



Growing community-university engagement through food system study

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Overview

Context

- Community-university engagement (CUE)
- Food systems as lens

Collaborate

- Case study: UBC-based Community Food Assessment Project

Communicate

- Feedback (students, teaching team, community partners)
- Best practices for CUE in large classes

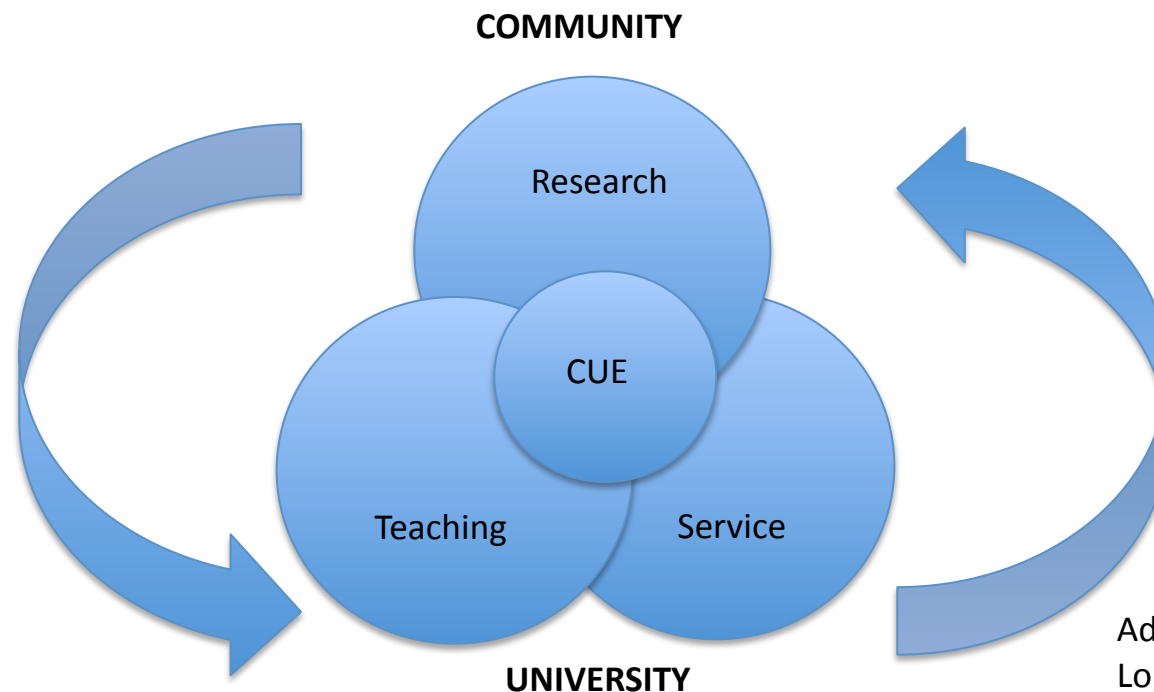
Celebrate

- Systemic change is possible!

Community University Engagement (CUE)

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

- The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching carnegiefoundation.org



Adapted from: University of
Louisville, Office of CUE

Calls for CUE & Growth

Examples

- UN Decade of Ed. for Sustainable Development (2005-14)
- Canadian: McConnell Foundation
- US: Carnegie Foundation

Issues

- Managing quality while increasing quantity
- Balance of needs (students, community) to be met
- Time & resources

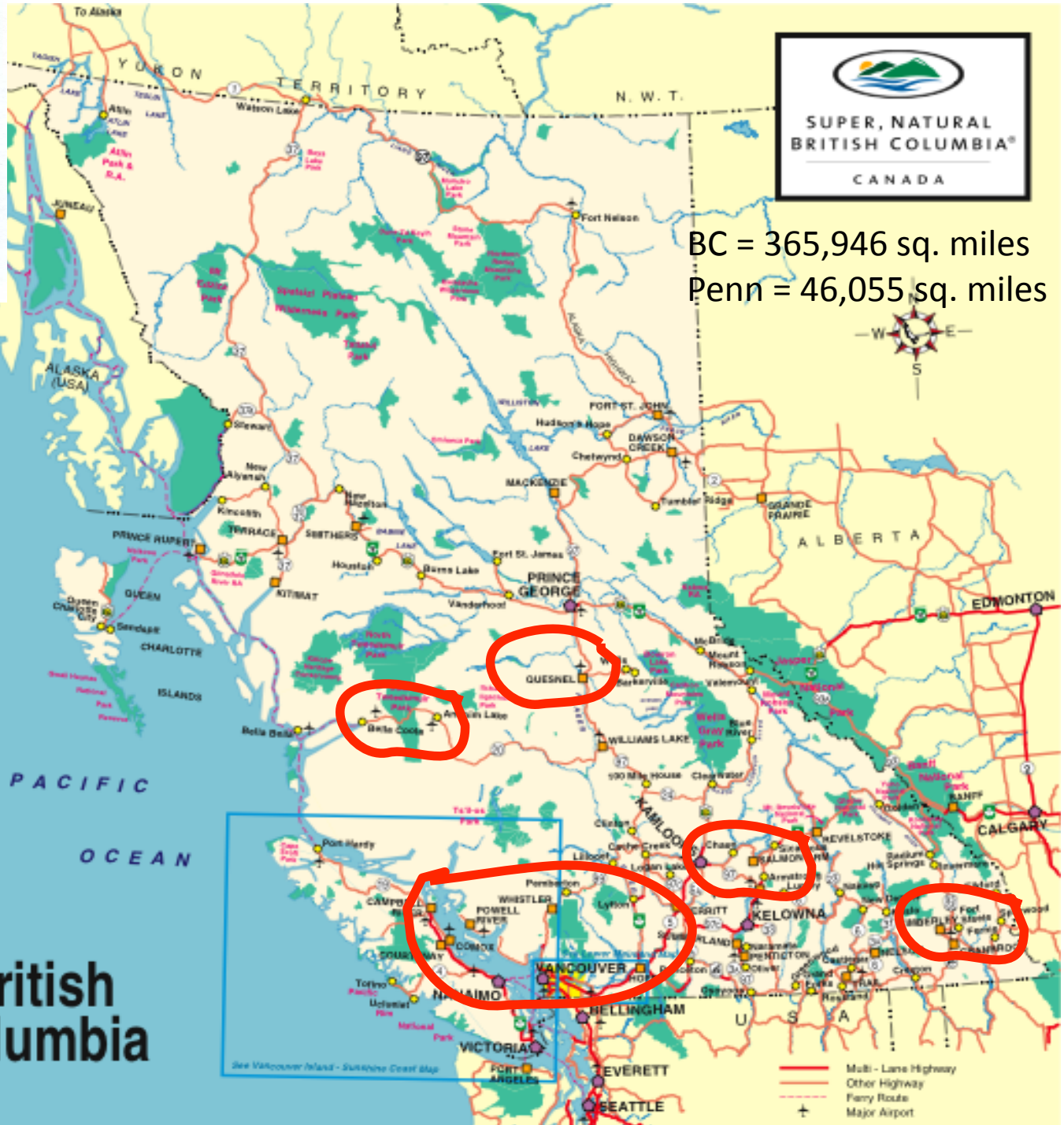
Food Systems as Lens & Grand Connector



Case study:

UBC-based Community Food Assessment Project

- Collaborative, community food security project in Faculty of Land & Food Systems, UBC, Canada; 3rd year of required Land, Food & Community series
- Dietetics; Food, Nutrition & Health; Food Science; Food & Environment (Agroecology); Global Resource Systems
- Facilitated by teaching team: 1+ faculty, coordinator, TAs (grad students in Integrated Studies & 1-2 undergrads who have taken course)
→ Human resources allow for a modular approach
- CFAP: 200 students & 30 projects / year; community partners from 10 regions of BC, inc. urban, suburban, rural perspectives. **Projects are iterative.**
- Mandatory, team-based Community-Based Research
- Optional, individual Community Service-Learning
- **Microcosm of broader theoretical & praxical investigations into community-university engagement due to its size, scale, and scope**



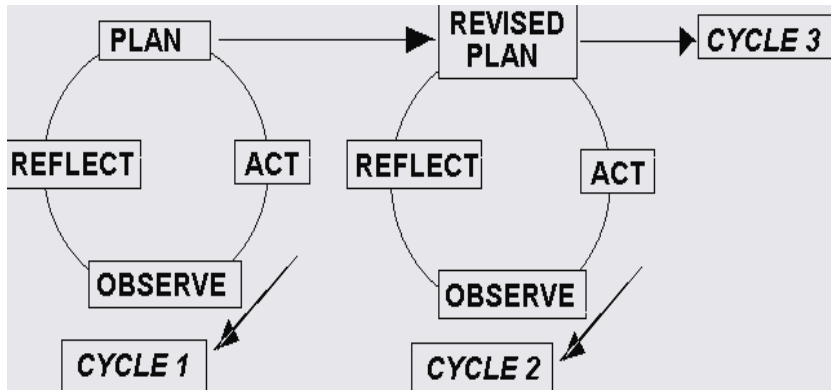
BC = 365,946 sq. miles
 Penn = 46,055 sq. miles

Map of BC, Canada's westernmost & 3rd largest province with an area greater than California, Oregon and Washington states combined and a population of 4 million. About 75% of the province is mountainous; 60% is forested; and **only about 5% is arable.**

**British
Columbia**

Outcomes of UBC-based CFAP

- ✓ **Provincial perspective on food system sustainability**
- ✓ **Direct connections:** info & experience across urban-suburban-rural
 - **Education:**
 - High school curricula impacts in Vancouver, Quesnel, Bella Coola
 - Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project extension
 - **Health:**
 - Community garden research: Vanc., Richmond, New Denver, Bella Coola
 - Increasing access to affordable, nutritious food: Vancouver, Comox Valley
 - **Production:**
 - Farmer network development: Pemberton; Increased urban ag: Vancouver
 - **Economics:**
 - Social enterprises: Richmond, Vancouver
 - Marketing strategies: farm/famers' markets in Surrey-White Rock
 - **Policy:**
 - Abattoir regulation: Bella Coola, New Denver
 - **Resource Use:**
 - Increase composting: Vancouver, West Vancouver



Iterative Processes

Evolution in response to formal and informal input from students, community partners, and teaching teams:

- Student feedback
- Annual teaching team reviews
- Community partner interviews

Student Surveys

- ***(%age agree/strongly agree, avg. 2008/ 2009):***
- Learned a lot about community issues (76%)
- Projects were valuable for the community or organization (78%)
- Understanding of food systems & food security improved through CBL (74%)
- Community partners were a valuable part of student learning (68%)

Student Feedback

Feedback	Response	Reflections
Introduce formal option of Community Service-Learning (alongside CBR)	Developed partnership with UBC-Community Learning Initiative → OPTIONAL 10% for reflective essay linking 12 hrs. service with academic materials	* Could/ should CSL be worth more? * Uptake over years of CSL is huge (20 to >70%)
More marks should be assigned to the UBC-based CFAP	Playing with grade designation	Striving for balance between team & individual work
Provide more diverse reading set to accompany plenary sessions	Intro more diverse reading set; offer workshops Still improving here...	Diverse projects require diverse resources, as well as “common experience”

Community Partner Feedback

Feedback	Response	Reflections
<p>Focused research question is key to success – AND – Can take time (weeks to years) to formulate such questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continue developing multi-year partnerships •Support partners in developing focused questions 	<p>Aligns with our approach to keep 1st-year questions broad, then get more specific over multi-year partnership</p>
<p>Students provide new energy and enthusiasm</p>	<p>Great! Be sure that UBC provides orientation for students</p>	<p>Clearer protocols of engagement</p>
<p>Hands-on service provides key opportunity for students to learn about organization for research projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourage students to begin CSL early in the semester •Continue formalizing CSL component 	<p>Be sure each team has participants engaged in CSL</p>
<p>Hold presentation & networking events off of the UBC campus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Will do! 	<p>– Desire for networking opportunities!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •UBC is at the edge of Vancouver

Teaching Team Feedback

Feedback	Response	Reflections?
Utilize experience of teaching team more effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Group projects by theme & with experienced TA •Determining how best to group projects •TAs better positioned to act as resources 	Could TAs assume an even larger role as contact for community partners?
Ensure “big picture” and “common experience” is available to all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Developed “student integrators” to make & share links across class •Feedback from class to teaching team through integrators; web presence for CFAP is initiated 	Transition to student journalists?
Be cautious in doubling up teaching team members as community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Proceed with caution; case-by-case analysis 	Too much time/work on same student project. Sometimes differing priorities to weigh.

Broader Significance

- Uniting a diverse student body via hands-on involvement in communities, dealing with real food system issues
- Interacting with community members, practicing professionals and interdisciplinary student teams → valuable experience
- Requires institutional commitment to support instructor with TAs & coordination to establish & maintain community relationships
- Community partners as co-educators; Students as fresh energy & new perspective for community partners
- May provide important networking opportunities for food system leaders & potential for lessons learned in different communities to be shared more broadly

Best Practices: Community-University Engagement in large (>50 person) classes

- Modularize the class
- Human resources (teaching team)
- Appropriately scaled CBR projects & CSL opportunities
- Clear expectations & adaptive management
- Multi-year partnerships with community organizations allows for “collective memory”
- Feedback cycles to enable projects to build
- Integration across projects & communities
- Effective communication
- Student contact for partners

Next steps?

- Succession planning with teaching team
- Continue with urban-suburban-rural focus
- Web presence
- Student journalists

Thank you!

- UBC-Community Learning Initiative
- SSHRC
- LFC 350 teaching teams, community partners, and of course, students!

Success Criteria

- Effective feedback loops
- Strength of community partnership
- Clear expectations for all
- Focused questions, scaled to student timeline
- CSL must be represented in grading scheme
- Project “collective memory” allows iterations

Food System Scenario <i>examples</i>	Theme	Partner	Yr. initiated	Outcomes?
<i>Food scrap recycling demo project</i>	<u>Food Resources: assessment and recovery</u>	West Vancouver <i>(municipal government)</i>	2009	Higher uptake of composting program with W. Van residents due to increased people power & enthusiastic students
<i>Policy options to increase agriculture & food security</i>	<u>Food Production</u>	Bella Coola <i>(sustainable ag. society (health agency))</i>	2008-2009	Contribution to community forum on policy alternatives to allow community abattoirs
<i>Investigating outcomes of a classroom food systems project over time</i>	<u>Food Education</u>	Terra Nova Schoolyard Society <i>(NGO)</i>	2007-2009	Design & delivery of questionnaires to all students in the program. Relevant for planning & grant-writing