

Vancouver Island University 3 Year Research Development Plan: Creating Capacity 2005-2008

Background

Vancouver Island University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning. Our academic culture is grounded in these values, and our key research themes derive their importance from them. VIU's research mission is to engage faculty and students in inquiry, enhance teaching and learning, advance disciplinary knowledge, and encourage interdisciplinary interaction among faculty and students. Early involvement in research helps students cope with complexity in a challenging world. We thus regard research as a foundation of undergraduate education and we are dedicated to helping our students contribute to national continuity in research training for the decades to come. With this philosophical foundation, taken from our Strategic Research Plan, we have crafted a strategy based on research centres and institutes to help build our research capacity in the social sciences and humanities.

Vancouver Island University is a young institution that has recently evolved from a community college to a University and is on its way to being legislated as a full university. With this background, we have had to build a culture of research and create the foundation necessary to support research. In the past decade, VIU has made significant strides in its academic and research stature. The institution has achieved undergraduate, degree-granting authority (and in the past year, graduates degree authority), become a member of AUCC, created new academic programs, and increased the size of its student body. A research support infrastructure has been established, research policies and procedures have been put in place, and the Mission Statement and Institutional Plan now include research as a core activity in the institution. A strategic research plan has been formulated with widespread institutional and faculty support. In addition, we were successful in having a CFI Innovations infrastructure application approved. This grant enabled us to construct an interdisciplinary research centre - The Institute for Coastal Research and a research support area for faculty. This facility is being housed in our newly renovated library and is due to open in the spring of 2005.

The Strategy

As a small, and still evolving institution, we are aware of the need to create a strategy that makes the most use of our limited resources and build on our strengths. Our first ASU grant was intended to build our capacity by building a research culture, encouraging networking and interdisciplinary research. We focused on starting up two interdisciplinary research centres: The Institute for Coastal Research which focuses on the social, economic & cultural impacts of the new economy on coastal communities of

British Columbia and the Pacific North West, and the Centre for Humanities Computing, which is an interdisciplinary centre that explores new ways that technology impacts our society. Our strategy is to further develop and solidify these research centres and to encourage the development of three more research centres.

Our Vision

VIU's vision for research capacity development is one in which Research Centres and Institutes not only act as centres of support but also create dynamic environments of inquiry. We envision faculty and students co-investigating, sharing resources, and participating together in dissemination activities. We see the Centres as critical hubs that bring together a broad range of people including students from first year through to Master's levels, new and experienced researchers, researchers from various disciplines, and members of our local communities. The Centres will provide VIU Faculty and students with opportunities for multidisciplinary research, collaboration, and mentoring with visiting scientists or with colleagues in other institutions. While the Centres provide sites for research activities, the Institutes will bring together various centres and researchers from the social sciences, humanities, health fields and the physical sciences to engage in interdisciplinary research and research training. The Institutes will also integrate and coordinate the activity centres, encourage innovative approaches and responses to challenges, and provide opportunities for intellectual exchange amongst faculty members and between faculty and students.

The Objectives

1. Build on the capacities created with the previous ASU grant
2. Solidify and strengthen the Institute for Coastal Research (ICR) and the Centre for Digital Humanities Computing (CDH)
3. Build our research capacity by focusing our limited resources where they can do the most good - on research Centres and Institutes that are designed to encourage multidisciplinary, collaborative research as well as to support individual researchers
4. Create 3 more research centres or institutes within the research themes identified by our Institutional Strategic Research Plan (Healthy Communities, Environmental Resource Management and Policy, Cultural Communication and Expression, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning)
5. Work to establish those research centres and institutes that are progressing towards implementing Canada or BC Research Chairs

The Plan

The Centre for Digital Humanities

The Centre for Digital Humanities has created close alignments with the scholarly community in humanities computing, has sponsored a symposium in new media technology, and has established links between research and technology within the institution and with other institutions. The CDHI will use the next round of funding to build on these early developments in order to promote computer-assisted research and training in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Activities:

1. Build research partnerships and networks with other researchers
 - a. Create a website which highlights the research activities and opportunities
 - b. Work with U of Victoria to develop research partnerships
2. Host an annual conference for digital film and video researchers
3. Invite two speakers per year to VIU to address faculty and students on aspects of new media and humanities computing
4. Provide seed funding for new researchers
5. Establish a Canada Research Chair

The Institute for Coastal Research (ICR)

The Institute for Coastal Research was established two years ago and has been active in coordinating research on subjects related to the health of coastal communities and their environments, and supporting social sciences and humanities faculty to develop the theme of Environmental Resource Management and Policy. The ICR will build on its capacity to encourage interdisciplinary interaction through seminars and events, and in supporting and developing partnerships with national granting agencies, governments, and First Nations to develop community-based research projects. Activities:

1. Establish an advisory committee consisting of community members and faculty
2. Create an endowment for a research position and visiting fellowships
3. Establish an ongoing community symposium on coastal issues
4. Investigate best models for promoting faculty and student participation in the ICR
5. Provide seed funding for interdisciplinary research in coastal research

The Creation of Three New Centres

We also have identified three other areas of research activity that would benefit from support to help them establish themselves as centres.

1. The Centre for Research in Teaching and Learning. There has been a lot of interest in developing a research centre that investigates pedagogy and integrates research and scholarship in teaching and learning process. This area is one of our institution's strategic research themes as it cuts across all disciplines, strengthens research, and the knowledge that is generated can be applied to benefit faculty and students. This will be achieved through supporting excellence in teaching and learning, facilitating professional and scholarly networks, and fostering scholarship of teaching and learning. In addition, the Centre will coordinate collaborative opportunities, disseminate research information, and maintain close links to instructional and service departments.
2. The Alexandro Malaspina Research Centre. This is an informal centre that shows great promise. Faculty involved are currently engaged in mapping the historical development of the west coast of British Columbia and are dedicated to promoting interdisciplinary research into Alexandro Malaspina, a navigator, explorer and scholar in the Enlightenment era. The Centre supports international collaboration between scholars and enthusiasts with like interests.
3. The Institute for Community Health. This centre will apply a multidisciplinary approach to the examination of health, human and social wellbeing, and the environment. Funding has already been received from SSHRC to support investigations into community health, First Nations health, women's health, and the history of nursing practices. The institute will support and encourage research activities in the areas of rural tourism, Aboriginal Early Childhood Development, and will develop the capacity of researchers in the study of rural communities, First Nations, and community health.

Development Plan Budget Details

Objectives for the Centre for Digital Humanities

1. Hire a student to create a website of research areas and opportunities. \$1,500 (Year 1 \$1,500)
2. Hire a research assistant to help coordinate the research activities. \$4,500 (Year 1 \$1500, Year 2 \$1,500, Year 3 \$1500)
3. Sponsor two visiting speakers per year \$6,000. (Year 1 \$2000, Year 2 \$2,000, Year 3 \$2000)

Objectives for the Institute for Coastal Research over the Next Three Years

1. Solidify the VIU Institute for Coastal Research. We are developing a six-year plan to achieve this goal. The first three years sought to establish the Institute and the next three years are designed to create a self-supporting research institute, along with a Canada Research Chair.
 - a. Establish the advisory committee. \$2,500 (Year 1 \$1,500, Year 2 \$500, Year 3 \$500)
 - b. Cover the costs for the creation of an endowment to establish an ongoing research position and visiting fellowships. \$5,000 (Year 2, \$2,000, Year 3 \$3,000)
 - c. Establish an ongoing community symposium on coastal issues. \$6,000 (Year 1 \$2,000 Year 2 \$2,000, Year 3 \$2,000)

- d. Hire Research assistants to provide support to the symposium. \$6,000 (Year 1, \$2,000, Year 2 \$2,000, Year 3, \$2,000)
- e. Hire a research assistant to investigate models of faculty participation, barriers and facilitators. \$2,500 (Year 1 \$2,500)
- f. Provide seed funding for interdisciplinary research in coastal research (Year 2, \$1,500, Year 3, \$1,500)
- g. Establish ongoing visiting fellowships. \$7,500 (Year 1 \$2,500, Year 2 \$2,500, Year 3 \$2,500)

Objectives for Establishing the New Research Centres

1. Hire a doctoral student to work with researchers in planning a research agenda for the centres. \$19,000 (Year 1 \$10,000, Year 2 \$5,000, Year 3 \$4,000)
2. Provide research workshops. \$6,000 (Year 1 \$2,000, Year 2 \$2,000 Year 3 \$2,000)
3. Sponsor a symposium for each centre starting in year 2. \$18,000 (Year 1 \$1,250, Year 2 \$7,750, Year 3 \$9,000)
4. Provide seed funding for research projects for all SSHRC faculty to encourage developing research agendas. SSHRC SIG funding will be dedicated to providing seed funding.
5. Hire research assistants to work with the Directors of the centres to help establish the research centres. \$2,500 (Year 1 \$1,250, Year 2 \$1,250)

Explanation of Funds Requested

Student salaries. We plan on hiring fourteen undergraduate research assistants and one doctoral student to work with the research centre directors: help establish centres, help organize symposia and help research models to encourage faculty participation in the centres.

Undergraduates \$17,000 (Year 1: 7 students, \$8,750; Year 2: 4 students, \$4,750; Year 3: 3 students, \$3,500)

Doctoral \$19,000 (Year 1 \$10,000, Year 2 \$5,000, Year 3 \$4,000)

Other Expenses

Workshops and symposia. The centres will sponsor symposia and research workshops each year to encourage collaboration, multidisciplinary research and dissemination of results. \$30,000 (Year 1 \$5,250, Year 2 \$11,750, Year 3 \$13,000)

Visiting Scholars and Fellowships Each centre will create fellowships to encourage collaboration amongst visiting researchers and VIU Faculty. \$13,500 (Year 1 \$4,500, Year 2 \$4,500, Year 3 \$4,500)