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Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador: Insights for Knowledge Mobilization and University-Community Engagement

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Abstract

In this paper, we provide insights for knowledge mobilization and university-community engagement based on the lessons learned from the Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador Project. Out hope is to provide a window into the experiences of academics as they navigate the complexities and politics of mobilizing research and engaging with diverse stakeholders. Despite the challenges of this work, presented by factors inside and outside the academy, it is crucial to enhance our capabilities if we are to maximize the impact of universities in linking theory, research, and expertise with critical social and economic needs, such as enhancing innovation.

Introduction

In January 2013, the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development (Harris Centre) at Memorial University, in partnership with the Navigate Entrepreneurship Centre (Grenfell Campus), and the Canadian Regional Development: A Critical Review of Theory, Practice, and Potentials project team launched the Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador project to synthesize and share knowledge related to innovation and ways it can be fostered with key innovation stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador. The project was inspired by the Contextualized Health Research Synthesis Program (CHRSP) approach created by Stephen Bornstein in the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research at Memorial University. This approach aims to synthesize and contextualize research for Newfoundland and Labrador versus conducting new research on a particular topic. The Innovation Project included a team of researchers from Memorial University and an advisory committee made up of key representatives from industry associations, the provincial government, the federal government, the university, college, and labour. The project deliverables included a series of reports, innovation case studies, innovation workshops, a website, and an innovation summit.

In this paper, we provide insights for knowledge mobilization and university-community engagement based on the lessons learned from the project. We begin with a brief overview of some of the key challenges and opportunities identified in the knowledge mobilization and community-engagement literatures. In the next section we introduce some of the key concepts in the innovation literature that highlight the importance of learning and collaboration between industry, government, postsecondary institutions, and communities. We then provide an overview of the Innovation Project and approach, which is followed by a discussion on the main challenges and opportunities that we encountered during the project. Our hope is to provide a window into the experiences of academics as they navigate the complexities and politics of mobilizing research and engaging with diverse stakeholders. Despite the challenges of this work, presented by factors inside and outside the academy, it is crucial to enhance our capabilities if we are to maximize the impact of universities in linking theory, research, and expertise with critical social and economic needs, such as enhancing innovation.

Knowledge Mobilization and University-Community Engagement

Postsecondary institutions across Canada, and internationally, are increasingly embracing knowledge mobilization and university-community engagement through a variety of mechanisms (Hall, 2009; Levin, 2011; Heisler, Beckie, & Markey, 2012). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching describes community engagement within a post-secondary context as "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (New England Resource for Higher Education, 2016). This can often include service-learning, community-based experiential learning, community-based participatory research, and community-based research (Hall, 2009; Heisler,

Beckie, & Markey, 2012; Castledon, Sloan Morgan, & Lamb, 2012). While community engagement, defined in this way, is focused on knowledge exchange, knowledge mobilization, on the other hand, includes "public participation, translating ideas into accessible language, working with media, social networking strategies, [and] podcasting" (Hall, 2009, p. 19) among other means to bring "knowledge, people and action together" (Bennet & Bennet, 2007, p. 17).

We share Bud Hall's (2009) argument that the collective resources of universities and colleges represent the "largest accessible, available, and underutilized resource for community change and sustainability" (p. 13). Likewise, Barbara Holland and Judith Ramaley (2008) highlight "the urgent need to summon our collective wisdom to address critical social, economic, cultural, and environmental threats" (p. 334) by bringing together academic institutions and communities. Despite this, there are still a number of challenges confronting academics within postsecondary institutions when they focus their efforts on community engagement and knowledge mobilization. In relation to the traditional trifecta of research, teaching, and service, in 1996 Boyer argued: "At tenure and promotion time, the harsh truth is that service is hardly mentioned. And even more disturbing, faculty who do spend time with so-called applied projects frequently jeopardize their careers" (p. 13). More than a decade later, this is still the case in a number of postsecondary institutions (Jackson, Schwartz, & Andree, 2008; Moore & Ward, 2010; Jaeger, Katz, Jameson, & Clayton, 2012). While we recognize that this varies among and within institutions, it still poses a significant challenge where it does exist, especially for emerging scholars, as further discussed below in relation to our experience with the Innovation Project. Other challenges include time, financial support, and building and sustaining relationships for engagement (Moore & Ward, 2010; Heisler et al., 2012; Castledon et al., 2012).

We turn now to a discussion of some of the key arguments emerging from the innovation literature that support and necessitate university-community engagement and knowledge mobilization.

Learning and Interaction to Promote Innovation

One of the major arguments emerging from the innovation literature in the last decade is the importance of interaction and learning between a wide variety of actors including individuals, firms, industry associations, and support institutions like government, universities, colleges, and innova-

tion centres (Hall, Walsh, Vodden, & Greenwood, 2014; Asheim, Boschma, & Cooke, 2011; Tödtling & Tripple, 2011; Nauwelaers, 2011; Rodríguez-Pose, 2013). This supports the argument that "innovation is increasingly recognized as a social process" (Wolfe, 2009, p. 15) versus a linear process including the phases of invention, production, marketing, and diffusion (Sternberg, 2009). Simply put "firms do not innovate in isolation" (Nauwelaers, 2011, p. 468).

The term "quadruple helix" (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009; Leydesdorff, 2012) is often used to describe the various innovation stakeholders including business, community, government, and postsecondary institutions. Related to this is the importance of innovation support systems often called "regional innovation systems" (Cooke, 1992; Cooke & Morgan, 1998) or "innovation ecosystem." For example, the Canadian Independent Panel on Federal Support to Capital Research and Development (2012, pp. 2–15) explains how the "innovation ecosystem" includes,

> not only firms, universities, colleges and polytechnics, but also a spectrum of intermediary players [technology transfer offices, college applied research offices, public research institutes and programs, incubators, angels and venture capitalists]…characterized by effective synergies, connections, and flows of knowledge and ideas.

Given this emphasis on interaction and learning between and among innovation stakeholders, university-community engagement and knowledge mobilization can play an important role in supporting business innovation.

The Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador Project

As noted earlier, in January 2013 the Harris Centre at Memorial University—in partnership with the Navigate Entrepreneurship Centre (Grenfell Campus) and the Canadian Regional Development: A Critical Review of Theory, Practice and Potentials project team—launched the Innovation Project to synthesize and share knowledge related to innovation and the ways it can be fostered with key innovation stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the following sections, we provide a brief overview of the Harris Centre and the CHRSP approach. We then turn to a discussion on the Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and

Labrador approach including a description of the advisory committee, the innovation workshops, and the innovation summit.

A Brief Overview of the Harris Centre and the CHRSP Approach

The Harris Centre was launched in October 2004, with a mandate to facilitate and coordinate Memorial University's activities in regional development and public policy. It developed a series of programs and supports to connect Memorial faculty, staff, and students with the needs of the province. These include organizing regional workshops in partnership with community-based organizations, holding public policy forums, and establishing applied research funds in partnership with government and private sector partners. The Harris Centre also developed the online public engagement tool called Yaffle. As the Harris Centre has built its brand based on values of independence, integrity, and practical application, it has established a reputation within the university, the province, and internationally as a trusted knowledge broker and mobilizer.

Given the Harris Centre's focus on knowledge mobilization, we were inspired to try the CHRSP approach, created by Stephen Bornstein in the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research at Memorial University. CHRSP provides systematic reviews of topics identified in partnerships with key decision-makers in the health sector. More importantly, this information is contextualized to take into account the unique issues, challenges, and capacities in Newfoundland and Labrador (Newfoundland & Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research [NLCAHR], 2013; Memorial University Faculty of Medicine [MUNMED], 2013; Barrett, Bornstein, Kean, & Navarro, 2011). In terms of process, the CHRSP approach includes several stages: (1) identify pressing issues

of concern in partnership with health system decision-makers; (2) use research expertise to develop research questions based on these concerns; (3) synthesize international research literature on the subject and contextualize it to Newfoundland and Labrador—this includes taking into account the unique provincial challenges and capacities; and (4) quickly produce research results that are easily accessible and in usable formats.

In recent years, the Harris Centre has supported a number of innovation-related research initiatives (Table 1). The focus on innovation results from the widespread understanding that innovation is critical for economic growth and the recognition that Newfoundland and Labrador businesses have the potential to be far more innovative than current evidence suggests (Greenwood, Pike, & Kearley, 2011). Given the widely recognized importance of innovation for economic development but also regional development more generally, the emphasis on partnerships in fostering innovation in a region, and the abundance of existing literature on this topic, innovation was selected as the theme for the Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador Project, the Harris Centre's first CHRSP-like initiative.

Table 1. Innovation-Related Research Initiatives Supported by the Harris Centre

Title	Description
The Social Dynamics of Economic Performance in City-Regions	• National project was led by David Wolfe and Meric Gertler at the University of Toronto • NL component was led by Rob Greenwood • Focused on three themes: the social dynamics of innovation, talent attraction and retention, and civic governance and inclusion
Networks for Business Innovation: Building Social Capital in Corner Brook, NL	• Led by Jose Lam (Memorial University – Grenfell Campus) and included a team of individuals from government, post-secondary, business and community organizations • Focused on investigating who people talk to and work with to map out these connections and networks and their roles in business innovation
Canadian Regional Development: A Critical Review Of Theory, Practice And Potentials	• Led by Kelly Vodden (Memorial University – Grenfell Campus), with Co-Investigators Bill Reimer (Concordia University – Quebec), David Douglas (University of Guelph – Ontario), and Sean Markey (Simon Fraser University – British Columbia) • Focused on the following themes: place-based development, collaborative, multi-level governance, rural-urban interactions, integrated development, and innovation and learning in four Canadian provinces

The Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador Approach

The team included Rob Greenwood (executive director – the Harris Centre), Heather Hall (postdoctoral fellow – the Harris Centre and Department of Geography project coordinator), Kelly Vodden, (associate professor research – Environmental Policy Institute), and Jacqueline Walsh (assistant professor – business), together with an honours undergraduate student (Kyle White) and Ph.D. student (Ken Carter), both focusing on innovation in Newfoundland for their thesis research in the Department of Geography. The composition of the team, with backgrounds in business, geography, and political science, reflected the interdisciplinary approach to the complex issue of business innovation. The team also included members at varying stages of their academic career. This proved to be a very useful method of introducing and embedding new researchers into existing relationships with community members.

The project team prepared a four-page background document outlining the key objectives and three-phase approach, including a knowledge synthesis, a series of innovation workshops, and an innovation summit. Like the CHRSP approach, the knowledge synthesis summarized in a succinct fashion the latest research on innovation with insights for advancing innovation strategies in the context of Newfoundland and Labrador. The innovation workshops, on the other hand, ground truthed these insights and reported on how the research findings from the knowledge synthesis could help foster innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador. As well, the workshops were used to report back to community partners on related research findings that had been previously explored in that particular region in the province. The innovation summit then distilled lessons for policy and practice (Table 2). The team was careful to include both urban and rural parts of the province in all aspects of the project to counteract the urban bias in the innovation literature and because Newfoundland and Labrador is one of Canada's most rural provinces, with more than half of its population residing in rural and small town communities

as of 2011 (Vodden, Gibson, & Porter, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2012).

The Innovation Project Advisory Committee

The Innovation Project team invited key innovation stakeholders in the "quadruple helix" (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009; Leydesdorff, 2012) to become members of an advisory committee. The advisory committee included 15 representatives from industry associations, the provincial government, the federal government, the university, the college, and labour. The roles of the advisory committee, which were outlined in a terms-of-reference document, were to: provide feedback on proposed workshop locations; provide advice and comments on the workshop reports; identify existing relevant data and resources; identify key local contacts in each of the workshop locations; highlight important local or stakeholder specific issues for consideration; review emerging themes and lessons and provide advice to the project and research teams on the final report; and assist with publicity for all events and reports. From the start, it was emphasized that the final project report would reflect the independence of the research team and that the final content for the report would be the responsibility of the project team.

We held five advisory committee meetings in March, April, and September 2013 and January and March 2014. The March 2013 meeting provided an introduction to the project as well as an overview of the advisory committee terms of reference. In the April 2013 meeting we discussed workshop locations, times, possible local stakeholders and research for the knowledge synthesis. The September

Table 2. Advancing Innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador Project Deliverables

- A Knowledge Synthesis on innovation, summarizing the latest research on innovation and insights for advancing innovation strategies in Newfoundland and Labrador
- Five Innovation Workshops in Kittiwake, Labrador Straits, Northern Peninsula, St. John's, and Corner Brook as well as a series of Innovation Workshop Reports
- A series of Innovation Case Studies on firms in Newfoundland and Labrador in partnership with the Canadian Regional Development project
- An Innovation Summit
- A final report based on the key findings from the AINL project that provides recommendations for policy and practice
- The http://innovational.ca website to host innovation-related research studies in Newfoundland and Labrador

2013 meeting was focused on preparing for the innovation summit with the advisory committee providing feedback on the knowledge synthesis and findings from the workshops as well as recommending participants for the innovation summit. At the January 2014 meeting we discussed the final report and insights for policy and practice while the March 2014 meeting was focused on next steps for the advisory committee and ideas for disseminating the Innovation Project materials.

The Innovation Workshops

Throughout May and June 2013, we held five Innovation Workshops in Kittiwake, Labrador Straits, the Northern Peninsula, St. John's and Corner Brook (see Figure 1). These locations reflected urban, rural, and remote regions from across the province, which was essential for understanding place-based challenges and opportunities as well as combating one-size-fits-all policy approaches. These locations also reflected places where previous community-based research had been undertaken on related issues. The workshops provided an excellent opportunity to report back to the stakeholders in each region. We used a variety of methods to try and encourage participation in the workshops. For example, prior to the workshops we traveled to some of the locations where we had limited research connections to meet with local stakeholders to discuss the project, select dates for the workshops, and tour innovative companies identified by the advisory committee, local stakeholders, and previous research. By visiting the regions in advance we were ultimately trying to show our interest in building relationships within the communities as well as our willingness to be engaged at a very practical and meaningful level. Another recruitment strategy included contacting individuals who had previously participated in one or more of the research projects highlighted in Table 1.

We decided on a half-day format to encourage more businesses attendance. We know it is difficult for small business owners, in particular, to be away from their businesses for long periods of time. We also tried to hold the workshops in conjunction with other meetings. For example, in Kittiwake we held our workshop in conjunction with a Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) business network meeting. The format for these workshops included:

- A brief overview of the Innovation Project by the project coordinator
- A presentation based on prior research undertaken in the region and on themes

Figure 1. Workshop Sites
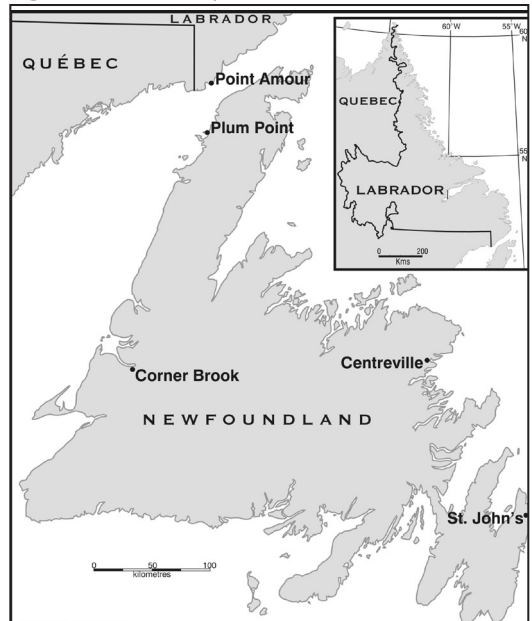
related to innovation in the regional economy by a project team member
- Question and answers
- A presentation on firm-level innovation in Newfoundland and Labrador by a project team member
- Questions and answers
- A panel discussion with regional representatives from business, the community, government, and/or postsecondary to respond to earlier presentations and speak about what strategies were needed to enhance innovation in their region
- A breakout discussion on challenges, opportunities, and strategies, and
- A survey using TurningPoint technology (voter keypads) to select the top challenges, opportunities, and strategies according to participants

Seventy-six people attended the workshops including 16 representatives from business and social enterprises and the balance from community-based organizations, industry associations, postsecondary institutions and all levels of government. The workshop attendance breakdown was as follows: St. John's, 23; Corner Brook, 17; Kittiwake, 16; Northern Peninsula, 11; and Labrador Straits, 9.

The Innovation Summit

In October 2013, we held a full-day Innovation Summit in St. John's (the provincial capital). We invited innovation stakeholders from each of the

workshop locations and from across the province. In total, 46 participants attended from all three levels of government, business and labour, Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic, and community organizations. The summit started with a brief overview of the Innovation Project, which was followed by presentations on the key findings from the knowledge synthesis and key lessons from the innovation workshops. The morning also included a panel discussion with representatives from business, the community, government, and postsecondary who responded to the key findings from the knowledge synthesis and innovation workshops. The afternoon consisted of facilitated breakouts on the critical gaps that needed to be considered for advancing innovation and how these critical gaps could best be addressed. Each group reported back with their top three gaps, which were identified through a dotmocracy[1] exercise. These critical gaps were then entered into the Turning-Point technology to select the top gaps that needed to be addressed. A closing panel followed this with representatives from business, the community, government, and postsecondary, responding to these critical gaps and how the various stakeholders could address them.

Insights for Knowledge Mobilization and Community-University Engagement

During the Innovation Project we encountered a number of expected and unexpected challenges and opportunities. The challenges included: the demise of the regional matchmaker; the politics of timing; working in the business and not on the business; academic independence versus co-production; and the academic publish or perish mentality. Opportunities, on the other hand, included: hope, optimism, and networking; reporting back, validating research findings and building relationships; exploring new research topics; student engagement; and informing policy.

We turn now to a discussion of each while highlighting how they offer insights for knowledge mobilization and community-engaged research.

The Demise of the Regional Matchmaker

Just as regional economic development agencies were being abolished in the UK (Kitagawa, 2013) and across Canada (Hall & Greenwood, 2013; Gibson, 2013), in May and June 2012, the federal and provincial governments announced that they were discontinuing the funding for the Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) in Newfoundland and Labrador. The REDBs were created in 1995 in response to growing economic challenges impacting communities across the province and were designed to be the 'facilitators of regional economic development' (Report of the Ministerial Committee, 2005). As we have noted elsewhere, "the REDBs acted as a 'matchmaker' between diverse regional interests and provided a point of contact for information about government programs and policies in many rural regions" (Hall, Vodden, & Greenwood, forthcoming). The demise of the REDBs impacted the Innovation Project in several ways, including: the loss of a key partner and the introduction of a contentious policy issue into project design and stakeholder dialogue and relationships.

The structure of the REDBs included professional economic development staff and a volunteer board of directors made up of representatives from municipalities, business, community development, education and training, labour, and other organizations (Hall et al., forthcoming). As a result, they were well connected to many of the key innovation stakeholders within their respective regions. More importantly, the REDBs had provided a quick and efficient "one-stop-shop" to disseminate information and gather contacts. Team members had benefited from this function played by the REDBs in previous related research initiatives. However with their demise, the Innovation Project lost this point of contact in the region. We also lost a key regional development partner that would have played an integral role in advancing a number of the recommendations from the Innovation Project. The decision to close the REDBs was done with little consultation and took many organizations by surprise. As result, it became a fairly contentious policy issue especially in a number of rural regions across the province in the period leading up to and during the Innovation Project. In many of the innovation workshops, participants were keen to discuss the REDBs and what regional development could look like after their closure.

The Politics of Timing

Related to this, several members of the Innovation Project team were labeled "political" by certain government stakeholders because of our critical discussion of the decision to close the REDBs in other research reports and for discussing the REDBs at the innovation workshops. This issue was exacerbated by deep provincial budget cuts and

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[1] Participants were provided with 10 dot stickers and voted (by placing one or more stickers) on a flip chart listing the critical gaps. The three with the most stickers went forward from the breakout groups to the larger discussion.

layoffs in early 2013 that resulted in further cuts to regional development organizations along with dramatic reductions in government staff and provincial spending, which precluded some government officials from attending the innovation sessions. Also complicating (and politicizing) matters, the governing provincial political party was losing support in public opinion polls (CBC, 2014). Thus, the demise of the REDBs, the deep cuts and layoffs and this weakening in public support, created a perfect storm of political sensitivity that presented a number of unexpected challenges for the Innovation Project, including the loss of financial support and participation from some key provincial government actors.

Ward and Jones (1999) refer to this issue as the mode of entry, which is shaped by the political-temporal contingency of research. Simply put, they suggest that the political timing of research has significant implications for the research project. In their paper, they discuss the secretive nature and political sensitivities with researching training and enterprise councils in the United Kingdom when they were in the political limelight. As a result, researchers experienced issues with access and political sensitivity (see also Hall, 2012). Likewise, Desmond (2004) discusses the politics of time and the impacts on quality and access to information. She argues, "as any stand up comedian knows, timing is everything, and it is particularly relevant when interviewing elites during moments of political sensitivity" (p. 266). In the Innovation Project case, it impacted collaboration and stifled critical and informed discussion on pressing policy concerns facing rural areas across the province. It also highlights the importance of recognizing and responding to political sensitivities when trying to inform policy and practice through research.

Working in the Business Versus Working on the Business

We also experienced challenges with getting business owners or managers to attend the innovation events. This is largely because many small- and medium-sized business owners are often too busy "working in the business" and they lack the time to step back and attend events or what we call "working on the business" (see McGoff, 2012). Members of the Advisory Committee also brought this issue to our attention. To contend with this challenge we used the innovation case studies as a way to gather feedback and information from businesses. We also sought to partner with existing industry events. In particular, we had excellent business turnout at the Kittiwake innovation workshop where we partnered with a CME's Central Continuous Improvement Network (CCIN). This business network formed three years ago and includes seven manufacturing firms that meet regularly to share business advice and ideas. The CCIN network also receives one-on-one coaching/mentoring from CME. For the innovation workshop, the CCIN held their own meeting in the morning and participating businesses were encouraged to stay for the workshop, while workshop participants were encouraged to arrive early and join the CCIN and Innovation Project teams for innovation tours of several local firms. The Innovation Project team then provided lunch and we continued with the innovation workshop throughout the afternoon.

Academic Independence Versus Co-production

The Harris Centre brand of integrity and independence has provided a means to ensure scholars that the projects and funds brokered with community, industry and government partners will not compromise their findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The Harris Centre has a policy of not responding to Requests for Proposals, as it will not compete with the private sector, and clients paying for consulting reports usually own the intellectual property. If an external partner comes to the Harris Centre with funding or to broker a project, it is with the explicit understanding that there will be consultation and engagement during the research process, which is often driven by a need identified by the partner, but the university researcher(s) retains independence in what is in the final report. For most stakeholders, this has value, as they often are conflicted within their own organization to examine difficult issues. The relative independence of university researchers provides the means to access research and expertise that may pose difficult answers. The partner may wish to distance themselves from the conclusions, in whole or in part, but they now have research to inform their decisions.

The Innovation Project Advisory Committee understood this. As the research progressed, however, and the ground truthing workshops took place, some partners heard negative comments about their programs or policies. In some cases they welcomed this information as a way to improve, but in others they were defensive or failed to appear at the summit or some of the final committee meetings. As long as the integrity of the research was maintained, and the workshops and summit offered means for clear and balanced input from stakeholders (such as dotmocracy and voting keypads), the project team

was comfortable with the process results. Significant revisions were made to the final document and its recommendations based on the Advisory Committee's feedback—their expertise and perspectives made for a better result. When the project team failed to respond to their suggestions, it was based on an informed dialogue, building on the research and process. Advisory Committee members were not always happy, but most respected the integrity of the process and of the project team.

Publish or Perish

One final challenge is the "publish or perish" mentality that confronts many individuals within academia, which can act as a deterrent to community-engaged research and knowledge mobilization. Similar to our discussion earlier in this paper, the "publish or perish" mentality often refers to how academic hiring, tenure, and promotion committees only recognize (or place more value on) peer-reviewed publications. Jaeger et al. (2012) suggest, "community-engaged work is still perceived as an 'add-on', rather than integrated into faculty roles" (p. 160). In a study of faculty engagement, Moore and Ward (2010) explain how participants in their study were labeled as outliers within their departments and academic institutions. They also felt the pressure to accumulate the so-called "'coin of the realm': peer-reviewed publications and grant funding" (p. 52). Similarly Jackson et al. (2008) argue that in Canada, "One of the major challenges to the growing movement for community-university engagement is the nature of traditional academic tenure and promotion (T&P) procedures, which tends to reward disengagement" (p. 133).

Publish or perish is increasingly playing a strong role in grant applications and university rankings (van Dalen & Henkens, 2012). While we recognize that this varies between institutions and within institutions, it still poses a significant challenge where it does exist, especially for emerging scholars. This pressure to publish leads to the mentality that "it no longer matters what you write, but only how often, where and with whom you write" (p. 1283). While business leaders and government officials have reviewed our knowledge synthesis and final report (including recommendations to enhance innovation), these manuscripts are not traditional peer-reviewed academic outputs and may or may not be "counted" on our academic CVs. While Memorial University's senior administration has expressed a commitment to engaged scholarship, most recently through the establishment of a Public Engagement Framework, the extent to which this has transferred

to department P&T committees has been inconsistent, with peer reviewed publications and funding remaining as the dominant criteria. Considering three of the project team members were emerging scholars (one postdoctoral fellow, one recent faculty hire, and one faculty member undergoing tenure review), this posed some challenges.

Community-university engagement and knowledge mobilization efforts also take time (see also Castledon et al., 2012). In the Innovation Project Team, time was required for booking the venue and catering, sending out invites, organizing panels and supplies, and making travel arrangements in the lead up to the innovation workshops and summit. Because our chosen communities included both rural and urban regions spanning the entire province, the team traveled in excess of 3,900 kilometres over the course of six weeks in May and June 2013. After the workshops and summit, our priority was getting the reports out to the public while the momentum was there and the discussion was fresh. Our next priority was then spending time on producing peer-reviewed publications. However, in the "publish or perish" environment time spent on community engagement and knowledge mobilization is often viewed as secondary to peer-reviewed publications (and in some cases even wasted time that could have been better spent on the latter). Interestingly, innovation stakeholders at the summit identified this mentality as one of the critical gaps impacting innovation in the province (Hall et al. 2014). Despite these challenges, we experienced several positive outcomes in using this approach. We turn now to a discussion of these opportunities.

Hope, Optimism and Networking: "It's Like Having a Wedding after a Funeral"

As noted earlier, rural regions across the province were significantly impacted by the closure of the REDBs and the deep provincial budget cuts and layoffs. In the Northern Peninsula, one participant commented, "There's only so many bullets a man can take before he dies," while another in the Labrador Straits described how the last year was one of the most depressing times she had ever worked in (see also Hall et al., forthcoming). The innovation workshops were seen by many regional development stakeholders as an opportunity to come together and discuss the impacts of these cuts and new strategies for the future. One participant even argued: "It's like having a wedding after a funeral." The innovation events also brought together a diverse array of stakeholders from business, postsecondary institutions, government, and the community. This

provided networking opportunities, some of which have continued beyond the innovation project. For example, participants in several regions have held their own follow-up meetings to discuss the research findings and next steps. This also emphasizes the need for findings and recommendations to be disseminated in a manner that allows community partners to gain maximum follow-up benefits from their participation in the project in the spirit of knowledge mobilization as a process of "moving new ideas and shared understanding into the hands of the people at the point of action" (Bennet & Bennet, 2007, p. XIII).

Reporting Back, Validating Research Findings and Building Sustainable Relationships

Project team members were each involved in at least one of the innovation-related research initiatives outlined in Table 1. Most of the innovation workshop locations were also case study regions in one or more of these research projects. The innovation events, therefore, provided a platform for the researchers to report back and in some instances validate initial research findings. These repeat encounters with the same community members raise some key issues for success in community-based research. The importance of reciprocity and partnerships when building sustainable relationships were highlighted in the introduction to this article as part of the framework for meaningful engagement initiatives. The necessity of collaborative arrangements is also often highlighted in the academic literature. For example, Fisher et al. (2004, p. 29–30) report that university researchers have historically created a negative impression by using their perceived dominance to take advantage of external stakeholders without giving them back something in return. Establishing partnerships built on trust and integrity become even more integral when the research team wishes to continue to engage with the same stakeholders on multiple levels for various research projects over time. The research team has a common interest in economic development, particularly in rural areas. There is no quick fix and short-term relationships would not be beneficial to either party.

For example, the Canadian Regional Development project included two case study regions in Newfoundland and Labrador: Kittiwake and the Northern Peninsula. In the Northern Peninsula the research team had placed particular focus on the project themes of innovation and governance. Both primarily rural regions were sites for Innovation Project workshops. This provided previous connections as contacts for the team as well as an opportu-

nity for the research team to meet a commitment to report back to each of the regions on project results, with the valuable assistance of the project coordinator and other project resources. Further, through a combined effort between the research project and team, case studies of innovation within small and medium sized firms and social enterprises in these regions were completed, providing additional insights for both groups. Finally, the Canadian Regional Development project received provincial level exposure, increasing the project's knowledge mobilization impact.

Exposure to New Research Topics

Community engagement provides an opportunity to interact with a variety of stakeholders and to build a researcher's capacity and reputation in specific areas. It also exposes the researcher to a variety of issues and challenges that are outside the scope of the project being undertaken. Research ideas arise organically and can easily be validated as important to community stakeholders. From the Innovation Project findings, one team member developed a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada proposal and was able to use the final report as evidence to support the research question being addressed in that application. As well, through the project a member of the team learned about a mining firm with innovations in both human resources management and mineral exploration and processing technology, forming the basis of subsequent case study research. Finally, knowledge and relationships built during the Labrador Straits workshop helped to advance a subsequent federally-funded research initiative to identify development assets in that region.

Student Engagement

Two students—Kyle White (Geography undergraduate student) and Ken Carter (Geography Ph.D. student)—were also engaged in the project. Kyle was the note-taker at all five innovation workshops. He was also a co-author on each of the workshop reports and lead author on the innovation case studies. Ryser, Markey, & Halseth (2013) cite a number of benefits to introducing undergraduate students to community-based or community-engaged research. For example, it can "expose them to the complexity of community development issues, build support and career networks and foster student interest in graduate studies or a research career" (p. 13). With the project, both students were just starting innovation-related research of their own. For Kyle, his participation on the Canadi-

an Regional Development and Innovation Project influenced his desire to focus on sustainable innovation for his undergraduate honours thesis. It also inspired him to pursue graduate studies in public policy. As members of the project team, both students benefited from opportunities to present their work, gain knowledge, and strengthen relationships in their study areas. We strongly believe that undergraduate and graduate students build research and networking skills, gain valuable research experience, and develop confidence through knowledge mobilization and community-university engagement.

Informing Policy

One of the major benefits of knowledge mobilization and community-university engagement is the opportunity to inform pressing policy concerns. As Boyer (1996) argued: "The academy must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems" (p. 13). From the onset we were committed to offering insights for policy and practice, which were provided in our final report. As noted earlier, our advisory committee included government policymakers and the workshops engaged with representatives from all levels of government. It became clear at our final advisory committee meeting in March that the committee wanted to continue beyond the project. The final report was well received with plenty of discussion about where to go from here, which is one of the major goals for this type of community-engaged project. Many of the stakeholders also acknowledged their role in advancing innovation, which they did not previously seem to accept.

In May 2014 we publicly released the report through a media campaign organized by the Harris Centre. Copies of the report were also mailed to every participant who was engaged throughout the workshops and/or summit. One outcome thus far was Innovation Week, organized by a number of innovation-support organizations involved in the project. We were invited to present our major findings for policy and practice at two events during Innovation Week. We also organized a live webcast of the presentation made at an Innovation Outlook event through the Harris Centre to make the presentation accessible to all project participants. The final report and findings were referenced several times during Innovation Week by senior policy-makers, leaving us optimistic that some of the recommendations will translate into new policies and approaches. We also submitted our final report

to a federal consultation on science, technology, and innovation. Several members of the project team are planning follow-up sessions in some regions and with key government innovation departments and other innovation organizations to discuss the major findings for innovation policy and practice.

Conclusions

The goal of this paper was to provide a window into the experiences of academics as they navigate the complexities and politics of mobilizing research and engaging with diverse stakeholders. We presented the Innovation Project as a practical example of university-community engaged research and knowledge dissemination as complimentary techniques for addressing economic challenges (in this case advancing innovation) in Newfoundland and Labrador. This recount of this project, including the methodology and the researchers' perceptions, adds to the growing body of literature on good practices and challenges in this area. As we noted in the introduction, understanding both the benefits and the challenges of knowledge mobilization and community-engaged research is crucial to maximizing the impact of universities in linking theory, research and expertise with critical social and economic needs, such as enhancing innovation.

The success of projects like ours should not be measured solely based on the number of peer-reviewed articles published. Success for this project must be measured by its overall impact on the communities involved; the mobilization of key stakeholders to achieve a common goal; the validation of methods used in community-engaged research; the capacity building opportunities for the researchers and students; the exposure to new networks and new research ideas; the dissemination of collective knowledge and reports containing the voices of community participants to influential stakeholders and policy-makers; and the strength and longevity of the relationships being nurtured with every interaction. Every research project involves challenges, but few provide the opportunities and rewards found in community-engaged research.

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