Campus Community Engagement

Primer for Community Organizations with Research Questions

Community Campus Engagement

The purpose of this document is to guide community organizations' staff as they begin to create research-oriented relationships with university faculty. The goal of these relationships is to maximize the effectiveness of the non-profit organization through the creation of evidence-based decision making.

Nonprofit community organizations often have service-related questions but few resources to answer these questions. For example, an organization might want to know whether a specific intervention or program is providing the desired outcome. The lack of unbiased answers to such questions makes it difficult for an organization to make the best, or perhaps most economical, decisions about the future direction of the organization.

University faculty have a need to engage in research to meet the university's promotion and tenure requirements. More and more often faculty members are seeking projects that will make meaningful contributions to the community in which they live and work. They are seeking opportunities to engage in what is known as Community-Based Research. Faculty are recognizing that the outcome of such projects is more likely to result in change when the question, or problem statement, arises from the community. As such they are seeking research partnerships initiated by community organizations.

Other faculty, while themselves not Community-Based Research practitioners, may be able to support a research project undertaken by their students, whether as course-based projects or as graduate or undergraduate thesis projects.

Some universities and colleges have well-developed departments that engage community organizations in this process and utilize the resulting projects to provide students with real-life experiences in the surrounding community. Others are just beginning to develop the process.

1. Where to start: Finding the right partner:

Tips on navigating the complex environment of the university to find the right research partner:

- Call the university in your local area to determine if there is a department that is responsible for community research relationships. This department might be called experiential learning or co-operative learning. If the university does not list such a department call the V.P. Academic office or any one of the Undergraduate Deans. **Note:** If this document has been distributed by a specific university the final section on page 8 will provide their correct contact information.
- Hold a breakfast meeting of like-minded community partners and invite faculty from the university who have related research interests. Food seems to draw people together in a non-threatening environment.
- Look through a university calendar to identify relevant faculty interests.
- Do a google search on your topic, including the name of your local university, and take note of the names of local authors. Once you have a name, contact them to start a discussion.
- Develop relationships with faculty by getting involved in projects that are already in progress. In this way you

become a known entity and can 'pitch' your pet project at a later date.

- Capitalize on any existing relationships to help you navigate the university. Do not be afraid to ask someone you know who works at the university to help identify the right people for your desired project.
- Attend public talks at the university and do not be shy about asking questions of the speaker after the talk is finished. This is the first step in developing a partnership or being guided to someone better suited.
- As previously noted, faculty at a University gain promotion and tenure by meeting certain criteria such as publishing research papers in juried professional journals. Ask faculty what they would need in order to be able to participate. If the answer is funding, see what you can do to find part of the required funding. If the answer is authorship, make a commitment to work toward a paper in a juried journal.
- Start small by suggesting a pilot project so a big commitment is not required.

2. **Preparing for your first meeting with a potential partner:**
   - Create a brief synopsis of what you want to accomplish. Include the question you have, what you already know, the benefits of finding an answer to the question to your organization and the community, acknowledge any barriers you have encountered in your attempt to answer the question yourself, and offer any resources you may have at your disposal.
   - Make a specific request for help given the knowledge you currently possess.
   - Think about the potential contributions and limitations the prospective partner may have. This will help you customize your request and offer potential solutions to barriers. If you do not know what these may be then ensure that you address potential barriers during the meeting.

3. **Meet to discuss project:**
   - The goal of this meeting is to determine whether there is sufficient common ground between the researcher and the organization to merit continued exploration. Beginning the meeting by gaining an understanding of the faculty member's research interests, experiences and

capacity to engage may enable you to frame the pronject in a manner that will be of interest.

- If there is interest continue to point 4.
- If there is insufficient interest request a referral to another faculty member and arrange a meeting with that individual. Do not be discouraged by a "no". There are many reasons why a faculty member may decline.

4. Orientation to your organizational vision and goals:

- Once the potential partner has agreed to consider the project, arrange an orientation to your organization. This will give the individual the information they need to feel comfortable proceeding. Ask them for guidance about the specific requirements while remembering to include the following:
    i. Tour of relevant facilities.
    ii. Key organizational vision and goals.
    iii. The importance of the organization to the local community. Pay particular attention to how this project helps to strengthen the mission of the organization.
    iv. Budgetary limitations.
    v. A statement of the desired outcome of the collaboration.
    vi. Discussion of the university partner's potential contributions, goals and limitations and how they might align with, or support, your organization's proposed project.

5. Designing the project:

- Agree on a process to be utilized to achieve the outcome. Clarify whether the project will be accomplished through:
    i. The work of the faculty member alone or with a paid research assistant.
    ii. Student service / experiential learning.
    iii. Undergraduate student research as part of a course credit.
    iv. Undergraduate student research as independent study.
    v. Graduate student research.
    vi. Grant application for research or demonstration project.
    vii. Other.

- Agree in principle on roles and responsibilities (i.e. designate 'one' contact person per partner to facilitate project efficiency).
- Discuss details of the partners' roles and estimate time commitments.
- Confirm availability of resources that are needed to ensure success from each partner.
- Ensure that the scope of the project is appropriate for the time and resources available.
- Ensure that organizational policies and regulations of the university and community agency are met (i.e. confidentiality, WHMIS, CPR, Policies).
- If the research will involve human subjects (e.g. interviewing or surveying people), faculty and students will typically need ethics approval from their Department or University ethics board. Be sure to include the time necessary to complete this application, and to secure its approval, in your timeline.

6. **Write an agreement that:**
   - Is written at a level of comprehension understood by all participants. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification of language. Academic language can be quite different from that utilized in a community organization. A common understanding is critical to success. Expect to clarify common agency terminology for the faculty member and student(s) as well.
   - Describes the role of the student (if applicable).
   - Lists all deliverables and states who is responsible and the associated due date(s).Includes an opportunity for preliminary research results to be reviewed and commented on by the agency. This could take the form of a presentation to the agency board. This step will help to ensure the utility of the research results when the product is complete.
   - Defines who 'owns' the end product of the work and publication rights. Especially, determine if the end products are public or private domain, who has a right to publish the results and what kind of input to publication is required (i.e. co-authorship, review of paper before publication).
   - See appended example agreement form from U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research

7. Implement research:
- Implement the research as per the contract. This may involve hiring staff or selecting students who have appropriate skills.
- Follow up with partners at appropriate times and according to agreed completion dates for each segment of the project.
- Make/be open to adjustments as necessary.

8. Dissemination of results:
- Ensure that the results of the project reach the appropriate people both within and outside the community organization.
- Make and implement actions as per recommended outcomes of project
- Write and submit paper to appropriate journal, if part of the research plan.

9. Evaluation of project:
- It is important to reflect on the success of the project once complete:
  i. Were the goals achieved?
  ii. Did each partner/organization fulfill its commitment?
  iii. Is there a need to engage in Phase 2?
  iv. How could the process be improved for any future projects?

Critical success factors:

- It is best if the project need emanates from the community organization. The results of the study are much more likely to be implemented when examining an issue perceived as a priority by the community organization.
- If students are engaged, the project should ideally be of interest to them, NOT just assigned to them by faculty. Interested students tend to produce better end products.
- When a barrier to completion of the agreed upon timeline or deliverable is encountered it is important that a new strategy is negotiated among all partners. A good

outcome is unlikely if any one partner unilaterally alters the project.

- The existence of a community facilitator, connector, or 'broker' who negotiates the divide between the university and the community can enhance success. In the absence of such a person it is important that someone be assigned to check with each partner when approaching deadlines.
- Have a core project team that meets at regular intervals to check on the progress of the project. Frequency will depend upon the specific needs of the project. The meetings may not all need to be face to face. The frequency for these meetings should be stipulated in the initial agreement.
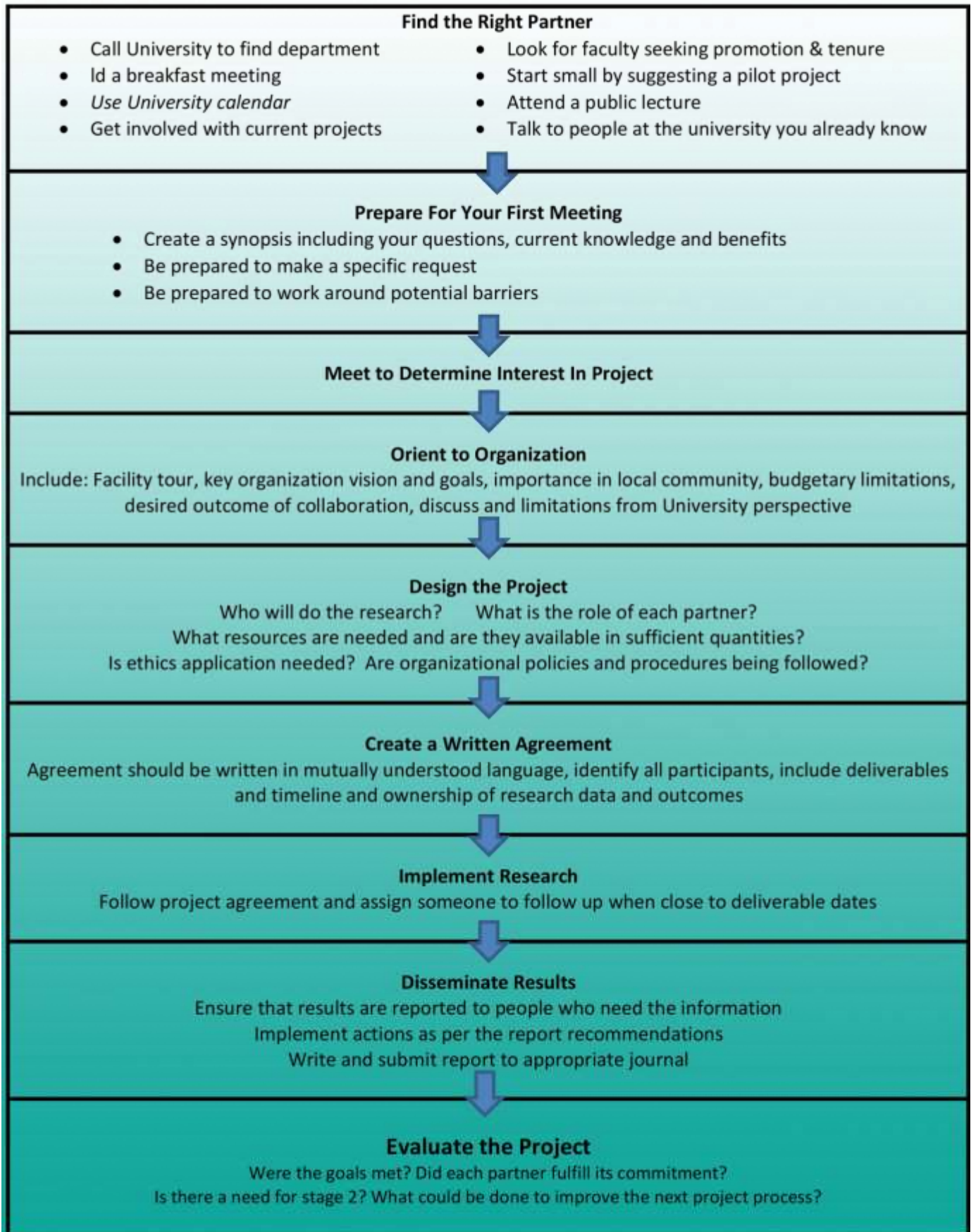
University Contact Information

Name of University:

Department to Contact:

Contact Person's Name:

Contact Person's Telephone

Summary of Process of Successful Campus Community Engagement

Find the Right Partner

- Call University to find department
- Id a breakfast meeting
- *Use University calendar*
- Get involved with current projects
- Look for faculty seeking promotion & tenure
- Start small by suggesting a pilot project
- Attend a public lecture
- Talk to people at the university you already know

Prepare For Your First Meeting

- Create a synopsis including your questions, current knowledge and benefits
- Be prepared to make a specific request
- Be prepared to work around potential barriers

Meet to Determine Interest In Project

Orient to Organization

Include: Facility tour, key organization vision and goals, importance in local community, budgetary limitations, desired outcome of collaboration, discuss and limitations from University perspective

Design the Project

Who will do the research?   What is the role of each partner?
What resources are needed and are they available in sufficient quantities?
Is ethics application needed? Are organizational policies and procedures being followed?

Create a Written Agreement

Agreement should be written in mutually understood language, identify all participants, include deliverables and timeline and ownership of research data and outcomes

Implement Research

Follow project agreement and assign someone to follow up when close to deliverable dates

Disseminate Results

Ensure that results are reported to people who need the information
Implement actions as per the report recommendations
Write and submit report to appropriate journal

Evaluate the Project

Were the goals met? Did each partner fulfill its commitment?
Is there a need for stage 2? What could be done to improve the next project process?

Community Agency Needs and Assets

Community-Based Research Program

Centre for
Community-Based Research
93 Bobcaygeon Road
Box 655 Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0
Phone: (705) 286-2411
Fax: (705) 286-3511

E-mail ulinks@on.aibn.com

Website www.ulinks.ca

Project Agreement

Community Based Research Program Students:

When doing a community research project you are providing a consulting service to a community organization. The key to a successful consulting relationship is clear and documented agreement amongst all parties, outlining everyone's expectations and responsibilities. This computer template will help you develop a comprehensive **research proposal***, which, once approved by all parties can be signed to become your* **project agreement***. The template is intended to make the process easier. It is normally based upon an electronic version of the 'client' or host organization's original research proposal so that you can cut, paste and* **modify** *information in the template as indicated. If you have any difficulty completing the template, contact the U-Links representatives.*

Before you begin, please read the entire template carefully. You only need to fill in sections A and B. **Once you have completed these sections, go back and delete all of the italicized instructions***. Circulate a draft (ideally by e-mail) to U-Links, your supervising professor. Once these parties are satisfied with the terms of the agreement your CBR coordinator will forward the document to the host for their input. Once all parties are happy with the document, all parties need to sign either a single hard copy or provide an email sign off.*

Project Title:
Course Code and Name:
Section A: Party to the Agreement

Student
Name: E-Mail:
Address: Phone:

Host Organization
Supervisor's Name: E-Mail:
Address: Phone:

Trent University
Instructor's Name: E-Mail:
Department: Phone:

Community-Based Research Program
Project Coordinator: E-Mail:
                                                            Phone:

Section B: The Proposed Project

1. Purpose of the Project:

2. Key Research Question(s) and Project Goals: *If available, import and edit appropriate sections from the 'client'/host organization's preliminary proposal outlining the research needed.*

3. Project Timeline:

The completed schedule should: accommodate your time constraints; your instructor's expectations; the demands of the research project; needs and contributions from the community; and course/academic requirements. Estimate the time you think each step will take and the approximate dates by which you expect to complete them. The 'who' column helps to clarify and outline individual responsibility for completing each task (i.e. host, student, faculty supervisor, CBR project coordinator). For example, it is the responsibility of CBR staff to provide students with information on the Celebration of Research Event. Establishing these time-lines, meetings and milestones at the beginning is a useful project management strategy, helping to avert problems and misunderstandings later on.

Task, Activity, Meeting	When	Who	Total Hours
Draft final report			
Comments on final report			
Incorporate comments into final report			

4. Total hours required to complete this project: *Insert the total number of hours, based on total from schedule above. The CBR program uses the following as a rough guide for estimating appropriate time commitments for students: one full credit course involves a total commitment of about 220 hours. Plan your assignment/project proportionally according to the marking scheme.*

The total number of hours required to complete this project is estimated at: _____

5. Ethics Application:

The project does ☐ does not ☐ involve human research (i.e., "any person who is a source of raw unformulated data and who is not acting as, or assisting, the principal investigator", SSHRC).

NOTE: If the project does involve human research, the students may be required to submit an application for ethical review of their research through their academic institution. This process may take up to 4 weeks and will need to be taken into consideration when creating project timelines. Consult with your supervising faculty member for more information.

6. Duration of Project: *(Insert latest possible dates)*

The project will begin on _____ and end on _____.

7. Student screening or training requirements (e.g. police checks, confidentiality agreements, CPR, WHMIS): *Import from host's original proposal.*

8. Project budget and resources required:

*Consider things like travel expenses, accommodations, long distance phone calls, photocopies, etc. Ensure this section includes not only cash expenses, but also resources such as data/ information, training, staff support, etc. that you will require to successfully complete this project. Identify who will provide each resource (e.g., your professor, the CBR Program, your host/'client,' other organizations/groups in the community, etc.) U-Links has some resources to support transportation costs, All other project related costs must be negotiated with the host and included in this agreement). Consider creating a **table** detailing the project budget.*

*<u>**Important Note:**</u> Transportation costs that U-Links will cover on behalf of students and host organizations includes the following:*

- *The cost of a rental vehicle OR reimbursement for fuel (student owned vehicle) to travel to and from Haliburton County for up to four (4) visits. Gas expenses for students using their own vehicles will be reimbursed at a flat rate of $40.00 per round trip from Peterborough to Haliburton.*

- *All costs for transportation beyond the four visits, including rental and fuel costs, as well as fuel costs for project related travel within the county are the responsibility of the host organization.*

9. Project Deliverables : *Deliverable(s) - Describe number and form, scope/length of document(s), map(s) or other research report(s) that will be given to the host/'client' and evaluated by your Professor (including the literature review). Other forms of dissemination include presentations at conferences or to host organizations. For example, U-Links hosts a 'Celebration of Research' each year in mid-March and this is an opportunity for students to present their findings to the host and community. All final reports should include an abstract (a paragraph long summary of the project), which identifies key words that can be used to search for the report in an electronic database.*

   a. **Deliverables for the host organization:**
   Consult with host organization to determine what they would like you to deliver to them during the course of the project.

   b. **Deliverables for the CBR Program**:
      i.   Participation in the "Celebration of Research" (Haliburton projects - exact date, time and location to be confirmed)
      ii. Design a poster presentation about your research for the above event
      iii. Provide a copy of the Ethics Review application (if applicable)
      iv. Digital copy of final report preferably in MS Word format or universally friendly format (e.g. Adobe PDF or .rtf), including
               a. table of contents
               b. acknowledgements (e.g. thank-you's, project partners)
               c. an abstract/executive summary of the project
               d. a list of key words that can be used to search for the report in an electronic database
      v.   Contribute to CBR Program evaluation
      vi. Where possible, attend wrap-up meeting with program staff and host upon completion

   c. **Deliverables for course instructor**. The marking scheme for the course will be as follows:

Assignment	Length	Date Due	% of grade

*Describe format, scope/length of document(s) or other research result(s) that will be evaluated. Include due dates; differentiate between items to be submitted at the midterm and at the end of the course or at any other interval. As much as possible, work submitted to the instructor for evaluation should be the same as that completed for the host organization. ***Important note: at least 25% of the grade for the course must be assigned before the withdrawal date listed in Trent University's Academic Calendar.***

10. Dissemination of Findings

Except under special circumstance, all completed projects are included in the U-Links library as soon as possible following completion of the project. This library are accessible to the general public. All project partners will have the opportunity to give feedback on the final version of the project's final report to be made public.

If any part of the final report is to be withheld or its publication delayed, please explain here:

C. Participant Responsibilities & Signatures

a) Responsibilities of All Parties:

1. Each party to this agreement has the right to initiate renegotiation of this agreement if circumstances affecting the project change.
2. Each party has the right to terminate the project if the conditions of the agreement are not being met. Because of the potential consequences to a student's program of study, a decision to terminate the project must be made in consultation with U-Links.
3. The student owns the copyright for all work completed as part of his/her project, but the host organization may use all project reports or papers, in whole or in part, as it sees fit as long as the student is duly credited as the author. (If work is completed collaboratively between the student and staff of the host organization, copyright will be jointly held.)
4. All parties must complete the pertinent section of the form entitled Work/Education Placement Agreement/Post Secondary, to enable the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to purchase workers compensation or private insurance coverage for the student.

b) Responsibilities of the Student:
1. Undertake the project conscientiously and with due respect to the expectations of the host organization and the University/College.
2. Keep his/her instructor and U-Links informed of the project's progress and notify them of any concerns about the project or the host organization in a timely fashion.
3. Attend and participate in all necessary meetings (with his/her instructor, host supervisor and/or U-Links).
4. Ensure that the confidentiality of any information acquired in the course of his/her project is strictly maintained, notwithstanding the host organization's commitment to make the results of the project publicly available.
5. Provide a copy(s) of the final product(s) of the project to the host organization and U-Links.
6. Upon the advice of his/her instructor, comply with ethical guidelines and review procedures. If applicable, provide a copy of the ethics review application to U-Links.
7. Participate in U-Links program evaluation so that we can report to the board of directors, funders and broader community about the impact of our work.

c) Responsibilities of the Host Organization:
1. Orient the student to the organization and work site. Ensure the student understands any risks or hazards that may exist and the safety practices followed. Promptly report any incidents to U-Links.
2. Provide adequate direction, ongoing communication and feedback on the quality of work so as to enable the student to complete the project successfully.
3. Supply/provide resources listed above needed to complete the project.
4. Be available for occasional consultation and meetings with U-Links as needed for the purpose of monitoring the project or refining the Community-Based Research Program.
5. Participate in U-Links program evaluation so that we can report to the board of directors, funders and broader community about the impact of our work.

6. Comply with policies and ethical guidelines governing research projects conducted in conjunction with Trent University, Fleming College and U-Links - as advised by U-Links, the instructor or the student.
7. Cover all project related costs such as lab fees, extensive photocopying, office supplies, long distance telephone charges, audio/video tapes and some transportation costs.

d) Responsibilities of the Instructor:
1. Ensure that the project, as described above, fulfills the requirements of the course listed on page one.
2. Provide guidance of an academic nature, advise on and monitor research methodologies employed. Evaluate the student's learning and grade his/her work.
3. Meet with the student at regular intervals, at least monthly, throughout the term.
4. Inform U-Links promptly of any missed meetings, breakdowns in communication, incomplete research/assignments or other incidents that may affect the success of the project.
5. Determine the need for the research project to be reviewed by your institution's ethics committee.

e) Responsibilities of CBR Staff:

1. U-Links will endeavor to ensure the instructor; the student and the host organization understand and approve of the nature of the work to be undertaken for the project.
2. U-Links will serve a liaison function among these parties; will offer advice on best practices in Community-Based Research and assist in overcoming any difficulties throughout the project.
3. Where appropriate U-Links may form and facilitate peer support and project coordination meetings for students working on projects, to enhance learning and coordinate projects.

Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism and cheating, is an extremely serious academic offence and carries penalties varying from failure on an assignment to expulsion from the University. Definitions, penalties, and procedures for dealing with plagiarism and cheating are set out in Trent University's *Academic Integrity Policy*. Students have a responsibility to educate themselves – unfamiliarity with the policy is not an excuse. Students are strongly encouraged to visit Trent's Academic Integrity website to learn more: www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity.

Access to Instruction. It is Trent University's intent to create an inclusive learning environment. If a student has a disability and/or health consideration and feels that he/she may need accommodations to succeed in this course, the student should contact the Student Accessibility Services Office (SAS), (BH Suite 132, 705 748 1281 or email accessibilityservices@trentu.ca). For Trent University – Oshawa Student Accessibility Services Office contact 905 435 5102 ext. 5024 or email nancyhempel@trentu.ca. Complete text can be found under Access to Instruction in the Academic Calendar.

By signing below, you are stating that you agree to the above terms regarding this Community-Based Research Project. You have a full understanding of what the project entails and what your responsibilities are for the duration of the project. If any aspect of this agreement is altered, all parties must be notified, the agreement amended and re-signed by all parties involved.

Photo/Image/Audio Recording Release

I hereby give my permission for U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research, Trent University and Fleming College to use my photograph/image/audio recording in their publications, promotions and other media.

Student Name: Signature: Date:

Student Agrees to Photo/Image/Audio Release? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Instructor Name: Signature: Date:

Instructor Agrees to Photo/Image/Audio Release? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Host Name: Signature: Date:

Host Agrees to Photo/Image/Audio Release? ☐ Yes ☐ No

CBR Staff Name: Signature: Date:

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