

## Queen's in the Community Working Group DRAFT PLAN

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In all our activities—research, teaching and learning, creative activity, and service — we seek to increase the porosity of boundaries between Queen's University and the local communities that constitute Kingston. Embedding Queen's in Kingston and area communities must be an *ongoing process* of mutual benefit and commitment to the common good. It requires mutual respect, collaboration, reciprocity, sustained relationship-building, and attention to equity. To be effective, such a process requires commitment, resources, and leadership from Queen's.

*"We have an obligation intentionally to bring the scholarly and human resources of the university to bear on issues of cultural, social, and environmental sustainability as they manifest themselves locally" Patrick Deane, 2020.*

Queen's students, faculty, and staff are already engaged in numerous local, provincial, national and international activities, including research, learning, creative work and service, but for the most part, these are not integrated into the operations or mission of the University. While some Canadian universities have developed a strong track record of significant community engagement or campus-community partnerships, Queen's has maintained and fostered its aura of an "ivory tower" institution, "still too much 'owned' by the white, colonial constituency it was founded to serve" ([Patrick Deane, 2020](#)). Some members of marginalized Kingston communities perceive there is a literal gate around campus, blocking them from access to campus.

Although the Working Group understands that "community" can be understood expansively, we focussed on the Kingston "community" recognizing that there are many communities within the larger Kingston community. Speaking of Kingston *communities* reminds us that Kingston is not homogenous. Given our great privilege as a publicly funded institution, the Working Group is particularly interested in building relationships with the most marginalized in Kingston communities, to reach those who are least likely to participate in engagement activities with the University. We also recognize that Queen's faculty members and graduate students carry out community-based research in communities outside of Kingston; the Working Group supports the application of the same principles of respectful community engagement in these settings.

### Actions:

1. Begin a process of centering meaningful and respectful community engagement at the heart of Queen's activities in research, teaching and learning, artistic creation, and service. As Principal Deane has [said](#), *"In doing so, furthermore, we must exercise respect and deference to the community, positioning ourselves not as bringers of salvation, but as willing partners in pursuit of a shared goal."*
2. Develop a systematic, institutionalized process to understand the perspectives of various Kingston communities about Queen's, ensuring meaningful participation by marginalized



communities, including Indigenous, racialized, low-income, and newcomer communities, especially youth, seniors, and parents in these communities, and the community organizations that serve them. This could begin with a version of *The Conversation* that involves going out into various Kingston communities.

3. Develop an inventory of existing activities that involve campus-community engagement, assess coherence with the principles of meaningful engagement, identify gaps and improve.
4. Begin the development of a campus-wide infrastructure to support and promote community engagement in all activities at Queen's. This will need financial and human resources at the level of the University, and should have a longer term goal of establishing a well-resourced Community Engagement Office at Queen's.
5. Connect with other universities involved in the development of the Canadian Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and assess the suitability of the classification for facilitating Queen's-Kingston engagement.
6. Develop robust mechanisms for Kingston community members to influence decisions and actions at Queen's.
7. Support the development of funding (e.g., research grants, fundraising, alumni-giving) for community-campus engagement.
8. Develop professional support programs and recognition for faculty and staff who engage in meaningful and respectful community partnerships.

#### Specific initial projects:

- establish a fund that members of the Queen's community could access to facilitate community engagement (e.g., to reduce costs for use of sport facilities and room rentals; to provide start-up funds for community-based research; to develop community-driven initiatives)
- recognizing that internet and computer access is a basic human need, essential for access to the legal system, health, health care, education, employment, and more, establish a working group to develop policies to facilitate internet and computer access for those who do not have internet access at home or in a suitable private location.
- in conjunction with local community activists, relevant organizations, and the City of Kingston, consider mounting a version of a [Democracy Festival](#), to engage Kingston citizens in constructive dialogue about the collective problems we face and how to develop solutions.
- build on existing resources and programs that facilitate community engagement (e.g., art, athletics & recreation, summer camps, law clinics, health care) to deepen and broaden engagement, especially among marginalized groups.
- make Queen's campus courses (not only on-line courses) accessible to Kingston-area community members. Develop interdisciplinary courses on local issues that invites collaboration with and participation by community members.