

# Principled Community-University Engagement

What, Why, How



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The SFU logo consists of the letters "SFU" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, set against a dark red rectangular background.

**SFU**

SFU SURREY-TD COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT CENTRE

Rachel Nelson  
Associate Director for Partnerships and Programs

The logo for the University of the Fraser Valley features a stylized green wave or leaf shape above the text. The word "UNIVERSITY" is in a white, serif font, "OF THE" is in a smaller white font, and "FRASER VALLEY" is in a larger, green, serif font.

UNIVERSITY  
OF THE  
FRASER VALLEY

Susan Mide Kiss  
Vice-President, Community Engagement



# You will learn

- **history and philosophy of university-community research and engagement**
- **how to analyze and cultivate principled partnerships**
- **what the PAIR Evaluation Tool is and how to use it**
- **how to engage in effective community-university partnerships**

# Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **History and Philosophy**
- **Partnership Stories**
- **Principles for Partnerships Activity**
- **PAIR Evaluation Tool Activity**
- **Final Tips**

# Table Chat

- **Are you with community organization or university?**
- **Why did you join this session?**
- **What would you like to learn?**





# History and Philosophy of University-Community Engagement

# History

- Growing trend over the past two decades for community-university engagement
- Bringing together academic and community knowledge to better address complex challenges
- This trend follows a decline in post-secondary commitment to social impact - addressing private vs public needs
- \*POINT about BIPOC scholars

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

- Singh, 2017, p. 13



# Definition & Purpose

- A key issue noted throughout the literature is the challenge of a shared understanding and definition of community-university engagement
- Many have adopted the Carnegie Foundation definition:

“Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

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

# Carnegie Foundation

- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching - US based organization with a mission to catalyze transformational change in education.
- Community Engagement Elective Classification - provides a process of reflection and accountability to the definition of 'Community Engagement' in the post-secondary context.
- Facilitates transformation over time as institutions assess and reflect on their community engagement practices, resources, and infrastructure.
- Canadian version of the Community Engagement Classification underway.

# Importance of Principles

- Definitions help us with the ‘what’ and ‘why’, but not the ‘how’
- Historically, community-university relationships have been strained.
- Mistrust, suspicion and mis-match between research and community need.
- Need principles to inform partnership processes that lead towards developing trust, sharing power and valuing different forms of knowledge.

# Growth in the Field



# Our Partnership Journey





**Our Story, Your  
Story**

# Table Chat



- **What have you done to engage with universities?**
- **What partnerships have you engaged in with larger institutions? What were the challenges or successes?**
- **Who would you like to engage with?**

# Principles for Partnerships





# Principles for Partnerships



What is an effectiveness principle?



What is an overarching principle?



What is an operating principle?

# OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

## RELATIONSHIPS

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

### OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

- Participate in the community and add value without a preconceived agenda.
- Demonstrate reliability and commitment by delivering on promises.
- Facilitate the space to get to know partners on a personal and human level.
- Respond, where capacity allows, to requests for assistance outside of the parameters of the particular partnership project or activity. Use available resources and knowledge to benefit the partner.
- Build networks and social fabric by introducing and recommending partners to other contacts and by positively promoting the partnership.



## CONTEXT

Consider unique contexts, history, and power dynamics as factors in how each partnership is approached, designed, and sustained.

### OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

- Acknowledge history, power dynamics and other social, economic, political, environmental or cultural factors that affect your partnership.
- Approach collaborations with vulnerability, openness, and humility, and be willing to step back or change course based on feedback.
- Avoid perpetuating systems of oppression by engaging in regular self-reflective practice<sup>4</sup> and by being open to feedback and learning.
- Codevelop implicit or explicit principles and processes with partners for each collaboration, considering the context and nature of the activity.
- Use formal agreements<sup>5</sup> if necessary for establishing parameters, managing resources, and balancing power.



## FLEXIBILITY

Let ideas and opportunities emerge, and be open and adaptable to change in a complex environment.

### OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

- Be willing to shift direction for projects and initiatives, provided there continues to be mutual value in the partnership.
- Take advantage of unanticipated opportunities where capacity allows.
- Be open to the development of new goals, outcomes, and processes as the partnership evolves, and attempt to capture unanticipated learnings, outcomes, and ripple effects.



## RESPECT

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

### OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

- Approach partnerships with a listening and learning mindset, and ensure all voices are heard in order to shape and bring forward collaborative initiatives.
- Create inclusive environments<sup>4</sup> where all partners feel welcome and valued for their time, experience, and knowledge.
- Discuss what a fair distribution of resources and benefits looks like for the partnership based on the specific initiative, the capacity and contribution of the various partners, and the resources available.
- Celebrate partnership accomplishments in ways that honour and value the contributions of all partners.



## COMMUNICATION

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

### OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

- Establish a shared understanding of interests, goals, commitments, and limitations.
- Check in with partners along the way to provide feedback for improvement and to ensure continued mutual benefit. Make adjustments as needed.
- Determine preferred modes and frequency of communication.
- Use accessible language<sup>7</sup>.
- Communicate concerns or changes in the partnership with timeliness, respect, and honesty.



These principles are offered as a resource and compass to guide behaviour and action in partnership work, while giving space for the complexity inherent in these relationships. This framework is meant to provide useful guidance based on foundational values, lessons, assumptions and experience from practice. It builds on existing evidence and literature, and it would benefit from testing, feedback and iteration to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

<sup>4</sup> Fook, "Reflective Practice and Critical Reflection", p. 447  
[[https://practicelearning.info/pluginfile.php/317/mod\\_data/content/2740/Extract%20-%20Lishman%20-%20chapter%2026.pdf](https://practicelearning.info/pluginfile.php/317/mod_data/content/2740/Extract%20-%20Lishman%20-%20chapter%2026.pdf)]

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.carleton.edu/ccce/community-partners/community-partnership-agreements/>

The background features a large, light orange shape on the left side and a teal shape on the top right. A thin, light brown line curves across the right side, overlapping the teal shape.

# Principles for Partnerships

Deep Dive



# Relationships

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

# Operating Principles



Participate in community and add value without a pre-conceived agenda



Get to know partners on a personal and human level



Be helpful outside the partnership



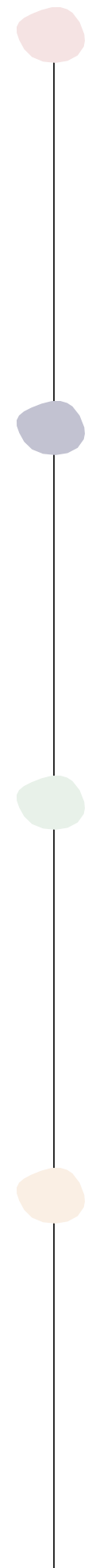
Deliver on promises



# Context

Consider unique contexts, history and power dynamics as factors in how each partnership is approached, designed and sustained.

# Operating Principles



Acknowledge the factors.  
Approach with care.

Avoid perpetuating systems of oppression. Engage in self-reflective practice and be open to feedback.

Co-develop process for each partnership. Use agreements when necessary.




# Respect

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



# Operating Principles



Listen and learn. Ensure all voices are heard

Create inclusive environments

Distribute resources fairly

Celebrate and honour the contributions of all partners



# Flexibility

Let ideas and opportunities emerge, and be open and adaptable to change in a complex environment.

# Operating Principles



Be willing to shift direction.

Take advantage of opportunities where capacity allows.

Be open to new goals, outcomes and processes

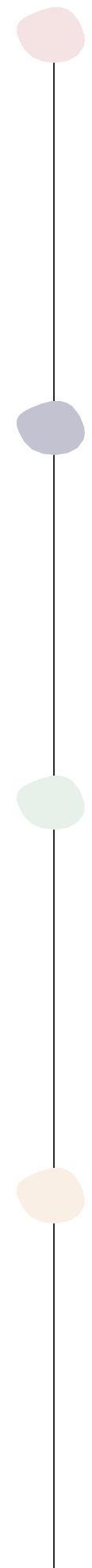
Attempt to capture unanticipated learnings



# Communication

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

# Operating Principles



Establish a shared understanding of interests, goals, commitments and limitations

Check in and make adjustments along the way

Determine preferred modes and frequency

Communicate concerns or changes with timeliness, respect and honesty

# Scenario Activity

The background features abstract, organic shapes in light orange, light blue, and light pink, set against a white background. The shapes are soft and flowing, creating a modern and minimalist aesthetic.

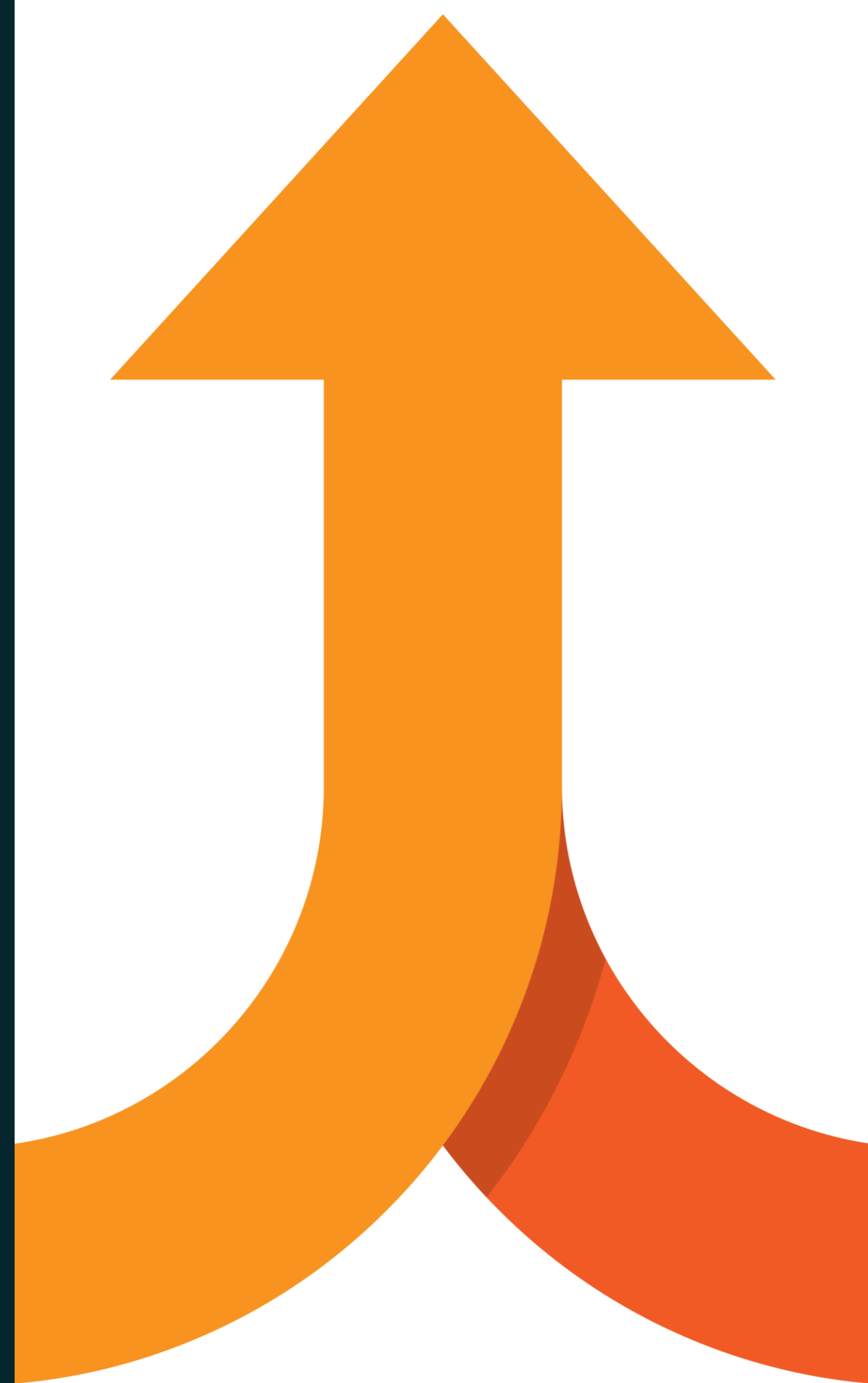
# Community Engagement Through the Lens of the PAIR Toolkit

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# Community Engagement PAIR Matrix

Co-created by UFV's Community  
Engagement Portfolio and Community  
Health and Social Innovation Hub (CHASI)







## Why PAIR?

### Reap

1. To gather or take (a crop, harvest, etc.)
2. To get as a return, recompense, or result

### Pair

1. Something consisting of two parts or pieces joined together
2. To form into a pair, as by matching, joining, etc.

### PAIR

- Partnership
- Agency
- Inclusion
- Recognition



## Constructing Criteria

# Our questions/criteria are drawn from

1. UFV's Mission Statement
2. UFV's Integrated Strategic Plan
3. UFV's Enrollment Plan

Balancing a manageable number of questions with a thorough review across a wide scope was a primary focus in decision making.



## Designing the Matrix

# Our biggest design priorities were:

1. User-friendliness
2. Accessibility
3. Flexibility

After some experimentation, Excel was the clear best platform for this tool.



## Planning for the Future

# We considered how institutional priorities could shift.

We made it easy to update:

1. Customizable for other parts of UFV (and partners)
2. Adjustable question weighting
3. Editable questions and answers

So here's what we did.

**CHASI** Community Health &  
Social Innovation Hub

UNIVERSITY  
OF THE **FRASER VALLEY**





**Mission: Engaging learners, transforming lives, building community.**

**Values: Integrity, Inclusivity, Community, Excellence**

**CHASI** Community Health &  
Social Innovation Hub



**FIFTY YEARS  
FORWARD ›**

**UFV.CA/50**

**CHASI** Community Health &  
Social Innovation Hub

# Wrap Up

- **Final tips**
- **Final comments**
- **Final questions**





A close-up photograph of cherry blossoms. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open showing five petals and yellow stamens, and others as buds. The petals are a mix of light pink and white. The leaves are bright green and serrated. The background is a clear, vibrant blue sky.

Thank you