissioned several reports into the potential of and models for these partnerships which are also encouraged through the "Nelson Reforms" of higher education documents to encourage a new way of approaching engagement.

However, universities are often 'traditionally bound' and not immediately open to new opportunities.

- ❑ Structures and budgets must be able to respond to opportunities as they arise – especially if they arise outside the annual budget plan, term time or current projects and grants.
- ❑ Any partnership project undertaken still needs to support the core responsibility of universities: teaching and research, curriculum and pedagogy and the fostering of successful student learning. Certainly through outreach, change can occur to both the university and society. Strategically this is, a new direction for universities in Australia.

It was in this context that I applied to study what was happening in universities in the US and Canada, and how they were dealing with the changing pressures on universities and incorporating community into their mission.

Basically, engagement takes two forms; it is either transformative or transactional. *Transactional* relationships are more common in Australia – task (or grant) oriented with no plan necessarily for follow up or for the development of an on going relationship. There is not generally a long-term plan and research undertaken responds to traditional expectations of academic staff to 'publish or perish'. *Transformative* relationships on the other hand are less carefully defined, open, fluid in planning and define an on going relationship to achieve long-term goals.[2] These relationships are more interactive, consultative and the community may take the lead. Almost all community – university partnerships begin as transactional but, ideally, should become transformative as the level of engagement and understanding of the nature of these partnerships, mature.

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[2] Sandra Enos and Keith Morton, Chapter in *Building Partnerships for Service-Learning*, p 24

Many would argue for a third type – a 'business model -. when, for example, tailored classes are delivered to community groups or to students for a fee. This is a traditional view and is not in the spirit of current thinking.

Engagement for the university must be accepted as scholarly and legitimate by colleagues, peers and university management and those who make decisions about the value and worth of faculty.

4.2 Observations.

1. ***Universities in North America at the transformational stage of engagement had several things in common.***

a. Funding support from budget, philanthropic grants and personal endowments and from this support comes some cutting edge thinking and philosophy.

The Kellogg Foundation through its The Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities brought together presidents and chancellors from twenty-five public (Land Grant) universities. The outcome was to develop five strategies to advance "engagement":
1) Transforming thinking about service so that engagement becomes a priority and central part of institutional mission;
2) Developing an engagement plan;
3) Encouraging interdisciplinary scholarship, research, and teaching;
4) Developing incentives to encourage faculty involvement in engagement efforts; and
5) Securing stable funding to support engagement.

So, to be effectively engaged with the community, all activity must be more sympathetically and productively involved with community concerns and needs. It recommends seven characteristics which define an engaged university:

1) responsiveness;
2) respect for partners;
3) academic neutrality;
4) accessibility;
5) integration;
6) coordination; and
7) resource partnerships. [3]

Clearly, the view is that the transformative model is the preferred model.

At the University of South Dakota a senior Professor, Dr Bob Tosterud making has philanthropic funding through the Freeman Foundation for an Endowed Chair to support his community activities. He has developed a program known as the "CAFÉ Program" which is a means of community development through empowerment, linking community members and developing leadership skills. The university supports each community for two years through the program. I noted that his Dean considered that Bob represented the entire faculty in community development and the rest focused elsewhere.

b. Support from the top

Most actively and successfully "engaged" universities were driven 'from the top'. At these institutions, interaction with the community was formalized, community's representatives

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[3] Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities. (1999). *Returning to our roots: The engaged institution.* Washington, DC: National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

advised the university and had access to decision-making groups. University of Massachusetts, Lowell, Portland State University, University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and University of British Columbia (UBC) are examples. At all these institutions, the President (Vice-Chancellors) supported, encouraged and often directed the community engagement. In all cases the process from initial engagement to a transactional relationship had developed over 10 or more years.

Also, Presidents had chosen to strategically place their universities as 'engaged' universities and wanted their university to be nationally and internationally known for its community engagement.
These engaged universities established "institutes" dedicated to the management and support of the engagement and there were substantial annual budgetary allocations made. Students were involved in practical projects within the community and reported results not only to their Professors but also to the community group with which they worked.

c. Staff who were passionate enough about the concept that they were prepared to take risks with their career to continue doing it and gave leadership to colleagues to become involved.

Firstly, this involves non-traditional activities for staff and students alike. Teachers had to negotiate with the community groups, identify appropriate projects, monitor the relationship and modify their expectations of the students in the response submitted. Without exception, the individual people I met who were working in communities were passionate about what they were doing.
Secondly, academic staff who throw themselves into community engagement projects do so at some risk to their careers. Teaching, research and publications are still the main forms of evaluating the academic. To undertake research (such as among the First Nations people who have power of veto over information circulation) means that the academic must trust the university to support their endeavor and reward their input – even if there is no traditional outcome from the interaction.

d. They worked in an environment where volunteerism and philanthropy are common.

There is a culture of philanthropy in the US and to some extent, in Canada that does not exist in Australia, with the income and estate tax benefits that go with it. This philanthropy supported several universities in their community engagement activities. In Australia budgetary allocation for community engagement either from government or university budgets is minimal.

There is a long-standing infrastructure in Australia of government which deals with community services such as health, agriculture, education and unemployment that does not exist in the US – a proportion of these roles fall to universities – especially land grant universities.

e. This philosophy is perpetuated through the concept of Community Service Learning.

This "Service Learning" is widely used and is a powerful tool to give the students practical experience, make them accountable to their community and encourage 'volunteerism".

A highlight of my trip was being present at the final student presentations in Massachusetts and Portland. Students were allocated a project with a community group. All valued the 'real life' experience they had and most were planning to continue volunteering with the community group thus continuing the relationship, supporting the community group and having a valuable additions to their resume. Invariably, the activities they undertook related to the field in which they hoped to work.

f. A sophisticated level of engagement had not happened overnight.

.   The level of engagement evolves slowly even when led by dynamic people. It has taken 10 years for University of Massachusetts to have community engagement imbedded in the infrastructure of the university – and a similar time for it to spread throughout Portland State and UBC.

g. That communities can have a powerful influence on its university.

The University of Northern British Columbia. It is a unique university, located 9 hours drive from Vancouver in the far, cold north of BC.

What makes it unique is that it was founded as the result of the lobbying of local people – 16,000 of whom contributed $5.00 each to fund feasibility study to investigate building a university in the remote region to address the specific needs of those people – most of whom were First Nations people. Its mission: " A university in the North for the North to improve the quality of life in its region, the province and beyond"[4] It is the university who is beholding to the community. Traditionally, communities are seen as having the problems, the universities the solution. This university, in ten years of existence has managed to maintain an open relationship with its community unlike any other I have seen.

The whole institutional focus is on community-engagement, which is supported at all levels. The President tours the entire area once a year, an area more than twice the size of France with a population of just less than 300,000 people,[5] to visit and meet with all the communities involved in the formation of the university. While the administration is largely centralized, the teaching and faculties are decentralized and academic programs are run in a variety of ways – at regional campuses, weekend-only run courses and courses run in the villages often using elders to teach. Many graduates never set foot on the campus.

Funding for these programs comes entirely from private sources, mainly corporate and foundation donations.

h. There are distinct advantages for a university being actively engaged.

❑ It ensures financial viability and continued support from external constituents
❑ It can enhance the curriculum and pedagogy, foster successful student learning.
❑ It can establish an institutional culture that is more conducive to change and capable of overcoming barriers to action[6]

2. **Not all universities were particularly active in their communities. Some left it to the enthusiastic few, and sometimes long standing 'traditions 'had not kept pace with the changing nature of their communities.**

For example, the original mission of the Land-Grant institutions conceived by Abraham Lincoln and Vermont Congressman Justin Morrill, in 1862, was to teach "agriculture, military tactics, and

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[4] Vision Statement, University of Northern British Columbia
[5] Jago. Charles, (President, UNBC) Partnering with the First Nations: The University of Northern British Columbia Experience

[6] Judith Ramaley as Director Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation former President of Portland State University

the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so that members of the working classes can obtain a liberal and practical education………" [7]

The nature of the lifestyle has changed – and also varied greatly:
The extension officer in Jackson's Hole, a former home economics teacher, has watched as the town changed from a town of unemployment to one where the "billionaires are pushing out the millionaires"[8]. Jackson is home to movie stars (Harrison Ford) and politicians (Dick Cheney). It has also a high level of poverty among Hispanic migrant workers who come to find work in this town.

The role of the extension officer varied and relies on her own creativity. To identify community opportunities and work with the local government council or the university to find ways to address these needs.

Roles can involve working with local council when requested (being careful not to encroach on the role of their economic development officer-) and giving them access to university resources back on campus in Laramie. The agricultural experts are non-academic staff based at the university in Laramie. There was not much evidence of academic staff and the co-operative extension service working together – the two roles were distinct. .

There are no government health support or other support for the Hispanics who come to Wyoming to work in the town. The UWY extension officer has supported the development of health centers, help for the pregnant young women etc. She sees herself as a member of the community representing the university rather than the other way round.

Community engagement in the land grant institutions seemed to me to be transactional rather then transformative.[9]

4.3 Recommendations and a warning.

1. Universities can support community and economic development and themselves be transformed through these relationships

2. That community engagement needs to be supported in Australian institutions. Although there may be mention of this as valuable contributions in promotions documents, these activities are difficult to measure and thus are often not the basis for a promotion or tenure decisions.

3. Community engagement prepares students to be good citizens by providing ways to help the university itself become a good citizen

4. Community engagement fosters the bonds between the university and community to harness the 'social capital' and use the neutrality of the campus

5. It shares and encourages debate

6. It identifies and develops common ground.

7. It create leadership development opportunities in both university and community

8. Community engagement makes graduates more employable – builds their resume, explore career goals, encourages feeling of being part of their community

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[7] The Morrill Act, 1862
[8] In conversation with Roger Coupal, Community Development Specialist, University of Wyoming
[9] Sandra Enos and Keith Morton Chapter in Building Partnerships for Service-Learning,
Developing a Theory and Practice of Campus-Community Partnerships p 23

9. It broadens the scope of just what learning is.

10. Gives community the opportunity to work on more complex societal problems

11. It makes students become a resource

12. The campus can contribute to community economic development

13. Campus accomplishes a mission of service.

14. It becomes a path for transformational change. - It can reshape underlying institutional culture.

15. *Some of the universities that I visited played a role in communities that in Australia is played by the Federal and State governments. We should perhaps be careful that appealing grants such as the Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund do not weaken the existing social support infrastructure that already exists in this country and increase the responsibilities of universities and undermines their funding for traditional role*

4.4 Endnote

My Churchill Fellowship was an exciting experience. I am very grateful to

❑ The Churchill Trust to have been able to undertake this Fellowship. It is a very generous award and one held in high esteem by people all around the world.
❑ My family, Brian, Kirsten and Laura and my mother for their support, encouragement and enthusiasm.
❑ Monash University for sponsoring the fellowship in university management
❑ To those I visited in on my trip especially Isabel Sampson Mapp at the University of Pennsylvania, Rod Howe at Cornell, Dr Linda Silka at University of Massachusetts, Lowell, Dr Bob Tosterud at University of South Dakota, Roger Coupal at University of Wyoming, Kevin Kesckes at Portland State, Dr Greg Halseth at University of Northern British Columbia and Dr Patricia Vertinsky at University of British Columbia.
❑ My friends, colleagues and community partners in New South Wales who supported and encouraged me in my application and planning.

It has been a rewarding experience for me, one that came at a time when I needed an adventure. I am enjoying sharing my experiences with colleagues and look forward to working with both communities and universities to support the development of high-level transactional alliances in the future.