

The UBC Learning Exchange celebrated the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Main Street storefront on October 14. This event, attended by many Downtown Eastside (DTES) residents, representatives from community organizations, students, and other members of the UBC community demonstrated the essence of what the Learning Exchange is about: the strengthening of civil society through the creation of learning-focused relationships between people from UBC and people from inner city neighbourhoods. The Learning Exchange was established in 1999 to fulfill commitments to community engagement made in UBC's Trek strategic plan. The recent reinvigoration of that plan, Trek 2010, is inspiring the continued growth and evolution of Learning Exchange programs and partnerships. This report briefly outlines the highlights of our progress this year. For more information, please visit our website: www.learningexchange.ubc.ca

Learning Exchange Trek Program

In 2004-2005, 800 UBC students took part in special projects or volunteered on an ongoing basis in 19 non-profit organizations and 17 schools in the Downtown Eastside and other inner city areas in Vancouver. In order to balance continued growth in the program with the quality of students' and community members' experience, growth in the program this year was limited to about 25%. The Trek Leadership Network grew to include 28 students who organized special projects in community settings and participated in weekly educational sessions designed to build their capacity to act as peer leaders. Student recognition awards made possible by the endowment established by Dr. Lloyd and Mrs. Kay Chapman were given to 17 students this year while 10 students received Chapman project awards to undertake summer projects in partnership with community organizations.

Focus on Inner City Schools

Over the past several years, the Learning Exchange has been placing increasing emphasis on involving UBC students in inner city schools because of anecdotal reports from teachers and administrators that suggest that, among other benefits, inner city children are being motivated to do better in school because of the tutoring and mentoring being done by UBC students. For example, this year, 37 student-athletes acted as reading tutors or sports coaches in the *T-Birds in Schools* initiative and 57 student-athletes, five Athletics coaches and five alumni organized field trips for 400 children

from eight schools who attended UBC varsity games and sports clinics (*I'm Going to UBC*). In addition, a partnership with the Let's Talk about Science program brought Science graduate and undergraduate students to an elementary school where they led educational sessions on topics such as water quality testing and DNA analysis. Fifty UBC staff also volunteered in Vancouver schools this year, helping with the Christmas dinner for students and their families at Grandview/ʔuuqinak' uuh school and helping with a school and community clean-up day in May at Laura Secord school.

Reading Week Community Service Projects

During spring break, over 200 UBC students took part in 14 community service projects. All but one of these projects took place in Vancouver schools. Ranging from painting a mural focused on building community and working on a quilting project on the theme of personal and social responsibility to preparing gardens for spring planting and renovating a meeting space for parents, the projects stimulated students' thinking about important social issues. This year's projects were organized by staff from the Learning Exchange and Student Development, with faculty and staff Project Leaders coming from 11 different units at UBC. Student leaders and participants came from a wide range of faculties and schools, including Arts, Science, Applied Science, Land and Food Systems, Forestry, Pharmacy, Medicine, Social Work, Human Kinetics, Nursing, Community and Regional Planning and the Sauder School of Business.

Community Service-Learning

The Learning Exchange worked with units such as Teaching and Academic Growth (TAG) and various faculties to integrate Community Service-Learning (CSL) into 13 courses this year. CSL integrates students' volunteer work with their course work through processes such as journal writing and small group dialogue. These reflective techniques encourage students to think critically about the connection between what they are studying and the real-life issues they encounter in the community. UBC is a leader in the development of this emerging pedagogy in Canada and has been active in the establishment of the new Canadian Association for Community Service-Learning (CACSL). In June, UBC co-hosted a regional conference on CSL with CACSL. This conference at Robson Square brought together 75 faculty, staff, and students from universities and colleges throughout BC, as well as representatives from a variety of community organizations.

Storefront Education Programs

The Learning Exchange storefront is a lively centre of dialogue and discovery. The computer drop-in continues to operate at capacity with an average of 35 people using the computer resources each afternoon. The drop-in is partially funded by Industry Canada. The storefront also offers access to the on-line and other resources of the UBC Library. In addition, various free educational events and programs are offered.

Computer Skills Programs

HSBC Bank Canada continues to support free computer training workshops and tutorials for DTES residents. This year, 126 people took part in the Basic and Advanced Computer Skills Programs. These four to five week programs are very popular: registration typically reaches capacity several weeks in advance.

ESL Conversation Program

This year, HSBC Bank Canada increased its support for Learning Exchange programs

and began funding an innovative ESL program that was developed by students from UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning working in collaboration with patrons of the storefront drop-in. The program trains and supports DTES residents to facilitate English conversation sessions with small groups of immigrants. In the eight-month period following the January 2005 establishment of the ongoing program, 25 local residents acted as conversation facilitators and 189 immigrants took part in conversation groups. Each group met several times each week for periods of six to eight weeks.

The Vancouver Foundation provided initial funding for the training of facilitators. Since May, UBC's English Language Institute (ELI) has been providing weekly training sessions for the facilitators. The partnership with the ELI has enabled facilitators to enhance their skills substantially thereby increasing the effectiveness of the program. This program is in high demand, especially among immigrants who want to practice their English in order to enhance their employability.

Personal Goals Planning Program

HSBC Bank Canada also supports a personal goals planning program that enables DTES residents to set and establish a plan to achieve their goals, whether these are linked to education, employment, or other life goals. In the period from January to August 2005, 36 people took part in the program.

Partnerships

The success of the Learning Exchange depends on partnerships with units at UBC as well as organizations and individuals in the community. Several donors have made significant gifts to the Learning Exchange this year. As noted earlier, HSBC increased its support for education programs. TELUS also donated \$100,000 to support UBC students' engagement in Vancouver schools.