

# Editorial

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The Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education occasionally publishes a theme issue on a topic of particular current interest. What you have in your hands is a special issue on university-community engagement. Submissions on this theme were invited in various ways, starting a year ago. Individual invitations to submit articles and Forum pieces were sent to those who gave presentations at the 2008 annual conference of the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education, as the theme of that conference was also university-community engagement.

We received a number of submissions on this topic. Those that were peer reviewed before our production deadline are included in this issue; one article is still being revised and will likely appear in our next issue. Some of the presenters at CAUCE 2008 expressed interest in turning their presentations into articles but were unable to do so before the submission deadline. For these and perhaps other reasons, this issue is thinner than most of our recent ones.

Clearly, we received fewer submissions related to university-community engagement than we had hoped for. It is still a relatively new term, as compared to “continuing education” or “continuing studies” or the other headings that we are accustomed to using for what we do. Indeed, it is a very new term in Canada, although somewhat less so south of the border. However, this relatively muted response to our call for submissions may be one indication that people working in our field do not (or, at least not yet) conceive of their work as falling under the broad heading of “university-community engagement” or, as it is sometimes termed, “community-university engagement.” As I remarked in my editorial for the Spring 2008 issue, our field is very diverse and developing a conceptual framework that encompasses all aspects of it is a true challenge. It may be that we are still thinking through the implications of our work as an aspect of university-community engagement and that this term may yet shape the mental map within which we locate our particular activities.

But that’s enough reflection on my part. Now let’s look at the reflections by the authors of the Forum piece and the articles in this issue!

Those who attended CAUCE 2008 will recognize Budd Hall's Forum piece as a revised and expanded version of the keynote address he gave at the conference. After a brief sketch of how our field has developed in Canada over the past century or so, he suggests that the new conception of university-community engagement has the potential to move us another step forward in our long-standing mission to serve both our institutions and our communities. Budd's contribution to this issue was deliberately placed in the Forum category in the hope of stimulating further discussion of his ideas, both in this journal and elsewhere. I look forward to receiving submissions from others in our field who would like to build on, or challenge, the ideas expressed by this author.

To complement the broad overview presented by Budd Hall, two articles describe two specific applications of university-community engagement. Lois Gander discusses the case of a partnership between the University of Alberta and the surrounding community that focused on providing the public with information on the legal system. From this case study, she derived a model of university-community engagement that she refers to as the "incubation model of university-community relationships." A thoughtful reading of this case study and the author's reflections on it should be useful to others in our field who have developed or are thinking about developing somewhat similar "incubation" relationships with their surrounding communities.

The article by Lorraine Carter and Ellen Rukholm applies the concept of university-community engagement in a quite different context. Their institution partnered with an Aboriginal community in a culturally informed health education project. The authors describe the process used by their team in working with this particular community, and they suggest this process may be a template for university-based teams working with Aboriginal partners.

In short, this issue of the journal offers a possibly controversial statement of how university-community engagement may shape the future of university continuing education, as well as two examples of how it has contributed to such shaping in the recent past. All three are valuable contributions to our understanding of this emerging concept.