



Brock University  
President's Task Force on Community Engagement  
Final report and recommendations



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#### Message from the President

Brock was incorporated in 1964 as a result of the dedication of people in its surrounding communities who wanted a local university that would offer Niagara's youth a high-quality education. At the dawn of the 21st century, as Niagara grappled with a confluence of factors that caused its economy to falter, we recognized that Brock could do more to support the communities that had created the University. From our participation in local economic development strategies, to partnerships aimed at reigniting Niagara's economy, we became more active participants in the social, cultural, economic and environmental transformation of the region.

Students gained first-hand experience in the marketplace while providing invaluable support and knowledge to public, private and not-for-profit organizations across the region. Faculty produced cutting-edge research that was relevant to, and advanced, new and ongoing priorities of people and organizations across Niagara. Together, Brock and its surrounding communities were making great strides toward the transformation of the region.

To further encourage partnerships between Brock and its surrounding communities, we formally identified community engagement as a strategic priority of the University in our Integrated Strategic Plan (2010) and our Strategic Mandate Agreement (2013).

However, as we began to implement initiatives to strengthen our community engagement, we recognized that the voice of the community was necessary to understand not only local needs but also how Brock could best respond to those needs.

The President's Task Force on Community Engagement was created in August of 2013. Composed of members of both the Brock and Niagara communities, the Task Force was asked to develop recommendations that could strengthen Brock's community engagement efforts moving forward.

This report is a culmination of the efforts of that Task Force and reinforces our belief that the community's voice is an invaluable asset in the development and implementation of Brock's community engagement plans.

On behalf of the Brock community, I would like to thank all members of the Task Force for the time, dedication and insights you have shared with us. The recommendations in this report will help to guide the University in the years ahead as we consider ways to improve access to the University's expertise and resources and to expand the impact we are having across the region.

Sincerely,

Jack N. Lightstone  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
Brock University



## Executive Summary

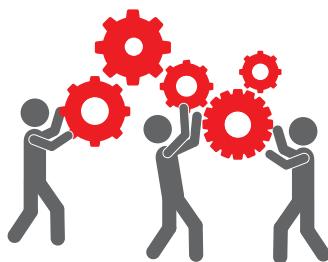
Brock University was created in the 1960s because of grassroots support across Niagara communities. In 2014, the University set out to update its strategic priorities, the most significant of which was to assume a more active role in Niagara.

University President Jack Lightstone asked a group of community figures, familiar with Brock's presence in the community, to help guide the review and develop recommendations on how to advance and better promote Brock's community engagement efforts.

As the President's Task Force on Community Engagement, they studied how the University was connecting with the community, and compared perceptions of that engagement to best practices.

To develop a well-rounded assessment, the Task Force sought input from members of the University community as well as more than 100 community members across Niagara's social, cultural, economic and environmental sectors.

They found that community groups who engaged with Brock saw the University as an important partner, but they also found that many in the community were unaware of Brock's engagement, or of how to engage Brock. There was also a sense that Brock was more involved with St. Catharines and less involved with other communities in Niagara.



### The Task Force was able to obtain many examples of Brock's far-reaching engagement, and has captured that within its report.

In summary, the Task Force felt there is opportunity for Brock to not only be more engaged, but to better promote that engagement. To this end, the Task Force offered the following recommendations:

- 1.** Establish a campus-wide coordinating structure or central point of contact to improve access to the University and facilitate community engagement and collaboration opportunities.
- 2.** Recognize and reward individuals, both from the Brock and external communities, who play significant roles in the University's community engagement efforts.
- 3.** Promote, internally and externally, Brock's community engagement goals and strategies to help the community identify synergies that can lead to mutually beneficial engagement opportunities.
- 4.** Create a formal, structured process that allows for two-way dialogue and raises awareness of Brock and community initiatives
- 5.** Collect and report data on Brock's community engagement activities to identify:
  - Social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts.
  - Alignment with Niagara's industry sectors and workforce needs.
  - Gaps in the University's engagement efforts.
  - Existing engagement with communities beyond Niagara's borders, and how to link these partnerships and activities back to Niagara
- 6.** Develop metrics to measure engagement once benchmarks are established.
- 7.** Refine mechanisms for people at Brock to work more fully in partnership with community networks, to promote two-way exchange of ideas, knowledge and evidence.

The Task Force feels that by adopting some of these recommendations, Brock will be in a better position to strengthen its role as a community partner.

We hope the following report helps the University in its efforts to expand its partnerships in the region. We look forward to continuing to partner with Brock as it works to enhance its community engagement efforts and its impact across the region.



## Background

**Brock University's President's Task Force on Community Engagement defines community engagement as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and broader communities for the mutual exchange of knowledge and resources. These efforts are carried out in a spirit of partnership and reciprocity with the objective of contributing to the community's sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural prosperity."**

Brock's commitment to its surrounding community was sown long before its doors first opened. In the late 1950s, there was growing public discussion about the need for Niagara to have its own university so that young people had access to a good education without having to leave the Niagara region. This grassroots sentiment became a movement when, in November 1957, the Allanburg Women's Institute asked the Government of Ontario to "favourably consider the placing of a university in the Niagara Peninsula." By fall 1962, the Brock Founders Committee was incorporated. Upon receiving approval to create a new university, the committee developed an administrative and academic plan and began to fundraise.

As a result of the work and dedication of people in its surrounding communities, Brock opened in September 1964 with 127 students in a refurbished refrigeration factory at the foot of the Niagara Escarpment in St. Catharines. In 1966, the landmark Schmon Tower was completed, and faculty began moving "up the hill" to the University's permanent home atop the Niagara Escarpment.

Since that time, Brock has sent thousands of graduates on to successful careers and its commitment to the communities that helped to form it has only grown stronger.

However, while Brock continued to flourish, the community responsible for creating the University began to struggle. The combined effects of the recession, uncertain and volatile exchange rates, vulnerabilities in export markets and fluctuating fuel prices created a perfect storm, and Niagara, with economic bases rooted in both automotive manufacturing and agriculture, was particularly hard hit.

Recognizing that its community was at a crossroads, senior leadership at Brock worked closely with local governments towards the development of strategies that would help set a new course for the region. The strategies would build on the community's

core strengths, which included the knowledge generated through its post-secondary institutes, its strong business base, an involved local chamber of commerce and strategic investments made in the Niagara region.

In 2010, Brock reconfirmed its commitment to its surrounding communities in its Strategic Plan.

### Vision

Brock University envisions itself as a dynamic post-secondary educational institution that:

- Makes a difference in the lives of individuals in our Brock community, the Niagara region, Canada, and the world.
- Demonstrates leadership and innovation in teaching and learning across disciplines.
- Extends knowledge through excellence in research, scholarship, and creativity.

### Mission

Brock flourishes through the scholarly, creative, and professional achievements of our students, faculty and staff. Although we share a common purpose, we recognize and honour knowledge pursued through a diversity of perspectives and approaches.

Our academic mission is to nurture and support our faculty and students in the discovery of knowledge through exemplary scholarship, teaching, and learning.

We provide undergraduate and professional education of the highest quality, while continuing to expand graduate programs that are integrated into Brock's growing reputation for excellence in research and innovation. We

provide a transformative experience for our students, inside and outside the classroom, by helping to develop their full potential as creative, educated citizens in a global community. Brock graduates go out into the world as leaders, with a track record of entering fulfilling careers across all disciplines.

Brock University works to enhance the economic, social, cultural and intellectual lives of the communities around us — Niagara, Ontario, Canada, and beyond — and to demonstrate the vital ways in which we contribute to the betterment of society in the 21st century.

Subsequently, the University committed to developing a community engagement plan that would further Brock's vision, mission, values and strategic priorities.





More recently, Brock's Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) priorities reiterated the University's commitment to its surrounding communities. Brock's SMA highlights the value that community partnerships provide to students who gain knowledge and skills through first-hand experience working with people and organizations across Niagara. These partnerships in turn contribute toward the environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being of the region.

### **Strategic Priority 1:**

#### **Serving the 21st-Century Learner: Putting Students First**

Recognizing the benefits produced by university-community partnerships, Brock's SMA commits to expanding service-learning opportunities for students. It aims to create 400 new student placements in 2013-14 with subsequent incremental increases of 200 student placements for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17. In response to student demand, the University also committed to a pilot accelerated degree in Nursing in partnership with the new Niagara Health System hospital.

To respond to the fact that Niagara has one of the lowest university participation rates, Brock is strengthening its relationship with Niagara College through a number of initiatives aimed at enhancing student opportunities. The University committed to improving access to a post-secondary education by working with Niagara College to establish a program in general arts and science. This program will provide individuals with the opportunity to explore the option of higher education, which may, in turn, help to raise Niagara's university participation rates. Other collaborative community partnerships with Niagara College include a new fully integrated degree program in digital gaming and the Faculty of Education's Bachelor of Early Childhood Education program.

### **Strategic Priority 2:**

#### **Establishing Transdisciplinary Research Hubs and Developing New Graduate and Undergraduate Programs**

Brock recognizes that many of the most pressing challenges in its surrounding communities cannot be addressed within classical disciplinary boundaries or without active partnerships across Niagara. In response, the University committed to establishing transdisciplinary research hubs that reflect Niagara's strategic

industry clusters and that are committed to community partnership. Ranging in areas from health to grape and wine, the hubs bring together successful researchers from all of Brock's Faculties to develop transdisciplinary solutions to major questions of importance in both academic and community domains.

**Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI):** An internationally recognized research institute, CCOVI was Brock's first transdisciplinary research hub. By expanding its activities beyond the sciences of oenology and viticulture, CCOVI is working with academic, industry and government leaders to establish and transfer knowledge and technologies that respond to leading concerns of the grape and wine industry in Niagara and beyond.

**Advanced Biomanufacturing Centre (ABC):** The ABC explores new methods for the manufacture of medicinally important compounds, chemical building blocks, and new materials. It is expected to generate research with commercial potential in areas ranging from pharmaceuticals to materials required by society. In turn, it is expected that new and existing companies will come to Niagara to benefit from the commercial potential of the work accomplished in the ABC, creating high-quality jobs in our community and enhancing Niagara's reputation as a hub for bio-product manufacturing.

**Brock-Niagara Centre for Well-being:** The Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-being has developed over 30 partnerships with public, private and not-for-profit health organizations as well as post-secondary institutions across Niagara and beyond. It continues to provide community programs that are improving health and quality of life for cardiac patients, people with spinal cord injuries, people with Multiple Sclerosis, amputees and older adults. Today, with over 300 members, 85-90 per cent of whom are older adults, the direct integration of research into community programming has successfully created unique, cutting-edge community programs that add economic and social value to public investments in research. The programming addresses key health and wellness challenges experienced by specific populations across Niagara. It improves quality of life by promoting healthy and active living in an inclusive environment. Students, working with members individually and in groups, further contribute to this unique setting while gaining practical experience for future careers.





**Environmental Sustainability Research Centre:** Leveraging Brock's location in the Niagara Escarpment, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the ESRC brings together researchers from across a range of Brock Faculties, community organizations and international partners to pursue innovative research that supports environmental sustainability and social-ecological resilience in Niagara and beyond.

**Jack and Nora Walker Centre for Lifespan Development Research:** the Jack and Nora Walker Canadian Centre for Lifespan Development Research is dedicated to studying human development across the lifespan, with special strengths in childhood and adolescence. The Centre involves more than 60 faculty members across a range of Faculties as well as 117 partnerships with organizations locally, nationally and internationally who collaborate to investigate the psychological, social, health, neurophysiological and educational aspects of life from infancy to old age.

**Social Justice Research Institute (SJRI):** The SJRI brings together researchers from a range of disciplines to produce socially relevant and community-based scholarship on social justice issues while creating connections with community organizations that can advance or benefit the objectives of the centre. With the goal of producing social change for the benefit of 21st century society, the SJRI has focused on five urgent social problems in five research clusters: global justice, jobs and justice, gender and justice, animals and justice, and epistemic justice.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Building a Network of Partnerships that Promote Prosperity through Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Creativity.**

Brock is actively committed to the environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being of its surrounding communities. Its third SMA priority directly speaks to its commitment to community engagement: "Brock strives to be the model for how institutions of higher education can partner with their communities to establish a culture of innovation and meet the needs of the creative economy." In addition to the network of community partners developed

through the University's transdisciplinary hubs, community engagement activities have expanded on a number of additional fronts.

**Goodman School of Business:** The Goodman School of Business' Deborah E. Rosati co-op fund, has presented awards to three Brock students who, as part of their co-op term, have had the opportunity to hone their entrepreneurial skills by learning how to start and advance their own business. In 2013-14, more than 1,400 Goodman students participated in Service-Learning. That means that 40 per cent of Goodman students engaged with and assisted community organizations by participating in 125 community projects. The value attributed to the student support provided to the community in that one calendar year was more than \$595,000. The Goodman School of Business' Centre for Innovation, Management and Enterprise Education (CIMEE) continues to partner with the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce to offer courses to the general public. This partnership has greatly supported CIMEE's efforts to train the next generation of managers at the Niagara Region and within each municipality. In the past 10 years, more than 5,000 registrants have taken part in CIMEE seminars, dealing with business and management and administration topics. To date, 270 individuals have obtained Professional Management Certificates from CIMEE. The Goodman School of Business' Student Consulting Services is a student-run management consulting team, employing top Goodman School of Business students. Since 2004, the group has been providing affordable management consultancy services to organizations in the Niagara Region, specializing in the small-to-medium size businesses, business start-ups, and non-profit organizations.

**Goodman School of Business BioLinc Incubator:** Since 2014, Brock has incubated seven companies and has worked with 176 student entrepreneurs and 27 mentors. In September 2014, Biolinc launched the Kick-Starting Entrepreneurship program, which, in its second year, is annually accepting 35 young people, aged 18 to 29. The program encourages youth to explore their innovative ideas and advance their early-stage entrepreneurial aspirations through two intensive training weekends, monthly seminars and events. Participants also access a mentor and advisory services from BioLinc and Innovate Niagara, Niagara's Regional Innovation Centre. Recently, BioLinc and Innovate Niagara also developed the Healthcare Ecosphere (HCE), a specialized program for the Niagara Region Healthcare Ecosystem that connects hospitals with entrepreneurs, health services providers and academic institutions to guide and develop the unique innovations needed by healthcare organizations.

**Office of Innovation and Commercialization:** To date, Brock Innovation's primary instrument for the advancement of University reputation has been the development of partnership research, particularly research with regional (Niagara) commercial partners. The University has developed more than 100 new research partnerships, two-thirds of which are with SMEs in Niagara and the GTA. Seventy-three of the office's 106 patents are licensed to



## President's Task Force on Community Engagement

industry, with these licenses bringing in \$700,000 of income in the last year alone. The office is working with 60 Brock professors, more than 100 Brock students, 50 external companies and 30 venture mentors. In the past four years, more than 110 professors have been involved in an innovation project. With support from the Ontario Centres of Excellence, Brock Innovation launched 'Research Ventures', a program that supports student-led ventures. With mentorship from professors and local community members, students leverage Brock research to establish technology, business and social ventures. In 2014-15 Brock Innovation awarded its first 16 Research Ventures to students across the University. Many of the ventures support existing research at the University, including research from Brock's transdisciplinary hubs.

**Niagara Community Observatory:** The Niagara Community Observatory works with partners in the community to produce and distribute evidence-based research on current and emerging issues that have a significant impact on the region. Since its inception in 2009, the NCO has researched more than 25 topics, from local farmer's markets and Niagara water quality, to subjects like how poverty impacts at-risk youth, how to attract and retain young people in Niagara, and how to build successful bi-national relationships.

**The Centre for Healthy Development through Sport and Physical Activity (CHDSPA):** CHDSPA promotes research and practice with local, provincial, national, and international partners to provide a vehicle for creating, evaluating and disseminating effective strategies for enhancing physical literacy and active healthy living. Through one of its current projects, the Centre is working with Canadian Sport for Life to investigate the physical literacy levels of children and youth in Ontario and the validity of the Physical Literacy Assessment for Youth (PLAY) tools. One of the outcomes of this project will see upwards of 300 recreation and sport practitioners trained to more effectively apply PLAY. In conjunction with Brock Niagara Aquatics and Brock Recreation Services, the Centre also launched the Brock Niagara Penguins

program in the fall of 2006. The Penguins have a wheelchair basketball team, a competitive swim team, and as of 2014, a competitive bocce team.

**Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts:** In June 2015, the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts relocated the departments of Dramatic Arts, Music and Visual Arts and the Centre for Studies in Arts and Culture to its new downtown facilities. That fall, the newly relocated School opened its doors to nearly 500 students. Positioned at the epicentre of an effort to revive the downtown core, this location seeks, along with the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and the Meridian Centre, to establish a cultural hub that breeds new spin-off cultural activities, businesses and employment opportunities. The agreement to share the recently opened FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and two of its facilities, the 300-seat Cairns Recital Hall and the Film Theatre, is evidence of a strong, forward-thinking relationship between Brock University and the City of St. Catharines. In addition to large lectures held by all departments in the Film Theatre, the Department of Music hosts public recitals and choral events in the Cairns Recital Hall and the 800-seat concert hall. It also hosts a weekly RBC Foundation Music@Noon series, which attracts 75 to 80 people weekly. To celebrate the School's move downtown, it organized a rich rostrum of 50 events at its new location and throughout the community under the theme of "Imagining the City". From faculty and student exhibitions to performances, from theatre to musical recitals, and from Hot Talks to symposia, the goal was to showcase the new facilities while introducing the public to the extraordinary breadth of the School's programming.

To further advance the University's strategic priorities and commitment to its surrounding communities, Brock's president directed the establishment of a task force on community engagement.





## President's Task Force on Community Engagement



**Community Engagement Task Force established**



**A study on community engagement begins**



**Recommendations developed**



**Final report to President**

Brock has a vested interest in building strong relationships with the communities that surround its campus. As previously indicated, Brock's location was not determined by happenstance. Brock is a byproduct of the needs of the community and as such, the University will always have strong ties to the community.

As Brock embarked on defining its strategic priorities, among the most significant was the intent to grow and enhance community partnerships. These partnerships allow Brock to assume a more active role in the revitalization of our community. In response, Brock set out to gain an understanding of how the University could enhance its contributions.

To that end, the President requested a group of community leaders who understand the community and Brock's role within it. This group came together to create the Task Force on Community Engagement. The Task Force was guided by the following principles:

- Brock University is a socially responsive university committed to growing its role in community development through engagement and stakeholder relations.
- Brock University's community engagement perspective and the University's community engagement efforts are in large part a result of the University's involvement in helping to create and implement regional economic development priority plans and seeing a role for itself in the strategic plans of the surrounding communities.
- These plans identify and in some cases rely on Brock's current activities to support the region's economic growth and prosperity. Elected leaders at all levels of government, as well as community business and not-for profit sector leaders, recognize post-secondary involvement as a critical enabler in the economic and community well-being of the Region. (see Appendix for further information)
- Brock has a historically informal approach to community relations — absence of an articulated strategy for community relations resulting in missed opportunities and gaps.

Membership, including cross-sector representatives of our community partners, as well as representatives from the University:

### **Community Members**

Mishka Balsom, The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce  
Jeff Chesebrough, Innovate Niagara  
Marty Mako, Niagara Region Public Health  
Sarah Pennisi, Niagara Region  
Bob Seguin, Niagara Region Economic Development  
Walter Sendzik, formerly of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce  
Janet St. Amand, YMCA of Niagara  
Mary Wiley, Niagara Connects  
John Zoccoli, Brock Board of Trustees and Alumni Board

### **Internal Brock Members**

Kate Cassidy  
Don Cyr  
Sandy Howe  
Kevin Kee, former AVP Research  
Kim Meade, former AVP Student Services  
Meaghan Rusnell  
Alejandra Wichartz  
Barry Wright

The role of the Task Force was to create a report that would provide senior administration with a clear understanding of the community's perception of the University, and make recommendations on ways to enhance and better-promote the University's community engagement efforts.

To support the work of the Task Force, Brock University remained committed to:

- Continue to play a key role in the economic, social and cultural development of the region
- Provide economic and social benefits to the community through ongoing activities and initiatives
- Strengthen service-learning opportunities for students to enhance student engagement with the community



- Advance innovation in emerging clusters through its research and academic activities
- Pursue collaborative research opportunities with industry
- Establish mechanisms for the systematic collection and assessment of community perceptions and advice
- Collect data to better understand and articulate current engagement

To fulfill its mandate, the Task Force spent time understanding community-university engagement as it relates to Brock's institutional vision, mission, identity, values and strategic priorities and directions. The Task Force also looked at community-university engagement as it relates to the University's commitment to its surrounding communities. Further, in order to effectively advise Brock leadership about key needs and goals from a community perspective, the Task Force gathered feedback from the community that would serve to provide a better understanding of the community's perception of the University.

To accomplish its mission, the Task Force:

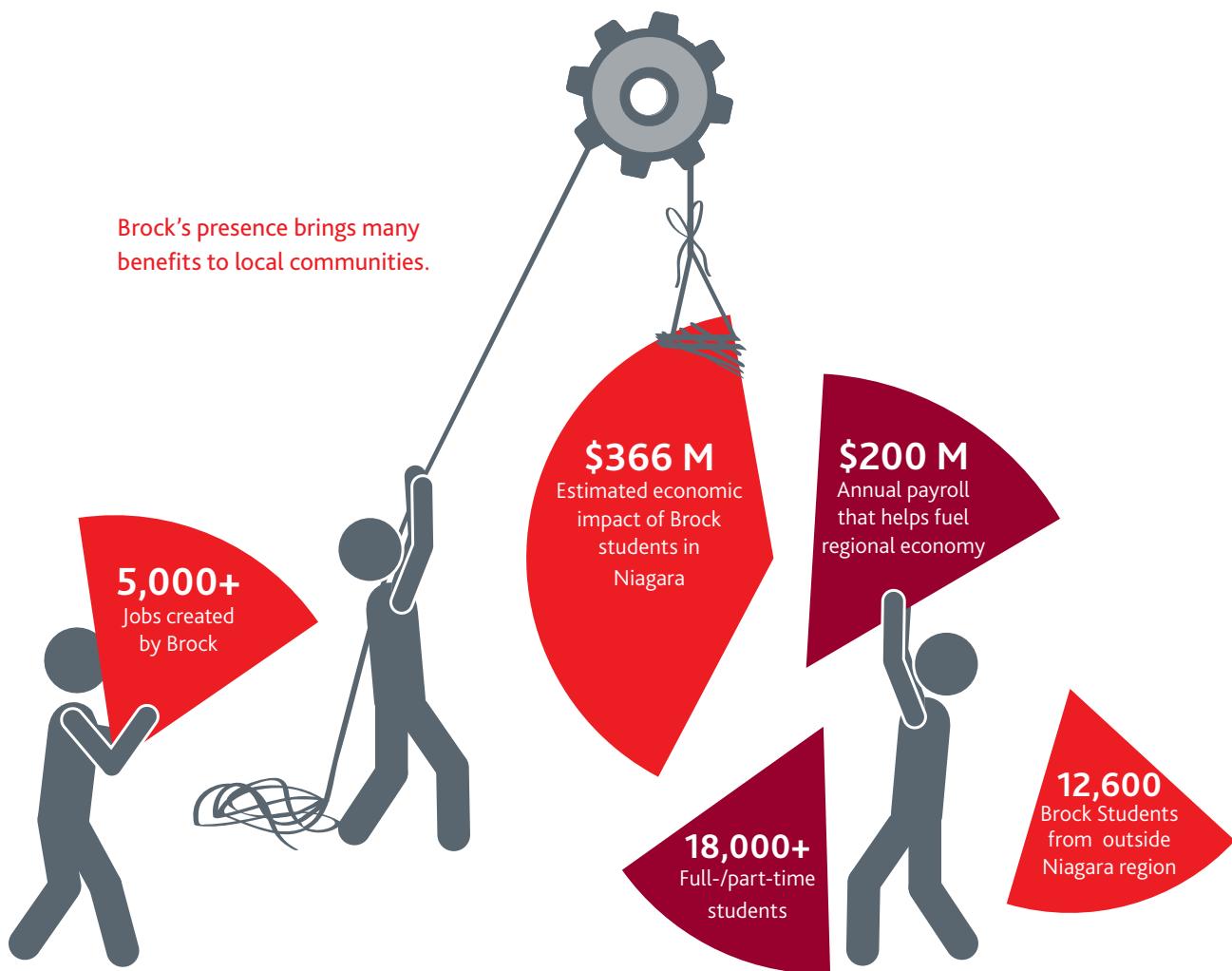
- Identified key community stakeholders
- Made recommendations to senior administration regarding the direction of Brock's community engagement strategy
- Provided advice on a promotional piece to be used in the University's community engagement promotion strategy
- Undertook an external assessment to identify gaps in Brock's community engagement activities, key community stakeholders in Brock's interaction with its community, and community challenges that can best be addressed by Brock's expertise

The Task Force made recommendations regarding the strategic direction of the University's community outreach efforts. They also suggested synergies between Brock and the community of Niagara that would effectively leverage Brock's expertise in research, education and knowledge to benefit the broadest cross-section of the University's stakeholders.

The report that follows was the result of the work of the President's Task Force.



## What is Brock currently doing?



As a partner in the intellectual, cultural and economic wellbeing of Niagara, Brock has a significant impact on its surrounding communities. As one of Niagara's leading employers, Brock infuses a meaningful amount of money into the Niagara economy. With an annual payroll of \$200 Million, Brock provides full- or part-time jobs for more than 5,000 people across Niagara. Further, the University pays nearly \$10-million per year in local taxes and utilities; spends more than \$10-million per year in purchased services, much from local suppliers; and spends \$13-million per year on repairs and maintenance of its buildings, vehicles, roads and facilities.

Brock is also attracting youth to our region. 75 per cent of our 18,500 students come from outside Niagara. Among them, nearly 2,000 international students come from around the world, enriching our region in many ways. Brock's 18,500 students inject \$366-million per year into the Niagara economy. With 75 per cent of Brock students coming from outside of the region, most of that money would not otherwise have been spent in Niagara.

### Examples of Brock in the community

#### Experiential learning

Brock University aspires to be a global leader in the delivery of high-quality life-long learning. As identified by Brock's Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), one of the key features that differentiates Brock from other comparable medium-sized comprehensive universities in Ontario is experiential education.

Brock is one of the largest and most extensive experiential education providers in the country, offering a broad range of opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and gain experience related to their career aspirations. These include but are not limited to: Co-op education, service-learning, internships/placements, field courses, clinical and/or professional practice, and applied research projects.

To continue to build on our objective to offer an outstanding student experience at Brock, we need to generate capacity for these opportunities across all Faculties and programs.



## Brock University's co-op advantage



**Direct entry  
from high school**  
(Most programs)



**Nearly 100% co-op  
placement rate**



**One of the largest and diverse  
co-op programs in Canada**



**12-20 months  
of paid work experience**

### Co-op

In 2014-15, there were 1,940 co-op students at Brock. The University has developed relationships with more than 8,000 employers from around the country that have hired, or who are open to hiring co-op students.

Each co-op term gives students the opportunity to gain valuable work experience as they spend a minimum of 420 hours (35 hours per week for 12 weeks) working with businesses and organizations that put their academic experience into practice. This translates into a minimum of 470,000 hours that students dedicate to working in the local community and beyond, bridging their academic learning with experience in the field.

### Service-Learning and Additional Experiential Opportunities

In 2013-14 Brock offered 3,427 spaces for students wishing to engage with the community through service-learning courses. In 2014-15, that number increased by 214 spaces to 3,641.

According to Brock's survey of Service-Learning Course Registrations, in 2014-15, service-learning spaces were broken down as follows:

<b>Goodman School of Business:</b>	<b>1,315</b>
<b>Faculty of Applied Health Science:</b>	<b>1,024</b>
<b>Faculty of Social Sciences:</b>	<b>908</b>
<b>Faculty of Humanities:</b>	<b>394</b>
<b>Faculty of Education:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Faculty of Mathematics and Science:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,641</b>

In addition to service-learning opportunities, spaces for students were also offered in other types of experiential for-credit offerings.

### Additional Experiential Opportunities

Type	Undergraduate	Graduate	2014-15 total
<b>Internships</b>	510	90	600
<b>Clinical/ Professional Practice</b>	3,924	730	4,654
<b>Field Courses</b>	1,358	770	2,128
<b>Total</b>			7,382

\*Note: these numbers are taken from internal survey data collected in the spring of 2015 from each Faculty.

### Co-curricular Experiential Learning

Brock University recognizes that increasing students' engagement, both inside and outside the classroom, is central to ensuring their success. With this in mind, an easy-to-use online platform, ExperienceBU, was created to help students find campus and community events, volunteer opportunities, clubs to join and other great ways to make the most of their time at Brock.

Over the last two years, use of ExperienceBU has grown as students increasingly seek to become more engaged. The platform is also helping students participate in the Campus Wide Co-Curriculum (CWC), a unique guide that helps students develop, enhance, and improve their understanding and skills in a variety of areas by offering experiences in 10 different co-curricular domains: arts and culture; Brock spirit; career preparation; community engagement; diversity and inclusion; global awareness; health and wellness; innovation, leadership and teamwork; and personal growth.

Faculty members have also started integrating curricular and co-curricular student experiences into their teaching by building components of the CWC into academic courses. These outside-the-classroom experiences are linked to assignments and critical reflection. As the first Canadian university to bridge curricular and co-curricular experiential learning in this way, Brock has been put on the forefront of experiential learning nationally.

The number of high-quality experiential learning opportunities at Brock is always growing thanks, in part, to the strong partnerships that Brock has built in Niagara and beyond. In the last year alone, the University created two new positions dedicated to enhancing and expanding experiential education. Brock's new Director of Co-op, Career and Experiential Education, and an Associate Director, Experiential Education are working on ways to increase experiential offerings at Brock, while centralizing the campus approach to experiential education.

Another strategy aimed at enhancing experiential education at Brock involved putting service-learning support and reporting solely under the direction of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, which already oversees Brock's Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Brock's Co-op, Career and Experiential Education departments. This shift has allowed for better synergies between the different departments.

Brock will build on this foundation by increasing the number of available spaces for students in classes that incorporate



experiential pedagogy. Experiential education is moving into the spotlight at Brock.

#### Brock's role as a founding partner in the building of innovative mechanisms for community engagement

##### nGen (Innovate Niagara) and BioLinc

The creation of Niagara Interactive Media Generator (nGen) was sparked by the desire of Brock's department of humanities to integrate teaching and innovation. Launched in 2008, nGen created a collaborative hub that brought Brock University together with like-minded groups such as Niagara College, Interactive Ontario, the Niagara Region, the City of St. Catharines, and the Niagara Enterprise Agency. It encouraged synergies between creative and enabler enterprises, local arts and culture industries and Niagara's post-secondary institutions.

A few years later, in late 2012, Brock University received an \$843,000 grant from the Government of Canada's Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) to start an incubator and to establish support services for entrepreneurs.

At the same time, the Government of Ontario, through the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs (ONE), put out a call for Regional Innovation Centres (RIC); an initiative that was to be led locally by nGen.

Brock recognized that replicating RIC programming with FedDev funding would both duplicate services and be an inefficient means to spur economic growth across the region. As a result, a consortium of local partners including nGen, the Niagara Region, Brock University, the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and the City of St. Catharines, came together to create Innovate Niagara.

Innovate Niagara leveraged Brock University's FedDev funding to expand nGen's mission. Changing nGen's name to Innovate Niagara was a reflection of its expanded mandate to serve emerging sectors and high-growth industries through business advisory services, tools, resources and linkages to a network of business incubators.

In 2012, Brock University's Goodman School of Business' BioLinc

was also established and became part of Innovate Niagara's network of incubators. A bioscience, biotechnology and biomanufacturing facility housed within Brock's \$114.1 million Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Complex, BioLinc began accepting clients for tenancy in the summer of 2013. In partnership with Innovate Niagara, it helps transform leading-edge research opportunities into robust business opportunities by providing students, researchers and private sector companies with a forum to connect, collaborate and commercialize concepts.

Today, as Niagara's RIC, Innovate Niagara, provides streamlined services for Niagara's growing number of entrepreneurs and SMEs in strategic business clusters including interactive digital media, health and wellness, life sciences, bio-products and green energy/technology. It works with Niagara's incubators and organizations to promote innovation, entrepreneurship and job creation and provides the necessary services to support business growth.

##### Niagara Connects

Niagara Connects is a Niagara-wide network of people working together to plan, learn, innovate and take community action toward a stronger future for Niagara. Beginning in 2005, Brock is among several partners who worked together to build this community-owned network, with a mission of: Generating knowledge that drives community action.

At the core of Brock's involvement in Niagara Connects is the intent to connect people at Brock in working more fully in partnership with people in the Niagara-wide community. This promotes two-way exchange of ideas, knowledge and evidence. It enriches the science/society dialogue, ensures benefit-sharing among all stakeholders, and ultimately strengthens outcomes for Niagara.

When the Niagara Community Observatory (NCO) was established in 2009, a mechanism was intentionally established for the NCO and the Niagara Connects network to work together. The partnership creates knowledge exchange pathways for the Niagara-wide community's focused Action Steps in the Living in Niagara report to inform priorities for NCO policy brief topics. In particular, the 2012 brief, "Are the Consequences of Poverty Holding Niagara





Back?" continues to achieve significant community uptake. The high level of impact of this policy brief validates the two-way community-university linkages inherent in the Niagara Connects-NCO model.

People at Brock work with the Niagara Connects team to support and leverage tools such as:

- The Living in Niagara report, a triennial measure of quality of life across the 12 Living in Niagara Sectors, which align with the Social Indicators of Health. The first 3 reports, produced in 2008, 2011, and 2014, were built by the Niagara Connects team of volunteers and staff, in collaboration with Brock researchers. People at Brock are utilizing the report to inform priorities, such as the Consider This podcast series; NCO policy brief topics; and Niagara-focused research done by students and faculty.
- niagaraknowledgeexchange.com (NKE), an online space curated by Knowledge Brokers, for people to access and exchange data, knowledge and best practice ideas to support planning, collaboration, learning, innovation and community action in the Niagara context. People at Brock are leveraging the NKE to both share relevant, reliable information out to the broader community, and to learn about emerging community priorities.

Brock's role in helping to build the Niagara Connects network is resulting in increasingly refined pathways for the university to support the broader community's action planning, and vice-versa. This strengthens the future for people at Brock, and for Niagara as a whole.

#### **Brock as a catalyst for community engagement**

Over the years, Brock's engagement with its surrounding communities has grown beyond academic-community partnerships to include diverse initiatives by faculty, staff and students throughout the University. The Brock community is actively promoting healthy living in all age groups; encouraging secondary students to pursue higher education through scholarships, campus visits and youth programs; and contributing to local festivals and events that celebrate diverse parts of Niagara, from wine to the arts to sports.

In 2014-15, this culture of community engagement saw Brock students alone contribute 70,000 volunteer hours to 200 diverse agencies across the school and Niagara. In 2015, Brock was proud of Naomi Johnson, MA student in the Centre for Applied Disability Studies, who was awarded volunteer of the year by Thorold's Bethesda Services, an organization dedicated to serving children and adults with special needs. That same year, three Brock students walked more than 100 kilometres from Brock's Schmon Tower to Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto in support of Syrian refugees.

There are many examples where Brock has been a catalyst for community engagement, such as:

#### **Niagara Principal's Scholarship**

A \$2,500 entrance scholarship for two students from each of Niagara's secondary schools who best demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and an exceptional commitment to school and community.

#### **University Preparation Program (UPP)**

A two-week, tuition-free summer experience for students who may not typically be interested in pursuing post-secondary education. UPP participants also have access to support and services from Brock University through the rest of their high school careers.

#### **Play for Memories Ball Hockey Tournament**

An annual initiative co-ordinated by the Brock Leaders Citizenship Society that raises money for the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region. The event focuses on supporting individuals with Alzheimer's, as well as their friends and family, while promoting ways of keeping a healthy and active brain.

#### **Unity Games**

An outreach event that unites youth involved with after school programs run by United Way, YMCA, the Niagara Children's Centre (NCC), and the Resource Association for Teens (RAFT) as they participate in cooperative activities that teach skills such as fair play, leadership and respect.



### Badgers vs. Bullying

An outreach event initiated by the Brock men's basketball program to help educate Niagara youths in grades six, seven and eight about bullying issues.

### Team Achieve

An initiative that matches young people with intellectual disabilities with university and college sports teams, Team Achieve youth become official members of the varsity team from draft day through their high school graduation and the student athletes join the young person's support team.

### Niagara Young Entrepreneur Kick-Off Weekend

A partnership between Niagara College and Brock University, this weekend event encouraged innovation and creativity by providing youth entrepreneurs with the opportunity to form a team, build an idea and pitch a business concept.

### Leave The Pack Behind

A program to help adults quit smoking, co-created in part by Brock faculty and staff. Today, the program is on every university and college campus and in 36 public health units across Ontario. It continues to launch initiatives to encourage people to stop smoking.

### Concussions — What are they and what can I do?

A speaker series that welcomed a world-renowned expert in concussions and spinal chord injuries, Neurosurgeon Dr. Charles Tato, to discuss what concussions are and how they impact the developing brain.

### "Spring into Reading Festival"

A festival, for children in preschool through grade six, was launched by Ontario Literacy Association Niagara, which includes professors from Brock's Faculty of Education.

### Cuvée

Ontario's premier celebration of Ontario VQA wine and food hosted by CCOVI. In 2015 the Grand Tasting gala welcomed over 700 guests, 52 Ontario VQA winemakers and 15 culinary partners.

### Imagining the City

A performance series hosted by the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts performance series, this series is part of the Walker Cultural Leaders Program and in 2015–16 will include performances, exhibitions, concerts and conferences, all themed around ideas of the urban, and the relationship between the City and the University.

### Leadership Niagara

Brock is a partner in this innovative program that brings together individuals who are recognized as emerging and aspiring leaders in the public, private and non-profit sectors of our community. It provides them with opportunities to explore and strengthen their leadership skills, develop a new-found network of meaningful contacts, and learn more about the outstanding characteristics and challenges of our community.

### Public forums

Brock University administration, faculty, staff and students participate in forums where multiple community stakeholders come together to address community concerns. Brock's Research Cafes for example, have facilitated conversations between Brock researchers and community members to address topics like Working together for a healthy Niagara, Bullying – from classroom to workplace, and Food sustainability in the Niagara Region. Brock also participates in forums initiated by community stakeholders such as the U35 forum, which was organized by Niagara Region and various community partners to discuss the strategic direction of the Niagara Region's youth retention strategy.

### Testimonials

Start Me Up Niagara (SMUN) has enjoyed working with Brock for many years. Initially we did short one-day special-event projects. These provided us with manpower to successfully hold events and meet Brock students, some of whom became volunteers. Over time, the positive engagement with Brock students and faculty has grown. From the basketball team serving dinners, to the applied drama students working directly with individuals facing homelessness and then performing for them, each interaction has been positive. SMUN hosts nursing interns and is about to be part of a graduate students research project. We also share the same neighbourhood as the new Performing Arts Centre and are anticipating many new opportunities. Brock has come down the hill and the community served by SMUN is benefitting.

— Susan Venditti, Director, Start Me Up Niagara

Our organization simply didn't have the time to invest in putting together a proposal of this nature and the staff alone did not have the expertise to formulate the human resources component. Ultimately, the student team was able to put their experience to paper and provide us with a very detailed plan, with which we may be able to hit the ground running in approaching the board of directors to act on hiring an additional staff person.

— Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce regarding their Service-Learning team for Recruitment & Selection

For many years Brock has been a vital part of our community, providing excellent learning and development opportunities, applied research and support for entrepreneurs. With the new Marilyn I. Walker School downtown and innovative partnerships to support our community's growth, the City's relationship with Brock continues to deepen.

With his [Dr. Jack Lightstone's] leadership and vision, we have created a strong foundation of partnership, innovation and community connection that will continue to help lead Niagara into the future.

— Walter Sendzik, Mayor of St. Catharines

The University is a very important part of what makes Welland and Niagara attractive to residents, visitors, students and investors."

— Frank Campion, Mayor of Welland



As a key post-secondary institution and long-standing community partner in our region, Brock University has done an outstanding job of educating the next generation of leaders.

— Alan Caslin, Niagara Regional Chair

Brock's activity has been important to the business community of Niagara, especially that of the Goodman School of Business and the BioLinc incubator, the Niagara Community Observatory, and other departments, faculty, staff members and students. Brock has been innovative and responsive when it comes to finding ways to service academic research, the learning experiences of its students, and the needs of Niagara business. The GNCC has partnered with Brock on many projects and events.

— Mishka Balsom, President and CEO of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce

Brock University is a premier resource and partner for all of Niagara.

— Dolores Fabiano, Executive Director of Niagara Falls, Welland/Pelham and Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chambers of Commerce

Brock University is one of the great community partners the YMCA relies on to achieve our mission of building a healthier community. As we approach 2016, we look forward to further collaboration with Brock University, one of Canada's leading academic institutions, providing relevant community research and leadership in Niagara organizations along with a student base ready to tackle the job market and volunteer opportunities.

— Janet St. Amand, Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA of Niagara

### Co-op Testimonials

Brock Co-op understands us as an organization and the processes we need to go through on our end.

— Susan Brockington, Ministry of Transportation

Often, they [Brock] have someone in mind for us and then we always have a chance to meet the person as well. Overall, the co-op process is very smooth.

— Malcolm Allen, former Member of Parliament

We are consistently impressed with the calibre of students who complete work placements with our organization. Brock does a stellar job of preparing students for the interview process, the supervisory relationship and professionalism in the workplace.

— Tammy Dumas, Associate Director, Ontario Brain Injury Association

A right choice can be much more important than working hard. It is my decision to join the Brock University's Co-op Program that has allowed me to obtain a wonderful first job that will help me start my career. I cannot thank the co-op staff enough for how much they assisted me and what a great result they helped me achieve. Not only the large amount of job opportunities I am able to access through CareerZone, but also the series of workshops, mock interviews, individual assistance and most importantly, access to their network with large companies. My participation in co-op has been a very valuable experience.

— Mia Duan, MBA Co-op

I attended the Goodman School of Business to develop my breadth and depth of knowledge, intellectual flexibility, and the skills needed to have a successful career. I have been trained extremely well to be a business professional, but the Brock University Co-op program enabled me to apply and showcase my capabilities to a multinational conglomerate. Completing a 12 month co-op enabled me to tap into my inherent talents while I provided financial advice and business counsel across the value chain covering strategic planning, financial analysis, business development, and technological simplifications. My success led to a full-time opportunity before I even completed my degree. I believe that success in any circumstance can result from a mixture of preparation, hard work, and determination. Go above and beyond for your employer and you will be rewarded.

— Thomas Francescutti, BBA Finance Candidate Brock University | Goodman School of Business

### Youth University Testimonials

This has been a wonderful and enriching opportunity for our little guy. I know that he is nothing close to a math genius, but the purpose of him taking the course was to have him acquire a better liking towards it! Mission accomplished! We are both so pleased that our son Emilio loves to tackle his take-home math challenges every week and practically runs into his Math class on Monday evening! He can't wait to meet his teachers and friends there! It has truly been a positive experience. Thanks for all of your efforts and those of your instructors. Toy hacking is the next course we will register our son for...a surprise Christmas present for Emilio! He will love that one, I am sure.

— Kerri-Ann Geremia

The best thing about the program was the exposure to new math for my son to experience. He was very pleased with himself when





his teacher at school began teaching something he was exposed to in math club. With no testing he was able to learn at his pace without pressure.

— Brenda Haskins

My son wanted to go to your program even on my days off work. I realize how much fun it must be!

— Pam Ledoux

Great program! Our daughter enjoys being part of the Youth University. She is 11 and has Brock on her list of colleges to attend — and we live in California.

— Bob Caseres

Being a lone parent, I started Brock as a mature student and now I am in my final years in Health Science. Choosing Brock changed my life. The professors and staff are above and beyond helpful and caring. Youth University also taught my child to have the confidence she needed. She demonstrated leadership in other programs after attending Youth University.

— Tasnuva Afreen

We are so fortunate to have such an educational opportunity available in our community. It is so motivating; the kids don't even realize how much they are learning!

— Enrichment parent

Knowing my daughter is having fun and learning at the same time has made me tell others about your unique camps. They are a community service that we are grateful to have. I cannot be with my daughter all summer but I'm glad she is with you!

— Cheryl Wadsworth

My son has been going to YU for the last two years and my daughter for four years. What makes this program so special you might ask? Well, there are two key factors that make this program amazing. First, the type of programs offered are very exciting for most children, such as courses in Mine Craft, Math, Robotics, Art and Science. The second thing that makes YU so special is its team of instructors. They take a genuine interest in the children and the program they are running. One year my daughter was in Greek Mythology and her counsellor would bring her extra things to do because she had such a keen interest in Greek mythology. Because of this program my children have also met some other wonderful children who they might never have had the chance to meet. I would like to thank Youth University for providing a camp and after school program that both of my children look forward to. Whoever says learning isn't fun has never gone to YU.

— Jenn Corriveau.

### School Trips

This is a wonderful program with University student's role-modelling the careers and culture that your students are aspiring to reach for.

— Tom Reynolds, Principal — DSBN

It has been an absolutely remarkable experience for my students every year.

— Chuck Fraser - Mackenzie Community School

Special thanks and a group 'WOW' for a great time at Youth University. Our three-day adventure with you will be happily remembered. The calibre of service, leadership and educational integration was indeed superb. Our only regret was that our stay finally came to an end.

— Teachers; Ms. G. O'Reilly , Mr. G. Scian and Intermediate Students, St. Bartholomew Elementary School Toronto Catholic District School Board

Youth University has offered a wide breadth of inclusive programs throughout the community. They have engaged students across the Niagara region by offering programs in a number of District School Board of Niagara schools. Youth University engages youth not only in exploring how their unique talents and interests align with post-secondary opportunities but in connecting them with positive mentors who model community building by fostering a welcoming environment and encouraging participation from all those present. Whether it is the long-term youth engagement Priority Neighbourhood Access Initiative or the shorter term Your Future program, it is evident that Youth University's diverse programs are designed to create a sense of awareness and belonging among youth participants. I believe that Youth University is an important resource for our community.

— Filomena Goldsworthy, Community Outreach Coordinator, District School Board of Niagara

Over the past five years, during my role as Outreach Coordinator, Niagara Catholic School Board has partnered with Brock University's Youth University. Youth University has provided family-oriented after school programs and learning opportunities to elementary students. In my experience, Youth University has contributed to the community through the Neighbourhood Access Initiative. Through this program, students were able to explore their interests and talents as they relate to post-secondary education and beyond. This initiative strengthened social connectedness among students, the school and the neighbourhood. Interactions became more positive and parents were more engaged with the education system and their child's interests. Youth University provides many exemplary programs that value student needs in a positive manner while increasing their academic identity, motivation and desire for further education. Youth University has fulfilled our expectations and they are truly a valuable resource to the Niagara community.

— Debbie Ogilvie, CHRL, Community Outreach Coordinator, Niagara Catholic District School Board

I would like to thank Youth University for coming to Port Weller Public School for our first ever Family Technology Night. This event produced the largest turn out of Port Weller families that I have ever seen in the four years that I have been principal at this school. I commend your staff for the work that they did facilitating the Robotics, Stop Motion, and Game Design workshops. Each and every one of your staff members was positive, energetic, patient and supportive with our families. As you know, participant ages on this night spanned from four years old to over 60! I am so convinced that the collaboration between Brock University and



DSBN is vitally important to our community. How wonderful for our students and their parents to make this connection so early on in a child's academic career. I have been impressed with Youth University from the moment my daughter experienced summer camp for the first time last August and now after Family Technology Night, this confidence in your organization is solidified! Please accept my most sincere appreciation.

— Hilary Abbey, Principal, Port Weller Public School

#### **Family Programs Testimonials**

We really enjoyed ourselves as a family! Programs such as these make it possible for children who may not regularly have the opportunity to take part in such programming due to financial restrictions

— Krista Capes (family adventure)

I just wanted to let you know that my kids really loved it. The instructors were great, and the kids learned a lot. Before we even left, they were asking when they could go again! We would like to see another one of these one-day robotics programs again in the future.

— Norm Neshevich

#### **Conversation Cafe Testimonials**

While we may belong to many 'communities', the opportunity to informally meet and share views and perspectives with new folks has a richness otherwise hard to come by today.

— Ben Hannan (Café participant)

#### **100 Days of Learning Testimonials**

I just wanted to say thank you for your kind support in promoting our events and workshops. We have liked your page as the Sanctuary and I have "liked" it personally as well. A lifelong yearning for learning is the best way to stay fit and active. Great idea!

— Nadine, Sanctuary Centre for the Arts (100 Days of learning social media initiative)

#### **University Prep Program Testimonials**

Brock's UPP program helped me to determine a career path and built up my confidence. I now feel ready for university!

— CB, Session 4 UPP Participant

Brock's UPP program teaches you things that are necessary to get prepared for university. The experience is literally priceless.

— Luke, UPP participant

If you don't know what to be when you're older, this program will help you so much (leadership, confidence, learning skills). My experience at Brock University's UPP program was the best thing I have ever done!

— Silvana, UPP participant

#### **Past Student Staff Testimonials**

When I initially came to work at YU, I thought that it would be something great to put on a résumé. I didn't realize that it would be much more than that. While working there gave me the experience and references I needed to be hired as a teacher my first year out of teacher's college, I learned also how to teach, interact with students, and build relationships; I gained leadership skills, formed friendships, and stored away four years of incredible memories. This program was incredibly valuable in making me the teacher and person I am today.

— Jill Richardson (Couture) (former student staff)

When I was 11 and in grade six at Charles R. Beaudoin School in Burlington, the entire grade participated in the Extreme Scientists Innovation Lab offered at Brock University. I was able to stay for two nights on Brock's campus in St. Catharines, sleep in a dorm, eat food in the cafeteria, experience meaningful and creative science lessons taught by Brock University students, and attend activities that helped develop my leadership and teamwork skills. I remember being awe-struck by life at university. I also remember how I wanted to be like the instructors who were friendly, engaging and knowledgeable. So here I am today attending the same university I visited when I was only 11 years old. My experiences at Brock have certainly made a positive impact in my life. Yes, sometimes things do happen for a reason.

— Abby Rollo — now attending Brock University as a second-year student

#### **A snapshot of Brock's Community Engagement**

Given the University's historically informal approach to community relations, no campus-wide systematic mechanisms have been established with the purpose of tracking, recording and assessing the community engagement efforts of Brock's various silos. There is no comprehensive inventory of community partnerships or of the engagement efforts of the University community. Lacking as well is any systematically documented account of community perceptions regarding the University's engagement efforts.

The Task Force agreed that, in order to deliver on its mandate,



it needed to gain a better understanding of the community engagement efforts and attitudes of Brock's students, staff and faculty. In 2014-15, the Task Force decided to conduct a series of surveys to better define and capture this data.

Internally, Brock students provided feedback about their engagement, both as part of their academic courses and their community involvement outside of the classroom. Faculty provided information about the ways in which they are involved in the community through their research, scholarship, and creative works.

#### **Student community engagement survey summary**

More than 16% (2558) of degree seeking, full-time or part-time undergraduate students responded to the student community engagement survey. Almost 74% of respondents indicated that they perceive community engagement as valued at Brock. 70% of respondents participate in community engagement activities both through their academic courses and as extra-curricular activities. The majority of respondents (31.82%) indicated that they dedicate one to five hours per week to volunteering activities. More than 10% of respondents dedicate six hours or more per week.

When asked why they choose to engage with the community, 1,451 students provided 9,240 responses. The most common responses included: gaining new skills (999 responses), improving one's résumé (992 responses), genuine enjoyment from being involved in the community (919 responses), getting experience that relates to one's future goals (877 responses), a desire to "give back" to the community (865 responses), getting experience related to one's academic program (811 responses), to network and/or make connections with others (758 responses), and to practice existing skills (740 responses).

The majority (64.54%) of student respondents indicated an interest in seeing more community engagement opportunities built into academic courses on campus and offered suggestions that they felt would help increase students' overall community engagement. These include: easier access and awareness (discussed in 49% of responses), improved quality, availability and variety of opportunities (discussed in 19% of responses), rewards (discussed in 12% of responses), increasing the connection between community engagement and academic programs (discussed in 11% of responses), improved support for students (discussed in 9% of responses).

#### **Faculty community engagement survey summary**

Approximately 40% (241 responses) of Brock faculty responded to the faculty community engagement survey. Faculty indicated that they engage with Niagara organizations as representatives of the University in various capacities, including volunteering (29%),

as members of a board of directors (21%), as consultants (15%) and a variety of other ways such as membership in community committees and advisory groups and as internship/service-learning coordinators.

The majority of faculty indicated that they engage with the community through various activities, including knowledge translation and mobilization (31%) and data collection (23%). Other types of engagement include research partnerships with organizations (17%), curricular business case study projects (10%), workshops, service-learning projects and one-off community initiatives.

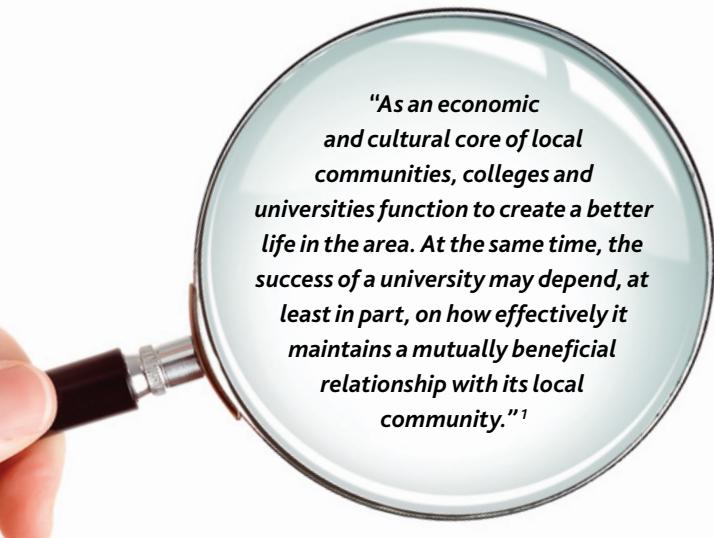
Faculty indicated that their engagement activity has impacts on all of the sectors described in the Niagara Connects "2014 Living in Niagara Report". The majority of faculty respondents (18%) feel that they are making impacts, through their engagement activities, on the learning and education sector. Other sectors that see the highest impacts as a result of faculty engagement in the community include Arts, Culture and Heritage (14%), Belonging, Volunteering, Giving and Leadership (14%), and Health and Wellness (12%).

Impacts are also made on Recreation and Sports (8%), Work and Employment (8%), Economic Development, Poverty and Prosperity (7%), (The) Environment (5%), People Getting Started (4%), Housing and Shelter (2%), Transportation and Mobility (2%), Crime, Safety and Security (1%), and Other (6%).



## Community perceptions

### An assessment of our current environment



To support the development of recommendations for the University's community engagement strategy, the Task Force recognized the need for a better understanding of the community's perception of the University. Two steps were taken to capture local perceptions, an online survey and face-to-face SWOT interviews with community leaders.

#### On-line survey

An on-line "pulse point" survey was completed to provide a preliminary scan of perceptions and understanding of Brock's engagement with the community. The survey targeted engaged individuals with a Niagara-wide view of quality of life in Niagara, all of whom acted as Community Expert Opinion Leaders to inform the 12 Sectors of the Living in Niagara-2014 report. A total of 35 individuals completed the survey, conducted by Niagara Connects on behalf of Brock University's President's Task Force on Community Engagement. Respondents spoke highly of their experience with Brock, and offered ideas for opportunities to further strengthen the University's engagement with the community, including:

- Broaden Brock's reach: leverage perceptions of Brock's strong value to the community by establishing a Niagara-wide presence, and connecting more broadly with community organizations.
- Be a strong partner in engaging with the community: coordinate efforts to enable members of the community to easily engage with the University.
- Connect research and information directly with service users: enable two-way exchange so that practice-based experience and locally-identified requirements inform and guide academic pursuits.

#### SWOT interviews

To gain a better understanding of the University's current impact and to identify new opportunities for engagement, the Task Force conducted 75 one-on-one SWOT interviews with a Niagara-wide cross-sector sample of community organizations (see appendix 1).

The SWOT interview questions sought to:

- Gain input from a broad range of external stakeholders representing local and regional communities and private, educational, government and not-for-profit sectors
- To identify core themes, priorities and potential opportunities that may help to guide future directions for the University

The general consensus of the community was that Brock has a vital role to play in the environmental, social, cultural and economic viability of Niagara, especially through knowledge transfer. There was acknowledgement that in the past five to seven years there has been a shift in the culture at Brock and that we are, visibly, more involved in the community. This shift was credited to change in management and direction of the University.

It became evident that most members of the community are unaware of Brock's priorities as they relate to community engagement, and of the many initiatives underway at Brock that partner and/or serve the community. Community members suggested that our priorities and areas of strength should be made public so the community can more easily identify ways to partner or engage with the University. A recurring suggestion was the idea of a "front door" or a point of contact that would help members of the community access Brock's expertise, facilities and other offerings.

#### Strengths

Some knowledge transfer

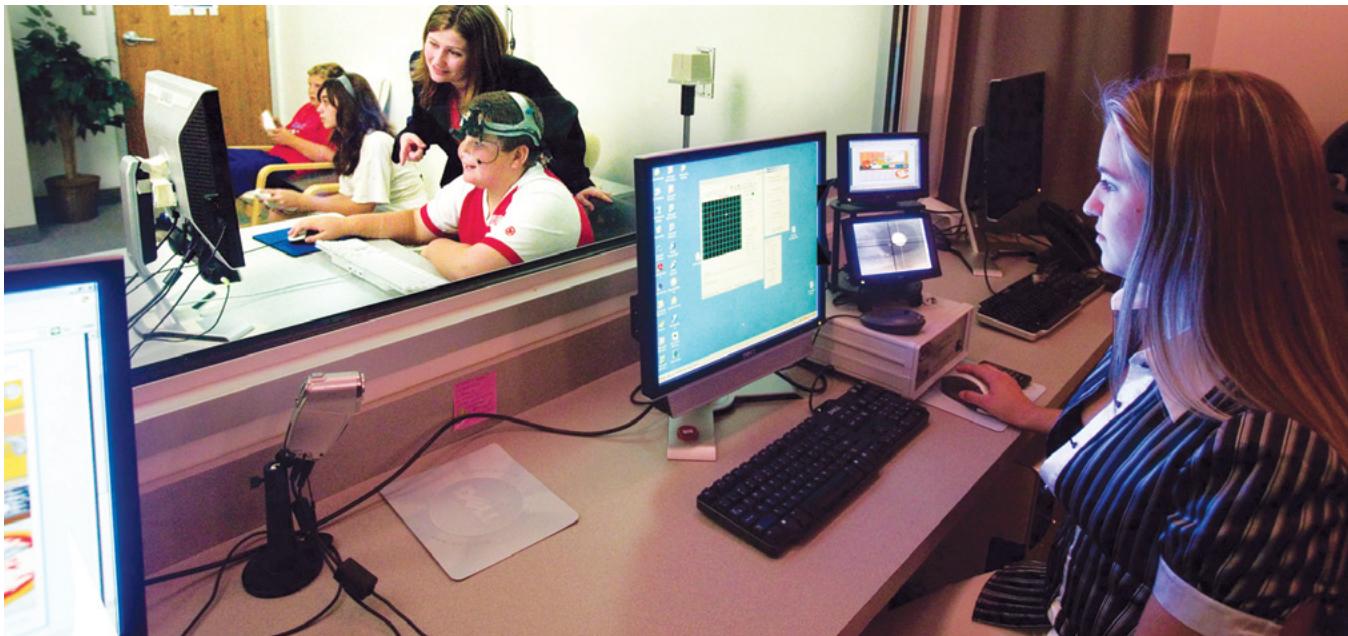
The community described Brock as an asset to Niagara; in part because of the expertise it is able to offer the community. The majority of those interviewed recognized the presence of Brock in the community through the president, the Niagara Community Observatory, the Goodman School of Business and various conversation cafes. However, it was suggested that a wider representation of University events and/or departments in the community would be favourable.

#### Reputation

The community agreed that Brock's reputation and positive impact on the community is growing.

#### Student/faculty/staff engagement

The community generally feels that students, faculty and staff are involved in the community; however, most found it difficult to provide specific examples of engagement.



#### New location

The community feels that the new location of the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts has had a positive impact on downtown St. Catharines. It was generally agreed that the new location has shown Brock as a partner in and within the community, and not the insular tower at the top of the hill.

#### Quality of our grads

The community remarked on the shifting reputation of Brock's exceptional quality of education, noting that the breadth and knowledge of Brock students involved in the community is outstanding.

#### Brock as Niagara's university

The community generally felt that Brock is Niagara's university and has an important role to play in the region.

#### Economic impact

The community felt that Brock provides stability, good salaries and infrastructure that benefit the local economy.

#### Weaknesses

##### Promotion and knowledge of Brock

The community was largely unaware of Brock's specific activities and strategic priorities. There was a general feeling that research at Brock does not always align with the needs of the public. The community suggested that Brock should strengthen its brand and increase its visibility. The community also noted the importance of having individuals from Brock who engage with the community and identify themselves as representatives of the University.

##### Front door

The community felt that accessing Brock services, facilities or expertise can be an onerous and complicated process. As a result,

individuals are likely to seek guidance from someone they already know, or alternatively, choose not to engage with the University at all.

##### Insular

The community perceives Brock as very inward-thinking and feels that partnering with Brock involves dealing with a significant amount of bureaucracy.

##### Student Issues

The community felt that, while student behaviour has improved, especially with more students living closer to the university, student behaviour could still hurt Brock's reputation.

##### Benefit of investments unclear

The community feels that they were approached as partners for government funding applications but that there was a lack of follow-up to show return on investment after Brock has built a new building or gained research funding. Specific mention was made of the Cairns Family Health and Bioscience Research Complex.

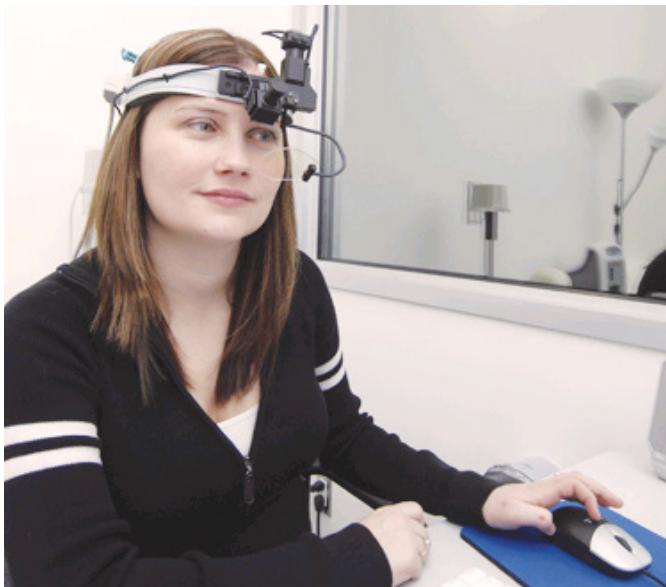
#### Opportunities

##### Increase knowledge transfer / knowledge exchange

The community felt that there are opportunities to increase the use of Brock experts in the community and to promote Brock's expertise and willingness to partner with the community.

##### Increase knowledge strategically

The community felt improving knowledge of Brock's priorities should align with the University's expertise/areas of strength. As opposed to being everything to everyone, the University should focus its priorities on the strategic areas it wants to be involved in.



#### Increase visibility where Brock is not physically located

The community recognized that the University's physical presence may not be possible in their community but felt there were other opportunities to increase the University's presence. It was suggested that a permanent storefront would give visibility to Brock in new areas and booths at festivals, and would help to promote Brock's community engagement.

#### Increased use of alumni as Brock champions

The community felt that alumni could be used to promote Brock. Local alumni could act as spokespeople in the community to promote the University.

#### New continuing education courses

The community felt that there was an opportunity to develop specialized continuing education courses relevant to local businesses.

#### Increase partnerships

The community felt that Brock and Niagara College, which came up in many conversations, could be aligned better. There is also an opportunity to improve outreach to Niagara's multicultural residents.

#### Promote Brock to area youth

The community felt that there is an opportunity to strengthen the promotion of Brock to Niagara youth — making them feel that Brock is their university.

#### Engage retired professionals

The community felt that there is a significant opportunity to engage retiring CEOs in Niagara in on- and off-campus activities.

#### Increase Brock's representation in the community

The community felt that, while Brock is at the 'important tables', there can be more than one Brock representative who is involved in the community.

#### Threats

##### Physical location

The community felt that parking, especially the cost and accessibility for seniors, was a barrier to engagement. Local transit and signage at the University also made engagement difficult.

##### Stigma about academics and students

The community feels that for people without a post-secondary education, the University can be intimidating. Other engagement barriers include the perception that Brock is the 'insular tower on the hill', as well as the idea that students are transient and unengaged with the community.

##### Weak culture of engagement

The community noted that it is often the same individuals that are seen engaging with the community. While the contribution of these individuals is appreciated, they are not necessarily seen as representatives of an engaged university. The community hopes that all faculty and staff see themselves as part of the community and are inspired to give back in some way.

##### Association with other institutes

Community representatives from western Niagara noted that individuals and organizations, in western Niagara in particular, tend to feel more aligned and engaged with post-secondary institutions in Hamilton.

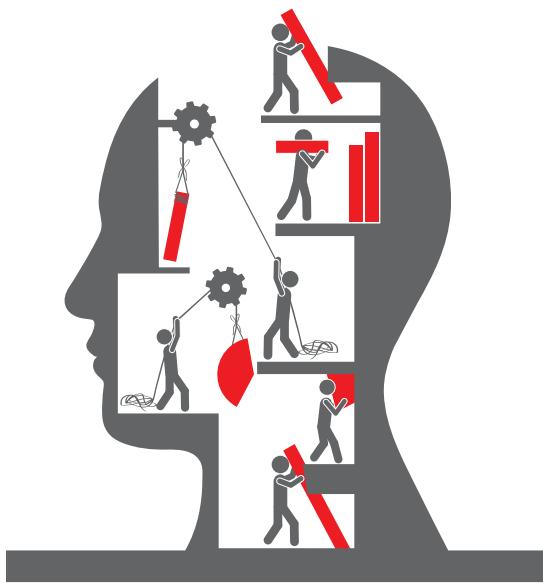
The community felt that there is a high turnover of those involved in community engagement. This may be due to sabbaticals and administrative leaves. The community felt this made it difficult to establish the long-term relationships needed for successful engagement.

##### Political issues of Niagara

The community expressed that Brock can get pulled into the granular issues in Niagara and needs to remain focused on how to make the whole region better.



## Recommendations

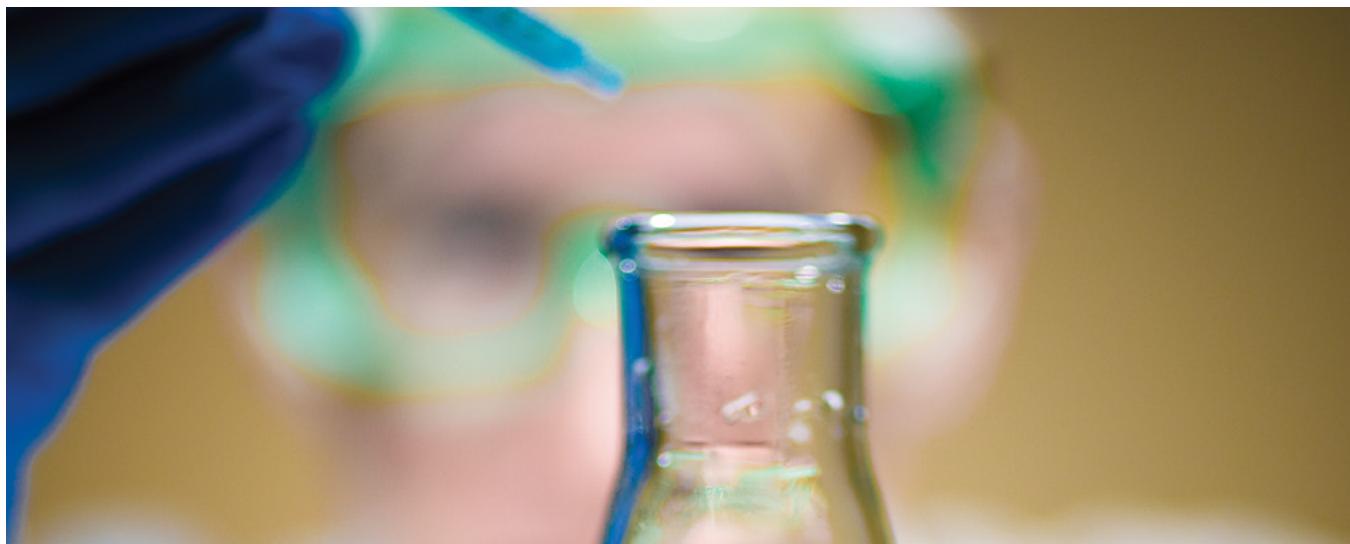


### Proposed definition of community engagement

The President's Task Force on Community Engagement discussed a variety of definitions of community and civic engagement (see appendix 2) and agreed that its definition would be:

*"The collaboration between institutions of higher education and broader communities for the mutual exchange of knowledge and resources. These efforts are carried out in a spirit of partnership and reciprocity with the objective of contributing to the community's sustainable economic, social, environmental and cultural prosperity."*

- 1.** Establish a campus-wide coordinating structure or central point of contact to improve access to the University and facilitate community engagement and collaboration opportunities.
- 2.** Reward and recognize individuals, both from the Brock and external communities, who play a significant role in the University's efforts to be engaged in the community.
- 3.** Promote, internally and externally, Brock's community engagement goals and strategies to help the community identify synergies that can lead to mutually beneficial engagement opportunities.
- 4.** Create a consistent formal process that allows for two-way dialogue to raise awareness of Brock and community initiatives
- 5.** Collect and report data on Brock's community engagement activities to identify:
  - Social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts.
  - Alignment with Niagara's industry sectors and workforce needs.
  - Existing gaps in the University's engagement efforts.
  - Existing engagement with communities beyond Niagara's borders, and identify ways to link these partnerships and activities back to Niagara
- 6.** Develop key scorecards to measure engagement once benchmarks are established.
- 7.** Refine intentional mechanisms for people at Brock to work more fully in partnership with community networks, to promote two-way exchange of ideas, knowledge and evidence.





## Moving Forward



Brock acknowledged that its current understanding of the University's community engagement activities is fragmented and that a more comprehensive inventory must be done in order to create a community engagement framework.

Community engagement can be defined in many different ways, which can make it difficult to track and measure. Furthermore, at universities and other large institutions, structural gaps can further hinder communication and information sharing. Brock acknowledges these challenges, but recognizes that it could be doing more. Its fragmented approach to community relations has not lent itself to formal campus-wide understanding and tracking of community-university engagement. This has resulted in missed opportunities for both the University and the community to advance their interests.

Brock has taken its first steps towards the development of a structure that will facilitate internal coordination and data gathering. An internal steering committee was established composed of senior administrators with a role in community engagement. The steering committee developed Brock's definition of community engagement and defined the University's community engagement vision, mission and goals and objectives. An internal working group was also developed. This group, comprised of representatives from all areas of the University who have a stake in community engagement, will become the supporting mechanism for the ongoing internal communication and information sharing that will help the University track and measure the institution's collective community engagement efforts.

The University has committed to provide members of the working group with a copy of this report. The report will provide an invaluable foundation from which the University can build strategies to expand and coordinate its engagement with the community. In doing so, this report will better position the University to:

- plan for community engagement and allocate resources where they are most effective and necessary
- identify new engagement opportunities and areas for improvement
- encourage two-way dialogue between Brock and its surrounding communities
- build awareness, support and confidence in Brock University
- nurture a culture of community engagement and build Brock's community engagement capacity
- identify ways of joining efforts to eliminate the duplication of outreach and engagement activities
- improve the community's access and ease of engagement

Moving forward, Brock will continue to update Task Force members on the progress of Brock's community engagement plan and will ensure the two-way dialogue commenced with the community continues in the years ahead.