

The Carnegie Corporation and Philanthropy in Canadian Higher Education: A Case Study on the University of Alberta's Department of Extension

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Abstract

We provide a case study of how Carnegie Foundation grants to the University of Alberta (Western Canada) during the Great Depression impacted the university's community engagement practices. Previously unutilized archival sources contribute to a historical survey of the university's Department of Extension as Carnegie philanthropy enabled the establishment of a Fine Arts Division within this department. The many benefits to the wider province, however, were laden with imperialist assumptions around race and the European "canon," and thus contributed to the concurrent development of settler institutions and erasure of Indigenous people's cultures and livelihoods. As Alberta's economy shrinks, unemployment increases, and university funding is cut, it remains unclear whether the desire for new and innovative forms of outreach and engagement seen in the Great Depression still exists today. Concluding, we ask what alternatives to philanthropy we can, as scholars, university employees, and citizens, make available.

Keywords: Carnegie Foundation, history of community engagement, Department of Extension



As Canada's postsecondary sector struggles through the pandemic, the radical moves to online learning, and diminished revenues from international students, 16 institutions are continuing to examine their community engagement activities, structures, and impacts. The University of Alberta (hereafter UAlberta) is one of those institutions that has partnered with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (hereafter CFAT), and over the past 2 years has participated in forming a community of practice of community engagement professionals and scholars in an effort to develop a Canadian version of the Carnegie Classification System for Community Engagement. Using the U.S. elective classification, one of the most successful instances of a sector-led approach to establishing quality criteria for the varied practices of higher education-community engagement, around 360 U.S. institutions have been officially designated "commu-

nity-engaged institutions" by a national review panel of expert peers. As UAlberta (the employer of the authors) and other Canadian institutions work with Carnegie on this project, it is instructive to recollect the history of Carnegie-funded philanthropy at UAlberta, as well as in Canadian postsecondary education more generally. Specifically, we seek to highlight in a case study how grants from the Carnegie Foundation in the Great Depression of the 1930s impacted what today we would call the "community engagement" practices of UAlberta, in a time of social upheaval. As the postsecondary sector in Canada today grapples with the enormous historical task of decolonizing its institutions and meeting the demands of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), we also question whether new Carnegie-inspired reforms to the practices of community engagement alone will be adequate to the task.

That UAlberta should be deeply engaged

in the sociocultural and economic development of the province, with concerted efforts to extend knowledge and learning to communities far beyond Edmonton and the needs of its on-campus learners, was taken for granted by university leaders and the Provincial Government of Alberta in the 1930s. The current pandemic provides an opportune moment for us to explore the roots of contemporary university–community engagement agendas, for both internal and external actors to the university. As Alberta’s economy shrinks, unemployment increases, and university funding is cut, it remains unclear whether there is the same desire for new and innovative forms of outreach and engagement activity as there was in the years of the Great Depression. For instance, the recent diminishment of the Faculty of Extension at UAlberta and the redistribution of its faculty members into different faculties suggests that community engagement, and the scholarship of community engagement, is not considered as core to the university’s mission as it was in the 1930s. Our examination of historical philanthropic grantmaking for outreach and engagement at the university in a time of economic depression, we believe, is useful for considering the place of community engagement within the contemporary university. Although there are no simple “lessons” to learn from the 1930s for the 2020s, we argue that without a clear demonstration of concern for local communities and their well-being, research-intensive universities such as UAlberta will continue to struggle to secure government and philanthropic support, especially in the short term, for their operations. Just as in the 1930s, innovative outreach and engagement assists the university in creating the social license for its research and teaching missions.

There are two further reasons for this analysis. The first is that the Carnegie Corporation was quite proud of how its funding in Extension was used at this institution. UAlberta’s Extension work (and particularly the Banff School of Fine Arts) was repeatedly hailed as one of the Carnegie Corporation of New York’s greatest successes in funding adult education (Brison, 2005, pp. 52–53). Carnegie funding helped increase the reach of UAlberta Extension activities across the province, and its outreach helped to endear the university to the people. The second reason is a historiographic one; a good deal has been written about UAlberta’s Department of Extension

and its various offshoots (Cormack, 1981; Fink, 1987; Johns, 1981; Reichwein & Wall, 2020; Schoeck, 2006; Walters, 2002), and Carnegie funding to UAlberta in general (discussed in Brison, 2005; Rosenfield, 2014). But no synthesis of this material exists that provides a historical survey of UAlberta’s Department of Extension in light of Carnegie grantmaking. For the first time, and with previously unutilized archival sources from the Carnegie Corporation of New York Records at the Columbia University Archives, as well as materials from UAlberta Archives, we are able to provide such a survey. In doing so we hope to advance the historical scholarship of the early outreach and engagement efforts at a Canadian university.

A clarification of terminology will assist the reader in what follows. We will use the term “Carnegie” (as in “Carnegie anticipated”; “Carnegie sought”; “Carnegie funding”) to refer to the Carnegie Corporation of New York (hereafter CCNY) as a means of avoiding repetition, or in instances where both the CCNY and CFAT had some involvement (or presumed involvement) in decision-making. Where we refer to Andrew Carnegie the person, we use his full name.

It is also important to distinguish the CCNY from the CFAT. The CFAT was an early philanthropic institution that helped organize Andrew Carnegie’s efforts in education, with much of its work being dedicated to providing pensions for university professors. The CFAT later functioned to advise the CCNY on its donations, and occasionally on funding research in education. Its role in advocacy for education would distinguish it from the CCNY’s focus on philanthropy, and the administering of funds to educational institutions. By contrast, the CCNY initially constituted an incorporation of Andrew Carnegie’s previous philanthropic interests more generally. Through this body, Andrew Carnegie’s work in libraries, church organs, and education continued, and it was not until after his death in 1919 that the organization gained a greater degree of systematicity and focus (Brison, 2005, p. 28). The CCNY was far and away the most substantial funding institution of all the Carnegie philanthropic organizations.

UAlberta’s Department of Extension and CCNY Grantmaking

UAlberta’s original extension work takes

on characteristics familiar to many of this journal's readers, such as the dissemination of western agricultural science and technologies to rural peoples in a recently settled colonial province. Extension was an early component of UAlberta, formed in 1912, only 4 years after the university's founding. Such efforts were understood by early leaders at UAlberta as making the university feel that it belonged to the community (Corbett, 1957; Cormack, 1981), and its relationship to the province as a whole, beyond its student body, was crucial to how the institution understood its role in Alberta. The importance of this function is reflected in the fact that even in the first year of UAlberta's founding, Extension lectures were already being given (Johns, 1981, p. 30). Recent historical analyses of the origins of land-grant institutions in the United States point to the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples as conditions of possibility for these institutions' extension missions (Stein, 2020). In Canada, postsecondary institutions are also wrestling with their complicity in their roles in the colonization of Indigenous peoples. For instance, the statue of Egerton Ryerson—known as an architect of the Residential Schooling system for Indigenous peoples in Canada—that stood proud at the university in Toronto bearing his name, has been pulled down, and many professors, staff, and students have demanded the institution be renamed (Beaulne-Stuebing, 2021). Yet UAlberta was sufficiently committed to the colonial extension ethos of the time that it created a unique Department of Extension for this settler-development work in the province. As will be noted below, although Carnegie's philanthropy was silent on Indigenous peoples in the Province of Alberta, its grantmaking was instrumental in the wider colonization project of the university and the province.

Judith Sealander (1997) has suggested that "if the Carnegie Corporation practiced cultural imperialism, most of the colonials practiced passive rebellion" (p. 20). Certainly, in Alberta, not all rebellion could be described as wholly passive; Andrew Carnegie was not without his detractors in the province, nor were the charitable institutions that bore his name. A blistering 1910 article in the *Edmonton Capital*, presumably written by editor William Macadams, stated the following:

Carnegie with his steel trust entrenched behind a tariff wall, rob-

bing a nation by legal process, and his slaughter, as at Homestead, of workmen who feel that they are inadequately recompensed for their toil, does more to create the conditions which make for war than all his millions could offset by the establishment of a bureau for the promotion of peace. (Macadams, 1910)

Earlier, an *Edmonton Bulletin* article titled "The Price of Blood" (1901) had the following to say about Andrew Carnegie's philanthropic efforts: "Philanthropy which is only possible as a result of grinding tyranny and the extortions of monopoly is not philanthropy, it is conscience money or it is hush money" (p. 3). People clearly saw a contradiction between Andrew Carnegie's efforts at promoting peace and engaging in philanthropy, while also treating the workers that generated his fortune in an unfair, and at times ruthless, fashion (for other examples of Albertan resistance to Carnegie funding, see Gourlay, 2019).

Such critiques, however, do not reflect any general unwillingness within Alberta to accept Carnegie funds. In fact, as early as the 1900s libraries in the province sought Carnegie philanthropy, and the first time UAlberta received a Carnegie grant was 1923. The two grants awarded to the university that year were for insulin research and for the construction of the St. Joseph's Catholic College building (see Munro, 2015, pp. 16–20). Overall, Carnegie largesse was welcome in the young province, which was seeking to build its settler institutions, even if there were some hesitations about Andrew Carnegie's business practices.

Although UAlberta would not receive another Carnegie grant for some time, CCNY's funding would prove enormously consequential during the Great Depression, especially in its effects on the Department of Extension. Early on, the university had made great lengths in reaching rural Alberta, particularly through its public lectures, its magic lantern shows, and its traveling and open libraries. These early successes would be severely tried, however, by the onset of the Great Depression. The Depression devastated the agriculturally dependent Canadian Prairies and caused years of considerable financial strain to the university. Despite an overall cut to the Extension Department's budget, its activities continued to grow and

expand (Johns, 1981, pp. 122–123), which illustrates the importance of Extension’s role in how UAlberta connected with the province. In addition to its existing resources, the department filled an important niche in Albertan life—as then–assistant to the director E. A. Corbett (1957) recollected,

the depression had closed most of the small-town moving picture houses, and the people outside the larger cities had been more and more thrown back on their own resources for entertainment. The result was the growth of hundreds of small dramatic or little theatre groups. (pp. 89–92)

Thus, from the department’s perspective, adjudication and assistance from the university could elevate these groups and expand the network of the arts in Alberta.

Though the university had no resources to support such a venture in Extension work, other philanthropic resources became available. Dr. W. S. Learned, of the CFAT, visited universities across Western Canada in 1931 to assess their viability for Carnegie funds, given the desperate conditions of the Depression. Before even arriving in Alberta, Learned had heard reports in Manitoba and Saskatchewan about UAlberta’s excellent reputation in Extension work. Upon a personal inspection, Learned wrote that he “found the work admirably organized and directed,” and that an unusually strong bond had been created between the province and the university (Learned, 1932). An application process was undertaken by UAlberta, suggesting the creation of a Fine Arts Division within the Extension Department. As UAlberta President Robert C. Wallace (1931) wrote to CCNY in 1931,

It is, I think, generally admitted that in the scientific emphasis of our present day education there is need of the note [*sic*] of appreciation of the beautiful . . . we desire at the present time to stimulate an appreciation of the fine arts—music, drama and painting—in Alberta. It is not possible to consider under present conditions the establishing of any new department in the University. It would, however, be possible, through the Extension Department, to cultivate a wider participation in music and drama,

and a more intelligent understanding of art, throughout our rural communities, if some assistance could be obtained for the work.

Upon Learned’s recommendation and the CCNY’s own evaluation, a 3-year grant of \$10,000 per year was made for the creation of a Fine Arts Division within the Extension Department. As will be further discussed, a further 2 years of funding would be granted in 1936, also for \$10,000 per year. The Carnegie annual donation over 3 years at the beginning of the 1930s for the development of the new division was \$10,000, approximately one third of the entire Extension budget before the gift (most of which we assume was directed to salaries).

The earlier groundwork in establishing a connection with the rural population no doubt facilitated the success of Extension’s CCNY-funded Fine Arts Division. Although the effectiveness and competence of UAlberta’s Department of Extension was remarked upon by all who were aware of its activities, there is more to the decision to make this fairly substantial grant. During the years of the most substantial grant-giving to UAlberta, Frederick P. Keppel was president of CCNY. Keppel’s leadership inaugurated a greater focus on “cultural” projects (such as work with museums) directed toward the arts, a trend that Brison (2005) described as seeking “to introduce the tastes, standards, and values of traditional ‘high culture’ to a wider segment of the population” (p. 77). The purpose of the Fine Arts Division was consistently described in similar terms to Wallace’s original proposal cited above: to *create an appreciation* of drama, music, and fine art among the people of Alberta. UAlberta’s Department of Extension participated in this movement toward bringing “high culture” to the masses, and through Carnegie philanthropy facilitated CCNY’s cultural aims. This endeavor was seen as particularly important for the province’s rural population, as evident even in Wallace’s (1931) initial proposal to Carnegie.

Another justification for awarding this grant was the demographics of Alberta, which Learned saw as particularly desirable from CCNY’s perspective. Learned wrote in his initial memorandum on Extension activities at UAlberta that “[t]he situation in Alberta appears to be peculiarly favorable for university extension activities. An unusually

large proportion of the leaders in the population throughout the Province have come from the old country and have brought with them their inherited tastes for music, art, and drama” (Learned, 1932). In a roughly contemporaneous document that may have also been written by Learned, the standards in fine arts being set by the Department of Extension were praised in the following terms:

There seems to be a carefully developed plan [at UAlberta] which recognises “standards” so very dear to the heart of all Britishers. . . . The person interested in adult education out there must find himself in a situation approaching Utopia. An isolated people of good stock, interested in making for themselves a better life, with a fair share of leisure and few distractions of the modern world—what more could one ask? (*Report on University of Alberta’s Department of Extension*], n.d.)

There was thus a demographic, and, indeed, a racial expectation that efforts in arts and culture would experience success within Alberta’s population, and thus, that Carnegie funding would be well-placed.

Questions of race are indispensable to understanding Albertan history during this period, and indeed, discussion between Carnegie funding organizations and UAlberta regularly addressed racial matters; W. S. Learned (1933) referred a Museum of Natural History research project to the CCNY on the “racial origins” of Canadian Indigenous peoples. A curator (who Learned does not name)

had convincing assurances from well-informed observers, that there is a striking similarity between parts of [music of Indians in northern and northwestern Canada] and Buddhistic ritual music to be heard in certain parts of China. This fact, if it is one, raises suggestive queries as to the racial origins involved and throws some light on the former home of these Indian tribes that have apparently appeared in Canada in recent times.

This is one of the few mentions of Canadian Indigenous people in the correspondence

between UAlberta and Carnegie. This project was of interest to UAlberta President Robert C. Wallace, whose own support of eugenics illustrates his thinking on race as a factor in Canadian society. As recent scholarship has emphasized (Kaler, 2017; Kaye, 2003; Vernon, 2020), the Canadian Prairies during the settlement period and early 20th century were far from the “leveled” social space sometimes implied in popular perceptions of the Prairie West: Racism and racial hierarchies were persistent and pernicious elements of how the region was conceptualized in this period and beyond.

The Fine Arts Division and UAlberta Extension Work During the 1930s

From the initial grant to the department onward, Extension work in Alberta increased tremendously. An important leader in the Department of Extension’s activities was Elizabeth Haynes (Haynes, 1933). Haynes was hired as an instructor in the department following the Carnegie grant, and undoubtedly, the understanding was that a great deal of work and travel would be required in the role. Haynes’s efforts led to the expansion of dramatics education and activity throughout the Province of Alberta. In her first year as instructor in drama in the department, she visited (from one to four times) 21 different rural communities, in addition to various places throughout Edmonton. Haynes’s travels to rural communities across the province elicited an overwhelming response. Extension’s annual report from the first year of the grant stated that

it is very evident that there was a real need for this work. The response has been amazingly wholehearted in all parts of the country districts. The most fundamental work has been done in the field of drama, where [Haynes] has been taxed almost beyond her strength by the calls that have come to advise and assist in dramatic productions. (Board of Governors, 1933)

The circulation of plays via Extension’s library services is one quantitative indicator of the increasing interest in drama that the Fine Arts Division was encouraging (Fine Arts Division, 1935). In the first year after the Carnegie grant, 1933, 419 communities were being sent plays for amateur productions. The following year, the number of

communities had increased to 483, with 4,285 plays being circulated. By 1935, these numbers had increased to 597 communities and a total of 5,575 plays circulated (Board of Governors, 1933–1935). The University's student paper, *The Gateway* (Pharis, 1936), reported in 1936 that "during the winter the Extension Library sends out plays to about 6000 people each year and could send out more if copies of plays were available. There has been a steady increase in the play-reading public of Alberta" (p. 3). The increased availability of services related to drama was extraordinarily effective.

In tacit agreement with CCNY's interest in introducing "standards" for artistic appreciation, the Department of Extension was active in adjudication of theater in the province. In the last year of Carnegie funding to the Department of Extension, 1936–1937, it was noted that the department provided adjudication "at 18 local dramatic festivals. This service for adjudication of oral reading and dramatics has been very much appreciated" (Cameron, 1937). Advice by mail on dramatics was a major feature of Extension activity. From 1932 to 1935, roughly 5,000 letters of advice on drama were sent across Western Canada (Corbett, 1935, p. 31). In the year 1936–1937 alone, it was reported that 1,900 letters were written to people inquiring about issues related to dramatics (Cameron, 1937). The performance and writing of Canadian plays were also encouraged—starting in 1932 and proceeding annually, a prize was awarded by the Department of Extension for the best Albertan plays in an open competition.

Community Outreach Through Radio and the Banff School of Fine Arts

The CCNY also made a similarly influential donation to one of UAlberta's most treasured institutions: the radio station CKUA. In 1934, CCNY donated music study materials that included over 800 records (Keppel, 1934). (The University of Saskatchewan, Acadia University, and Mount Allison University received similar "Music Study Materials"; Tippett, 1990, p. 145.) Carnegie funding had notable effects on CKUA, from its material facilities to the amount of programming it provided. Aside from the Carnegie music set, this funding enabled the establishment of a Sunday afternoon series headed by locally acclaimed musician Vernon Barford, which was greatly appreciated by the radio audience (Corbett, 1934;

Walters, 2002, pp. 33–34). In the first year of the Carnegie grant, Elizabeth Haynes gave lectures on the history of theater over CKUA, and dramatic performances were hosted on the air. In the 1930s, a Sunday evening music hour also became a regular event that used the Carnegie collection of records. By 1939, the university's leaders had come to see the station as "one of the characteristic features of the Department of Extension, indeed of the Canadian radio world and [it] must continue to develop and expand" (Board of Governors, 1939, p. 13).

The culminating achievement of this work in fine arts extension was, from the perspective of both CCNY and UAlberta, the Banff School of Fine Arts. It was consistently flaunted in UAlberta correspondence to Carnegie; it was a major feature of UAlberta's annual reports; the CCNY itself consistently cited it as among its greatest successes in the funding of Canadian adult education. The school, currently known as the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, continues to support the arts in Alberta to this day.

In 1936, Carnegie was convinced to renew its \$10,000-a-year grant for 2 more years, 1936 to 1937, thereby enabling fine arts extension work to continue. However, the CCNY did not renew the grant to the Extension Department after 1937. Alberta was still in the midst of the Depression, and the university could not continue many of its Fine Arts Division activities without these funds—even during the time between the expiry of the 3-year 1932 grant and the beginning of the 1936–37 grant, fine arts extension work largely shut down from August 31, 1935, to January 1, 1936. UAlberta's president attempted to restore the much-needed funding, and even then-premier of Alberta William Aberhart sent the CCNY a letter supporting the continuation of the grant (Aberhart, 1937; Keppel, 1937; Kerr, 1937). This continuation, however, did not occur. Although Carnegie funding on UAlberta extension work had a demonstrable impact, and the CCNY saw this work as a success story, the corporation maintained its firm stance on avoiding continuing grants.

Clearly the Carnegie funding of UAlberta's Extension Department affected its capacity. To expand its activities during the devastation of the Great Depression was no small achievement, and the intense labor of Extension's staff is testimony to the belief

in the department's mission. Although Extension activity, given its demand in the province, would likely have continued through the Depression without the Carnegie grant, the creation of a Fine Arts Division would have been unlikely, if not impossible, without these external funds. Extension activity was a fundamental part of how UAlberta understood itself and its function within the province. Perhaps no better summation of that sentiment can be found than in how Donald Cameron concluded the 1940–1941 *Annual Report on Extension*:

To anyone who takes the time to examine the manifold activities of the Department, it must be apparent that through its Department of Extension UAlberta is making a valuable contribution to the life of this Province. There is no corner of the Province too remote and no group of people too small to be reached in one way or another by the University, thus it becomes in a very real sense a University of the people, serving them, guiding them, and establishing that community of interests and sympathy which must exist between an institution of higher learning and its constituency if the greatest values of democratic life are to be preserved. (Board of Governors, 1941, p. 33)

The Indigenous people's silencing and erasure through these comments must again be noted; the treaty making processes between the Canadian Crown and Indigenous peoples occurring over 1871–1921 resulted in the dispossession of people from their lands and their forced removal to reserves without traditional food supplies. There is no indication in the historical records that either the Department of Extension or Carnegie, during the years of our survey, had any programs or concerns for these acts of colonial power.

Discussion—Community Engagement Past and Present

Carnegie funds built upon and supported existing ingenuity and created the conditions for larger impacts. Ultimately, it was the labor of people in Alberta that brought the university to various parts of the province (though not all parts). Following the

limitations of the Carnegie grant's discontinuation, in the record year of 1941–1942, the Department of Extension is reported to have reached over a million people through its various activities (Board of Governors, 1942). The legacy of Carnegie funding is no doubt part of what made such a remarkable scope of activity possible. As we have sought to foreground, in the process Carnegie also became an active agent in cultural education of Prairie people, an education that bore the imperialist and racist assumptions of the liberal, "reforming" White settler-colonizers of the time.

It must be said that, as the UAlberta case study demonstrates, Carnegie funding could be remarkably free of explicit caveats. Aside from the annual reports on how the money was being used, and more informal regular meetings with CCNY executives, there was little in the way of requirements by CCNY once a grant was made. Report writing back to Carnegie accounting for the grants, however, gives some indication as to what the university *thought* Carnegie might want to hear. One example of this is the matter of centralization. E. A. Corbett (1936), in his annual report to the Carnegie Corporation, wrote that "with the renewal of the Carnegie Grant for 1936, it was felt that the time had come to introduce a greater centralization in the dramatic instruction afforded through this Department." Centralization, insofar as it was seen to produce efficiency, was a consistent preoccupation of CCNY efforts in Canadian higher education; the most substantial example of this impulse was in the CCNY's efforts to facilitate the creation of University of the Maritime Provinces, centered on Dalhousie University, with other maritime institutions as satellites. This proposal aroused some support, but an equal amount of discord, in the provinces, with the University of King's College and Mount Allison University being the only institutions to pursue a federated arrangement (Brison, 2005, pp. 46–51; Rosenfield, 2014, pp. 84–105).

We want to be clear that our argument in this article is far from a paean to some "better" way of handling Extension work in Alberta's past. However, by looking to the past, we seek to highlight some of the ways community engagement could be conceived of at present, and how it remains to be reimagined into the future. Communities within Alberta and beyond need university knowledge and support as much now as

ever, but they also need to see themselves—and their knowledges—represented in research, teaching, and service agendas. This need is most acute for Indigenous peoples, whose work both inside and outside the academy to decolonize imperial forms of knowledge production and cultural expression continues to challenge unidirectional engagement strategies from the university. Although Carnegie philanthropy in Western Canada can be fairly critiqued as yet another site of settler colonialism and racist erasure of Indigenous cultures and knowledges, the question remains: How does UAlberta today serve its host communities and province in a time of crisis? Does it collectively have the will to support Indigenous communities, and marginalized peoples, as they create greater sociocultural and economic opportunities for their communities into the future? Can they rely on the university to be a place where their aspirations are supported, their cultures recognized, and their dreams for their future nourished?

Philanthropy and Community Engagement

No contemporary American source of philanthropy is as concerned with Canadian higher education and the plight of the people of the Prairies as the Carnegie Foundation was in former times. This present absence might come as a relief to some, as philanthropy itself has come under increasing criticism from within and outside the academy, especially following the 2008 financial crisis and rising global wealth inequality (among many examples, Eikenberry & Mirabella, 2018; Giridharadas, 2018; Thelin & Trollinger, 2014; Tompkins-Stange, 2016; on wealth inequality more specifically, see Bjørnholt & McKay, 2014; Piketty, 2013/2014). The extraordinary accumulation of wealth by Amazon's Jeff Bezos and other American billionaires during the pandemic (Stebbins & Suneson, 2020) has only raised the ire of these critics even further. The environment of today's corporate philanthropy has important parallels to that of a century ago (a parallel to Andrew Carnegie's "Gospel of Wealth" might be Bill Gates and Warren Buffett's "Giving Pledge," for example), despite tremendous differences (not least in the political climate). Just as today the Canadian institutions working with the representatives of the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement pay for the peer review of their institutional engagement activities, rather than receive

money from the CFAT for those activities as they did in the 1930s, so too does UAlberta pay money to Google for use of its educational platforms without any philanthropic return. Our case study of Carnegie largesse has demonstrated that philanthropy does not have to involve the recipient in compromising accommodations to benefactor whims. Nonetheless, it also suggests that current philanthropy is also likely to carry cultural and epistemological assumptions that are not always in the best interests of local peoples, particularly Indigenous peoples. After all, the land on which UAlberta stands was bought as a River Lot (River Lot 5, one of the 44 large lots that once spanned the North Saskatchewan River). The larger historical process in which the university was created was one of colonization and massive settlement, with the river lots—overwhelmingly owned by Métis peoples, as well as other Indigenous peoples—gradually being transformed into urban space. Community engagement is never a neutral activity, and today needs to be anchored in the knowledges, cultures, and aspirations of those engaged.

Community Engagement Reimagined for the Postcolonial Era

This historical case study of the Department of Extension activities in the era of the Great Depression demonstrates how philanthropy can provide the necessary resources to innovate the community engagement function of the institution—that rickety third leg of postsecondary education, alongside research and teaching, which remains so vital in securing ongoing public support for those research and teaching efforts. Community engagement in fact, in its many guises, has always been funded at UAlberta via a combination of philanthropic funds and government funds, and often in mutually supporting ways. The Community Service-Learning program, of which the first author is the current director, has benefited greatly from more local sources of philanthropy to sustain its programming expenses beyond salaries. These gifts have, in turn, created the conditions for an expansion of staff and university resources into the program over its 16-year history. Our community engagement and outreach during the pandemic, ironically enough, turned once more to local university radio, just as the Department of Extension did in the 1930s, as a mechanism to reach marginalized learners (e.g., the incarcerated) in their time of isolation and

exclusion from contemporary technologies owned by some of the wealthiest companies on the planet.

Community engagement activities and scholarship, and the visible concern for people beyond a community of scholars attached to the institution, are almost always well regarded by the wider citizenry and governments, and create the community goodwill to enable the institution to pursue in freedom its equally important curiosity-based research and teaching. This is particularly the case as universities and colleges internationalize their internal communities. Provincial taxpayers appreciate an open university serving their children's and their own ongoing adult educational needs in rapidly changing economies.

Of course, the postsecondary field of 2020 in Alberta is a lot more complex than it was in the 1930s, and many urban and rural universities and colleges beyond UAlberta are engaged in research, teaching, and service for their host communities. Contemporary digital technologies, shifting economies, and broader urbanization patterns have changed the traditional outreach and extension function so that what had been linear spatial advancements into hitherto "unserved" communities are now more complex, mutually beneficial engagements. Communities themselves are increasingly diverse in their expectations and aspirations, and the community engagement function necessarily is tailored to specific Indigenous, Francophone, and newcomer populations, among others. It is significant on this point that in the recent academic restructuring of UAlberta's faculties, Native Studies and Campus St. Jean are to "remain stand-alone faculties to preserve and enhance their connections to key communities and partners" (Chisholm, 2020, Motion 2, para. 2).

Yet for the Canadian provinces and their oldest universities and colleges, the decolonization agenda is proving more complex and painful than many settlers might have imagined or would have wished. The scale of the cultural genocide through the Residential School system (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) has become apparent once again this past summer, with what feels like a new intensity. The long-known yet deeply hidden history of buried children at these school sites has been revealed anew to the Canadian settler population and they,

perhaps more acutely than ever before, are feeling the moral imperative for renewed and more just relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Such truth telling and bearing remains the greatest challenge for all institutions in Canada, and the higher education-community engagement agenda must squarely confront this reality within the postsecondary sectors of the provinces. Initial indications from the community engagement scholars and professionals engaged in adopting and adapting the Carnegie Classification System for Community Engagement for Canadian use are that the institutional questionnaire is too generic to capture the progress of institutions in the radical task of decolonizing community engagement and postsecondary education more generally. For the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification to speak meaningfully to the Canadian postsecondary field, it will need to be reoriented to concerns for decolonizing institutions, in addition to speaking intelligibly to French Canada. Absent these culturally specific reformulations of the purposes and processes of community engagement, the Carnegie Classification risks becoming another mechanism for the ongoing suppression of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, and a barrier to reconciliation efforts.

Nonetheless, this reimagined community engagement function requires new models of financial sustainability in order to build a renewed social contract for the university in a postpandemic era. Sophisticated outreach and engagement functions across research, teaching, and service, acting in mutually beneficial ways, as per the contemporary Carnegie Classification definition of community engagement (Simon Fraser University, 2020; see also Saltmarsh & Johnson, 2020), will need ongoing support from both governments and philanthropists. The postsecondary institutions themselves also need to renew their commitments, pressing forward in new acts of justice and reparations for their historical leaders' roles in Indigenous colonization and cultural genocide.

Conclusion

Our case study has suggested that, where public funding was impossible to access, private philanthropy facilitated community engagement activity that had long-term impacts many Albertans see as positive. However, the erasure of Indigenous peoples

and their aspirations were accomplished simultaneously, if not directly by the UAlberta and postsecondary institutions (although this point is debatable), then indirectly but efficiently through a wider colonization process in which UAlberta was an active participant. Carnegie funding thus was not entirely free of discursive, epistemological power and obligations in terms of directing the activities of UAlberta. Yet this case study suggests the funding was remarkably free of caveats that would constrain the university's ability to pursue its ends as it saw fit. This observation is not to uncritically endorse philanthropic funding, especially if it would straitjacket our ability to meet our obligations to the process of reconciliation, to social justice, and to our environmental responsibilities, or absolve government of ultimate responsibility for the financial well-being of a public institution. But we ask: Given the historical reliance of Canadian higher education on philanthropy to fulfill its community engagement functions, what alternatives are available? What alternatives can we, as scholars, university employees, and citizens, *make* available?



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