

The UBC Learning Exchange is a university-community engagement initiative based in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The Learning Exchange was established eight years ago, as part of UBC's commitment to contribute to social, economic, and cultural development in the city, the region, the province, and beyond. The Learning Exchange brings UBC student volunteers into non-profit organizations and public schools where they work to achieve community goals while building their understanding of social issues, developing their interpersonal skills, and gaining clarity about their own educational and career goals. The Learning Exchange also offers free educational resources and programs to local residents through its Main Street Storefront. The Learning Exchange sees itself as working towards the achievement of UBC's Trek 2010 vision, especially UBC's aspiration "to prepare our students to become exceptional global citizens" and "to promote the values of a civil and sustainable society." This report briefly summarizes the highlights of the past year's activities (academic year 2006-2007) and outlines our plans for the coming year.

Highlights of Activities in the Past Year

- The Learning Exchange is collaborating with partners in the community as well as faculty, staff, and students to strengthen **Community Service-Learning (CSL)** at UBC. CSL is the integration of students' volunteer work with their classroom learning. A total of 853 students worked in the community this year through the Learning Exchange. Forty-four percent (377) of these students integrated their participation in an ongoing CSL placement in the community or a short-term CSL project with an academic course. These students were taking courses in a variety of disciplines taught by 15 faculty members. There was a 50% increase in the number of students doing course-based CSL this year compared to last academic year.
- Almost 200 students were involved in short-term CSL projects through the **UBC-Community Learning Initiative**, a new model for course-based CSL activities in the non-profit sector made possible by a generous grant from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.
- More than 400 students helped to enhance the learning environment in 11 **Vancouver inner city schools** where they tutored individuals and small groups in academic subjects, facilitated hands-on science labs, and led sports and recreation activities.
- Almost 150 UBC students, including some from UBC Okanagan, worked alongside 600 elementary school children to complete special projects during **Reading Week**. A team of 15 students from Carleton University also participated in these projects. The projects were organized in collaboration with UBC Student Development with generous support from Business Objects.
- Twenty-two **UBC staff** led groups of students doing CSL projects in non-profit organizations and in schools. The training of these leaders was done in collaboration with Human Resources and Student Development. In addition to the staff members who acted as CSL group leaders, 44 staff took part in short-term service projects in schools.
- A strategic plan for the **UBC Okanagan Learning Exchange** is in the final stages of preparation, based on the results of an extensive consultation in the Okanagan Valley. This initiative has been made possible by a leading gift from James and Shirley-Anne Eccott. The UBC Okanagan Learning Exchange organized its first CSL project during Reading Week.
- **The Learning Exchange Storefront** continues to be a focal point for residents of the Downtown Eastside, with the number of people attending the afternoon computer drop-in increasing to an average of 39 per day.

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- **The Computer Skills Program supported by HSBC Bank Canada** continues to be highly valued. This year, 148 people took the basic and advanced computer skills workshops.
- **The ESL Conversation Program supported by HSBC Bank Canada** also continues to be very successful. The number of community members who acted as facilitators of the conversation groups increased (37 this year compared to 23 in academic year '05-'06) as did the number of immigrants who took part in the program (318 this year compared to 227 in the previous year). UBC's English Language Institute continues to provide training and support to the ESL facilitators.
- **The Monday Night Lecture Jam** was a new initiative this year that brought five faculty members from various Social Science disciplines to the storefront to talk about their areas of research interest. An average of 15 local residents attended each lecture.
- **HSBC Bank Canada** continues to provide exceptionally strong support for both the Learning Exchange storefront programs and the activities of UBC students in Vancouver schools.
- The departure of a significant number of **Learning Exchange staff** this year represented both a challenge and an opportunity. A new organizational structure has been created that will enable continued strategic growth in the future.

Highlights of Plans for the Coming Year

- We continue to work with faculty to expand the number and type of courses offering CSL options. New courses where CSL is an integral part of the course design are being supported through the UBC-Community Learning Initiative. We also support faculty to incorporate CSL projects into existing courses. The research program associated with the UBC-CLI will identify the ways in which CSL affects students, community organizations, and the university.
- We continue to strengthen the strategic focus of our partnership with the Vancouver School Board. We are developing a research program to determine the outcomes of the mentoring relationships formed between UBC students and inner city children through CSL activities.
- We are refining the staff leadership program that was piloted last year. We are partnering with Human Resources and with Student Development to offer a similar leadership development program for staff from Business Objects who will lead groups of students doing CSL projects during Reading Week.
- We are developing strategies to make stronger connections between our storefront programs and our CSL activities. For example, students in Creative Writing will offer free writing workshops through the storefront as their CSL project.
- We are developing new ways to recognize and support student leaders, e.g., by adapting the application and selection procedures for the Chapman Community Service Awards.

“Being able to apply something that we’re learning to an experience that helped someone or gives us some perspective on the community that we’re living in, the city we’re living in, or the people that live in it . . . that’s education.”---Sociology student who took part in CSL project at YWCA transition house for women and children.