THE HARRIS CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2012 2013

Focused On Newfoundland and Labrador





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I'm pleased to present the Harris Centre's Annual Report for 2012-2013.

When Memorial University's new Public Engagement Framework was launched this year, we knew that there were many at Memorial whose programs and activities were already working towards the framework's goals and objectives. The Harris Centre was one of them.

The development of the framework reflects a deep understanding of this university's importance to the province and Memorial's responsibility to fulfil its special obligations to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Harris Centre is approaching 10 years of supporting and facilitating public engagement relationships between the students, faculty and staff of Memorial, and the public of this province. From bringing researchers and community members together to solve regional problems, to providing a forum for the discussion of important issues and research at public forums, the Harris Centre is a bridge between Memorial and the people and organizations of this province.

The Public Engagement Framework, along with the Research Strategy Framework and Teaching and Learning Framework, emphasizes a true desire to distinguish Memorial as a top public university in Canada and beyond, and to ensure that we build on and pursue global excellence in our areas of strength. The Harris Centre will continue to support and champion public engagement at this university, and I am pleased to share the stories behind their demonstrated commitment to building connections between Memorial and the public.

Sincerely, Dr Gary Kachanoski



Message from the Executive Director

Public engagement has always been a hallmark of the Harris Centre's activities, but in the past year, our work supporting collaboration between Memorial and the public was strengthened with the launch of the Public Engagement Framework, a guiding document similar to the strategic documents for Teaching and Learning, and Research.

For the Harris Centre, the Public Engagement Framework represents a watershed in our role in facilitating and co-ordinating Memorial University's activities in public policy and regional development. We are now into our ninth year since inception, and we are proud of the programs and activities we have launched to help connect students, faculty and staff to the needs of the province. We have always emphasized that teaching and research are the primary vehicles for Memorial to connect to citizens, communities and organizations.

We often provide platforms for outreach, as Memorial expertise is shared with those who can put it to use. But public engagement emphasizes that Memorial achieves the most benefit for the province (and the world) when we recognize the expertise and contributions of our partners outside the university, and how they can collaborate with us to advance our academic mission. Service learning, community-based research, and all kinds of collaboration draw on knowledge and expertise, inside and outside the university.

At the Harris Centre we are excited to see this university-wide framework launched to guide all faculties, centres and departments at the university. This report highlights some of our activities and how they advance the goals of the new Public Engagement Framework. For each story we've noted an objective from the framework that the Harris Centre is helping to advance. To see the whole framework, visit www.mun.ca/publicengagement.

Next year we will enter our 10th anniversary year and we are planning lots of exciting projects to mark our achievements to date, and look forward to another decade collaborating with our partners inside and outside the university.

Sincerely, Rob Greenwood, PhD

HOW TO BUILD LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES?

Build Engaged Citizens!

Despite sometimes grim voter turnouts, and the usual grumblings that "people just don't care about their communities as much as they used to," lately we've been noticing a renewed interest in the concept of civic engagement. It's a topic of major interest to the Harris Centre, and one of the hallmarks of a vibrant and thriving society.

While our interest in civic engagement isn't a new thing, we must admit to being inspired by the public response to our October 2013 Galbraith Lecture featuring Calgary Mayor, Naheed Nenshi. Along with a strong turnout, we noticed that our audience was one of the most involved yet, asking many questions and sticking around afterwards to meet the speakers and share their thoughts. We noticed the same kind of interest later that winter at a Memorial Presents event we held during Engage Memorial Week. The panel included Memorial faculty members, and political junkie and CBC pundit, David Cochrane, sharing thoughts on the role of individuals in their own communities and democracy at large. Presenter Dr. Janna Rosales, an assistant professor with the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, isn't surprised by the public's interest in these topics. "At its heart, civic engagement is about asking how do we live well together? - and that's a question that everyone has a stake in," she says.

"Civic engagement is feeling like you are part of a community, that you have a stake in matters around you." - Janna Rosales

> Josh Smee, vice-chair of Happy City St. John's and Dr. Janna Rosales, assistant professor with the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science. (photo by: Bojan Fürst)

Along with individual interest, we also noticed an increase in the number of organizations bringing issues related to civic engagement to the forefront. In March, we partnered with Happy City St. John's, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, and Tract Consulting to present a public session featuring Dr. Katherine Loflin, a noted expert in place-making and self-described "city doctor." Attendance was strong and so was the audience's appetite for debate and discussion. Several significant points resonated throughout the session, including the fact that quality of life issues have the potential to affect a city's bottom line.

"Placemaking and city-building work isn't just 'nice-to-have,' but instead something that St. John's absolutely needs to do if we're to be able to compete for the best and brightest," says Josh Smee, vice-chair of Happy City St. John's. "The great thing about it is that we're being challenged to compete for talent simply by making our city a better, more interesting place to live – and that benefits everyone here."

Mr. Smee suspects that part of the renewed interest in civic engagement is the result of an expanding definition of what the term means. "In 1963, if you heard that term used, it was in the context of individual engagement with government, and even more specifically in the context of elections," he explains. "In 2013, it's much bigger. For individual citizens, it could mean getting involved with a community organization. It might mean politics, but it might even just mean talking to your neighbours!"



Objective 1.3: Mobilize knowledge, expertise and resources to support the ability of individuals, groups, organizations and communities to participate in good governance.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Making Sense of the Maze

As a province rooted in small, rural communities, historically defined by its vast geography and natural resources, Newfoundland and Labrador has long relied on community collaboration as a means of economic survival. The many different ways we collaborate regionally and how well they work was the subject of a recent Harris Centre report. Understanding Regional Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Survey of Regional Development Organizations takes an in-depth look at communities across the province and identifies successful approaches and challenges to regional governance.

The study was led by Memorial University's Dr. Kelly Vodden, associate professor, Environmental Policy Institute, Grenfell Campus (cross-appointed to the Faculty of Arts' Department of Geography), along with Dr. Heather Hall, the Harris Centre's first post-doctoral fellow, appointed in collaboration with the Department of Geography, and Dr. David Freshwater, professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and adjunct professor, Memorial University's Department of Geography. This core group collaborated with a research team and an advisory committee representing a cross-section of government and regional organizations over a five-year period.

"Both provincial and federal levels of government have encouraged regional development approaches," says Dr. Kelly Vodden, "but many community leaders also see the advantages – and the necessity – of working together as their demographic and financial realities change. Regional governance and collaboration does not come without challenges and requires significant investments in relationship and capacity building at the local level."

"We've been seeing these trends in communities around the province for many years now, but we had to rely on census data to try and piece together the data," says Churence Rogers, president of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL). "In many ways it's a wake up call. Many communities have faced economic development challenges for decades – their sole industry was the fishery and really it's only a matter of time before these communities are unable to sustain what they have.

We need to strategize about how we can move forward and what our communities

and regions are going to look like down the road." Driven by the mandates and funding programs of individual departments, the report suggests most regional initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador have yet to take an integrated approach to development. "This creates silos," says Dr. Vodden, "but also contributes to the complex layering and maze of regions and organizational structures and processes across the province."

"This research has been tremendously valuable for us – we now have solid data that confirms what we have been suspecting," says Mr. Rogers. "From my perspective, as president of MNL, it's a great piece of work for us to use as we have discussions with community leaders and governments, and try to determine what models we might use to be sustainable for the long-term."

The research was made possible with support from the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, the Canada -Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement, Service Canada, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, and Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador.

"In many ways it's a wake up call. Many communities have faced economic development challenges for decades ... We need to strategize about how we can move forward and what our communities and regions are going to look like down the road." – *Churence Rogers*

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Objective 2.7: Provide training and mentoring in public engagement best practises for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff.

DR. HEATHER HALL

- The Harris Centre's First Post-Doctoral Fellow

Dr. Heather Hall finished up her post-doctoral fellowship with the Harris Centre in August 2013. As the first HC post-doc appointed in partnership with the Geography Department, we thought we'd ask her some questions about her experience.

You identify yourself as a 'regional geographer'. Was that always an interest of yours?

Well, I've always been interested in regional issues. I was born in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, and raised in Sudbury – both mining towns – my dad and grandfather were both involved in the mining industry, so from a young age, I witnessed the volatility of a resource-based economy and the importance of strong regional governance and policy.

What sparked your interest in Newfoundland and Labrador?

I had the opportunity to work with the Harris Centre in 2010 and I fell in love with the province. I could see many similarities between northern Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador. For example, both regions are resource-based and both have faced similar economic and political challenges. Plus, I was really excited by the prospect of being engaged in research that is relevant to the policy issues confronting communities in the province.

What was the most interesting aspect of your time at the Harris Centre?

This is a really dynamic time to be studying regional development in Newfoundland and Labrador, with the demise of the Regional Economic Development Boards [REDBs] and trying to determine how regional economic development will look in the future. It really was an interesting time to be in Newfoundland and Labrador when all of those changes were happening – I was able to see how those changes unfolded and to experience the passion that communities across the province had for the REDBs. I hope that some of the research we're doing will help fill the institutional void in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and continue the discussion on regional development across the province.

What have you learned from your experience at the Harris Centre?

My research has always been policy-relevant and a strong part of it has been knowledge mobilization, so I really like that aspect of the Harris Centre and what it stands for. The goal when I came in was to learn as much as I could about how the Harris Centre works and operates, and hopefully take those insights back to northern Ontario one day. I'd love to have something similar in northern Ontario that could connect great research with some of the real issues happening on the ground.

Dr. Heather Hall, the Harris Centre's first post-doctoral fellow. appointed in partnership with the Geography Department, (photo by: Bojan Fürst)



Objective 1.2: Develop and improve processes, tools and resources to recognize and understand public needs, opportunities and priorities.

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EXTENDING NETWORKS:

Yaffle redevelopment connects new partners at CNA, UNB, and across the province

Since its launch in 2009, Yaffle has provided Memorial University with a public engagement tool unlike any other; however, a new redevelopment project is aiming to take Yaffle from unique to ubiquitous.

Along with enhancing the tool's functionality and user-experience, improvements to Yaffle's ability to support collaboration and partnerships between Memorial and the public, including other educational institutions, are central to the redevelopment. The project is funded by Memorial, and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. "One of the most significant developments will be an increased level of opportunity for users from the public to share their expertise and research ideas," explained Jennifer Adams, Yaffle lead. "We're also working with both the College of the North Atlantic and the University of New Brunswick to establish Yaffle at their institutions." She added that a number of other Canadian universities have also expressed interest in learning more about adopting Yaffle, once the pilot phase is completed.

The new and improved Yaffle has now been set up in a MUN development environment and is being tested. The Yaffle team is hoping to make it available soon.

The Yaffle Team, including Jen Adams, Lisa Charlong, Janice Caroy, Max Hu and John Duff, (photo by: Bojan Fürst) **Objective 1.3:** Mobilize knowledge, expertise and resources in support of the public good: social, health, economic, cultural and environmental.

PUTTING WASTE TO WORK

Refreshing research on an innovative water treatment system for rural communities Dr. Tahir Husain with master's student Jiabin Liu. (photo by: Bojan Fürst)

A tall glass of water. Refreshing? Absolutely. Safe? Well that is something that Dr. Tahir Husain is working on.

For many communities in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, sophisticated water treatment plants are financially out of the question. This is why 459 of the 536 public water supply systems in the province use a simple chlorination process – after all, chlorine is a highly efficient disinfectant and when added to public water supplies, kills bacteria, viruses and other microscopic organisms.

However, chlorination of water sources that contain high levels of organic matter (such as lakes and ponds) results in disinfection by-products (DBPs). The most common DBPs are trihalomethanes (THMs) and haloacetic acids (HAAs), many of which have been found to be carcinogens in animal studies. A report recently released by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Environment and Conservation stated that almost one third of the 459 communities using chlorination as their only source of water treatment had DBP levels higher than recommended Canadian guidelines.

With funding from the Harris Centre RBC Water Research and Outreach Fund, Dr. Tahir Husain, along with master's students Jiabin Liu and Masood Ahmad have been working on an innovative, affordable solution to this issue since 2011 and have made some significant progress. "This has been my dream, to develop an affordable technology for safe drinking water in small and rural communities, for many years," says Dr. Husain. " "In developing countries, around 4,000 children die each day because they don't have access to safe drinking water. If you cannot provide safe drinking water to rural communities in a country like Canada – there's something wrong. We have resources, we have technology, but still we have different types of water quality issues, including high levels of DBPs in small water supply systems which, with long-term exposure, may increase health risks."

Dr. Husain's research is based on using oily fly ash (waste generated from the burning of heavy fuel oil to generate electricity) which is comprised of 70-85% unburned carbon, a common material used in water filtration. Dr. Husain's initial studies have shown that by placing a simple carbon barrier made from the oily fly ash within an existing water treatment system, it can remove more than 60% of THMs and

HAAs – making the water more than safe by Canadian standards.

What makes this carbon filtration so different from others currently on the market?

The cost. The carbon being used in this case is virtually free, and has the added benefit of reducing fly ash waste (destined for the world's landfills) by 90 percent. The idea of filtering the source water with carbon also does not require a new water treatment system, or the employment of a system operator.

What does this mean for communities in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Provincial Department of Environment and Conservation's program co-ordinator, Paula Dawe, sees great potential for the project in communities across the province.

"There are about 150 communities in Newfoundland and Labrador that have small scale filtration systems with inherent problems due to an abundance of organic matter in the source water and limited local resources to upgrade their facilities," says Ms. Dawe. "Once proper piloting of the filtration method is completed, this could solve a big problem for a lot of communities around the province." Currently, Dr. Husain and his team are working on developing the most cost-effective way to extract the carbon.

"The technology is there, we've proven that it works," says Dr. Husain. "Now we just have to develop an affordable product so people everywhere can turn on their taps at home and be sure that their water is free of contaminants."



"If you cannot provide safe drinking water to communities in a country like Canada – there's something wrong." – Tahir Husain **Objective 2.5:** Support, encourage, and celebrate undergraduate and graduate public engagement activities.

GROWING

School gardens, food security, and rural sustainability.

Growing your own food was, for much of this province's history, a means of survival. Just 50 years ago, the yields from backyard vegetable gardens were a staple at 'Sunday Dinner' tables around the province, but a generation later much of that tradition has been lost. In the last few years however, there has been somewhat of a gardening revival taking place. Growing your own food is fast becoming the 'hip' thing to do.

For a school in Harbour Grace, however, this gardening revival is old news. St. Francis School opened the first and only greenhouse of its kind in the province as part of a social enterprise initiative nearly 20 years ago.

"In a lot of ways the greenhouse at St. Francis was ahead of its time," said Emily Doyle, Memorial University Community Health PhD student, who recently received funding from The Strategic Partnership-Harris Centre Student Research Fund to conduct research on school gardens and their benefits to rural sustainability. "It began as a social enterprise initiative with a focus on creating opportunities for students to build agricultural business skills."

The programming has evolved over the years, as the school has changed from a high school to an elementary school, but the high-tech modern greenhouse structure has served as a constant motivator to generate innovative programs that benefit the students and the broader school community. As part of her research project, Ms. Doyle will investigate how the project started, different models that have been explored over the years, the factors that have helped keep the program running and factors that have challenged the program, the benefits to the community (students and the broader community), and the factors that are necessary for the program to be sustainable.

"I was trained as a teacher. and during my education degree I saw a great need for opportunities for students to learn about gardening and growing their own food," says Ms. Doyle. "It's not just about teaching health in health class. It's about having healthy meals, healthy school food policies, and healthy family-community interaction in our schools. I think gardens are a model way of enabling that kind of comprehensive approach to health."

and into the greenhouse. The 30.5m x 12.2m structure is attached to the school and is often filled with vegetables that the students have grown from seed. Students are able to monitor the growth of the plants while learning about soil and nutrients and watering techniques.

"We're currently looking at garden to cafeteria models for the greenhouse project," says St. Francis School principal, Gary Barrett. "Ideally, the greenhouse will provide an opportunity for students to learn and experience how food grows and how we use it in everyday life. There are endless possibilities for the facility, we just need to be creative and find the right partners to help make it happen. The research funded by the Harris Centre will go a long way to help us determine what the tangible benefits are."

In the final stage of the research project, Ms. Doyle will share the findings in a focus group with students, parents and teachers. "I'm really looking forward to this part of the research project," says Ms. Doyle. "I have heard so many great ideas from people so far and I really think that bringing it back to the school community will be an excellent forum to start brainstorming about what innovative programming can take place in this great facility. I also plan to share those ideas with other schools around the province, so more kids can learn the value and tradition of growing food and food sustainability - and get their hands dirty outside the four walls of the classroom."

When funding is available, the program aims to get students (kindergarten to grade 8) out of the classroom

"It's not just about teaching health in health class. It's about having healthy meals, healthy school food policies, and healthy family-community interaction in our schools." – Emily Doyle

RIGHT TIME... RIGHT PLACE

Part of the Harris Centre's mandate is to bring people, ideas and resources together – sometimes this is just a matter of orchestrating a little 'right time, right place' magic. Here's an example:

In 2011, at a Harris Centre regional workshop, Blanford Billard, a resident of Isle aux Morts, suggested that a play about a significant heroine from the area, Ann Harvey, be written and staged to increase tourism to the region.

"It's the little everyday stories that could make the bigger play really work," said Mr. Billard

> The Harris Centre's Amy Tucker then included this idea in the Yaffle Your Next Project feature in the *Gazette*, Memorial's newspaper:

Blanford Billard

photo courtesy of the Gulf News)

"Mr. Billard is looking for someone from Memorial to research and write a theatre piece that could form the cornerstone of a tourism attraction in Isle aux Morts and on the southwest coast. Interested in learning more about this project? Think you could help?"

Amy Tucker, knowledge mobilization co-ordinator (photo by: Bojan Fürst) Dr. Jamie Skidmore, from Memorial's Department of English, and a playwright (wouldn't you know!), happened to read that article and contacted Amy. "The first thing that attracted me to this project was that a Newfoundland community was seeking help that I thought I could provide," said Dr. Skidmore

Dr. Skidmore then submitted an application to the Harris Centre's Applied Research Fund, and received funding to research and write the play. With some additional help from the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, Dr. Skidmore was able to conduct further consultations in the community to ensure the play was truly representative of Isle aux Morts' historic heroine.

"Writing for the community made me pretty nervous, because I didn't want to disappoint them. Although I'm the playwright, we wanted this to be a community collaboration and event."



Dr. Jamie Skidmore in Isle aux Morts with his daughter Leila Procter and Newfoundland dogs Annie and Charlie. (photo by: Dr. Andrea Procter)



(from the left) Lesley Dove Smith, Darren Ivany, and Emily Locke rehearsing The Song of the Mermaid on stage in Cupids. (photo by: Perin Squires)

Dr. Skidmore's play, Song of the Mermaid, was presented eight times in Isle aux Morts over three weekends this past July. Over 300 people came out to see the play in a town of only 600. The show was also presented in Port aux Basques, St. John's, Grand Bank, Clarenville and Cupids – to an additional 351 people.

"It always begins with bringing more art into the community and leaving something behind. I think this is one of the wonderful things about MUN and the Harris Centre. We really are a university involved with our province in any way possible." – Dr. Skidmore **Objective 2.1:** Create a culture throughout Memorial that values, facilitates and celebrates public engagement.

WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GET ENGAGED ON THE FIRST DATE?

When the Public Engagement Framework launched in February 2013, Memorial units, including the Harris Centre, were asked to participate in presenting a week of events called Engage Memorial Week.

We were happy to join in, and figured that it might be a nice opportunity to develop some programming that could relate directly to students. Looking at the calendar, we realized that the event would take place the day after Valentine's Day: and so, public engagement speed dating was born. We weren't out to make love connections though – public engagement was the name of our game. The concept was simple – give Memorial students the opportunity to meet directly with decision-makers from a wide range of sectors. We invited people from the arts, business, governments, non-profit organizations and more, and before long, had a list of 30 dynamic individuals eager to join in.

From there, students, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, were invited to take their pick of the list, selecting the people they were most interested in meeting.

"I had some fun and feel I made a small difference with a few students." - public partner participant The event itself was loud, fun and full of energy. Each public partner was assigned a table, with the students moving from date to date. It's amazing the ground you can cover in 15 minutes! In fact, over 95 percent of the students and public partners who participated reported making connections that may lead to further engagement activities.

We'll be running the event again this year – interested in participating? Email Amy at amy.tucker@mun.ca. "This event had a great impact on my own process when looking at what and where I want to be upon graduation." - student participant

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Objective 1.4: Mobilize knowledge, expertise and resources in support of innovation and economic diversification.

BALANCING THE BOOM:

Harris Centre Regional Workshop discusses challenges and opportunities in Labrador West.

Labrador West is a community at the centre of a boom. It's an interesting position to be in, especially for a relatively rural community: however, as with most things, with opportunities come challenges. In fact, balancing the benefits of the boom with the new challenges that have arrived as a result was one of the main issues raised by the local committee that helped us plan our March regional workshop in the community.

All said and done, about 45 people attended the full day event, including 19 Memorial participants and 26 individuals representing community-based and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, municipalities, and provincial and federal government departments.

During the morning and afternoon sessions, the participants broke into three groups to discuss themes developed by the local organizing committee: Social and Municipal Impacts of a Booming Economy, Labour Market Development, and Fostering Sustainable and Resilient Communities. Along with sharing Memorial's existing projects and partnerships in the region, the groups brainstormed ideas for collaborative projects between Memorial and the community. In total, 32 possible projects were suggested. Following the workshop, the ideas were shared in Yaffle.ca and are currently being brokered through the university to find individuals willing to take them on. Several projects and developments are already in the works as a result of the Labrador West workshop including a study of the experiences of immigrants to the region, supervisory training for foremen and the inclusion of Labrador West representation on the Atlantic Canada Transportation Forum, 2014.

The Harris Centre also held regional workshops in Port Aux Basques, Springdale and Marystown this year. To see our upcoming workshops visit us at www.mun.ca/harriscentre/regionalworkshops.

THE HARRIS CENTRE TEAM



The Harris Centre team: (from left to right) Cindy Andrews (administrative staff specialist), Jennifer Adams (manager, Operations), Rob Greenwood (executive director), Mike Clair (associate director, Public Policy), John Duff (Yaffle projects co-ordinator), Amy Poole (intermediate secretary), Cathy Newhook (communications co-ordinator), Bojan Fürst (manager, Knowledge Mobilization), Amy Tucker (Knowledge Mobilization co-ordinator), Lisa Charlong (Yaffle project manager), Max Hu (senior programmer analyst, Yaffle), Morgan Murray (Public Policy intern), Rebecca Cohoe (communications co-ordinator) (photo by: Bojan Fürst)



The Harris Centre is named for the late Dr. Leslie Harris, scholar, leader and past-president of Memorial University. Known for his integrity, his independence, and his love of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dr. Harris is not just a namesake, but a model for our activities. We work every

day to live up to his values of integrity and independence, while making a practical contribution to the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Harris Centre truly believes in Memorial's responsibility to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Led by our chair, Sheila Downer (above), our advisory board is made up of leaders from all across the province and Canada, including industry partners, governments, non-profit organizations and educational institutions. The group meets twice yearly to advise the Harris Centre on a range of issues, including strategic themes, opportunities, regional policy and development capacity-building and funding.

For a full listing of the members of the Harris Centre Advisory Board, please visit our website at www.mun.ca/harriscentre.



THE HARRIS CENTRE

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