



# DESIGNING THE SCHOOL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

## Dialogues on Civil Society

### RE-IMAGINING THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Guelph has a strong and varied tradition of working with civil society in research, teaching and service. Through international development studies, community university engaged scholarship from local to global, and numerous other civic engagement activities, we see faculty, staff and students working closely with civil society organizations for community benefit.

A series of conversations on how the university can better work with and contribute to civil society locally and globally are now being hosted. University and community members are invited to explore, provide expertise and experience, and respond to key ideas to inform work to build a “school for civil society” that provides new pathways for teaching, learning, research and service. The overall purpose of these dialogues is to engage in discussions that help to:

- Broaden and deepen thinking on the meaning of civil society and the linkages between the universities and civil society sectors
- Engage university constituents in a process of imagining how the University of Guelph can move in a direction of greater engagement
- Engage community, civil society organizations and individuals to inform and partner in building greater opportunities for teaching, learning and engagement
- Provide vision and key directions for a new school for civil society that re-imagines international development, community engaged scholarship and civic engagement

#### SCHOOL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

University of Guelph

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## TO DATE:

### Fall 2011

Short conversations with various international development faculty, community engaged faculty and students; early conversations with university partners.

### December 2011

Envisioning a School for Civil Society dialogue held with 25 campus stakeholders from across colleges to encourage critical and rich discussion about opportunities and obstacles in the University responding to ideas about civil society.

### January 2012

The campus wide Dialogue on Civil Society challenged just under 100 participants to re-envision undergraduate education, to identify knowledge and skills needed by civil society organizations, and to move to meet both local and global challenges. Speakers included President Alastair Summerlee, Paul Davidson (AUCC President), and Dr. Budd Hall, Secretary to the Global Alliance on Community-Engaged Research and holder of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

### February 2012

Catalyst Team engaged: small group of campus leaders with expertise in engagement, international development and planning, design further strategies and process, and elicit support from additional stakeholders. Key methods for eliciting stakeholder input, scans, reviews and vision for new pedagogy, international development, and community engagement developed.

### March-June 2012

Additional convenors to host conversations and provide input in a variety of areas engaged. Website developed to engage stakeholders beyond convening working groups.

- Conceptualizing Civil Society
- Exploring Pedagogy
- Arts-based Learning Strategies
- Practitioner Provocateurs
- Review of Existing University and Other Programs
- International Development Students and Faculty
- Undergraduate Engagement

Key individuals are meeting with the Catalyst Team to provide their own vision for what a school might look like – including University President Alastair Summerlee and other administrators, the UNESCO Chairs on Community-based Research and Social Responsibility Rajesh Tandon and Budd Hall, the Mayor of Guelph Karen Farbridge and several more. Content experts are being engaged to provide additional advice in several areas.

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**July 2012**

Convenors meeting: bringing together the multiple lenses.

**September 2012**

End of formal consultations. Identify directions, values, and partners in the new school.

**Fall 2012**

Incorporate directions, address structural issues of new school, engage in shaping new curriculum, fellowships, research endeavours, etc.

**Early winter 2013**

Proposal for new school early 2013.

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