

*L'information suivante est tirée de la déclaration d'intention soumise à la Fondation de la famille J.W. McConnell en réponse à l'appel de propositions lancé par RECODE au printemps 2014.*

# The University of Manitoba

## Introduction And Background

Since attending the World Association for Co-operative Education (WACE) Institute on Global and Experiential Education in 2012, a group of thoughtful students, staff, faculty and community partners have reviewed the University of Manitoba's involvement in experiential education activities like community service-learning and entrepreneurship. We are committed to further invest in such activities because they are relevant and challenge universities to be agents of change in the communities we serve, in and out of the classroom, and across higher education. We are committed to indigenizing these activities to ensure that they are both culturally appropriate and appealing to Aboriginal students. The University of Manitoba has invested over \$1 million since 2012 in community service-learning, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship projects. There have been many profound and positive impacts on our students and the communities with which we engage.

A social innovation zone exists in a nascent form at the University of Manitoba. Specifically, the University of Manitoba offers the following programs and courses:

- A Social Entrepreneurship course is offered in the Asper School of Business.
- The Asper School of Business holds a chapter membership with the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization (CEO).
- The Alternative Village is part of our Design Engineering department (a portion of our Fort Garry campus that allows for the practical application and research of alternative forms of building and energy generation).
- A community called 'Smartpark' is located on our Fort Garry campus. It is a physical and virtual neighborhood of research focused companies.
- Within Smartpark is 'The Eureka Project', one of Western Canada's premier incubators. The Eureka Project assists 20-40 companies annually to build their internal capabilities and accelerate growth.
- The Faculties of Social Work, Medicine, Kinesiology & Recreation Management, Engineering, and Education are well connected to the local community through various curricular and co-curricular programs (for more information, please see the "UM Connecting to Kids" report, 2011).
- The University of Manitoba nurtures strong domestic and international service-learning programming (curricular and co-curricular) and has the opportunity to expand into social innovation and social entrepreneurship.
- Our current Strategic Planning Framework sets a priority for advancing Aboriginal Education by providing students with the tools they need to be successful and reinforcing the University of Manitoba's role as a national centre for Aboriginal scholarship.

### **1. What are your initial aspirations and vision for how social innovation can take root and grow at your institution, and contribute to broader change?**

We would like to increase the number of University of Manitoba students connected to existing social entrepreneurship and social innovation opportunities in Winnipeg, in Manitoba, and across Canada. Some elements of a social innovation zone currently exist, but we would like to develop:

- a mutual mentorship program for our students and for local social entrepreneurial organizations,
- an enhanced delivery of community service-learning programs focused on social innovation and social entrepreneurship,
- an enhanced relationship with the Eureka Project focused on a student-centred, social entrepreneurship incubator and
- a robust funding formula to support social entrepreneurship and social innovation ideas.

The University of Manitoba is active in organizations like the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) and Junior Achievement but there are existing programs and organizations in Winnipeg like the Social Enterprise Centre, Social Enterprise (as part of the province of Manitoba), Startup Winnipeg (including Ramp Up Manitoba and AssentWorks prototype manufacturing), Venture for Canada, and the Young Entrepreneurs program.

### **2. What are your initial aspirations and vision for how social entrepreneurship can take root and grow at your institution, and contribute to broader change?**

Using the expertise and interest in social entrepreneurship found at The University of Manitoba's Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship, along with partners like The Eureka Project and a variety of professors and professional staff, our goal is to build a focused social entrepreneurship program. We would like to align our social justice interests with our interests in promoting entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and sustainability by developing a student-centred social entrepreneurship incubator. *Startup Winnipeg* and *Venture for Canada* are viable local and national partners.

This incubator would allow our students to more deeply engage with the community and in turn, allow social enterprises and similar organizations to benefit from the students' activity as leaders on their boards and committees. Our programs would ensure that students from all faculties have the opportunity to participate in social entrepreneurship and be aware of its benefits.

### **3. What types of activities, practices, programs and/or structures are you proposing to achieve this?**

In order to increase the number of opportunities for students to participate in social innovation and social entrepreneurship at the University of Manitoba and with the support of the Catalyst fund, we would:

- Establish a student-centred, social entrepreneurship incubator in conjunction with the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship and The Eureka Project. This incubator would generate interest and increase awareness about the benefits and potential of social entrepreneurship and provide information and support to interested students. The incubator would host 'social start up weekends' where interested students and community members could come

together to generate ideas and simulate the steps needed to develop a start-up social enterprise.

- Expected to attract 75-125 students and be attributed to the success of 8-10 social enterprise start up organizations in 2020.
- Establish a social entrepreneur ‘mutual mentorship’ program where CEOs of organizations that are regarded as social enterprises are paired with students interested in social entrepreneurship. The program would be mutually beneficial, because students would sit on the board of these organizations as a ‘student in residence’ or ‘entrepreneur in waiting’ and the board would benefit from the student’s perspective and recent educational development.
  - Expected to engage 50 students in the first year, and connect with 20 executives, 3 projects (working with local social enterprises) and six social enterprises. This could potentially grow to 250 students per year by year 5 of the program.
- Establish a community service-learning program focused on social innovation. Leveraging our existing relationships and our capacity to facilitate high-quality community service-learning programs, we would work with Winnipeg Harvest and other organizations that are committed to ending poverty in Winnipeg by the year 2025.
  - Expected to engage over 100 students, staff and faculty in the first year and assist Winnipeg Harvest in their goals to end hunger, ensure everyone has an appropriate living allowance, and to eventually go out of business by 2025.

#### **4. How do they align with existing initiatives on our campus?**

As indicated above, the first two initiatives would align with the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship and The Eureka Project (as well as local social enterprise organizations/programs).

The community service-learning program matches the existing suite of programs in Student Life such as Praxis (a social justice group of students that turn theory into action), and Alternative Reading Week Winnipeg (where university students spend their reading week working with local NGOs).

#### **5. If funded, how might this change the teaching, research and/or student experience on your campus?**

There would be a dramatic effect on our teaching, research and student experience.

The University of Manitoba is fortunate to have professors in several disciplines that are very interested in sustainability, social innovation, social entrepreneurship, resiliency, and social justice. This funding would allow for more programmatic connections between our professors and in doing so, enrich the student experience.

Although there has been research done on the subjects of social innovation and social entrepreneurship, we are confident that there is still more to be learned and explored so that these mediums may be more pervasive in our societies. We would also be able to promote undergraduate research opportunities, which provides a better student experience.

The current generation of university students are well aware of their own social responsibility. Students are actively volunteering and committed to community service-learning, career development and entrepreneurship. Typically, universities inspire innovation, but promote entrepreneurship to a

lesser extent. This funding would ignite a greater exploration in social entrepreneurship and social innovation and provide students at the University of Manitoba with the tools and resources to affect meaningful change in their communities.

## **6. What is the role of students in the design, governance and activation of the proposed programs?**

The University of Manitoba is committed to providing our students with an exceptional student experience. Student Life, a unit within Student Affairs, puts students first in everything we do (including our name). We involve students in every aspect of our operations, from the hiring of staff to the development of new programs.

Students will be co-creators in the design, governance and activation of these proposed programs. Student Life facilitates a program called 'Praxis' which is student led and focuses on local social justice issues. Praxis participants have had significant involvement and interest in working with Winnipeg Harvest from the annual 'Trick or Eat' campaign to raise awareness and collect non-perishable food on Halloween in neighbourhoods surrounding the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry campus, to participating in Winnipeg Harvest's education programming (similar to a poverty simulation) during the Alternative Reading Week Winnipeg program. We know that providing the opportunity for the University of Manitoba to work more closely and intentionally with Winnipeg Harvest will be well received by our students, staff, faculty and by the larger Winnipeg community. We will consider connecting with Bison student athletes who have a structured volunteer program and let them know how they can link into our initiative. Additionally, students in our Asper School of Business are also committed to ending hunger through their '5 days for the homeless' program and we would engage them in the design of this project from the start.

We will connect with students who are already involved in the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship as well as those students who have either taken, or are about to take, one of the social entrepreneurship courses in the Asper School of Business to solicit their participation in the development of social entrepreneurship at the University of Manitoba. We will connect with these students through their professors and directly through Mr. Stuart Henrickson (the Director of the Stu Clark Centre for Entrepreneurship).

We consider community service-learning and entrepreneurship to be two of five experiential education areas to which the University of Manitoba is committed. The University of Manitoba's Experiential Education Working Group includes student representatives from both our undergraduate and graduate student populations, as well as community partners. Students participate in an advisory capacity and will be identified by their leadership roles in non-profit and volunteer initiatives (like the Winnipeg Harvest collaboration).

## **7. What do you hope to learn and how you anticipate these learning's will affect project design and delivery?**

The University of Manitoba offers many courses focused on program assessment, evaluation and delivery, and we will leverage these internal resources to keep costs low for this important aspect of the project low. Regarding anticipated learning's, we propose:

- The establishment of a student-centred social entrepreneurship incubator through the Eureka Project and the Stu Clark Entrepreneurship Centre:
  - An increase in students' awareness of social entrepreneurship as a viable future endeavour. Measuring this could be difficult, but achieved by short surveys, focus groups or polls.
  - An increase in student participation in social entrepreneurship activities, with goals to attract 75-125 students annually. This would be measured by taking attendance at the various events and involvement in a social entrepreneurship group.
  - A long-term goal is the establishment of up to 10 social enterprise start-up organizations in 2020. As you can appreciate, some of the work completed between 2014 and 2016 will not be fully realized until a few years down the road.
- The establishment of a social entrepreneur 'mutual mentorship' program:
  - Provide students with the opportunity to be mentored by CEOs and senior leadership in social enterprise organizations.
  - Provide CEOs and senior leadership in social enterprise organizations with the opportunity to be mentored by a U of M student.
  - At the conclusion of each program, we will ask student participants and staff from the social enterprise organization: what went well, what could be improved, how did the experience build capacity within the individual/organization to be more effective with regards to social enterprise.
- Establish a community service-learning program focused on social innovation:
  - Connect U of M students with Winnipeg Harvest in an intentional and collaborative relationship to allow our students to work with Winnipeg Harvest staff and their partner organizations to end hunger in Winnipeg by 2025.
  - Learn about the students' experience in this program and the impacts of such an experience on them, their studies, and their future employment pursuits.
  - We will also want to know that the progress we are making with Winnipeg Harvest would build from one year to the next so that we may realize progressive improvements to a 10-year goal.

**8. Please describe how you envision indigenizing your social innovation and entrepreneurship activities so that they are both 'culturally appropriate and appealing to Aboriginal students'.**

At the University of Manitoba, our goal is to work together with Indigenous communities and key partners to make Manitoba the national centre for Indigenous education. The U of M embraces the life-changing impact that post-secondary education can have on learners of all ages. We strive to be a welcoming place where the time and effort of students and their families translate into successes that create positive change in their lives. This begins by collaborating with Indigenous communities and stakeholders to put Indigenous achievement front and centre.

The University of Manitoba is the first Canadian university to issue a Statement of Apology and Reconciliation for failing to recognize or challenge the forced assimilation of Aboriginal peoples and the University of Manitoba is regarded among the most prominent voices in the nation's conversation with Indigenous people. The success of our collaborative efforts was recognized nationally through our successful bid to host the country's first and only research centre dedicated to the Canadian Residential School System. More than 140 of our researchers study issues related to Indigenous peoples and cultures. We have one of the highest Indigenous student populations in the country, graduating more than 250 Indigenous students every year.

As we have explored the expansion of experiential education activities at the U of M (such as co-operative education and international student exchanges) we have consulted the on-campus Aboriginal community, consisting of Aboriginal staff, faculty and students, and have asked for advice to ensure that these programs are consistent with the culture and the values of Aboriginal Peoples and are designed with a diverse audience in mind.

Further, we would involve the Elders from our Aboriginal Student Centre and continue to seek the advice from Indigenous staff and faculty through our Indigenous Achievement Working Group. The involvement of Elders is very important with regards to the development of programming for Aboriginal students as well as supporting Aboriginal students that participate in such programs and who may be attending the U of M from remote communities.