Beyond Access to Inclusion: The Axworthy Years 2004–2014

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Abstract

Universities across Canada have more actively integrated service-learning and community engagement opportunities for students**.** However, The University of Winnipeg (UW), an urban institution on Treaty One land in the heart of the Métis Nation, has expanded its mandate for community learning to include a broader response to contemporary social and economic issues, as well as evolving community and demographic characteristics. In doing so, it has challenged existing academic models and practices, and has incorporated strategies that better address the social divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in order to more effectively serve the learning needs of the surrounding community. This paper demonstrates how an inner-city university has redefined its role by creating dialogue and authentic relationships with the surrounding community, which has in turn fostered an environment of mutual exchange. It will describe UW's holistic approach to Indigenous educational opportunities and community capacity-building for lifelong learning, and provide an overview of the positive effects of six learning initiatives on a community of underrepresented learners.

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Introduction

Over the past decade or more, universities and colleges across Canada and the United States have responded to the need to modernize pedagogical approaches to the curriculum by introducing community learning initiatives, which have taken the form of service learning courses for students (Moore, 2014; Prentice & Robinson, 2010) and increased emphasis on community-engaged scholarship for faculty (Arendt &Westover, 2014; Nichols, Phipps, Gaetz, & Fisher, 2014). The impetus for this movement in Canada was the establishment of the Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (CACSL) in late 2004, which supported the expansion of these initiatives in Canadian post-secondary institutions (CACSL, 2015).

A search of 65 university websites[2] across Canada showed evidence of universities actively embracing the idea that learning should extend beyond the customary structures of in-class lectures**.** Many universities have established service learning and community outreach offices or centres that focus on establishing community partnerships for the purpose of providing services to socially vulnerable groups. In most provinces, university programs target some of their services to Indigenous children and youth (e.g., Aboriginal students services), and they provide opportunities for Indigenous university students to mentor and support their younger peers in high school through work for credit programs.

The website review also revealed that Canadian universities have made efforts to raise interest and literacy in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields among young women and economically disadvantaged youth. Some science programs engage in Indigenous scientific approaches in an effort to attract Indigenous students to careers in the sciences. Moreover, a markedly popular service learning trend has seen university students receive course credit for placements in community settings; for example, tutoring and mentoring younger children in an after-school homework club or facilitating sessions at a science or reading club, or a math circle. More than ever, universities now offer mostly fee-based summer day camps for youth that focus on popular topics in science, literary and music creativeness, or sports. Some business schools have hosted youth entrepreneurship camps. Other program features that raise student comfort level on campus include guided tours of the university, career fairs, short-term workshops, and lecture series, all of which are geared toward enhancing community learning opportunities and raising student interest in post-secondary education.

The University of Winnipeg (UW) was at the forefront of these innovations over a decade ago. It recognized that, in order to maintain its relevance as a modern urban university, it was essential to remove systemic barriers (academic, financial, social, cultural, etc.) to post-secondary education for low-income students and incorporate a comprehensive community learning initiative. However, it has reimagined its approach, profoundly changed its relationship to the community, moving beyond service learning to actively

[2] A research assistant conducted a brief survey of community learning initiatives at approximately two-thirds of Canadian universities.

partnering with the surrounding community in order to make it easier for people to access the resources and facilities on the campus. Although the past decade has seen academic literature engage with the idea of "community as a neighbour" (Moore, 2014), a huge gap still exists between the theory and practice of community-university engagement. In fact, critics argue that these collaborations rarely evolve into mutually-beneficial and productive partnerships because university partners often give less attention to relationship-building processes, or the process is undermined by institutional complexities, such as inflexible policies and regulations, faculty rewards systems that do not favour relationship-building, or time constraints that limit adequate training of students for service learning projects (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Moore, 2014; Nichols et al., 2014; Stoecker, 2008).

At UW, culturally-based programming emerged from a series of discussions that took place at a 2004 Aboriginal Education Working Group led by First Nations and Métis faculty, staff, and students. At the time, a ten-year provincial tuition freeze had little impact on the recruitment of low-income students, as only 10% of students came from neighbourhoods around the university. Thus, the working group's mandate was to examine barriers within the university itself. These discussions produced an Indigenous Education Strategy that extended beyond service learning to a community investment model that adopted a holistic approach to addressing the learning needs of Indigenous members of the surrounding community. One example of UW's divergent approach is the free, culturally-based family programming, such as Pow Wow clubs and not-for-credit Indigenous language programs which are not typically offered at most other universities.

Moreover, some analysts have pointed out that successful collaborations are founded on reciprocity and mutual trust, and that one way to achieve this goal is through institutional support, ongoing attention to the university-community relationship, and harnessing financial and other institutional resources to back it up (Nichols et al., 2014). To this end, UW has made community learning a matter of university policy by changing its governance structure to include an Indigenous Advisory Circle to guide its progress, and it has established strong relationships with Indigenous Elders. It has also raised millions of dollars in private funding to establish innovative learning opportunities that address the needs of Indigenous students and the surrounding community (Axworthy, 2013). This paper presents the positive results of these long-standing interactions between a university and the community it serves.

Community Characteristics

Winnipeg is increasingly becoming more diverse as a result of the rapidly growing population of urban Aboriginal peoples, primarily First Nations and Métis, and new Canadians—the fastest growing populations in the university's immediate neighbourhoods and Canada as a whole. Aboriginal people represent more than 11% of Winnipeg's population and account for 20.2% of inner-city residents. Similarly, new Canadians comprise almost a quarter of inner-city residents (City of Winnipeg, 2015a). Despite the local cultural richness and diversity, these surrounding neighbourhoods are high-poverty areas that struggle with

inadequate housing, unemployment, a relatively high level of crime and gang activity, and other social inequities. Not only do young people face enormous economic disadvantages associated with poverty, but they also experience higher school dropout and pushout rates than children and youth in more affluent neighbourhoods. Likewise, an even larger gap persists in university education completion rates (Hallett, 2006; Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b, 2010). These challenges are profoundly significant because the number of Aboriginal youth under the age of 18 as a percentage of all Aboriginals in Winnipeg is more than double that of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (35.4% and 17.2%, respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2013a, 2013b).

The 2011 National Household Survey revealed that, in Winnipeg, 45.3% of Aboriginal children under the age of 18 (non-Aboriginal: 17.6%) and 52.0% of children less than 6 years of age (non-Aboriginal: 19.9%) lived in a low income household.[3] Moreover, 27.8% of Aboriginal renters lived in subsidized housing compared to 18.1% of all Winnipeggers (Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b). It is also well established that the majority of low-income households are located in the inner-city, North End, and West End neighbourhoods of the city.

Whereas gaps in labour market indicators have narrowed in Winnipeg, as shown in Table 1, Aboriginal men and women persistently have lower participation and employment rates and almost double the unemployment rate of non-Aboriginals (10.6% compared to 5.5%). Although not shown in the table, the average full-time full-year employment income of Aboriginal people in 2010 was 84% of the average for all of Winnipeg; this estimate was even lower at 78.4% for employed individuals residing in the inner city (City of Winnipeg, 2015a; Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b).

Table 1: Labour Force Indicators of Aboriginals versus non-Aboriginals in Winnipeg

	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**2001 Census**
Aboriginal people, 15 years and over	**% (*non-Aboriginal)**	**% (*non-Aboriginal)**	**% (*non-Aboriginal)**	**% Aboriginal (1)**
Labour force participation rate	64.1 (68.7)	68.7 (73.2)	60.1 (64.5)	63.6
Employment rate	57.3 (65.0)	60.9 (69.2)	54.1 (61.0)	54.3
Unemployment rate	10.6 (5.5)	11.4 (5.5)	9.9 (5.5)	14.7
Not in the labour force	35.9 (31.3)	31.3 (26.8)	39.9 (35.5)	36.4

Calculations by authors, based on the 2011 National Household Survey Profile and Aboriginal Population Profile (Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b).
*Non-Aboriginal estimates in parentheses.
(1) Statistics Canada (2002). "2001 Census Aboriginal Population Profiles."

[3] Based on after-tax low-income measure (LIM-AT**).**

As shown in Table 2, in a ten-year period from 2001 to 2011, the high school education gap appears to have narrowed modestly. However, recent statistical analyses in Manitoba indicate that high school completion rates in the poorest urban families (i.e. lowest income quintile) could be as low as 55.3% compared to 98.5% in the highest income quintile (Brownell et al., 2012, p. 207). In Table 2, only 12.3% of Aboriginals in the 25–64 age category reported a university degree compared to 30.4% of non-Aboriginals in Winnipeg.

Table 2: Education Levels of Aboriginals versus Non-Aboriginals, Ages 25–64, Winnipeg

	Aboriginal	**Non-Aboriginal**	**Inner City**
Education categories	**% (1)**	**%**	**% (1)**
No certificate, diploma, or degree	27.1 (42.2)	11.1	19.9 (36.0)
High school diploma or equivalent	27.0 (22.2)	25.0	25.2 (26.7)
Postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree	45.9 (35.7)	63.9	54.9 (37.3)
Apprenticeships or trades certificate or diploma	11.1 (n/a)	9.0	9.0 (10.5)
College, CEGEP*, or other non-university certificate or diploma	18.9 (n/a)	19.0	16.1 (11.8)
University certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor level or above	12.3 (7.4)	30.4	25.4 (15.0)

Calculations by authors, based on the 2011 National Household Survey Profile and Aboriginal Population Profile (Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b); in the far right column, inner city estimates (2011) for inner city residents, ages 25–64, were retrieved in an excel spreadsheet provided by the City of Winnipeg, Neighbourhood Profiles staff.
*CEGEP is a French acronym for General and Vocational College in the province of Quebec.
(1) In parentheses: Statistics Canada (2002). "2001 Census Aboriginal Population Profiles."; City of Winnipeg, (2015b), 2001 Census Data, Inner City, ages 20+.
n/a: not available.

Although some educational outcomes have improved, including rates of non-university post-secondary diplomas, it is imperative to continue to build on this positive momentum until the percentage of Indigenous peoples with a university education is at least the same as the general population.

Circumstances are similar for new Canadian families in the inner city as evidenced by recent statistics. In their interviews with 75 recently arrived refugee households predominantly from Africa and the Middle East, and 78% of them residing in inner-city neighbourhoods, Carter, Polevychok, Friesen, and Osborne (2008) found that, one year after arriving in Winnipeg, 92% of households had incomes below the poverty line. After re-interviewing 55 of these same households after their second year in Canada, 73% continued to live below the poverty line with average household income still being less than half of other Winnipeg households. Low household income was also attributable to the fact that only 42% of respondents were employed after year one; this figure increased to 66% after the second year which is reflected in the decline in household poverty rates.

These persisting poverty-related barriers raised many questions, such as: how, as a matter of ethical responsibility, can UW be situated in a neighbourhood with significant social disparities and not consider the wider inclusion of the community and particularly the university's role in challenging the graduation gap? How could we partner with our neighbours to improve high school graduation rates, and to help increase engagement with the university and other forms of post-secondary education? For young people, which methods of outreach would promote an understanding that the university belongs to them, and they have the right to benefit from it? In the process of integrating community learning initiatives, how can we respect the community's autonomy in developing programs to support the increased participation of inner-city youth in education? (Axworthy, 2009).

Community-Driven Learning Programs

The community's reality was a catalyst for UW's innovative approach to addressing the question of what it means to implement relevant and respectful community learning initiatives. As part of the university's community learning mandate**,** the introduction of an Innovative Learning Centre in 2006 presented an array of learning opportunities for community members, including an on-campus science program for Grade 5–6 students from inner-city schools, as well as a summer day camp. The mandate of the latter was to address summer learning loss experienced by students from high poverty neighbourhoods who would not otherwise have an opportunity to attend a summer day camp, and to help these students see themselves as high school and post-secondary graduates. In a further attempt to break down barriers to education, a Model School (a school within a school) provided students underrepresented in high school and post-secondary graduation rates an opportunity to attend UW's Collegiate High School at no financial cost to their families, while also providing bursaries toward their post-secondary studies. Students who are invited to join the program substantially increase their chances of completing high school and pursuing post-secondary studies (Axworthy, 2013, 2009).

Similarly, the doors opened to the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre in 2005, which is a community centre located on the UW campus, and for many years, it was open six days per week year-round. The Centre offers free and open access to computers, after-school tutoring, educational and cultural programs, as well as community meeting spaces. The centre is a safe and friendly environment that encourages residents in the community to expand their knowledge and skills in cultural activities, such as beading, making crafts, the art of traditional Pow Wow dancing (grass, jingle dress, hoop, round dance, etc.), drumming, and Aboriginal language proficiency. The Global Welcome Centre was also established in 2008 to help support new Canadians with their learning needs, such as computer and language skills, tutoring, counseling, as well as providing any other required assistance in transitioning to a university environment (Axworthy, 2013, 2009). Annually, this Centre served 350–400 registered clients representing 80 countries; it has recruited 75–100 volunteers; and its Bridge-to-Post-Secondary outreach program served approximately 600 people in the community each year.

The President and Indigenous leadership within the university recognized that, in order to meet the needs of the community, the approach to community learning must be a highly social process that nurtures family relationships. Moreover, learning can be more effective if it is informal and experiential. The role of Elders is crucial for passing down cultural teachings to children and youth, and for promoting lifelong learning about oneself, as well as one's responsibility to family and community. In Indigenous communities, social relationships provide the foundation for learning about self-identity through cultural ceremonies and other traditions, but particularly ancestral language. It is alarming then, that according to the 2011 Aboriginal Population Profile, only 6.1% of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg had knowledge of an Aboriginal language (Statistics Canada, 2013b). This may be significant with regard to children's school outcomes, as another study based on the Aboriginal People's Survey, found that children aged 6–14 years who were supported to learn an Aboriginal language had improved school achievement (Guevremont & Kohen, 2012).

All three centers are funded privately; however, they also need to rely on resources from UW in order to implement meaningful learning opportunities. The hiring of Indigenous leaders and role models with authentic relationships to the community and their ability to build on existing collaborative relationships with schools, community agencies, and families was also essential to UW's mandate of generating positive changes in the community by way of after school, summer, and cultural programs.

To ensure the sustainability of these programs, in 2011, UW integrated community learning into its governance structure by having its Board of Regents approve a Community Learning Policy that has a mandate of supporting youth from Indigenous and new Canadian families to increase high school and post-secondary graduation rates. In addition, following a commitment by the Province of Manitoba's Department of Education, a primarily private fundraising strategy, referred to as the Opportunity Fund, established bursaries and a tuition credit account towards post-secondary education for each student enrolled in the program. The overarching goal of these measures is to reduce the graduation gap (Axworthy, 2013).

Methods and Study Participants

Whereas UW has implemented a wide range of initiatives over the past decade, the impacts of six of these community learning programs (Tables 3 and 4) were evaluated in 2014–15. These evaluations assessed the Innovative Learning Centre's Model School, a science program for elementary school children, and summer camps open to children ages 7–15, and Wii Chiiwaakanak's free culturally-based learning opportunities for families, a healthy teen relationships program, and a summer math camp.

Table 3: Innovative Learning Centre Program Descriptions as of the evaluation period in 2014–15

Model School (2008): The Model School is a high school program accommodating approximately 45–50 students in Grades 9–12. It operates in partnership with UW's Collegiate High School (a private, tuition-based school), and addresses the needs of students from backgrounds that have traditionally been underrepresented in high school and post-secondary graduation rates; for example, Indigenous students and some new Canadians. The school has been developed as part of the university's community learning mandate to eliminate barriers to education, and in order to realize this goal, UW provides underrepresented students an opportunity to attend the university's Collegiate High School at no financial cost to their families, as well as providing bursaries for their post-secondary studies. The school takes a holistic approach to its programming and utilizes individualized academic plans that identify and address the unique challenges faced by each student while providing an intensive support structure to help students overcome them in achieving academic success.

Adventure Kids Summer Camp (2007): This summer camp is the largest free day camp in the inner city and serves more than 1,000 children from more than 40 public schools located in low-income neighbourhoods. The camp offers between 4–6 separate one-week programs that aim to address summer learning loss by engaging children in exciting science and environmental activities. Transportation is provided to get the participants to the camp site, as well as to build and reinforce a positive relationship with the schools and families, and a nutrition program provides healthy snacks and lunches to every participant. The camp employs and provides volunteer opportunities to more than 40 youth leaders between the ages of 14 and 25. The majority of these workers are Indigenous or they are visible minorities from the high poverty areas of Winnipeg, and many have a strong interest in careers that deal with social justice issues. Through the use of group-centered approaches, the employment experience teaches leaders about teamwork, positive peer influences, and life skills for daily living such as work ethic, leadership, responsibility, commitment, and dedication.

Science Kids on Campus (2006): Approximately 50 students in Grade 6 from three inner-city schools attend a two-hour long science program offered once weekly for a period of 8–10 weeks at the university campus. While on campus, science professors, teachers, and senior-level students assist the children in conducting a variety of hands-on science experiments and activities tied to their school curriculum, such as DNA sampling, squid dissection, studying how the brain works, and examining owl pellets. The students take tours of different departments and facilities on campus which helps to familiarize them with a post-secondary environment as it strengthens their science education and experience.

Table 4: Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre Program Descriptions as of the evaluation period in 2014–15

Although Wii Chiiwaakanak Centre has over 1,000 drop-in visits to its computer lab each month and hundreds more to its other community programming, three programs were evaluated:

Sacred Seven Healthy Teen Relationships: Since September of 2013, the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre at UW has offered the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships Program for students primarily from schools in Winnipeg's high poverty areas (the inner-city, North End, and West End neighbourhoods). Divided into two program components, basketball (Pride Group) and hoop dancing (Girls Group), the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships Program offers resources to Indigenous children and youth between the ages of 9 and 19 that allow them to access traditional Aboriginal teachings (Seven Sacred Teachings and Medicine Wheel tool), to feel connected to their ancestry, and to help them to establish better relationships with themselves, their families, and their communities. The youth also develop their own code of honour principles for healthy teen relationships, and they integrate these principles into their hoop dancing and basketball drills. The teens also conduct presentations of what they have learned in the program at community public schools in the above-noted neighbourhoods.

Family Learning programs: Let's Speak Ojibway to Our Kids and Pow Wow Club

Let's Speak Ojibway to Our Kids (2012): This weekly language program provides families and individuals of all ages a chance to learn about ceremony, the Anishinaabe (Ojibway) language, and traditional beliefs in a safe and social environment.

Pow Wow Club (2012): This weekly program provides community members of all ages with an opportunity to learn the art of traditional dancing, along with song and drum teachings. The program is open to families and individuals of all ages, knowledge levels, and abilities.

Summer Indigenous Math Leadership Camp (referred to as Math Camp) (2012): Beginning in the summer of 2012, the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre offered a two-week Summer Indigenous Math Leadership Camp for 11 students from urban schools in the high-poverty areas of Winnipeg (the inner city, North End and West End neighbourhoods). The camp ran from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day, and over the two-week period, students were given math lessons, lunches and snacks, and transportation to and from their residence at no cost to their families. The summer math camp provided students between the ages of 13–15 with an opportunity to improve their math skills and learn more about the connection between mathematics and Aboriginal cultures, while also enjoying activities and outings on campus. The math camp continued over the next three summers (2013–15) with the majority of participants returning each year.[4]

[4] In the summer of 2015, the Math Camp expanded its activities to emphasize the Indigenous leadership component of its program title. It hired 13 youth leaders from the pool of participants who had attended during the previous three summers to help tutor younger students between the ages of 8 and 11 from local elementary schools in the inner city of Winnipeg. To support the youth leaders, the camp provided a one-week training program, and it ran over the following three-week period for the younger participants. In 2016, the camp recruited 24 young

An Indigenous approach to evaluation, which is driven by a strengths-based and empowerment framework, offered a compelling depth for understanding the impact of these programs (LaFrance & Nichols, 2011). Since it was necessary for the research process to benefit those who are most directly impacted, we wanted to give the participants a chance to provide feedback on their experiences in the programs and what they thought worked well or needed improvement and why.

As shown in Table 5, 940 individuals participated in a wide range of exercises throughout the evaluation process, including surveys, questionnaires that required short answers, forced-choice Likert-scale statements, in-person or telephone interviews, and many other instruments. For younger participants, the objective was to assess their level of interest in, and enjoyment of, the program, as well as how much they felt they had learned from the experience. Questions in the qualitative interviews with youth leaders and other program staff addressed general themes such as program delivery issues, benefits derived from their employment with the program, the ways in which the program has impacted their educational and vocational aspirations, and their future plans for both paid and volunteer work. Parent and guardian interviews were concerned with the degree to which their children enjoyed attending the program, their perceptions of and satisfaction with the program staff, the benefits derived from their children's participation, the no-cost feature, and any suggestions for improvement. In their interviews, the teachers and administrators were asked for feedback on recruitment issues, the cultural value and social benefits of the program, and the importance of the program to youth in the community.

The evaluator triangulated the data to the greatest possible extent. In triangulation methods, the data are collected and analyzed together to ensure that the findings are corroborated. The objective of this cross-referencing technique is to have the data tell the full story and to identify patterns that increase confidence in the findings, thus permitting conclusions (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013). By itself, a standardized instrument such as a short-answer questionnaire or a circle-the-word exercise is much less meaningful unless it is combined with the feedback from other stakeholders, such as parents, school administrators, and teachers. The children's and youths' instruments were designed to capture some of the more immediate benefits derived from attending the program. Such instruments are frequently standardized and simplistic so as not to be too daunting for the young participants and, as such, they do not tell the full story. It is the triangulation of the data that allows their responses to be converted into a meaningful result (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013).

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campers whose grade levels ranged from entering grade 4 to 9. The camp hired 13 youth leaders, of which 11 were returning employees from the previous year.

Table 5: Evaluation Participation (2014–15)

		Innovative Learning Centre			Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre		
Program stakeholder	**Type of instrument**	**Model School**	**Adventure Kids Camp**	**Science Kids on Campus**	**Sacred Seven**	**Family Learning**	**Math Camp**
		N	N	N	N	N	N
Children and youth program participants, under age 25	Questionnaires and Likert scale instruments	26	n/a	n/a	36	n/a	10
Children and youth program participants, under age 25	Survey instruments and other evaluative exercises: circle the word, friendship bracelet, and fill in the blanks	n/a	308	46	222	27	n/a
Youth, over age 18 (former students)	Qualitative interviews	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other adult program participants	Likert scale instrument	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	27	n/a
Program staff and faculty, volunteers, instructors, youth leaders, administrators	Qualitative interviews	6	43	9	9	10	1
Parents and guardians of participants and youth leaders	Qualitative interviews	18	73	2	10	8	8
Community schools: teachers, community outreach workers, counselors, and principals	Qualitative interviews	n/a	17	3	6	n/a	n/a
Community schools: teachers and principals	Survey instrument	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	n/a	0
Total participation in the evaluations		**54**	**441**	**60**	**294**	**72**	**19**
Program registrations and participation		42 (1)	1,032 campers 45 youth leaders (2)	70 students (3)	222 students; 71 program participants (4)	54 adults and 69 children (5)	11 students

(1) Student registrations for 2014 and 2015; the Model School high school has graduated 41 students since 2008. **(2)** Summer 2014 registrations and youth leader employment. **(3)** 70 students participated in two sessions in 2013 and 2014; 110 students in 3 sessions in 2012 and 2013.
(4) From September 2013 to June 2015, 222 students participated in five school presentations, and 71 students participated in the Sacred Seven program.
(5) Spring session 2014: Pow Wow Club: 15 adults, 36 children from 9 families; Let's Speak Ojibway: 39 adults and 33 children from 19 families.

Although the data gathering instruments and questionnaires in the six evaluations were uniquely designed for each program, the questions were relatively similar and suitable to the thematic analysis included in this paper. For example, while questions posed to youth may have been framed or worded slightly differently in the instruments of each evaluation, they often tapped into similar themes of confidence building, resilience, making positive choices, educational and vocational aspirations, and establishing healthy relationships through cultural teachings. Therefore, in reporting the findings, we aggregated data wherever common findings or themes could be collated across programs.

Impact Assessment

Six evaluation reports (DeRiviere, 2015a–b, 2014a–c; DeRiviere & Rhodes, 2014) produced 168 pages of findings, outcomes, best practices, and lessons learned in the programs listed in Tables 3 and 4. In narrowing down these findings, five key themes and commonalities emerged from the data in support of UW's working group consultations and policy objectives dating back to 2004. The themes that seemed to cultivate program successes included: (1) support and connection with the community through free culturally-based educational opportunities; (2) strengthened community partnerships; (3) building social capital among youth through peer mentoring and role modeling opportunities; (4) encouraging connections of youth to education, employment, leadership opportunities, and civic responsibility; (5) fostering a sense of belonging to the university community in children, youth, and their families.

The findings reported in this paper only scratch the surface in terms of the enormity of the task undertaken by UW to provide community-learning opportunities. But this research has demonstrated the immense ability of an urban university to effectively use its resources and infrastructure in order to extend its reach into the community and, through a variety of partnerships, to have an impact on the learning experiences of many people beyond the conventional structures of university programming. The evaluations conveyed important narratives about the perseverance of inner-city youth in the face of numerous challenges, improved Indigenous academic success, and high parental involvement and turnout in community programs. Youth and their families remarked that they felt a sense of belonging to UW's community, and that it is not simply an exclusive, closed institution that happens to be situated within their neighbourhood. In fact, recent institutional statistics indicate substantial growth in the representation of Indigenous students at approximately 10% and visible minorities at approximately 20% (The University of Winnipeg, 2015). Overall, the reactions of evaluation participants were overwhelmingly positive with regard to their experiences at UW, which was described as a reputable institution that seemed genuinely interested in "getting to know the community."

Theme #1: Culturally Relevant Programming

On aggregate, 93.6% (n=455 out of 486) of participants indicated that they enjoyed and were satisfied with the evaluated programs. Participant feedback for the family learning programs, including Pow Wow Club and Let's Speak Ojibway to our Kids, was also overwhelmingly positive, as these programs provided

meaningful learning opportunities, built stronger family units, and enhanced the community's capacity to see itself as learners. The importance of language programs has been pointed out by Ball (2009), who found a higher effectiveness of these programs on children's ability to learn a language when they are centered on parental involvement in promoting their children's language development; thus, this research suggests that there is a considerable value in providing family language learning opportunities.

Parents and guardians spoke about being on a "cultural journey as a family," and they indicated that the programs provided solid grounding for how they wish to raise their children. Learning about Aboriginal history and cultural teachings was crucial in helping their children to understand the richness of their ancestry and historical family connections. In fact, 81.5% (n=27) of adult participants reported that they felt an increased sense of cultural pride as a result of participating in the program, while 85.2% (n=27) said that the program had fostered a greater sense of identity and connection with their culture and also indicated that they had been able to apply the knowledge obtained in the program to their day-to-day lives. Parents and guardians were especially pleased that their children were being helped to develop a shared sense of identity with others from the same background. In fact, the children reported making an average of ten new friends throughout the program, as well as feeling a sense of belonging to something about which they can be proud. Program learning also supported parenting strategies; for instance, parents reported using drumming and the singing of traditional songs at home as a strategy to get a restless child to channel their energy into a positive activity.

In all programs, parents and guardians expressed gratitude for the no-cost features. In low-income families, it encouraged parental consent for their children to participate in the program. Wraparound services[5] were provided in all programs, which included free transportation, supplies, and healthy snacks and meals. The most notable measures of success were the recommendations made to friends, neighbours, and extended family members. In the five programs in which the question was asked, 99.2% (n=128) of interviewed parents and guardians said they would send one of their other children to the program and/or that they would recommend it to extended family members and neighbours. In the Adventure Kids Summer Camp program evaluation, 95.2% (n=41) of youth leaders indicated that they would recommend the camp to families in their neighbourhood and, were they older and had children of their own, that they would send their own children to the camp. Likewise, 70% (n=10) of youth attending Math Camp said they would recommend the program to their friends. Finally, 92.9% (n=14) of surveyed school partners, including principals, counselors, and teachers, said they would recommend the Sacred Seven school presentations or Science Kids on Campus to other public schools in the high poverty areas of the city.

The reasons that were given for these positive recommendations were highly related to program emphasis on cultural aspects. Activities were regarded as creative, culturally-relevant and, where applicable,

[5] "Wraparound" is a problem-solving approach to supporting youth, children, or students, and it usually involves a group of individualized services that are relevant to the child's wellbeing and complex needs.

addressed summer learning loss in an enjoyable way. Programs were consistent with Indigenous approaches, such as hands-on or experiential learning opportunities that are relevant to participants' real lives. As an example of a hands-on teaching strategy, the math group's campus explorations were usually tied to a lesson about measurement problems such as solving an area and perimeter math problem in a space in the university's library. In past years, the group visited the university's bicycle lab where the instructor integrated an applied math problem as part of his lecture. Using physical materials while learning math concepts promotes mastery of skills and, by showing practical applications of complex ideas, it builds self-esteem in students. Importantly, programs helped Indigenous youth to connect with each other and to be proud of their identity, and they also gave non-Indigenous students a chance to learn about Aboriginal culture. Campers at Adventure Kids reported making an average of 7.6 (n=300 campers) new friends during their week at camp. This finding also shows how participation in the camp can help to alleviate the social isolation that some children from high poverty families experience during the summer break. Perhaps the most significant feature of the summer camps was that they exposed Indigenous children to positive peer influences in the form of the camp's leaders who came from the same communities as the campers, with nearly two-thirds of camp leaders being Indigenous and another 14.6% coming from visible minority groups.

In both the Science Kids on Campus and Math Camp programs, a hands-on approach to delivering lessons had an appreciable effect on the attitudes of participants towards science or math and post-secondary education. Upon completion of the program, 60.9% (n=46) of Science Kids (Math Camp: 60%, n=10) indicated that their interest in studying science (math) had increased, and 67.4% (Math Camp: 90%) indicated that they were now more interested in attending university. In the Science Kids program, a thread of environmental, Indigenous, and social justice issues ran through many topics, including ecological footprints and sustainable development, which made the program relevant to its young participants. Drawing on their professional experience in alternative educational settings, D'Elia and Wishart (2014) have argued that mainstream science pedagogy in North America has been consistently perceived by vulnerable children as irrelevant because they have difficulty relating the curriculum to their life experiences. An experiential approach allows children to control the experimentation and see how it connects to their own learning processes and daily experiences, which in turn helps to motivate them.

Further to this point, an important goal of the Math Camp was to celebrate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit accomplishments and contributions. The program integrated these traditional ways of knowing through its speakers series. For instance, in the summer of 2014, four invited guests spoke to the students on the topics of Indigenous accomplishments and contributions to mathematics. These community leaders emphasized the importance of pursuing a post-secondary education and exploring one's career opportunities, but they also discussed the importance of the medicine wheel teachings in making life choices. A favourite topic of participants in the Math Camp was the BBC documentary, *The Code*. The instructor connected the documentary's main discussion about how mathematics is a language that can be used to describe the relationships among all natural things (including people) to Anishinabe teachings about the importance of learning from nature, and he focused on how algebra can be a way of representing

these relationships.[6] All interviewed adults (teachers, principals, instructors, and volunteers) involved in these programs endorsed the hands-on experiential approach, and some described it as a holistic teaching method that respects the student's learning process. As noted by Nguyen (2011, p. 231), "Aboriginal education needs to be reframed in an Aboriginal context that will provide Aboriginal children with a sense of self-worth. That is, a sense of who they are and where they come from, which will impact community self-government and self-determination."

In summary, parents and guardians viewed all of the programs as a positive way to get the younger generation more involved in their culture. The family learning programs were viewed as a family celebration of learning about culture and as an intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Interviewed parents or guardians expressed a strong commitment to raising children who were proud of being Aboriginal, to keeping them away from the cycle of negativity commonly associated with poverty, and to continue to celebrate their Aboriginal heritage by passing along cultural traditions and legacies to their children. In two programs that targeted youth, when asked in a Likert statement if they were proud of being Aboriginal, 88.2% of Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program participants and 100% of Model School students indicated "true" or "very true."

Theme #2: Strength in Community Partnerships

Program staff has cultivated strong partnerships, both internal and external to the university community, with public school stakeholders (principals, community outreach workers, school counselors, and teachers), community residents and non-profit agencies, program volunteers, university faculty, and instructors. These partnerships have assisted the development of innovative and culturally-relevant programs, and they have been sustained over the years.

One example of the benefits of these strong partnerships, is the unique recruitment strategy of the Model School at the Innovative Learning Centre for inviting students to join the school. This strategy involves a collaborative referral system with community groups and agencies, and public school partners in the inner city. Each year, these partners recommend students who show academic promise but are not realizing their full potential and risk falling behind for a variety of reasons. The community partners also help to facilitate communication between the Model School faculty and a student's parents or guardians. No advertising is required in the recruitment process, as the school has strong links and networks in the community that support its referral system and help it to fill its capacity requirements. Similarly, interviewed public school partners of the Science Kids on Campus program expressed a strong desire to continue their working relationship with UW's Innovative Learning Centre. In fact, most school partners recommended program growth so that more schools and grade levels could be included, which is likely the most important measure of program success.

[6] N. Tanchuk (Math Camp instructor), personal communication, August 14, 2014.

At Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, named by an Elder and which means “partners” in Anishinaabemowin, considerable trust has been built between the centre’s staff and community members. A 2012 Renewal Plan that was created by the staff working in partnership with the community was a key step in responding to the priorities of the community. The centre has grown with the support and input of the community, and includes a Community Advisory Committee, and it has been developed into a true learning centre with more than 20,000 unique visits a year. Interviewed participants appreciated the wide variety of free services, such as resume building, computer access, or information about access to housing. Some thought that the centre and its family-oriented atmosphere is quickly becoming the hub of the neighbourhood, stating that it is a link that connects Indigenous people and families to one another by giving them an opportunity to participate in activities together, such as crafting, beading, and other cultural activities.

All interviewed participants agreed that places like Wii Chiiwaakanak are necessary in an inner-city environment, even if only to acquire a better sense of familiarity with one’s neighbours. Some participants, including staff who grew up in nearby low-income neighbourhoods, revealed that there were no programs that offered cultural teachings, traditional dance, and Aboriginal language preservation when they were younger. They believe that the uniqueness of the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre is tremendously important in building trust and support networks among residents in the inner city. The interviews identified another of the centre’s strengths which was its ability to leverage resources and infrastructure at UW; these resources range from the sizeable space in the university used for the weekly Pow Wow Club, to its relationships with the university’s bicycle lab and other faculty and student volunteers from a wide range of departments and faculties.

In the Sacred Seven Healthy Teen Relationships program, the centre’s collaboration with the Anishinaabe Pride Basketball Club for teens aged 13 to 19 was deemed a good match since the Pride Basketball and Girls Groups espoused similar values of teamwork, respect for oneself and others, cultural identity, and the positive role of physical activity in building resilience in youth. While the Pride Basketball Group was doing exceptionally well on its own, partnering with the Sacred Seven Program expanded its mandate and opportunities, and helped to give the Pride Basketball participants more opportunities to do community service through their cultural presentations to public schools in the inner city. Their participation also allowed more resources to be made available to the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre with regard to strengthening their partnerships with community schools. Moreover, this unique partnership with the Centre brought these youth to UW and exposed them to a post-secondary institution, which was a first occasion for some of them.

Theme #3: Building Social Capital among Youth

All programs supported youth in their journeys of personal growth and development through cultural teachings and understandings. A key strength of at least four programs (Sacred Seven, Model School, Adventure Kids Summer Camp, and Math Camp) was the mentoring component and its effect on the growth of participants’ leadership capacities. These programs are well on their way to developing a clear

model of youth leadership through a mentoring approach, and the evaluations revealed countless examples of participants who had received hands-on learning and mentoring from adult role models in a program and who later became mentors themselves in the roles of program leaders or facilitators. One example of this mentoring process is that, for the 2015 session of Math Camp, past participants have been hired to tutor younger children in Grades 3–4. Furthermore, the Adventure Kids Summer Camp evaluation revealed that 39% (n=41) of current leaders had previously attended as campers when they were younger, and 25.0% (77 of 308) of current campers indicated that they want to be employed as a camp leader in the future. With this model of skills enhancement and transfer, the program's participants are able to assume a role in future program development and teaching others how to mentor and lead. Moreover, assuming responsibility helps young people develop a sense of purpose, builds resilience, independence, and lets them become part of the solution in strengthening their community. In fact, most program leaders at Adventure Kids, many of whom were also students at the Model School, expressed a strong interest in developing leadership skills. Encouragingly, most defined "leadership" as an opportunity to actively help shape the character of their community and mentor younger children.

These programs have an added advantage that results from the wide age range of the students they recruit, as the younger children and adolescents get a chance to observe the older students and learn what level of commitment is required if they want to succeed academically and personally. The age gap between students (ages 9–24) creates some advantages in this area, as the older adolescents are approaching graduation from high school, and are preparing to, or are already pursuing, post-secondary studies. This co-mingling generates positive peer influences, as the younger children form relationships with and are influenced by these older role models who take their studies and future aspirations very seriously.

There are also positive spillover effects in the community at large. Five community school presentations of the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program saw young Indigenous leaders (the presenters) integrate their cultural teachings into hoop dancing and basketball drills. A survey of the audience indicated that 57.2% (127 out of 222) of students would like to participate in this program, and that less than 1% disliked the presentations. The teachers at the schools commented on the significant social value of exposing not only Indigenous children to their ancestral traditions, but also introducing Indigenous culture to new Canadian children who may be unfamiliar with it. Teachers had previously observed that, among peers, some Indigenous students were hesitant to openly engage with their culture. The presentations normalized the culture, highlighted an exemplary model of youth who were engaged with leadership in the Indigenous community, and fostered pride in Aboriginal identity. It helped Indigenous students to be proud of their strong heritage. In fact, through this form of hands-on or kinesthetic expression, learning also occurred in the audiences, as an evaluative matching exercise of the Seven Sacred Teachings and their connection to animals (e.g., the bear teaches us courage, the eagle teaches us love, etc.) indicated that the majority of students understood the presentation's main messages. Also of significance was the fact that the Sacred Seven presenters were seen by 100% (n=17) of principals and teachers at the public schools as good role models for the Indigenous students in their schools.

As revealed in the evaluations, another key feature of the community programs was the commitment on the part of program developers and facilitators to respecting collective values by empowering participants to assume a leadership role in designing program activities. This approach works particularly well with young people, as it builds independence, and develops decision-making and intuitive skills. The programs worked especially well when the participants had an opportunity to make decisions about which activities they engaged in or which types of speakers were invited to conduct workshops. For example, in the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships Pride basketball program, the facilitators encouraged the participants to design the program on their own terms, including developing their own code of honour principles for healthy relationships, as well as integrating the seven sacred teachings in their basketball drills. The facilitators were available to support the participants and access the necessary resources to implement the programs, but none of the programs were rigidly structured.

Finally, 100% (n=49) of youth leaders, facilitators, or staff associated with the family learning programs, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, and Adventure Kids Summer Camp viewed themselves as role models to younger children, as well as to their own peers. All interviewed parents and guardians (n=18) of Model School students stated that their children are positive role models to siblings, cousins, and other younger children. The adults noted improvements in their children's sense of responsibility, work ethic, dependability, and leadership qualities since they began attending these programs.

Theme #4: Encouraging Strong Connections of Youth to Education, Employment, Leadership Training Opportunities, and Civic Responsibility

All programs continuously stressed the importance of education as a positive life choice. For instance, depending on the age mix of the children, the leaders and facilitators of the family learning programs made a special effort to emphasize the empowering effects of education in discussing the occupational aspirations of the youth. In their answers to various questionnaires, some youth indicated that they were the first in their family and peer network to pursue a post-secondary education and, in many situations, they were the first to earn a high school diploma.

Educational Aspirations

As shown in Table 6, the payoffs of a peer mentoring and role modeling approach to community learning may be substantial. Although not shown in Table 6, 96.2% (n=26) of student participants in the Model School evaluation indicated that it was important for them to get more education or vocational training after leaving high school (i.e. university, college, or technical/trade school), and that this was part of their plans. Another 84.6% of students indicated that attendance at the Model School had influenced their decision to get more education after high school, particularly as a result of career exploration activities and the influence of faculty in helping students to view themselves as agents of change in their own lives. Adventure Kids Summer Camp leaders were excluded from Table 6, as the majority (87.8%, n=41) were already in Grade 12 or attending a post-secondary program, and the skills and attributes that brought them summer employment make it highly likely that they will also earn their high school and/or post-secondary

diploma. However, 75% (n=40) of leaders indicated that employment at the camp helped them to make a decision about a future career. In the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program, 87% (n=23) of participants indicated that they performed better in school since having joined the program.

Table 6: Attitude towards Education and the Future

	Programs	N	%
Education is important to the participant	MS; SS	60	98.3
Participant plans to finish high school	MS; SS; SK; MC	118	99.2
Participant plans to attend university	MS; SS; SK; MC	105	85.7
Participant is thinking about future goals	MS; SS; SK	106	89.6
Participant self-identified as a good student	MS; SS; SK; MC	116	75.9
MS: Model School; SS: Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships; SK: Science Kids on Campus; MC: Math Camp.			

Occupational Aspirations

The majority of youth in five programs, including 7–12 year old children at the Adventure Kids Summer Camp and Science Kids on Campus, identified themselves as workers in the future, with 94.1% (429 out of 456 respondents) reporting an occupational aspiration. For the most part, participants aspired to a career that would require university or college training (e.g., teacher, doctor, veterinarian, engineer, lawyer, graphic designer, etc.). Almost three-quarters of students (74.8%, excluding campers at Adventure Kids) identified a university program or courses they will have to take in order to achieve their occupational aspirations, and other students identified general knowledge that was required to do the job, such as knowledge of computer programming, biology, or calculus. These are important indicators of ambition in youth, particularly if they are given opportunities to put their goals into action and transform their aspirations into occupational outcomes.

Training and Employment

By creating meaningful summer employment and leadership opportunities, four programs (n=120)—Model School, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, Adventure Kids Summer Camp, and Math Camp—equipped youth with employment skills, leadership development, and promoted students' civic responsibility through volunteering in their community, including mentoring of younger children.

Evaluation participants in the Model School and Adventure Kids Summer Camp noted their appreciation of countless opportunities to build their resumes through access to summer employment and training experiences, as well as skill development through a wide range of courses and workshops such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first-aid training, non-violent conflict resolution training, food handling techniques, a culinary arts workshop, and many others. The Model School has provided funding for interested students to acquire their coaching and refereeing certification for basketball, volleyball, and other sports. Some students worked as paid leaders or held other volunteer positions in the Manitoba

Government's "After School Leaders Program," which works with businesses to give youth opportunities to explore their career options through work experience.

The school also offers a basic life skills course referred to as Life/Work Transitioning. In accordance with the provincial curriculum, this for-credit course covers topics such as career exploration, resume building, fitness, nutrition and health, anti-bullying workshops, and diabetes prevention. The school has also introduced a series of workshops focused on developing soft skills such as communication skills, conflict resolution, leadership, healthy relationships, making responsible choices, assertiveness and confidence-building, and many other basic life skills. And finally, senior level Model School students were recommended for summer employment at the Adventure Kids Summer Camp, Summer Indigenous Math Leadership Camp, placements with the provincial government or other non-profit agencies, and many more opportunities.

Leadership Training

Although most prominent in the Adventure Kids Summer Camp, the program at large contained a strong leadership development component and provided leaders with one week of intensive training and orientation at the beginning of the summer. Notably, however, many leaders had participated in other employment readiness workshops throughout the year, for example, a workshop on conflict resolution techniques that give children positive options as alternatives to negative behaviour.

Twenty-nine leaders (78.4%, n=37) identified teambuilding exercises as the most important component of their training. They appreciated how everyone's ideas were respected, and how it helped to build up the self-confidence of newly recruited junior leaders. All participants (n=39) felt that they benefited from the training, and 97.6% (n=41) felt that they received training that was adequate with respect to what they were expected to do in their job. Furthermore, leaders said that they actually used their training in their job, most frequently to help resolve disputes between children and teach them to address their conflicts verbally rather than physically.

Model School students were given leadership opportunities in the Science Kids on Campus program and/or the Math Camp by assuming the role of instructor or volunteer helpers. In fact, 92.3% (n=26) of Model School students indicated that they were interested in developing leadership skills (e.g., public presentations, etc.). The Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program supported participants to improve their communication skills and public presentations by helping them to articulate the ways in which they integrated the seven sacred teachings into their hoop dancing and basketball drills. In the Girls Group, an important goal of the program was to encourage the older participants to take on a mentoring role towards the younger ones. The adult facilitator noted that this required creating some space so that these relationships could be nurtured.

Civic Responsibility

Program participants also demonstrated a desire to become involved in improving their communities by becoming interested in social issues. Repeatedly, the majority of participants made comments that reflected their strong commitment to volunteering and a sense of responsibility for giving back to the community. As discussed by Grover (2007), a life of service to community can create a self-sustaining model that strengthens its people in countless economic and political ways. When participants in three programs (Model School, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, and Adventure Kids) were asked if they had previously volunteered in their community, 86.8% (n=91) of participants responded affirmatively and provided an exhaustive list of past contributions. They recognized the importance of committing themselves to social justice causes and helping others through community service, as the majority (95.9%) indicated that they planned to continue to volunteer in their community in the future. Moreover, 89.2% (n=102) of participants said they wanted to make their community a better place.

In the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program, the Girls Group hoop dancers participated in over twenty community presentations over a two-year period. The older adolescents in the Pride Group volunteered to coach younger children, ages 13 and 14 years, in the regular basketball leagues. In addition, this group volunteered at a local recreation centre in the Pride Basketball Kids Camps for children ages 5 to 12. Held on Sunday afternoons, this development camp was for children who wanted to learn the basics of the sport. By registering their siblings in the camps, the coaches were also encouraged to role model their love for the sport and share what they learned with family members. Through this volunteer work, the coaches focused on building relationships with younger children, as well as using cultural teachings to reinforce positive messages. They encouraged children to become more involved in school sports, including basketball. The youth leaders also promoted a positive lifestyle without the influence of drugs and alcohol. Indeed, some teachers placed considerable emphasis on the role of sports in helping keep students connected to their studies and the university community.

Personal Growth and Development

In addition to technical skills and formal educational training, the programs also recognized the importance of helping youth to establish better relationships with themselves, their families, and their communities. Program resources helped build participants' self-confidence and resilience as they worked towards discovering their cultural identity and achieving positive life results, including educational outcomes. Participants in the Model School, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, Adventure Kids, Math Camp, and family learning programs reported more self-awareness, healthier interpersonal relationships, improved positivity, choices, and decision-making abilities. Youth leaders at the Adventure Kids Summer Camp reported in large numbers (82.9%, n= 41) that they had grown their self-confidence and other areas of personal development (patience, self-regulation, etc.) as a result of having worked at the camp. Increased confidence levels in Model School students led to higher levels of engagement while at school and in activities outside of school. This added confidence and resilience will also enable youth to more effectively develop their capacity for leadership, to see themselves as lifelong learners, to succeed academically, and to achieve their goals. Community learning and educational success are deeply linked to the consistent

messages provided by the programs of healthy relationship building through cultural connections. For instance, in their study of Aboriginal children at a charter school in Alberta, Baydala et al. (2009) found that, as opposed to the standard intelligence measures, many social aspects of a school environment (e.g., children's self-belief and self-rated measures of behaviour, close friendships, and cultural aspects) predicted school achievement in students.

Noting considerable growth in their child's social and emotional development, some parents referred to the program as a "confidence builder," as their children learned to express themselves in group situations and took more social risks in meeting new people and developing friendships outside the family network. Parents and guardians of the Adventure Kids campers noted improvements in their children's ability to cooperate at home, and their sense of responsibility, independence, and self-regulation. New Canadian parents were pleased that their children had opportunities to practice speaking English and to learn about Canadian culture, and also to have friends who are culturally different from themselves.

In summary, the most significant findings with regard to the long-term accomplishments of the youth-related programs were the participants' personal growth, social maturity, and contributions to society. However, another significant long-run accomplishment is that the Model School has produced 41 graduates (a more than 95% graduation rate in a neighbourhood where a 50% graduation rate is the norm), of which 78% (n=32) have gone on to pursue post-secondary studies. Though the authors do not intend to measure success through numbers alone, an economic cost analysis has determined that the Model School program pays for itself. Compared to what it cost to educate them, throughout the course of their working lives, Model School graduates of post-secondary programs will contribute more than twice as much to the tax base from their incremental earnings than will a high school graduate. This is the tip of the iceberg in terms of their contributions to society. The Model School is a preventive investment as its costs are vastly outweighed by its far-reaching social and fiscal benefits for society.

Theme #5: Fostering a Sense of Belonging to the University Community

Nichols et al. (2014) have stated, "…universities are difficult for 'outsiders' to navigate" (p. 80). Nothing could be truer for groups that have had limited exposure to a university campus. By offering access to UW's campus, the programs address barriers that often prevent inner-city children, many of whom are Indigenous and new Canadians, from accessing post-secondary education. All programs showed evidence of improvements in the participants' sense of belonging in a post-secondary environment. For instance, in three programs combined—the Model School, Science Kids on Campus, and Math Camp—51.2% (n=82) of students identified that they were at first nervous about coming to a university campus, but in the follow up period, 82.9% (n=82) indicated that they were no longer nervous about attending a university campus. This is a clear indication that many students' comfort level rose, as the result of the measures taken by the programs to introduce them to the campus through guided tours and in helping them to think about how academic activities can connect their interests to a career. Furthermore, at the end of the Science Kids program, the university hosted a graduation ceremony with the President in traditional academic regalia handing out graduation certificates to the Grade 6 students.

Discussion and Policy

The evaluations showed the transformative potential of community-engaged approaches. Programs consistently showed progress in realizing UW's objectives of providing culturally-relevant and free learning opportunities to a community of underrepresented learners in all levels of education, addressing summer learning loss in children, and tackling the high school graduation gap. The community learning initiatives are well on their way to achieving UW's longer-term objectives of cultural preservation, and building resilient and involved communities in the inner city and other high poverty areas of the city. Equally as important is the goal of improving the literacy and educational outcomes of Indigenous youth, particularly their post-secondary graduation rate. These evaluations also inform policy and practice for this university's administration with regard to its commitment to a civic mission.

UW's model has also been provided at a relatively low cost compared to the societal benefits that extend beyond the substantive personal and community benefits. This immediately raises the question of whether there should be public investment funds added to the already strained budgets of the university system. Even in times of fiscal austerity, we simply cannot afford not to. If community learning initiatives result in higher graduation rates, fewer unemployed youth, and healthier, more engaged citizens, does this added human potential not enhance the public welfare instead of incurring the extra costs of economic repercussions? (Axworthy, 2009). The cost analysis offered earlier of former Model School student outcomes provides a clear answer that this model is a community investment strategy, which more than pays for itself in the long run**.** In fact, according to the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, educational parity that served to eliminate the employment rate/income gap between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals by 2001 would have yielded an additional $160 billion in Canadian GDP from 2001–17 (Sharpe, Arsenault, & Lapointe, 2007).

Our study findings present a viable approach to remediating the pervasive social problems in these neighbourhoods. If there are fewer children left on the streets to be recruited by the gangs, or if the rates of addiction are reduced and the expense of security and incarceration are positively affected and family life improved, is that not of substantial public value? (Axworthy, 2009). Referring to the social benefits of the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program, one basketball coach remarked how most of the programming occurs during the "vulnerable" hours for young people, such as after school and early evening. These are the hours when youth are most at risk of becoming involved in negative behaviours. Thus, UW's recreation facilities and Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre function not only as a safe place, but also as a preventive measure. Coaching, mentoring and role modeling Mino Bimaadiziwin, or a good life, which involves sports, team building, and keeping busy with learning activities, is one method of offsetting some of the boredom and potential for youth to engage in high risk activities. These ideas are supported in meta-analyses of after-school programs for vulnerable youth in the U.S., which suggests that non-academic activities may also have a positive impact on the developmental outcomes of young people (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Kremer et al., 2015). Likewise, in their case studies of Indigenous high school students, Preston & Claypool (2013) posed the question, "What motivates students to learn?" Their study

identified key themes, such as a supportive environment, relevant curricular content, role models, and many others; but after-school activities, including sports, were viewed as an important motivational aspect of students' education.

These are the kind of questions that the university contemplates as it continues to pursue its community learning strategy to help to slow the cycle of intergenerational poverty in these neighbourhoods. In fact, as many initiatives described herein are transferable to other situations, this university's vision can help set new priorities for public policy, practice, and university funding models that commit to both the continuity and expansion of these programs. To date, the community learning initiatives described in this paper have been largely funded through private sources and not public funds or the university's operating budget (Axworthy, 2009). In fact, most programs' operational budgets are deeply underfunded. What is needed now, in light of the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) events across the country, is a show of force among government leaders and policymakers, university administrators, and Indigenous advocacy groups to accomplish these goals together. Some of these actors have long held that Aboriginal peoples' strong beliefs in the transformational effects of education is a fundamental building block in their communities (Axworthy, 2009, 2013).

Moreover, the evaluated programs only scratch the surface in terms of the exhaustive list of UW initiatives for which private funding was raised, including affordable student residences mixed in with community townhouses, day-care spaces, a young entrepreneurs program, and a culturally diverse social enterprise food service. In an effort to address the fact that children in the care of a child welfare agency—87% Indigenous in Manitoba—are underrepresented in high school and post-secondary graduation rates (Brownell et al., 2015), UW has also introduced a tuition waiver program along with wraparound services, (e.g., housing, textbooks, meal plans) to support the participation of youth-in-care in post-secondary studies. Since this issue was brought forth by UW's former President, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, and its Indigenous leadership at meetings of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), several universities and local colleges now offer a tuition waiver program to youth-in-care. In light of the TRC's focus on education, these programs are best practice models that substantially broaden access for Aboriginal children and counter the dropout rate at the grade nine level that befalls Aboriginal students. Furthermore, in recognition of its responsibilities of Indigenous inclusion under Treaty One, UW has recently introduced the Indigenous course requirement, which will ensure that each graduating student has been exposed to Indigenous course content, including pedagogy (e.g., experiential learning).

In addition, a formalized Community Charter was developed to govern a new RecPlex recreation and wellness facility, and it mandates free access for community-based groups to run their programs. The facility was also built through private fundraising (Axworthy, 2013). As argued by Moore (2014), these bricks and mortar projects "strengthen relationships of people to the places where they live and among those people who live there" (p. 20). This idea is supported by the evidence that was gathered in the evaluations. However, a major shortcoming of this community-learning model is the lack of a sustained and

coordinated government funding commitment, which could potentially undermine future efforts in the university's civic mission.

Education is the new buffalo

In summary, the evaluations informed our understanding of key changes that post-secondary institutions can implement to positively impact Indigenous educational outcomes, which include:

- Visionary leadership as a catalyst for changing institutional culture in the face of obstacles and resistance.
- Recruiting strong Indigenous leadership entrusted to nurture authentic community partnerships and respectful relationships with ongoing, deliberative consultation.
- A clear university governance model and formal policy framework for community engagement that makes it an institutional priority.
- Culturally relevant programming that encourages family engagement at every possible opportunity.
- Promoting a clear model of civically engaged youth, positive role modeling, and mentoring among children and youth through a strong commitment to the leadership development aspects of the programs. The most significant feature of the peer-mentoring approach was that it helped Indigenous youth and children to connect with each other and to be proud of their identity and also to see themselves as high school and post-secondary graduates.
- A commitment to empowering youth in program decision-making processes.
- Multipronged educational strategies and opportunities to help generate resilience and capacity in youth who may otherwise be poorly prepared to meet the challenges of the labour market. These include pedagogical changes to include experiential learning, cultural teachings, co-curricular activities such as skill-building workshops and employment experiences.
- Good fundraising capacity to support low-income students with a program of tuition credits, waivers, and bursaries, as well as ancillary services (housing, meal plans, etc.).

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