

Vancouver Island University 3 Year Research Development Plan: Creating Capacity 2002-2005

Background

Vancouver Island University is a young institution that has recently evolved from a community college to a University. VIU is known for its strong links to the mid-Vancouver Island region, for first class undergraduate instruction, and some unique programs specific to the Pacific Northwest coastal communities. Our development as a research institution is fairly new and has been spent in putting in place the necessary support infrastructure. In the 18 months since Vancouver Island University became a member of AUCC, the institution has worked towards establishing a research support infrastructure, and has accomplished the following:

- The establishment of a Research Office,
- Research ethics committees, policies and procedures are now in place,
- An Institutional Research Plan has been developed,
- A strategic planning process is in place to determine outcomes, measurements and methods for our institutional research plan,
- A research institute and centre support framework is being developed,
- CFI infrastructure grants to support the institute and centres have been submitted

Vancouver Island University is now looking to put in place research agendas and activities, which will assist our Institute and research Centres in achieving their goals and objectives. The SSHRC Assistance to Small Universities will help us towards that end.

The SSHRC Institutional Grant will be used as seed funding for faculty developing grants at the national level, for strengthening their research programs, and for dissemination of results.

General Research Goals for the Next Three Years

Vancouver Island University is developing a research approach that is applied, interdisciplinary, extends our existing strengths, and builds on our connections with local regions, communities and industry. As a small institution with limited resources, the need to strategize on where and how we use those resources is important. Towards that end, Vancouver Island University has targeted resources to develop research over the next three years. VIU faces a unique opportunity to develop a research

strategy from the start that reflects the University's diversity in offerings, our commitment to quality instruction, and our focus on learning-centred activities. Within the next year, VIU will develop a research strategy, mandate and mission that will formalize and guide our research activities.

Our plan for the next three years is to: create research agendas; build research capacity in areas of our strengths; establish collaborative research partners and build research support structure that encourages and enables interdisciplinary research activities. To achieve this, Vancouver Island University is establishing two new research organizations. The key research organization will be the VIU Institute for Coastal Research. This institute will provide the necessary support structure and coordination for interdisciplinary research and for coordinating and integrating our existing research centres. The second area we plan to establish is the Centre for Humanities Computing, which aims to provide interdisciplinary research for the humanities. Vancouver Island University has submitted CFI applications for these two interdisciplinary research support infrastructures. While the research centres focus on disciplinary research, the Institute will work towards creating collaborative interdisciplinary research agendas. Research centres include The Centre for Humanities Computing, The Centre for Tourism Studies, The Rural Communities Research and Development Centre, and The Alexandro Malaspina Research Centre.

The approach Vancouver Island University has taken is to view the VIU Institute of Coastal Research as the hub to which different research centre spokes are attached (e.g. the Centre for Shellfish Research and the Applied Environmental Research Lab, in the sciences and The Centre for Humanities Computing, the Rural Communities Research and Development Centre in the Social Sciences and Humanities). As each spoke is developed, resources are sought to expand and strengthen the capabilities of both the research centre and the Institute. The Institute will also help assist the centre in developing interdisciplinary research with the other centres.

Within the coming year the VIU Institute for Coastal Research will be established, along with research themes and a research agenda. Collaborative partnerships will be developed and faculty researchers will begin the process of investigating trends in interdisciplinary studies and applications to coastal communities.

The second year aim will be to expand our interdisciplinary connections through a symposium, visiting scholars, building internal capacity for research, and the seed funding of collaborative research projects.

The third year will focus on supporting collaborative research projects and the dissemination of research activities.

We anticipate that it will take three years to set up the needed infrastructure, both internal research capacity and facilities (a CFI infrastructure grant for the Institute for Coastal Research has been submitted). The following three years will be devoted to supporting major collaborative research projects and refining our research themes. Our long-term goal is to develop a research chair for the Institute.

Research Concentrations

VIU Institute for Coastal Studies

Building on our strengths as a regional university, our coastal geography and our history of applied research, Vancouver Island University is developing a major new strategic initiative in the establishment of the VIU Institute for Coastal Research. This Institute will have an interdisciplinary research mandate focusing on coastal communities of the British Columbia and the Pacific North West. The VIU Institute for Coastal Research seeks to conduct internationally respected, interdisciplinary research involving the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. The focus is on understanding and promoting the resilience of "communities on the edge".

Current research themes within the Institute are the social, economic & cultural impacts of the new economy on coastal communities. Our Centres are studying historical approaches to community transitions and looking at new approaches. As new economies develop and impact on our communities, complex issues arise that require an interdisciplinary approach. Our coastal community is looking at new uses of our resources and creating new industries. This provides an ideal opportunity to research these developing industries and provide input into governance issues, policy and networking, community decision-making, socio-technical processes, lifelong learning, and best practices from a global perspective.

Research themes that look promising and ones that we will be moving forward on, include:

- Investigating environmental interactions, oceanography and knowledge necessary for environmental stewardship and sustainability of our coastal resources,
- Multidisciplinary studies to look at problems faced by common-pool resource industries and coastal communities such as governance, economic benefit, political structures, social values and others.
- The rural community, with a focus on the rural child and issues from education, health and human services,
- Coastal community resilience through lifelong learning, social learning, and learning communities.

The Centre for Humanities Computing

A dynamic Arts and Humanities collegiate, eager to demonstrate the applicability of the arts to pragmatic societal needs, is engaged actively at Vancouver Island University in the exploration of ways in which new technologies enhance and impact not only the research and research-training carried out at VIU but, also, the utility of that work for the community that VIU serves. The Faculty - already home to a number of innovative projects, among them the HSSFC-commissioned Credibility of Electronic Publication study and the much-noted Canadian Letters and Images Project -- carries out such work

chiefly in two major areas: [1] computer-enhanced and electronically-based archiving, representation, and, dissemination and publication; and [2] the pedagogy of computer-assisted learning, creation, & performance environments.

The Centre for Humanities Computing seeks to serve and support research carried out in the faculty of Arts and First Nations at Vancouver Island University into the application of the computer to humanities research and pedagogy -- an area described by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) as humanities "mind technologies" and identified by SSHRC as an essential current focus for research by humanists.

The many ongoing research programs that involve the use of the computer, groundwork laid by the field-serving surveys already carried out by VIU Faculty, the exploration and introduction of a humanities computing curriculum, and others factors are indicative of the longstanding commitment that VIU faculty have to work in this area. The very strong movement, internationally and nationally, towards an increased emphasis on the incorporation of humanities computing techniques into pedagogy and into research practices accords well with this local strength -- and, especially so, with the manifestation of this strength in the Centre for Humanities Computing.

Development Plan Budget Details

Objectives for the Institute for Coastal Studies Over the Next Three Years

1. Establish the VIU Institute for Coastal Research. The long-term goal is to create a self-supporting research institute, along with a Canada Research Chair. We are developing a six-year plan to achieve this goal.
 - a. Create an administrative structure based on best practices, write up terms of reference, and advisory committee for the Institute. (Year 1, \$1,500)
 - b. Facilitate the creation of specific research themes and a research agenda for the institute. (Year 1, \$2,000)
 - c. Development of a specialized library collection focused on interdisciplinary research and coastal communities. (Year 1, \$1,000; 2, 3, \$500/yr.)
2. Establish a yearly symposium that looks at interdisciplinary research related to socio/economic and cultural issues related to Coastal Communities. This will provide the Institute of Coastal Research with an annual goal to disseminate findings and share research ideas.
 - a. Host a visiting scholar for Coastal Research who could advise on current issues and research needs. (Year 2, 3, \$2,000/yr.)
 - b. Travel funds to host a keynote speaker to the symposium. (Year 2, 3, \$2,000/yr.)
 - c. Create a research dissemination plan to include newsletters, websites and annual Institute Research Report. We need to approach our dissemination plan as a

coordinated strategy, developing templates, designs and processes. Fund the design of templates, and models for print and online dissemination methods. Produce a report on the first annual VIU Institute for Coastal Research symposium. (Year 1, \$250; 2, 3, \$1,000/yr.)

3. Create a network of partnerships and research projects in the Institute for Coastal Research. The aim is to create research networks outside of our institution to help develop our research skills, knowledge and capacity.
 - a. Establish a seed fund to support researchers in developing collaborative research projects and partnerships. (Year 1, 2, 3, \$8,000/yr.)
 - b. Establish SSHRC SIG research grant to fund research projects. (Year 1, 2, 3, \$5,000/yr.)
 - c. Create an interdisciplinary team to help identify and guide research projects. (Year 1)
 - d. Develop a database of researchers and research expertise internally and with our collaborative partners. (Year 1, \$750)
 - e. Provide travel seed funds to establish partnerships in one or two targeted research areas defined in the Institutes research agenda. (Year 1 & 2 \$2,000/yr.)
4. Hold a series of workshops for researchers looking at current trends in interdisciplinary research and methodologies. Vancouver Island University needs to develop capacity in research by investing in our researchers. As we evolve from a teaching-only institution, we need to become aware of current trends and thinking in research methodologies.
 - a. Hire a student to research current issues and do a literature review in interdisciplinary approaches to research. (Year 1, 2, 3, \$1,500/yr.)
 - b. Hold 6 workshops per year on current trends and thinking in interdisciplinary research studies. (Year 1, 2, 3 \$6,000/yr.)

Objectives for the Centre for Humanities Computing Over the Next Three Years

1. Establish, through the Centre for Humanities Computing, a collaborative research agenda with Humanities Computing researchers locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, both within the academic sector and the business/industry sector.
 - a. Partial sponsorship of humanities computing symposium. (Year 2, \$3,000)
 - b. Create and host a virtual network for researchers. (Year 1, 2 & 3 \$1,000/ yr.; listserv and newsletter, for COCH/COSH)
 - c. Fund for invited speakers. (Year 2 \$2,000)
 - d. Host two visiting scholars. (Year 2 & 3, \$2,000/yr.)
2. Establish humanities computing expertise infrastructure to support the researchers.
 - a. Funding for several undergraduate research assistants who, after completing some basic computer training, work with the folks at the centre, and other faculty, providing assistance on humanities research projects that require computing expertise. (Year 1, 2 & 3, \$1,000/yr.)

- b. Proposal development plan to establish a humanities computing teaching and research computer support position. (Year 1, \$ 2,000)
3. Establish initial research projects.
 - a. Provide seed funding for research projects. (Year 2 & 3, \$4,500/yr.

Funds Requested

Student Salaries. We plan on hiring two undergraduate students to assist researchers with identifying current trends in interdisciplinary research as background material for setting the workshop agendas for each year. In addition, undergraduates will develop and maintain the virtual networking systems for connecting the researchers (listserves, websites). Masters-level students will work with researchers to help develop computer requirements for the Centre for Humanities Computing development plan for the next three years. One Masters student will provide computing assistance to researchers for the Centre.

Non-student Salaries. During year two and three, we would like to bring in postdoctoral students as visiting scholars to provide lectures and generate discussions for the interdisciplinary symposium.

Travel and subsistence. We would like to cover some travel expenses for our researchers to develop collaborators and networks. In addition, we would like to cover some travel expenses for invited speakers.

Other expenses.

Professional/Technical. We would like to bring in a facilitator to work with our researchers to develop an administrative infrastructure for the institute and help define the research agenda for the next three years. This will help guide where we plan to put our resources to support research. We require some technical services to create a database of research expertise that we can then maintain, and someone to design a web and print templates for dissemination of materials.

Infrastructure. In year two and three we estimate some expenses to help cover the costs of visiting scholars. Library resources will provide journals and books that will help researchers in interdisciplinary studies. The critical need is for seed funding for faculty to help them develop collaborative research projects. And finally, there is a need to provide workshops on interdisciplinary methodology and trends.