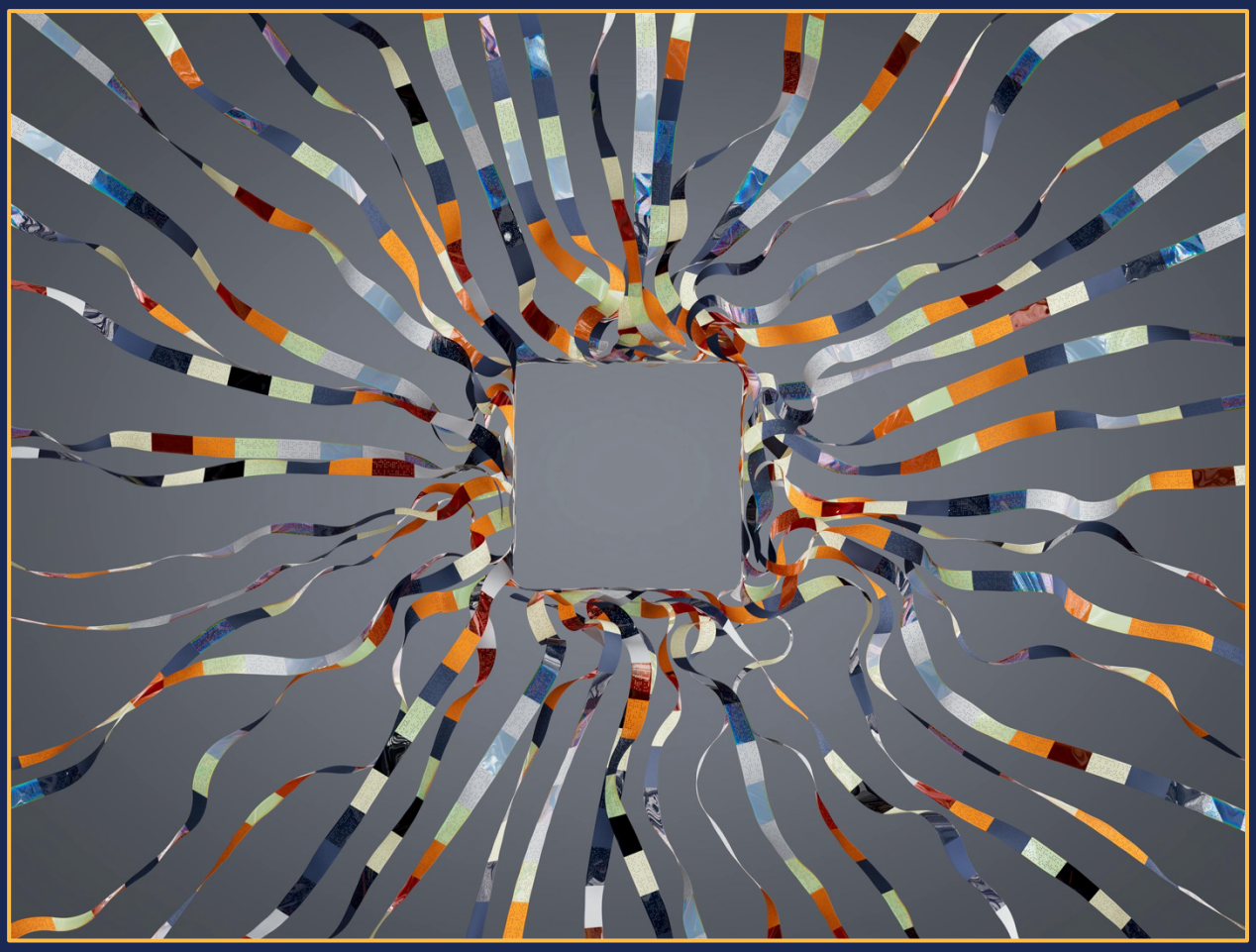
COMMUNITY INNOVATION AND IMPACT IN UNIVERSITY-BASED SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND ARTS

REPORT AND DISCUSSION PAPER



the la COLLABORATIVE

Community Innovation and Impact in University-based Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts

AUTHORS

Sandra Lapointe, Shannon Boss,
Kathryn S. Plaisance & Christian Dagenais

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Catherine Klausen

Marie-Hélène B-Hardy

Stephen Ross

PUBLICATION

FIRST, 2024

The/La Collaborative is a multi-institutional, cross-sectoral network led from McMaster University. The/La Collaborative's objective is to steer social and human research and skills where they are most needed by creating new models of knowledge mobilization and talent-building for innovation and social impact that focus on the needs and interests of community partners. The/La Collaborative is a part of McMaster University which is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudeno-saunee nations, and within the lands protected by the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum agreement. This report was made possible by an Insight Grant of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

yourcollaborative.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS

- Universities are generally perceived to value community innovation and impact. But their ability to develop and implement strategies to turn aspiration into practice is believed to be lacking.

- Deans, Chairs and other academic leaders are vastly more likely to agree, and SSHA faculty members overwhelmingly more likely to disagree that community innovation and impact are adequately supported and that their institutions are intentional about their community innovation and impact strategy. This discrepancy needs to be explained.

- Incentives available around community innovation and impact are perceived to be insufficient. Even where such incentives exist, they do not align with what actually motivates SSHA researchers to contribute to positive societal change.

- Academic culture is perceived to be SSHA's chief barrier to contributing to community innovation and impact.

- Researchers in SSHA generally participate in community innovation and impact projects because of a personal commitment to their community rather than because practices that lead to community innovation and impact are institutionalized. Universities are missing a valuable opportunity to create a sense of community around institutional goals while increasing the risk of inequity among faculty.

- Communications around institutional services that support community innovation and impact, when they are available, is generally deficient.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The gap between universities' stated vision for community innovation and impact and its actual implementation needs to be bridged. Universities that value practices that drive community innovation and impact need to institutionalize them.
- Universities claiming a commitment to community and social innovation should not be counting on researchers' individual sense of purpose or civic duty to fulfil it. Community innovation and impact need to be implemented through relevant guidelines and policies.
- Proper incentives, recognition and reward structures are needed to create fruitful and equitable conditions. Including contribution to community innovation and impact, i.e., community-focused knowledge mobilization activities amongst the criteria in tenure, promotion and merit evaluation frameworks is essential, especially from an equity perspective.
- External funding is a powerful incentive, but the current practices of scholars fail to meet the needs of communities. To increase universities' contribution to community impact and innovation, funders must make a deliberate effort to understand the sort of impact that is needed, the practices that would support it, and the accountability structures that will drive success.
- Federal and provincial grant programs must clearly be designed to support impact and innovation in the community. Such programs need to be separate from those supporting research on communities.
- We need shared approaches to impact assessment, and funding bodies should mandate the adoption of broader frameworks and more flexible ways to assess community impact and innovation. To demonstrate the value of community-focused SSHA in a landscape where institutional priorities shift and are sometimes inconsistent, efforts need to be made to both clearly articulate what successful community innovation looks like and set expectations regarding accountability.

GLOSSARY

Capacity: The ability of an organization to perform work, or the level of an organization's capability to deliver services, programs, and products as part of fulfilling its mandate or mission.

EDI: An abbreviation for: 'equity, diversity and inclusion'.

Experiential Learning: The acquisition of knowledge and skills through practice and upon reflection of a period of engagement, observation, and/or immersion. 'Experiential learning' and 'work-integrated learning' are often used interchangeably. An experiential-learning partnership is a community-based collaboration between an organization and a higher education institution that revolves around the hosting, facilitating, and supporting of one or more students involved, for instance, in program, service, or project delivery.

HQP: Highly qualified personnel in this context refers to those having received advanced training at the graduate, MA or Ph.D., level in any academic discipline.

Innovation Process: A series of actions or steps designed to create, improve, or implement ways of doing, framing, knowing, or thinking, intended to create new value.

Innovation: Innovation is the outcome of knowledge use: at the most general level, what leads to innovation is a series of actions or steps designed to create, improve, apply, or implement knowledge, research, evidence, and/or expertise to new ways of doing, framing, knowing, or thinking, and intended to create new value.

- **Community Innovation**: The outcome or knowledge use in the community. See also social innovation.

Knowledge Mobilization: 'Knowledge mobilization' is an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of activities relating to the production and use of knowledge, including, but not limited to, knowledge produced through research. These activities take various forms: synthesis, dissemination, transfer, exchange and co-creation.

Knowledge Use: A wide range of activities relating to the application of various forms of knowledge, research and expertise. Knowledge, research and expertise stem from a number of contexts that include higher education research, but also Indigenous knowledge, and R&D initiatives across government, nonprofit and industry. What this means is that knowledge, research and expertise are not the prerogative of any specific

type of institution in the innovation ecosystem, although obviously, universities and colleges tend to see it as defining at least part of their mission.

Research and Development (R&D): The planned creative work aimed at new knowledge or developing new and significantly improved goods, programs and services. This includes both basic research and applied research and development; the latter is the use of research and practical experience to produce new or significantly improved goods, programs, services, or processes.

Skill: An aptitude, competency, or ability broadly construed.

- **Foundational skill**: A broad range of abilities and knowledge understood to be essential to employability and citizenship, and generally associated with social and emotional intelligence as well as cognitive literacy. They include critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, self-management, intercultural competence and effective communication.
- **Technical skill**: A domain-specific skill that is usually associated with applied training.

Social impact: is predicated on specific activities or outputs (e.g., programs, services) and their outcomes. An organization's social impact is the measurable outcome of its products, programs, services, etc. that are created and delivered to address a specific social need.

Social innovation: The phrase "social innovation" is used in multiple contexts to refer to new ideas, services, processes, or frameworks intended to meet social needs or create impact for the public benefit as well as those involved in addressing wicked problems that are rooted in systemic issues. Here we make a distinction between **innovation for social impact** in the social sector that follows traditional logics and **innovation for social transformation**, which targets systemic societal issues.

Social sector: An umbrella term denoting the activities of organizations that identify with and operate for the public benefit, including co-operatives, non-profits, registered charities, social enterprises/B corporations, or unincorporated grassroots or community groups. It is sometimes referred to as the "third sector", in contrast to what has traditionally been labeled the private and public sectors. Recently, the emergence of "social enterprise", i.e., a for-profit business model embracing social and/or environmental goals, has made traditional boundaries between sectors in mixed economies more porous.

Talent: In this context, 'talent' means the same as 'HQP': those with skills acquired as part of advanced (graduate, MA, Ph.D.) training in any academic discipline.

REPORT*

Aims and Method

In this report, we present and discuss the results of a survey we conducted as part of a multi-stage study of academic practices in the social sciences, humanities and arts (SSHA) related to impact on non-academic and non-commercial communities. Our aim was to get a sense of the value placed on community-focused work, the level of support for it, and the degree to which it is perceived to be needed and actually impactful. Specifically, we wanted to understand how Canadian researchers and academic leaders perceive their individual and institutional capacity for community innovation and impact. The survey was open to all those working in universities, but recruitment intentionally aimed to collect input from those in SSHA faculties, including those in leadership roles and/or those who manage knowledge mobilization or community-engagement offices. We received complete responses from 90 participants. (See Appendix B for additional details about the methodology).

Prelude. What is community innovation and impact?

Community innovation and impact, and the creation of suitable knowledge mobilization strategies in the social sciences, humanities and arts (SSHA), is a relatively recent concern in the Canadian post-secondary landscape. Practices haven't yet had time to mature. We wanted to gather the evidence needed to draw a picture of the current state of community-focused knowledge mobilization in SSHA, as well as document academics' perceptions of the practices and approaches that are meant to drive and/or end up hindering social innovation and impact.

The phrase 'Community-focused knowledge mobilization' is a mouthful. But unlike other terms such as 'community engagement' or 'engaged research', 'community-focused knowledge mobilization in SSHA' has the advantage of being broad and value neutral enough—by contrast 'engagement' and its cognates are not—to connote the widest possible range of SSHA scholarly activities much beyond research.

Building on an inventory of community-focused initiatives in Canadian SSHA (Lapointe & Boss, 2023), in what follows we speak of community innovation and impact as the purpose of community-focused knowledge mobilization, and our specific target are the social sciences, humanities and arts (SSHA).

Community impact may arise through any scholarly activity designed to bolster non-academic uses of SSHA knowledge and, when it is successful, it often results in innovation, i.e., new ways of

* With thanks to Karen Benzies for her careful review and helpful comments.

doing and/or thinking. Benneworth *et al*. (2020) and Kumari *et al*. (2019) provide a comprehensive overview of the practices that drive community innovation impact. The term they use is 'co-creation for social innovation'. These practices include:

- Knowledge translation, exchange and brokering
- Evidence support for decision-making in policy and beyond
- Experiential learning
- Research partnerships
- Research shops
- Innovation-, living- and design-labs
- Program evaluation partnerships
- Public scholarship
- Community-engagement

In this sense, community innovation and impact denotes a range of non-linear and overlapping processes, ideally couched in terms of co-creation approaches, in which design and implementation involve stakeholder input as much as possible relative to the objectives.

"Community-engagement" is included in the list above, but we made an effort, in the data collection phase, not to use the term unless it was to refer to specific initiatives that bear that name (e.g., 'community-engagement offices'). Some forms of knowledge mobilization may be described as engaged or as engaging the community in some specific ways. However, the boundaries of the concept of engagement are eminently vague. 'Community-focused knowledge mobilization' and 'community innovation and impact' seemed to come with a lesser load of derivative connotation and refer more generally and agnostically to any activity whose purpose is to ensure knowledge produced through new research and/or knowledge that is already available in universities is used to increase the well-being of communities. Whatever name they are given, these practices are at the heart of SSHA's *raison d'être* and of universities' "third mission": beyond research and training, universities are expected to contribute to economic and social prosperity by producing talent and knowledge that can be used to address emerging societal issues and address socio-technological challenges through innovation. SSHA's contribution to the third mission is still vastly aspirational, and if universities are to bolster community innovation and impact, this needs to change.

Do universities put their money where their mouth is?

Just like any other aspect of academic activity, to be successful, community innovation and impact thrives best on a strategic vision that it is supported by apt organizational policies and infrastructure, as well as being adequately resourced, incentivised and rewarded. There is cause

for concern when an academic pursuit is said to be valued but does not actually benefit from material institutional support. In such cases, it is reasonable to assume that there is a gap between a university's vision and the implementation of their community innovation and impact strategy.

Academic impact is more valued than community innovation and impact

Our survey suggests there is a widespread gap between Canadian universities' aspirations toward community innovation and impact and the institutionalization of the relevant strategies. Assuredly, SSHA stakeholders seem overwhelmingly willing to agree to say that their institution values community innovation and impact. This is consistent with the fact that many universities have recently developed community impact strategies and plans. However, strategic planning is not a strategy until it turns into action.

And indeed, a conflicting picture emerges in responses to questions that unpack what "valuing community-focused knowledge mobilization" actually means. For instance, while the vast majority of those we asked agree with the statement that their institution values community-focused knowledge mobilization (93% agree or strongly agree), far fewer (66%) agree their institution values community-focused knowledge mobilization *as much as* traditional scholarly activities (e.g., publishing research and presenting at conferences) (Figure 1).

Universities are failing to institutionalize community innovation and impact

Significantly, participants' attitudes when it comes to evaluating their university's ability to institutionalize practices that support community impact and innovation provides even sterner evidence of the rift between discourse and practice (Figure 1). 44% of survey participants either strongly disagreed (7%) or disagreed (37%) with the claim that community-focused knowledge mobilization is heavily incentivised (32% were neutral) and more than half (53%) were unwilling to agree that their institution is intentional about deploying strategies to create an ecosystem where knowledge is consistently mobilized for impact in the community (19% disagree, 34% are neutral). Likewise, a non-negligible proportion of participants disagree that their institutions' tenure criteria include community-focused engagement and knowledge mobilization (36%) or that it properly weights knowledge mobilization activities in their hiring processes (24%).

This is all the more interesting given that participants generally believe that there is demand for SSHA expertise and that engaging in community-focused knowledge mobilization extends the impact of their research (Figure 1).

Admittedly, one might argue that in spite of evidence that supports the idea of a strategic vision/implementation gap, the picture is not so grim for Canadian SSHA knowledge mobilization since, overall, attitudes are generally more on the positive than on the negative side. But we have good reasons to pause: the data we collected indicates consistent discrepancies between the attitudes of SSHA faculty members and the attitudes of those in university leadership roles. Faculty members are far less enthusiastic than those in leadership positions.[1]

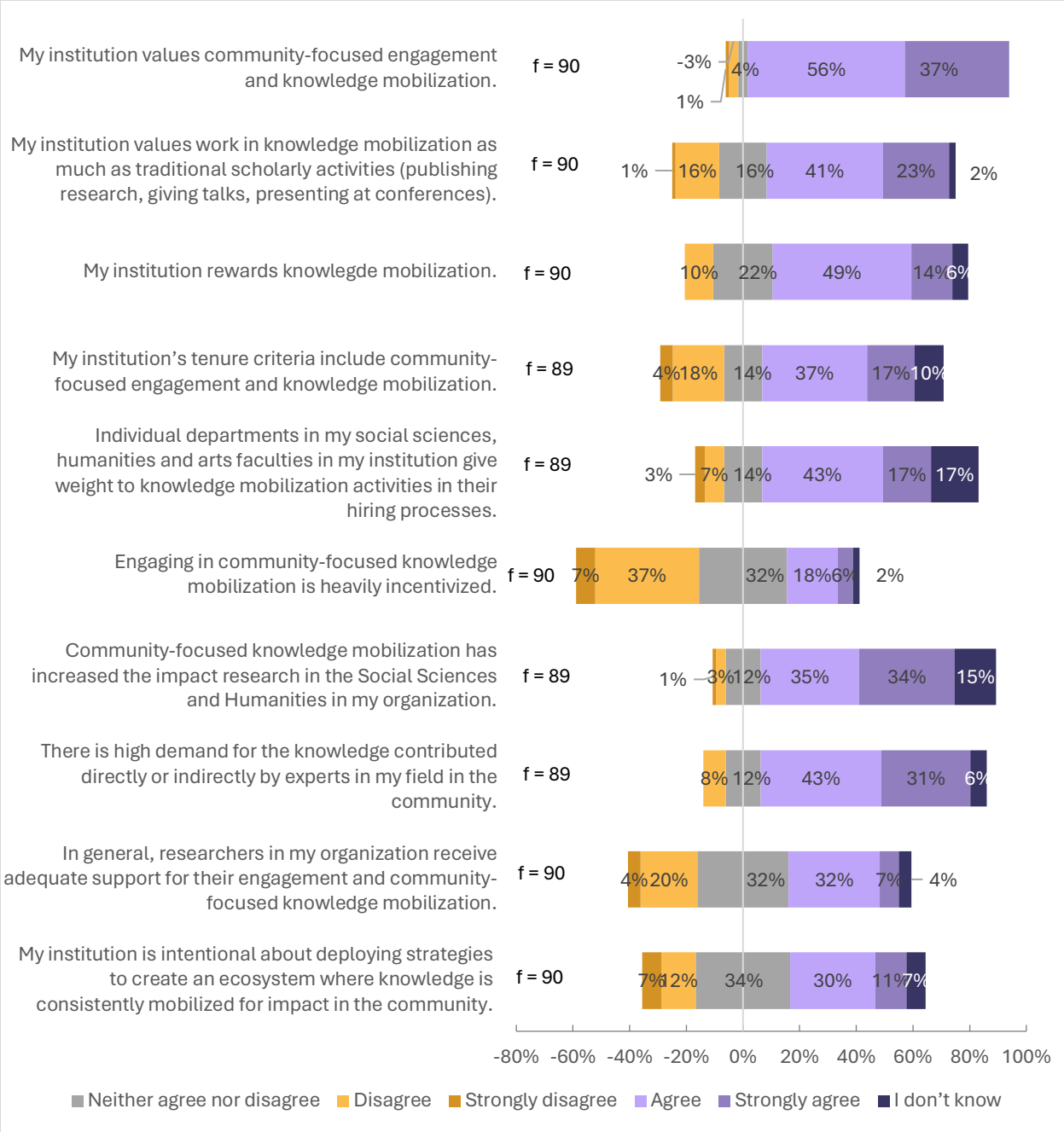


Figure 1. Needs, Interest and Value of Community-Focused knowledge mobilization (frequency, n=90).

SSHA faculty members' attitudes toward their university's institutional strategies, practices and policies around knowledge mobilization are consistently at least twice as negative, and more often than not, three or four times as negative as those in position of leaderships. In those cases, the attitude of SSHA leaders was also significantly more explicitly positive. The only point on which SSHA faculty members and leadership seem to agree and disagree to roughly the same extent concerns the relative value ascribed to community innovation and impact in comparison to academic impact. (Figure A1).

The discrepancy is most visible in attitudes that directly concern institutional practices and policies around knowledge mobilization, such as the inclusion of community-focused knowledge mobilization activities in tenure criteria (Figure 2), support provided (Figure 3), the systematic implementation of strategies that promote community innovation and impact (Figure 4) and the weight of incentives (Figure 5).

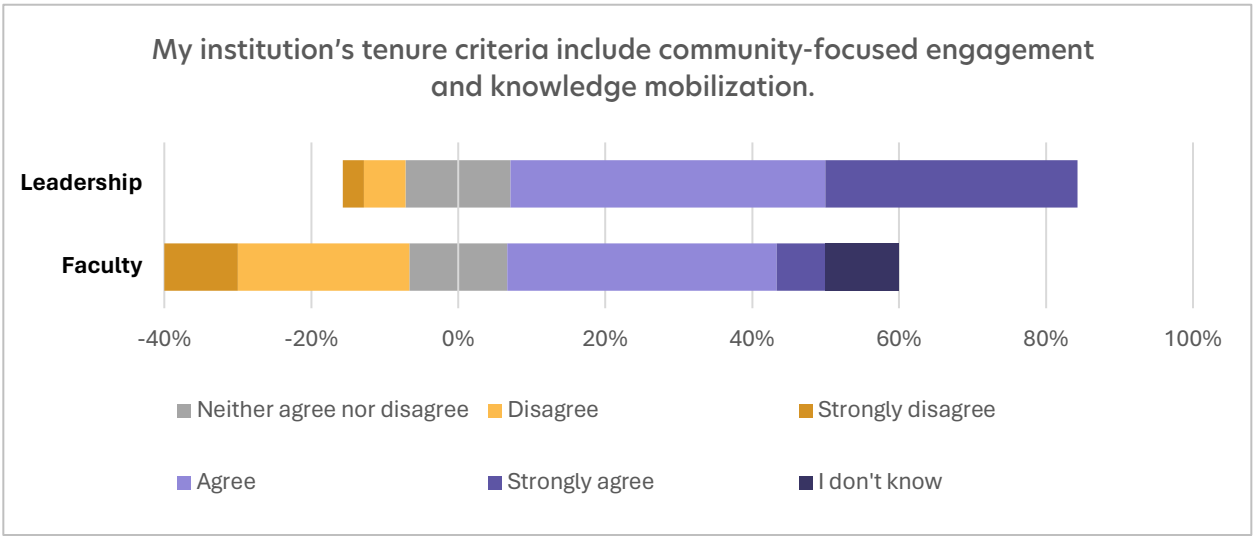


Figure 2. Comparison between leadership and faculty's perception of whether the tenure criteria at their institution includes community-focused engagement and knowledge mobilization activities (n1 = 36; n2 = 30).

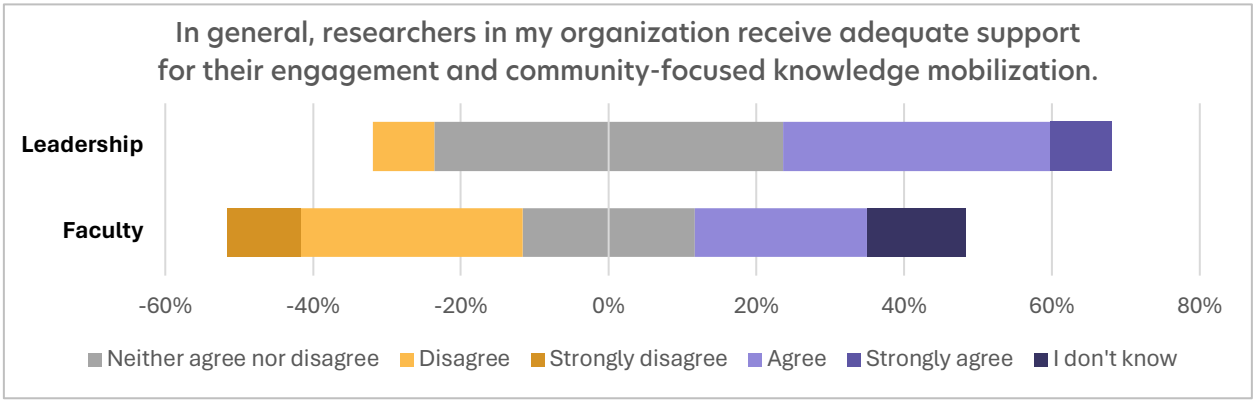


Figure 3. Comparison between leadership and faculty's perception of whether researchers receive adequate support for community-focused knowledge mobilization activities in their institution (n1 = 36; n2 = 30).

The discrepancy between the attitudes of faculty members and university leadership extends to the proportion of neutral responses. It's common methodological wisdom to assume that subjective evaluation questions that generate a high proportion of neutral responses were unclear, and Figure 1 suggests that neutral responses are close to 1/3 in at least 3 cases. However, our cross-tabular analysis shows that participants in leadership positions were far more likely than faculty members to answer 'neither agree nor disagree' (see Figures 2-5; A1). But this result ought to be especially puzzling since it suggests that many of those in leadership positions are willing to admit 'not knowing' the answer to questions on institutional facts that pertain directly to their roles. We return to this in the discussion.

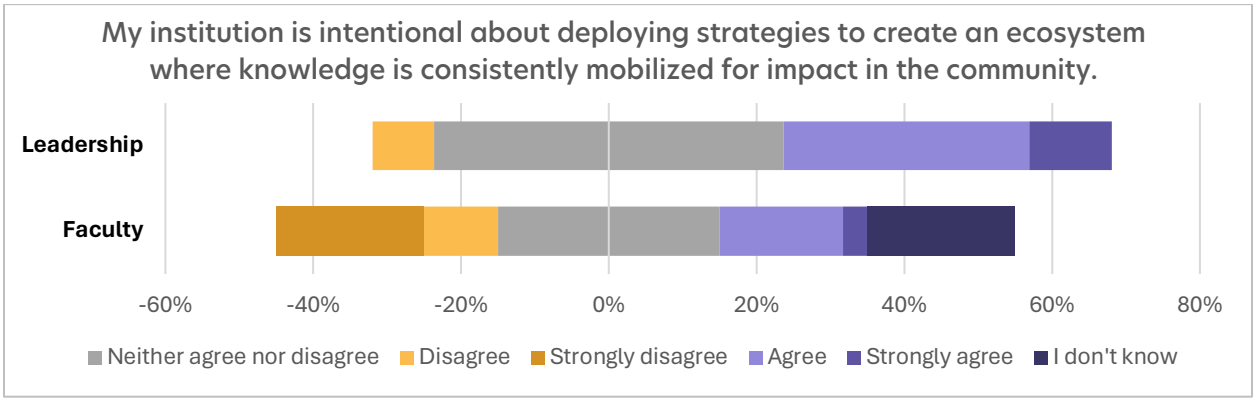


Figure 4. Comparison between leadership and faculty's perception of whether their institution is intentional about creating an ecosystem supportive of knowledge mobilization (n1 = 36; n2 = 30).

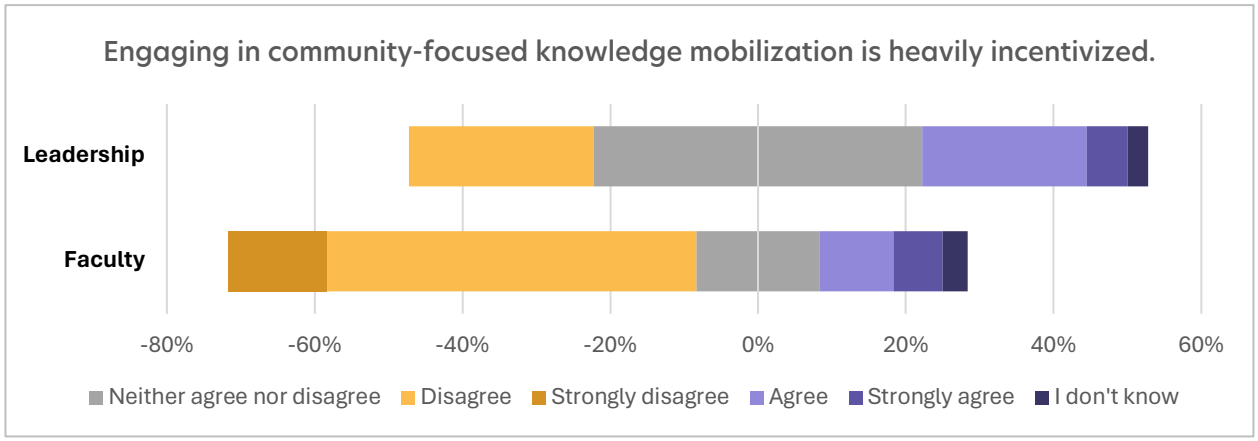


Figure 5. Comparison between leadership and faculty's perception of whether community-focused knowledge mobilization is incentivized in their institution (n1 = 36; n2 = 30).

Failure to Connect

It is reasonable to assume that participants' perception of institutional commitments, culture and support for community innovation and impact could be connected to their access to the relevant institutional resources and services. The distribution of such services across Canadian universities is quite uneven.

Interestingly, access to institutionalized support in the form of a community-engagement office or knowledge mobilization unit or their equivalent is not a function of the university's size. Our *Inventory* (Lapointe & Boss 2023) suggests that the likelihood of such services seems to be highest in very big universities (50k enrolled students or more) in mid-size universities (30-40k enrolled students) and in small universities (10-20K). In big universities (40-50K) and smaller universities (20-30K) the ratio is much lower. Interestingly, in very small universities (<1K-10K) which, according to our *Inventory,* are often comparatively more successful than larger ones at generating community partnerships, centralized community-engagement and knowledge mobilization units services seem to be comparatively rare (Figure 6).[2]

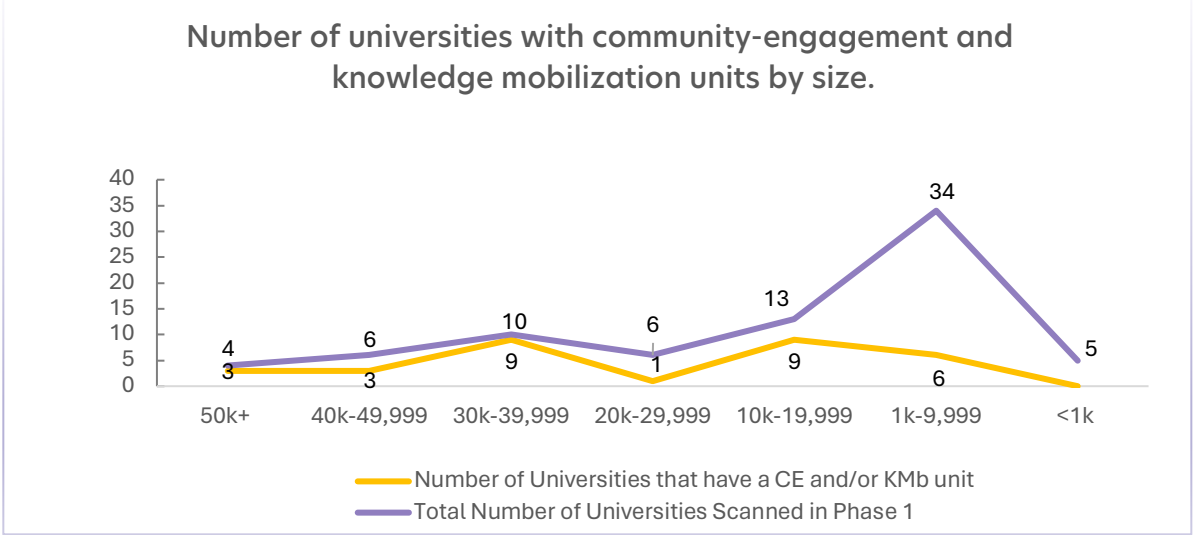


Figure 6. Comparison of universities that do and do not have community-engagement or knowledge mobilization units by enrolment. Enrolment numbers are based on data collected by Statistics Canada (2023b).

Access to opportunities is also a matter of adequate communication. Understandably, it's difficult to enjoy the full benefits of a service one does not know exists. We asked participants whether their institution has a community-engagement office and whether it has a knowledge mobilization unit. We then compared the responses to the actual state of affairs at the time of the survey (Figure 7).[3]

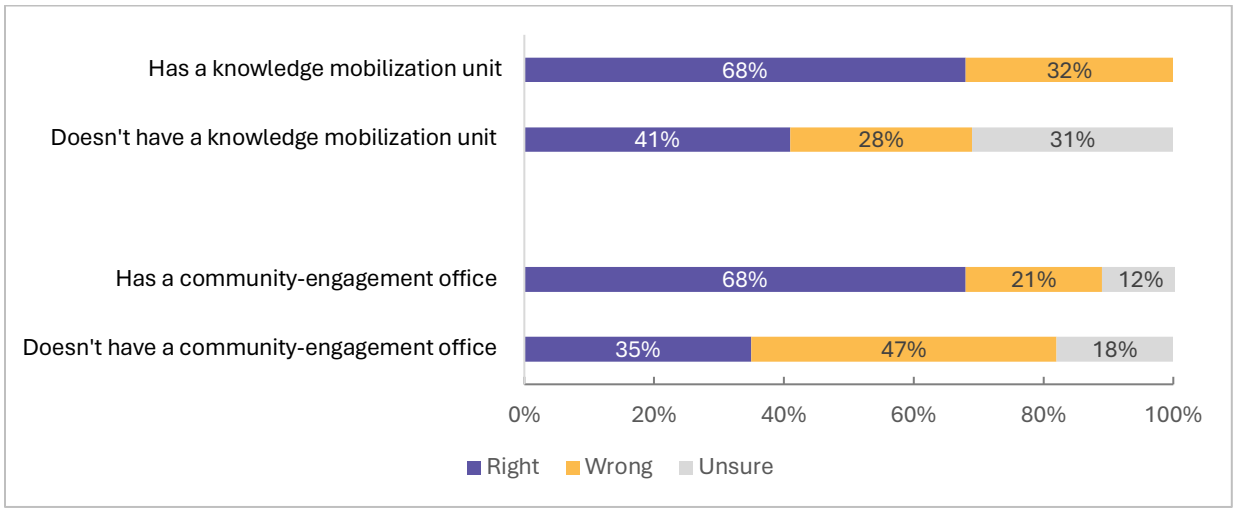


Figure 7. Participants' degree of accuracy in assessing whether their university has a community-engagement office or knowledge mobilization office (n1 = 51; n2=51).

The data indicates considerable knowledge gaps about what support is or isn't available. A desirability bias was expected to generate false positives in universities where the services are not available. (Figure 7). But, the rate of those who believed falsely that their university does not have a knowledge mobilization or a community-engagement unit or didn't know whether it did was also significant (Figure 7). This information gap could be symptomatic of the overall low levels of resources allocated to community innovation and impact. Plausibly, it could also be a consequence of the fact that academics' attention is overwhelmingly absorbed by... academia.

Academic culture remains the main obstacle to community innovation and impact

SSHA stakeholders who participated in our survey ranked academic culture the highest among barriers to community-focused knowledge mobilization (Figure 8).[4] It was followed closely by time and the lack of incentives/recognition.

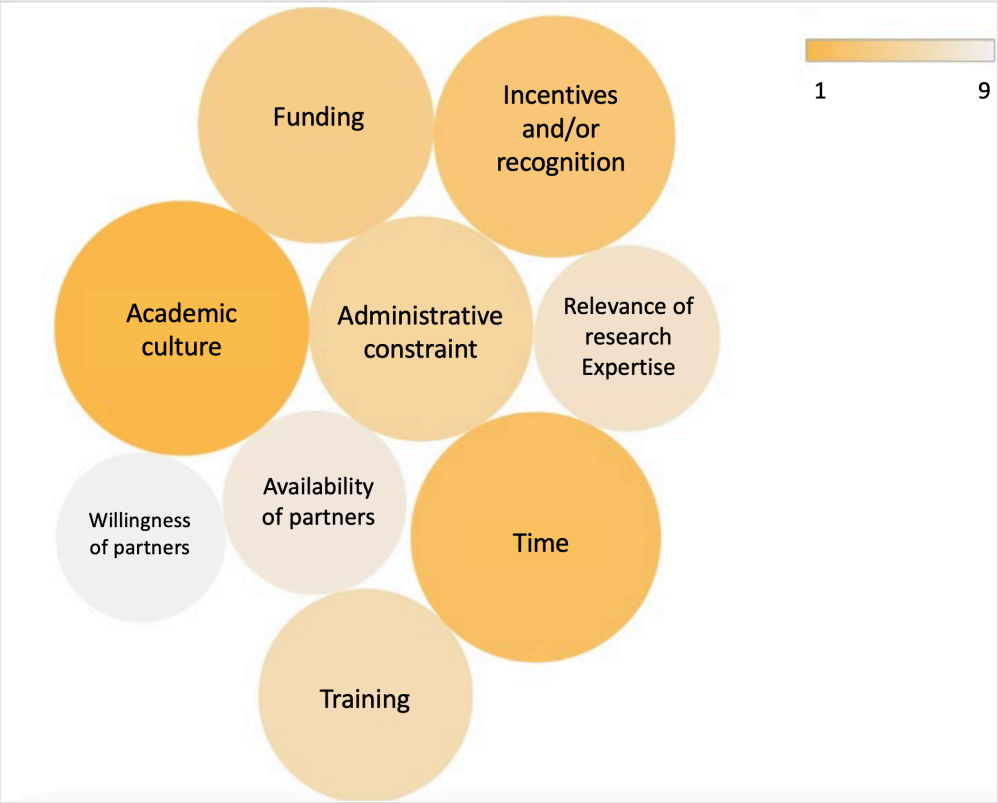


Figure 8. Weighted ranking of responses to "What do you think are the main barriers to community-focused knowledge mobilization in the social sciences and humanities?" (n = 86).

Interestingly, training and relevance of expertise were ranked at the bottom, just before the unavailability and/or unwillingness of potential partners. This is interesting, and could be explained by a double bias: academic researchers both underestimate the complexity of the skills required for community innovation and impact and/or overestimate the extent to which they possess those skills. Participants' comments did evoke that lack of training, support and resources for this type of work constitutes an impediment. And while some participants mentioned a dearth of efforts around communication as well as the unavailability of clear guidance and models for best practices, the "publish and perish" culture was cited as the main culprit.

Personal commitment is the primary motivation

What motivates participants when it comes to community-focused knowledge mobilization revolves around four themes:

- Commitment to community
- Commitment to university's mission
- Benefit to one's learners
- Benefit to one's career

A sense of belonging to the community was ranked as the top motivation for community-focused knowledge mobilization, followed, in order of ranking, by positive impact on students, career rewards/incentives and fulfilling the university's mandate. (Figure 9).

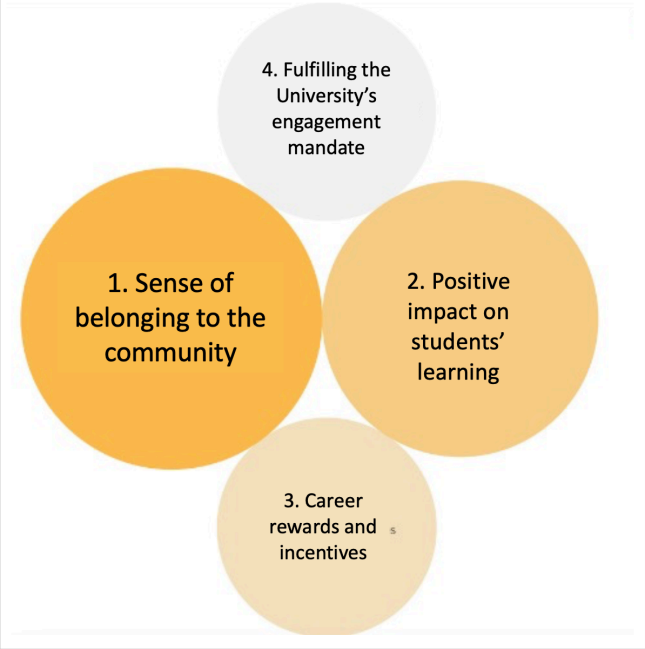


Figure 9. Weighted ranking of responses to "What do you think are the primary motivations of those who engage in community-focused knowledge mobilization?" (n = 84).

Over two thirds of those who left comments in connection to motivations (n=36) made a point to specify that the primary motivation for doing community-engaged should be framed in terms of "commitment" to community, rather than a mere "sense of belonging", thus emphasizing the ethical and/or normative dimension of their motivations.[5] They evoked the desire to positively impact their community and described a sense of responsibility to their communities. Since 'fulfilling the university's community engagement mandate' was ranked lowest, it would seem that participants clearly distinguish their personal ethical commitment to the community from their institution's mission, and that they see the former as a primary motivation. This raises interesting questions such as: Would more alignment between individual and institutional commitments to community be desirable, and what would it look like?

DISCUSSION

The current state of affairs

Universities are increasingly keen to be perceived as supporting community innovation and impact—often around "community-engagement" initiatives—but levels of institutional support remain inadequate (Cain *et al*., 2018; Phipps *et al*., 2012; Provencal, 2009; Provencal, 2011). Our data is evidence for the tension between the stated value of community-focused knowledge mobilization in Canadian universities and the perceived levels of support, rewards and incentives for researchers who pursue it. Ultimately, the general sentiment is that support and incentives to mobilize university-grown knowledge to contribute to innovation and impact in the community are inadequate, and this calls for action.

Researchers are cognizant that universities' expectations around community innovation and impact are growing, as is the demand in their communities (Olmos-Penuela *et al*., 2014; Provencal, 2011). But these new pressures clash with the fact that traditional scholarly outputs are still prioritized over knowledge mobilization outputs in tenure, promotion, and hiring practices, reducing the incentives to pursue them (Cain *et al*., 2018; Provencal, 2009; Provencal, 2011; Plaisance *et al*., 2019). In addition, the existence of community-engagement offices and knowledge mobilization units does not always translate into greater institutional support (Cain *et al*., 2018), at least in part because faculty members are often unaware of their services, as our data show.

Other factors tend to compound the issue, such as lack of time, training, and the difficulty establishing relationships required for community-focused work (Malik, 2016; Provencal, 2011). What is more, the fact that issues around impact assessment methodologies for SSHA are deficient, and, in their absence, makes justifying investment in community innovation and impact initiative an arduous task (Hayden *et al*., 2018; Kenyon, 2014; Olmos-Penuela *et al*., 2014; Plaisance *et al*., 2021).

But the way forward is clear. Reinforcing support, creating new incentives and reward mechanisms at the institutional level and enhancing communications about available resources for community-focused knowledge mobilization are key to increasing universities' contribution to innovation and impact in the community (Bayuo *et al.,* 2020).

Let's make sure perceptions are aligned

Those in positions of leadership at various administrative levels are presumably in the best position to ensure that relevant criteria are included in frameworks used to evaluate tenure, promotion and merit, for instance. However, perceptions of faculty members and administrative leaders when it comes to available support and incentives are widely misaligned. Those occupying leadership positions in universities (both in SSHA faculties and centrally) tend to be more optimistic and/or more uncertain than SSHA faculty members as regards their institution's commitment, support, culture and capacity for community-focused knowledge mobilization.

This is a concern. There are a number of ways to explain the discrepancy between SSHA faculty members and leaders when it comes to their perceptions around the degree to which support and incentives for community-focused knowledge mobilization have been institutionalized.

On the one hand, the data could indicate that SSHA leadership is better informed about available incentives than faculty, presumably because their position gives them privileged access to this sort of information. But this clashes with the fact that in many cases they admit that they 'don't know'.

On the other hand, our data could indicate that SSHA faculty members are better informed about the accessibility of incentives than SSHA leadership. After all, SSHA faculty are in a privileged position to determine which incentives are actually available since they are on the receiving end.

Yet again, the discrepancy could have to do with some form of social desirability bias: Those whose responsibilities are directly connected to the reputation of the university tend to be more optimistic when asked about what they do to support community innovation and impact and/or more cautious to express a negative stance.

Presumably, all universities are keen to provide adequate levels of support for activities that support community innovation and impact. But explaining the misalignment, and more importantly, determining whether or not adequate institutional strategies are being implemented to support community innovation and impact requires an assessment that goes much beyond what a survey can achieve. This assessment would have value on its own, but it should also serve to address the misalignment between SSHA faculty and leadership's perception.

If those in positions of leadership believe falsely that the level of support for community-focused knowledge mobilization is high, they will continue to make decisions about support, incentives and rewards accordingly. Given competing priorities, they might put less weight on creating additional incentives/rewards or even only on the importance of clearly communicating what these incentives and rewards are, both of which are resource-intensive. Universities should take stock, not only to be accountable to the public, but for the purpose of developmental evaluation. [6]

Let's be clear on the difference between research on society and research with and for community

Assuredly, fundamental research is an important aspect of universities' mission, and in order to be pure or fundamental, there has to be no expectation that research produce impact or leads to innovation. But much of the research enterprise that does claim to be geared toward impact, and this includes vast segments of SSHA, is struggling to articulate its theory of change.

This calls for a reassessment of research design and development methods, and stresses the need to identify the practices that work. Co-creation and co-design approaches are increasingly seen as indisputable features of knowledge creation and use for community innovation and impact and are

recognized as epitomizing best practices in research. But co-design and co-creation revolve around collaborative relationships and high levels trust which in turn require time and dedication.

Reconciling community-based relationship-building with teaching schedules, the pressure for academic publication and other service-related responsibilities is, however, often challenging (Malik, 2016; Provencal, 2011). As one participant in our study explained, few in SSHA receive training on how to cultivate meaningful partnerships and many are unsure what these relationships look like or where they would need to start to build them.

Whatever steps we take next should be informed by the idea that community-focused scholarly work is valuable to communities because it is done both *with* and *for* the communities it serves. Community innovation and impact should be clearly contrasted from research *on* society, social actors or social phenomena. This type of research is naturally an ingredient of innovation, impact and knowledge mobilization from campus to community. But community innovation and impact should be driven by co-creation approaches that respond to communities' demands and/or needs around evidence and knowledge, not to researchers' agenda. If academic impact and the creation of new knowledge is the only end-goal of scholarly activity, the pathway to innovation and impact is bound to be dim and narrow.

To achieve success, campus-community partnerships need to be structured by interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral co-creation approaches from design to implementation. But this might require university-based SSHA to agree to transform current scholarly practices and academic paradigms. The transformations this calls for are nothing short of radical.

Let's fund both investigator-led SSHA research AND research for innovation and impact in the community (and make sure funding programs achieve both purposes)

The availability of research funding for campus-community collaborations in SSHA directly supports university-grown community innovation and impact. The Social Sciences Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) is the single most important actor in the Canadian space. Many of SSHRC's programs are designed to bolster knowledge and collaboration across disciplines, institutions and sectors, and their policies have been shown to have direct impacts on how faculty choose to orient and present their research projects (Cain *et al.*, 2018; Naidorf, 2014).

While SSHRC has resolved to strengthen their suite of "Partnership" grants and deepen impact, measuring the quality of connections and degree of impact continues to be difficult (Naidorf, 2014). This, we propose, could be explained by the lack of nuance when it comes to articulating the differences between, on the one hand, traditional research and academic output and, on the other, scholarly activities that are intentionally designed to bolster community innovation and impact.

Lack of clarity as to what is considered to be an effective way to mobilize knowledge toward community innovation and impact affects both the capacity of researchers ideating and designing new projects, as well as the aptitude of committees tasked with assessing them. For instance,

adjudicators can project inadequate expectations on community-focused innovation, e.g., by failing to recognize that the volume of traditional academic output (e.g., journal articles, books) is affected by the considerable time and effort required to develop research partnerships (Provencal, 2011).

This, in turn, raises the question of the relative desirability and relevance of traditional academic research output for the partners, which is crucial to generating reciprocity and value on both sides. But defining impact outside of traditional indicators (e.g., bibliometrics) is arguably especially tricky in SSHA. The persistent challenge of assessing the community-focused knowledge mobilization and impact components of SSHRC-funded research projects raises the question of whether these elements are more cursory than constitutive (Naidorf, 2014).

Assuredly, more funding for science is needed. But the effort to bolster community innovation and impact needs to go beyond providing funding for new and/or more research activities (Cain *et al.*, 2018; Malik, 2016; Naidorf, 2014); it also needs to go beyond current funding models (Cain *et al.*, 2018; Lightowler & Knight 2013; Malik, 2016; Naidorf, 2014). To be effective, research funding must flow through a system shaped by shared criteria, definitions, models, and practices that work to both mitigate the constraints placed upon researchers and create collaborations that genuinely benefit the community partners.

The availability of funding may make little difference if the purpose is unclear, and/or if researchers are persuaded away from activities perceived to be "career limiting" in favour of outputs and outcomes their institutions actually recognize and reward.

For instance, funding dedicated to supporting community-focused scholarly work needs to be structured to accommodate the fact that community innovation and impact require co-design and co-production processes that are inherently collaborative, and in which community partners are seen as contributing expertise and not just "lived experience" (Hawkins *et al.*, 2015; Provencal, 2011; Wenger *et al.*, 2012; Plaisance and Kennedy, 2014).

The lack of recognition of community expertise and the lack of funding to support their indispensable involvement are barriers to the kind of reciprocity that can make the prospect of a research partnership appealing to community partners. What this means is that support for community innovation and impact cannot succeed if the funding available does not actually fund activities from design to implementation, but only research activities that yield academic products.

We need to transform academic culture

In SSHA, community-focused knowledge mobilization is not valued to the same degree as the production of traditional academic and scholarly outputs and many perceive the level of incentives and rewards designed to encourage it as insufficient. Part of the issue could be the lack of institution-wide channels of communication designed to highlight and advertise opportunities around community-engaged work (Cain *et al.*, 2018; Cooper *et al.*, 2018; Phipps and Shapson, 2009; Phipps *et al.*, 2012; Provencal, 2011). Clear and consistent channels of communication are critical for effective networking around community innovation and impact (Klenk and Wyatt, 2015). To be effective, these networks must extend in many directions and connect individual

researchers, community partners, university support structures, and funding bodies (Klenk and Wyatt, 2015; Malik; 2016).

But the issue is not merely communication. Evidence suggests that institutional changes undertaken to increase universities' capacity to contribute to social innovation and impact—such as changes in curriculum—tend to have limited impact. Traditional institutional logics create barriers to change, even where there is a willingness to embrace community partnerships. To be effective, such strategies need to correspond to a shift in academic cultures (Kumari *et al.,* 2019).

Incentives are few, and their effectiveness limited in a context where one of the main barriers to community innovation and impact is cultural (Figure 9). Changing academic culture is a complex challenge, and the difficulty is compounded by the fact that institutional structures are rigid and lack the flexibility to adjust when rapid social and cultural changes is needed (Kumari *et al.,* 2019).

Academic culture is multilayered, and at each level, it is defined by a range of normative factors:

- What is valued.
- What behaviours are rewarded.
- Where and how resources are spent: time, money, attention.
- What rules and expectations guide behaviours.
- When and how people feel safe and supported.
- The stories that convey shared values.
- Perceptions around risk.
- Tolerance toward those who diverge from norms.

These cultural elements congeal around norms that have different faces across disciplines, such as conceptions of what makes for expertise, who actually counts as an expert and how we define community (Wenger *et al.*, 2012). What is stable is the fact that community-focused scholarship challenges traditional understandings of expertise in academia. Likewise, it challenges what counts as "good research". Usable research for the purpose of community impact and innovation is generally at odds with the definitions informing university and funding bodies' policies (Kenyon, 2014; Benneworth *et al.* 2020).

We need institutional rewards and recognition for community innovation and impact

One way to change academic culture is to create and/or to bolster existing incentives and ensure that community innovation and impact activities are rewarded as part of tenure and promotion. One participant in our survey summarised the rational behind this idea, namely as long as it is possible to secure tenure exclusively on the strength of traditional scholarly outputs, other types of

knowledge mobilization activities will remain unlikely. The same can be said of expectations as regards standard practices around performance and/or merit evaluation.

Arguably, one of the main obstacles to the creation of institutional incentives, recognition and rewards has less to do with culture, and more to do with the fact that what SSHA-driven community innovation and impact actually looks like is somewhat vague. It is difficult to create effective incentives for processes whose structure we don't fully understand, and more importantly, about outcomes we don't know how to measure. The consensus is that there are few, if any, clear impact assessment frameworks for scholarly work in the SSHA in general, and that quantitative measures are ineffective (Kenyon, 2014; Naidorf, 2014; Olmos-Penuela *et al.*; 2014; Schulze, 2012; Donovan, 2011; Penfield *et al.*, 2014; Pedersen, 2020). Since universities are increasingly pressured to demonstrate cost-effectiveness and make fiscally responsible commitments in a shifting policy landscape, there is a risk in supporting what cannot be assessed (Cain *et al.*, 2018, p. 46).

We need to understand the real motivations behind community-focused scholarship

Incentives and measures of impact should not go against what motivates academics to show up for work. Just like in any other fields, SSHA needs both investigator-led and mission-driven research. It also needs basic research and innovation-focused research. The orthogonal configuration of these two possibilities makes one thing clear: not everyone needs to be motivated to engage in community innovation. (See Table 1) But the idea that investigator-led research is bound to "trickle down" to support innovation and impact is positively misguided.

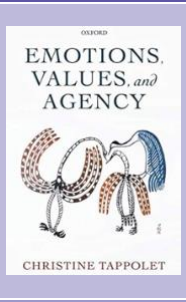
	Investigator-Led	Mission-Driven
Basic Research		
Innovation-Focused Research		

Table 1: Types of Research Initiatives

Knowledge mobilization for community impact and innovation requires research, but research projects aimed at data gathering and other types of research-driven partnerships may fail to generate innovation and impact. That may be ok in the specific context of fundamental research, but fundamental research is not an excuse for the shortcomings of academic cultures.

Universities were never meant to be a space for research to evolve in vacuum.

The good news is that innovation and impact are valued by academics. As we saw, their motivations are not primarily linked to career growth (Klenk and Wyatt, 2015). Many see themselves as driven by the desire to meet the needs of community partners (Figure 9) and describe their motivations in terms of a responsibility to community or a desire to positively impact the community. As such, the motivations of SSHA stakeholders have an ethical dimension

Evoking a personal sense of responsibility, rather than the prospect of career growth to motivate community-focused knowledge mobilization makes sense: in the absence of institutional incentives and facing insufficient institutional support, the perceived value of working with and for community partners has to be derived from something other than the feeling of participating in the success of institutional strategies; a sense of personal purpose is an obvious candidate.

But, contrary to what is suggested by Benneworth *et al*. 2020, appealing to these "intrinsic motivations" to bolster community innovation and impact rather than relying on institutionalized expectations and norms (extrinsic motivation) is not a solution. Fostering a sense of personal responsibility to achieve institutional goals without also providing adequate support and recognition is not a sustainable strategy for community innovation and impact. And it is one that creates equity issues, as we discuss below.

Assuredly, we need to educate emerging researchers, and develop academic narratives in which community innovation and impact has intrinsic value aligns with our conceptions of good scholarship in SSHA. It is in that very sense that, as we saw above, academic cultures need to change. But as long as incentives and institutional conditions remain seemingly unfavourable to community-focused knowledge mobilization activities, efforts toward community innovation and impact in fact go against the institutional grain. Under these incongruous conditions, it would be unreasonable to expect community-focused knowledge mobilization to be more than supererogatory, i.e., above and beyond what is expected as part of academic duties. And this is not only ineffective, it is ethically suspicious.

Institutionalizing community innovation is a matter of equity

If community-focused knowledge mobilization is not perceived to contribute to academic career development, those who cannot incur the risk of diverging from actual institutional academic career growth pathways will not have an equal opportunity to contribute (Valles, 2017; Plaisance *et al*., 2019). In other terms, lack of support and/or of clear guidelines and policies present a risk to equity and diversity: to ensure that everyone has equal access to opportunities connected to community innovation and impact, universities must buttress individual interest with adequate institutional infrastructure and resources.

It is not unusual for researchers with the highest levels of academic publishing to report higher levels of non-academic dissemination compared to those with fewer publications (Cooper *et al.*, 2018; Hawkins *et al.*, 2015), and this is to be expected since early-career researchers and graduate students face the most risk in pursuing scholarly activities that are not institutionalized, and not systematically recognised as part of career growth.

What this means, however, is that the absence of clear institutional criteria recognizing community-focused knowledge mobilization as part of the tenure and promotion evaluation processes creates significant problems in terms of diversity and inclusion.

Community-focused scholarship challenges the traditional understanding of expertise and research in academia. If career growth is associated with traditional incentive, reward and recognition mechanisms, there are risks to pursuing community-focused scholarly activities. Ultimately, community innovation and impact may be risk-neutral only for those more secure in academia, preventing the influx of ideas from a more diverse pool of younger scholars.[7]

FINAL REMARKS

Most researchers start their career hoping to change the world, even only just so slightly. They dream of places where the knowledge they produce is used. Knowledge does not just trickle down, and usability is rarely an accident. The usability of research is vastly increased when knowledge is the result of a concerted, mutual and intentional process that is guided by the input of all stakeholders. A genuine commitment to community innovation and impact is one that starts with research design, i.e. “in the lab”.

On the other hand, innovation and impact can happen through a range of activities that are not research-focused, but research-adjacent, such as experiential learning and implementation-focused partnerships (e.g., innovation labs). In this space, the sky is the limit and the only real obstacle is likely to be a lack of imagination.

The outcomes of community-focused, impact-driving knowledge activities should never, by definition, be merely academic. Admittedly, this might seem rather truistic, but every academic knows how difficult it is to resist the temptation of publishing a journal article over, e.g. the prospect of developing a new resource for a community partner when there isn’t time to do both. Whatever comes next, we need to make sure that community impact and innovation strategies do away with the dilemma.

NOTES

1. See A1 in Appendix for a comparison of participant responses by role on all the questions.

2. See (Lapointe et al., 2023); There are 97 public and private universities in Canada, though the number may vary depending on the source. We used the data from the Council of Miniters of Education of Canada: https://cmec.ca/299/Education-in-Canada-An-Overview/index.html. We chose to exclude colleges from our study. We hypothesized that approaches to knowledge mobilization and community partnerships in higher education institutions that are, by definition, more vocational and less research-focused would be different. At the very least, we did not want to make assumptions about the nature of similarities. We also excluded private universities, satellite campuses and branches of public universities, resulting in a sample size of 78 public universities. We scanned the websites of all SSHA departments and faculties in the 78 public French and English universities across all relevant provinces and territories in Canada (there are no universities in Nunavut and the North Western Territories).

3. Figure A2 in Appendix A. Since we only asked participants who answered the first part of the survey (those who identified themselves as SSHA leadership, senior university leadership, and knowledge mobilization and research services) to indicate their institution, we only have university affiliation information for participants who answered the first part of the survey (e.g., SSHA leadership, senior university leadership, and knowledge mobilization and research services). This means that we were only able to verify the information for a sub-sample of answers, i.e., 50/89 for “Does your institution have a CE unit? and 50/88 for “Does your institution have a Kmb unit?”

4. To calculate the weighted averages, we assigned each rank position a weight (Bhattacherjee, 2012). Rank 1 was weighted at 1, rank 2 at 2, and so on. We multiplied the number of responses for each item on the list at each ranking by the assigned weight. For example, 31 out of 77 participants selected academic culture as the first ranked barrier so we multiplied 31 by 1 to get a ranked weight of 31. Only 2 participants selected ‘academic culture’ for the last (9th) ranked position, so we multiplied 2 by 9 to get a ranked weight of 18. We repeated this for each item across all the rankings. For each item on the list, we then added the result of these multiplications across their rankings and then divided it by the total number of responses for a particular item across all the rankings. For “academic culture,” the sum of the ranked weights was 226 and we had a total of 77 responses for it across all rankings, so 226/77 = 2.9.

5. More participants left comments for motivations (36) than did those who commented on barriers (26), although the representation of roles among the comments is similar for both questions. See Figure A1 in the Appendix.

6. See Lapointe & Boss, 2023.

7. According to Statistics Canada, based on 2019 data, younger faculty and researchers are more likely to report belonging to groups designated as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2020b). 50% of postdoctoral fellows and 39% of Ph.D. students reported belonging to one or more groups designated as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2020b). Women only accounted for 32.2% of tenured positions in 2022/2023 (Statistics Canada, 2023a) even though women make up nearly half (46.5%) of all doctoral degrees granted by Canadian universities in 2019/2020 (Statistics Canada, 2021). In 2019, only 32% of visible minorities and 21% of Indigenous people in academia reported being tenured professors (Statistics Canada, 2020a).

REFERENCES

Bayuo, B.B., Chaminade, C.,& Göransson, B. (2020). “Unpacking the role of universities in the emergence, development and impact of social innovations—A systematic review of the literature”, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change 155*.

Bergen N., & Labonté, R. (2020) “Everything Is Perfect, and We Have No Problems”: Detecting and limiting social desirability bias in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*. 30(5):783-792. Doi:10.1177/1049732319889354

Bhattacherjee, A. (2012). *Social science research: Principles, methods, and practices* (3rd ed.). Global Text Project. https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology 3*(2), 77-101. Doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2021). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. *Qualitative Psychology 9*(1), 3-26. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196

Cain, K., Shore, K., Weston, C., & Saunders, C.B. (2018). Knowledge mobilization as a tool of institutional governance: Exploring academics’ perceptions of “Going Public.” *Canadian Journal of Higher Education 48*(2), 39-54. Doi: 10.47678/cjhe.v48i2.188072

Ceci, S.J., Kahn, S., & Williams, W.M. (2023). Exploring gender bias in six key domains of academic service: An adversarial collaboration. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest 24*(1), 15-73. https://doi.org/10.1177/15291006231163179

Cooper, A., Rodway, J., & Read, R. (2018). Knowledge mobilization practices of educational researchers across Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education 48*(1), 1-21. Doi: 10.47678/cjhe.v48i1.187983.

Donovan, C. (2011). State of the art in assessing research impact: Introduction to a special issue. *Research Evaluation*, *20*(3), 175–179. https://doi.org/10.3152/095820211X13118583635918

Fox Tree, J.E. & Vaid, J. (2022). Why so few, still? Challenges to attracting, advancing, and keeping women faculty of color in academia. *Frontiers in Sociology 6*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.792198.

Hayden, M.C., Petrova, M.K., & Wutti, D. (2018). Direct associations of the terminology of knowledge transfer – Differences between the social sciences and humanities (SSH) and other scientific disciplines. *Trames 22*(3), 239-256. Doi : 10.3176/tr.2018.3.02.

Hawkins, R., Langford, C.H., & Saunders, C. (2015). Assessing the practical application of social knowledge: A survey of six leading Canadian Universities. *Research Policy 44*(1), 83-95. Doi: 10.1016/j.respol.2014.07.013.

Kenyon, T. (2014). Defining and measuring research impact in the humanities, social sciences and creative arts in the digital age. *Knowledge Organization 41*(3), 240-257. Doi: 10.5771/0943-7444-2014-3-249.

Klenk, N.L. & Wyatt, S. (2015). The design and management of multi-stakeholder research networks to maximize knowledge mobilization and innovation opportunities in the forest sector. *Forest Policy and Economics 61*, 77-86. Doi: 10.1016/j.forpol.2015.06.008.

Kumari, R., Kwon, K.-S., Lee, B.-H., & Choi, K. (2019). Co-creation for social innovation in the ecosystem context: The role of higher educational institutions. Sustainability, 12(1), 307. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12010307

Lapointe, S. & Boss, S. (2023). Inventory of community-focused knowledge mobilization practices in the social sciences, humanities and arts. (Technical Report) The/La Collaborative, McMaster University. https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/28037.

Lightowler, C., & Knight, C. (2013). Sustaining knowledge exchange and research impact in the social sciences and humanities: investing in knowledge broker roles in UK universities. *Evidence & Policy*, *9*(3), 317–334. Doi: 10.1332/174426413X662644.

Malik, S. (2016). *Knowledge mobilization on Ontario: A multi-case study of education organizations* (10139209) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Naidorf, J.C. (2014). Knowledge utility: From social relevance to knowledge mobilization. *Education Policy Analysis Archives 22*(89), 1-30. Doi: 10.14507/epaa.v22n89.2014.

Olmos-Peñuela, J., Benneworth, P., & Castro-Martínez, E. (2014). Are 'STEM from Mars and SSH from Venus'?: Challenging disciplinary stereotypes of research's social value. *Science & Public Policy 41*(3), 384-400. Doi: 10.1093/scipol/sct071.

Pedersen, D. B., Grønvad, J. F., & Hvidtfeldt, R. (2020). Methods for mapping the impact of social sciences and humanities—A literature review. *Research Evaluation*, *29*(1), 4–21. https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvz033

Penfield, T., Baker, M. J., Scoble, R., & Wykes, M. C. (2014). Assessment, evaluations, and definitions of research impact: A review. *Research Evaluation*, *23*(1), 21–32. https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvt021

Phipps, D.J., Jensen, K.E., & Myers, J.G. (2012). Applying social sciences research for public benefit: Using knowledge mobilization and social media. In A. López-Varela (Ed.) *Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to Social Sciences and Knowledge Management* (179-208). InTech Open. http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/2273.

Phipps, D.J. & Shapson, S. (2009). Knowledge mobilization builds local research collaborations for social innovation. *Evidence & Policy 5*(3), 211-217. http://hdl.handle.net/10315/4568.

Plaisance, K. S., Graham, A. V., McLevey, J., & Michaud, J. (2019). Show me the numbers: A quantitative portrait of the attitudes, experiences, and values of philosophers of science regarding broadly engaged work. *Synthese*, *198*(5), 4603–4633. Scopus. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-019-02359-7

Plaisance, K. S., & Kennedy, E. B. (2014). A pluralistic approach to interactional expertise. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part A*, *47*, 60–68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2014.07.001

Plaisance, K. S., Michaud, J., & McLevey, J. (2021). Pathways of influence: Understanding the impact of philosophy of science in scientific domains. *Synthese*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-020-03007-1

Provencal, J. (2009). *Knowledge mobilization of social sciences and humanities research: Moving beyond a "zero-sum language game"* (NS23274) [Doctoral dissertation, Simon Fraser University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Provencal, J. (2011). Social sciences and humanities research and the public good: A synthesis of presentations and discussions. *Scholarly and Research Communication 2*(2), 1-30. Doi: 10.22230/src.2011v2n2a32.

Research Impact Canada. (n.d.). *About Research Impact Canada*. https://researchimpact.ca/about-us/

Schulze, N. (2012). Knowledge transfer to society—Examples from chemistry and sociology. *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology 49(*1), 47-65. https://publica.fraunhofer.de/handle/publica/229655.

Statistics Canada. (2020a). *Table 37-10-0172-01 Tenure status and average time to obtain tenure for university faculty and researchers* [Data table]. https://doi.org/10.25318/3710017201-eng.

Statistics Canada. (2020b). Survey of postsecondary faculty and researchers, 2019. *The Daily*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200922/dq200922a-eng.htm.

Statistics Canada. (2021). Number and salaries of full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities (final), 2020/2021. *The Daily*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211213/dq211213a-eng.htm.

Statistics Canada. (2023a). Number and salaries of full-time teaching staff at Canadian universities, 2022/2023. *The Daily*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231101/dq231101a-eng.htm.

Statistics Canada. (2023b). Table 37-10-0234-01 Postsecondary enrolments, by detailed field of study, institution, and program and student characteristics [Data table]. https://doi.org/10.25318/3710023401-eng.

Valles, S. A. (2017). Some comments about being a philosopher of color and the reasons I didn't write a (real) paper for this (seemingly) ideal venue for my work. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, *27*(2).

Wenger, L., Hawkins, L., & Seifer, S.D. (2012). Community-engaged Scholarship: Critical junctures in research, practice, and policy. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement 16*(1), 171-181. ISSN 1534-6104.

APPENDIX A. SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

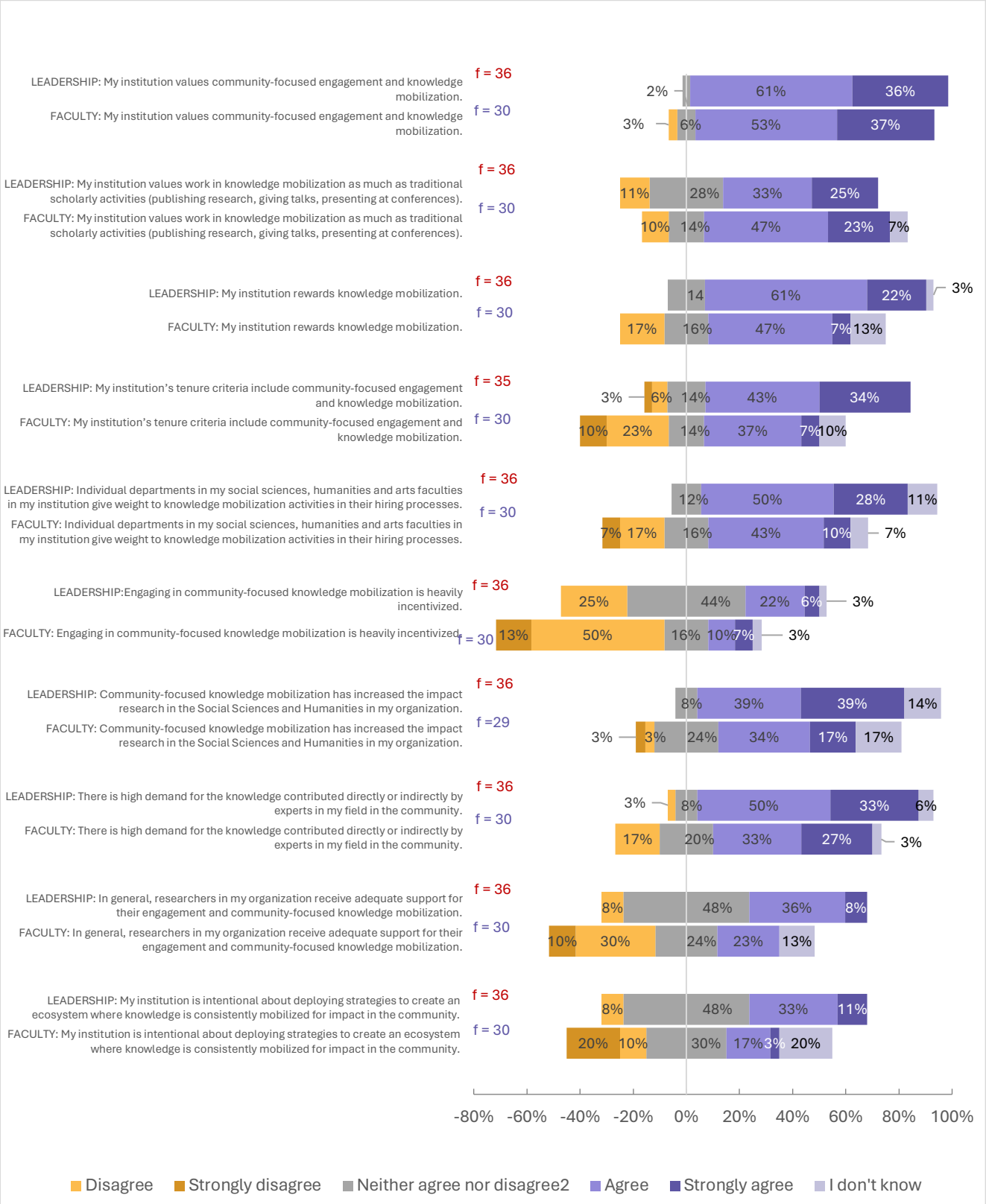
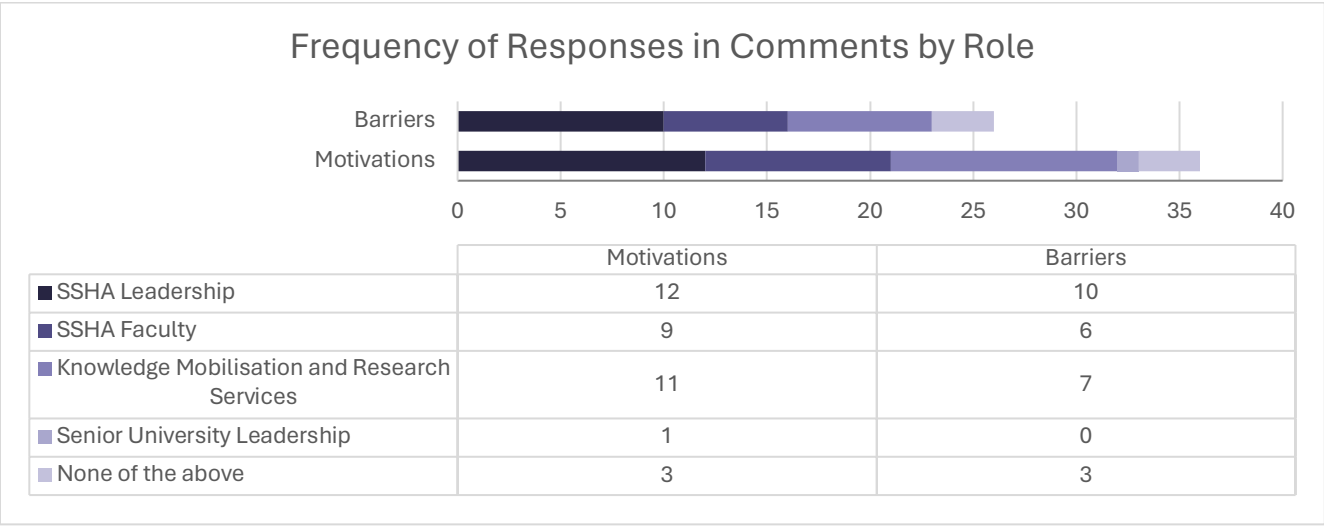


Figure A1: Perceived needs, interest and value of community-focused knowledge mobilization based on role.

Province or Territory	University	CE	Kmb	EL
Alberta	Concordia University of Edmonton	✓		
	Mount Royal University	✓		
	University of Calgary	✓	✓	✓
	University of Lethbridge	✓		
British Columbia	Royal Roads University			✓
	Simon Fraser University	✓	✓	✓
	Thompson River University			✓
	University of British Columbia	✓		✓
	University of the Fraser Valley			✓
	University of Victoria	✓	✓	
	Vancouver Island University			✓
Manitoba	University of Manitoba	✓	✓	✓
Newfoundland/Labrador	Memorial University of Newfoundland	✓		
Nova Scotia	Acadia University	✓		
	Dalhousie University	✓		
	Saint-Francis Xavier University	✓		
	Saint Mary's University	✓		✓
Ontario	Brock University	✓		✓
	Carleton University	✓		
	Lakehead University	✓		
	McMaster University	✓		✓
	Ontario Tech University	✓		
	Queens University	✓		✓
	Toronto Metropolitan University (Ryerson)		✓	

	Trent University	✓		
	University of Guelph	✓	✓	
	University of Ottawa	✓	✓	
	University of Toronto	✓		✓
	University of Waterloo	✓		
	University of Windsor			✓
	York University	✓	✓	
Québec	Concordia University	✓		✓
	McGill University	✓		
	HEC Montreal	✓		
	Université de Montréal	✓		
Saskatchewan	University of Regina	✓		✓

Figure A2: Table of the 36 universities that have either a dedicated community-engagement office (CE), knowledge mobilization unit (Kmb) or experiential learning office (EL), or some combination of the three. This is an updated version of the chart we produced in the report for Phase 1 of this project.



	Motivations	Barriers
SSHA Leadership	12	10
SSHA Faculty	9	6
Knowledge Mobilisation and Research Services	11	7
Senior University Leadership	1	0
None of the above	3	3

Figure A3: Frequency of types of roles of participants who left comments on the main barriers and primary motivations for community-focused knowledge mobilization work.

APPENDIX B. METHODS AND OBJECTIVES

Preliminary Research. Inventory of SSHA kmb.

In this paper, we report on and discuss the results of a survey we conducted as part of a multistage study of academic practices in the social sciences, humanities and arts (SSHA), specifically when it comes to impact on communities (non-academic and non-commercial use of research knowledge).

In a preliminary phase of the study, we produced an inventory of community-focused knowledge mobilization initiatives in SSHA departments in Canadian Universities. To circumvent the fact the information is neither collected nor documented systematically in universities, we surmised that we could use the content of individual departmental websites as proxies to reliably map knowledge mobilization for community innovation activities across Canada.[1] This involved applying a search-string to an advanced search engine to query individual departmental URLs to produce an inventory of activities and initiatives that pertain to community-focused knowledge mobilization, which we then analysed according to specific themes.

The data gathered, and on which we report in *Inventory of Models and Practices in Community-Focused Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts* (Lapointe *et al*. 2023; henceforth '*Inventory of SSHA kmb*'), provides the quantitative baseline we then used as a heuristic to formulate questions that could aptly guide the qualitative research we conducted through a survey on the current state of knowledge mobilization for community innovation in Canadian SSHA.

Survey Design

The survey was designed to leverage the results of the *Inventory of SSHA kmb* in a number of ways. To ensure that we would collect as many answers as possible, participants could share the survey with colleagues. While anyone could participate, we also wanted answers on Part 1 to be maximally relevant and we sought exclusively the input of university stakeholders who we could expected to have some knowledge of activities around community-focused SSHA knowledge mobilization: SSHA researchers, or academics leadership or executive roles in SSHA faculties or central university administration, as well as knowledge mobilization professionals in universities.[2] Other participants went straight to the second part of the survey.

Part 1 of the survey builds directly on the *Inventory of SSHA kmb*. Part 1 presented participants who indicated an affiliation with a SSHA department leadership position, knowledge mobilization unit/office or with a senior university leadership position with the results of the *Inventory of SSHA kmb* for their own institution and asked for brief input.[3] (See Figure B1 for an example).

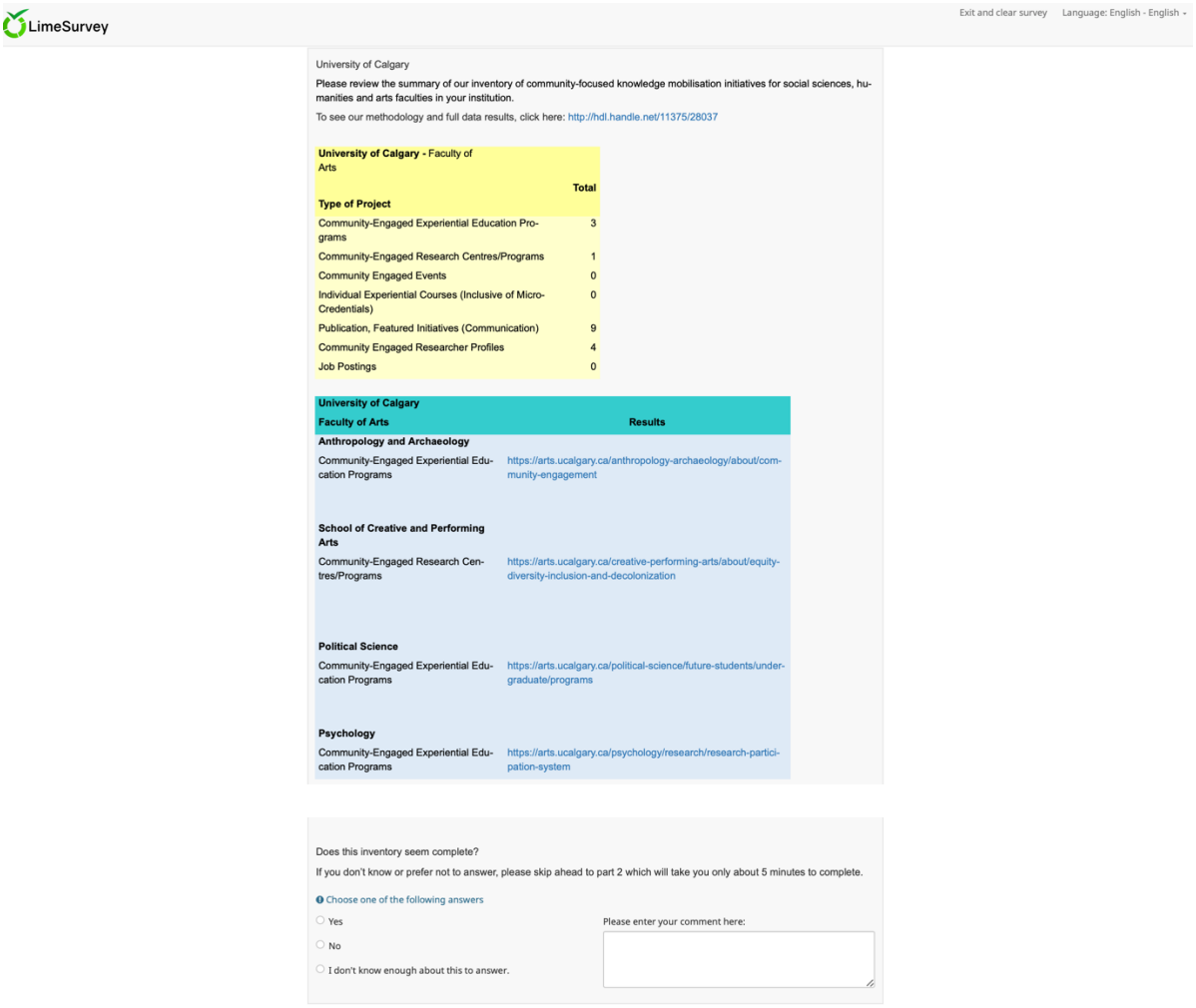


Figure B1: Example of a Part 1 Question from the Survey: University of Calgary.

Part 1's purpose in presenting participants with a table listing the results for their university and asking them to tell us about their assessment of its exhaustiveness was twofold. On the one hand, we wanted to determine the reliability of the *Inventory of SSHA kmb* by identifying any significant gaps, i.e., omissions so considerable (in number or in salience) that it would demonstrate that our proxies were unreliable. This said, our hypothesis was that most participants would also answer 'no' (indicating that the information is not complete) or 'I don't know enough about this to answer'.

This assumption was unavoidable and its rationale well-documented: While SSHA researchers engage in community-focused work, their pursuits generally do not receive institution-wide support (Cain *et al.*, 2018; Cooper *et al.*, 2018; Phipps and Shapson, 2009; Phipps *et al.*, 2012; Provencal, 2011). One implication of this is that universities often lack consistent channels of communication that highlight community-engaged work, as well as support opportunities that are available to them (Klenk and Wyatt, 2015; Malik; 2016). But clear and consistent channels of communication are critical for effective networking around knowledge mobilization for community innovation (Klenk and Wyatt, 2015). These networks extend in many directions and connect individual researchers, community partners, university support structures, and funding bodies.

Hence, while the second question of Part 1 collected information about projects that could be integrated to the inventory where relevant, we were right to expect that the update would not be considerable. Some comments identified community-engaged research centres, researchers, and education programs that were added to the inventory. Other comments mentioned various projects and initiatives that were either not SSHA-specific or were not specific enough for us to check their fit in the inventory. Finally, a small number of participants described not knowing any projects or initiatives to be included.

In addition to including a box for comments on the first questions, we separately asked participants to provide us with examples of initiatives epitomizing best practices. The aim here was to collect information about what participants perceive to be models of knowledge mobilization for community innovation worth emulating and to reflect on the latter. Responses to this question identified a significant number of initiatives to be added to the inventory. Participants identified community-engaged research centres, initiatives, researchers, and experiential courses and programs.

Part 2 of the survey was designed to fill a gap in evidence available about stakeholders' perceptions of what drives knowledge mobilization for community innovation in universities, and the questions were designed to generate knowledge specific to the Canadian context. All participants saw Part 2 of the survey, which was structured as follows:

1) A set of 10 Likert items.

2) A free-text question asking participants to identify their academic discipline.

3) Two ranking questions asking participants to rank separate lists of barriers and drivers to community-focused knowledge mobilization, both with the option to provide additional comments.

4) Two questions asking about the makeup and synergy between community-engagement units and knowledge mobilization units in participants' institutions.

5) A final free-text question asking participants to include anything else they felt needed to be shared about community-focused knowledge mobilization.

Our aim was to get a sense of the value placed on community-engaged work, the level of support for it, and the degree to which it is perceived to be needed and actually impactful. Specifically, we wanted to understand how Canadian researchers and leaders perceive their individual and institutional capacity for community-engaged work. The literature provides useful insight into important aspects of what is needed to increase the impact of community-focused scholarship, e.g., adopting co-design and co-production approaches that focus on the needs of partners and creating relevant incentive structures (Klenk and Wyatt, 2015). But it is relatively silent on researchers' own perception and motivations for pursuing community-engaged research.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey generated 90 full responses from participants between October 28, 2022 and February 8, 2023. Participants were recruited both directly and indirectly. We identified 176 individuals in leadership roles in SSHA faculties or managing knowledge mobilization and community-engagement offices whose input would be especially relevant and to whom a member of the research team sent a direct recruitment email. Some other participants received the invitation through a newsletter or email distribution list of associations who were willing to distribute the survey: Research Impact Canada, Canadian Sociological Association, Canadian Philosophical Association, Canadian Political Science Association, Canadian Anthropology Society, and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and the Social Sciences.

We used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the results in both Part 1 and Part 2. We used SPSS software for a descriptive statistical analysis of demographics and to compile cross-tabulations of participants' answers (in relation to their role, university affiliation, age group, and field of research). Visualisations of the results were created using tables in Excel.

We used a qualitative approach, specifically thematic analysis, to identify emerging themes in comments left by participants in open questions on both Part 1 and 2.[4] After creating a database of anonymized answers, we pulled comments from all relevant questions to collate and analyze them in Excel. Two research team members familiarized themselves with the data and began thinking about codes and themes separately. The two team members then met to discuss codes and emerging themes. Once a consensus was achieved on the taxonomy we would be using for the analysis, one team member conducted the analysis.

Along the way, we used critical tools associated with philosophical and logical analysis to engineer conceptual distinctions that would be useful in answering the research question. We adopt a grounded realist approach: We assume language reflects and enables us to articulate meaning.[5] As such, we identify themes through a literal representation and understanding of the data as opposed to theorizing underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations that shape the surface-level content of the data.[6]

Preliminary findings were presented to the research team for additional input, sense-making and discussion to confirm the codes and emergent themes and identify developing questions the data could be leveraged to address.

Descriptive Analysis

90 individuals completed the survey on community-focused knowledge mobilization, and while they were required to 'submit' the survey for it to count as completed, they could also skip a question. Participants could take the survey in either English or French. 87% (78/90) of participants took the survey in English, while 13% (12/90) took the survey in French. The majority of participants (66/86; 77%) were between the age of 40 and 60 years old. 56% (50/89) of those who answered the questions identified as cis-women, 30% (27/89) as cis-men, 1% (1/89) identified as Two-Spirit, 1%

(1/89) preferred to identify with an other gender identity, and 11% (10/89) preferred not to answer. Of the participants who identified as a member of an equity-seeking group (65), 62% (40/65) identified as women, 20% (13/65) preferred not to answer, 8% (5/65) chose other markers of identification (e.g., identified as more than one category, or pointed out missing gender and sexual orientation categories), 6% (4/65) identified as a visible minority, 3% (2/65) as persons with a disability, and 2% (1/65) identified as Indigenous.[7] The demographic make-up of our sample is not entirely surprising: Women tend to make up greater proportions of SSHA disciplines compared to others (Ceci, Kahn, and Williams, 2023) and racialized minorities still experience significant barriers to achieving similar levels of representation in academia as their white counterparts (Fox Tree and Vaid, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2020a).

40% (36/90) of participants were in leadership roles at the time of the survey, either in SSHA faculties (31/90) or in senior university offices (5/90). Another third were employed in SSHA faculty positions (30/90). About one fifth (17/90) worked in units dedicated to knowledge mobilization support, which includes community-engagement offices and research services. 8% (7/90) identified their role as not listed. (Figure B2).

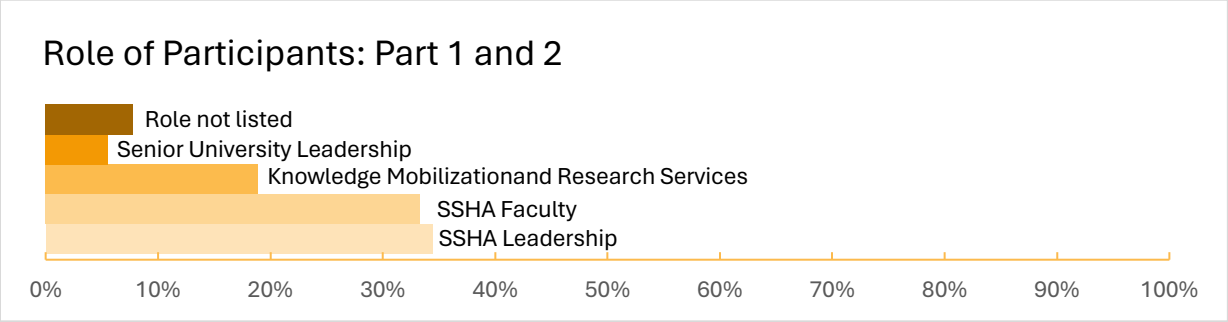


Figure B2: Representation of roles in sample from Parts 1 and 2 of survey (n=90).

Only participants who identified their roles as pertaining to SSHA leadership, senior university leadership or knowledge mobilization and community-engagement services answered the first part of the survey (53) (Figure B3).

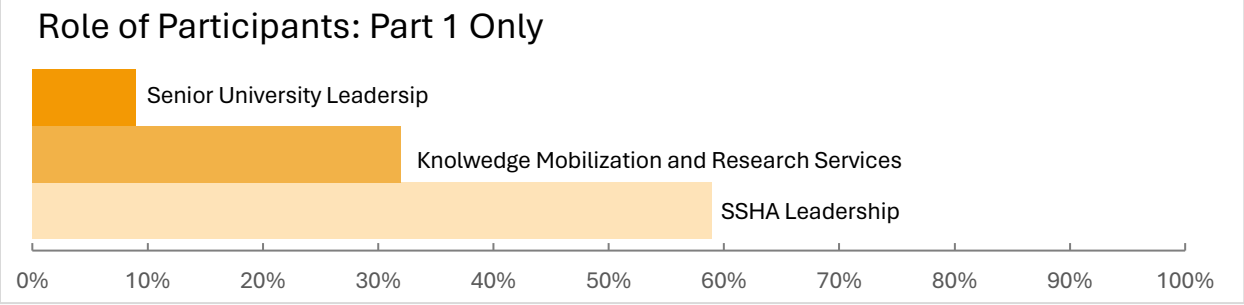


Figure B3: Representation of participants from Part 1 only (n=53).

Of the 84 participants who indicated their disciplines, more than half (49/84) stem from the Social Sciences, while a little under a third (26/84) are from the Humanities and Arts.[8] 11% (9/84) indicated they work in administration, knowledge mobilization or research services.

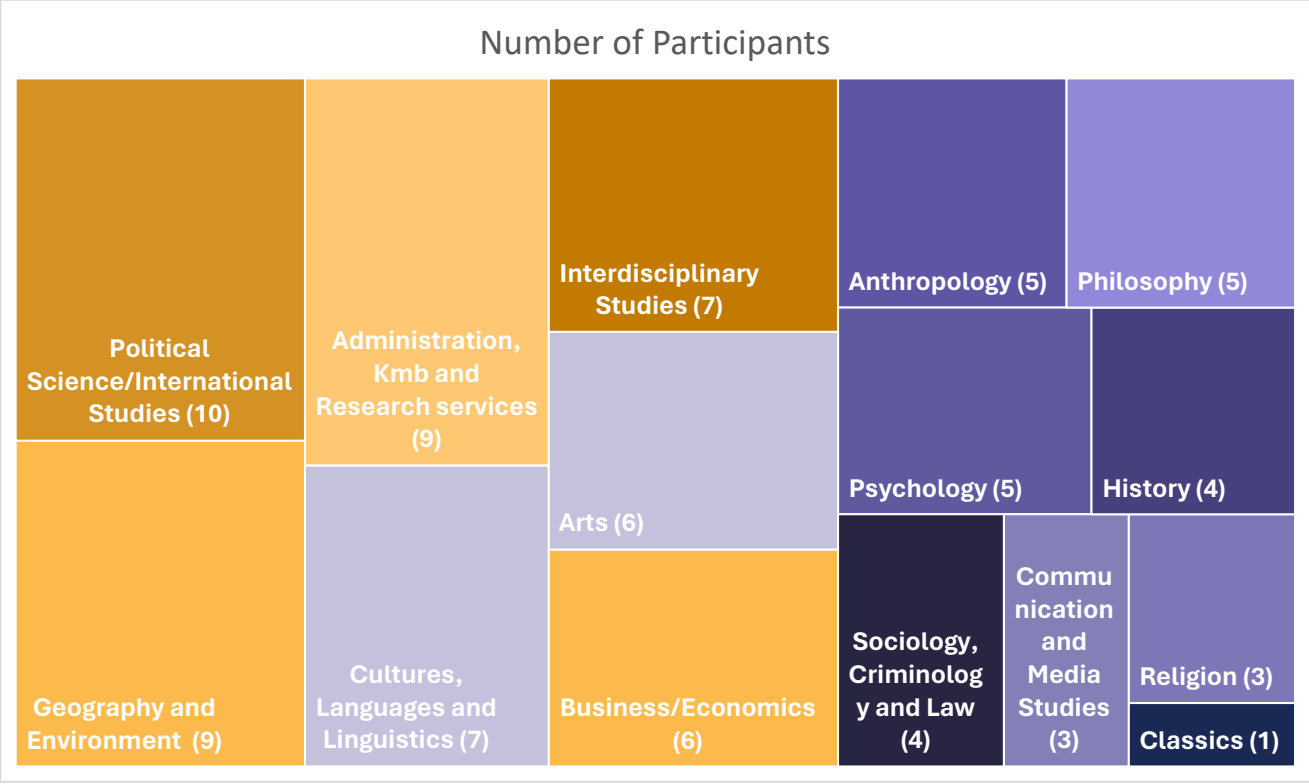


Figure B4: Number of participants by discipline (n=84).

Testing the Inventory, and Using the Inventory as a Test

The aim of Part 1 of the survey was twofold. On the one hand, we wanted to validate the information we acquired through the *Inventory of SSHA kmb* and make sure it had succeeded in reliably capturing at least the initiatives that would be widely known. The information on any website reflects perceptions of what is valuable for specific purposes, and whether or not information about an initiative will find a place on the URL of a specific department depends on a number of other constraints, from interface design and usability to internal policies and capacity. We were right to assume that university/departmental websites would be the most effective source of information about knowledge mobilization activities in general. But while they would be effective, they would not be exhaustive: Participants could reasonably be expected to have access to information that was not advertised on SSHA departmental websites.

Nonetheless, when we asked:

Q1: 'Does this inventory seem complete?'

We expected that while the answer would be overwhelmingly negative, this would not be a problem for the Inventory if participants were able to provide information that demonstrated large, systematic gaps in our data or were able to provide more information than our scan had produced.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of participants indicated that the Inventory was incomplete (74%; 37/50). 18% (9/50) were unsure and 8% (4/50) indicated that they thought the Inventory was exhaustive. However, the comments provided do not reflect a more accurate knowledge than the one we were able to achieve through the *Inventory of SSHA kmb*: Few participants were able to provide information that would suggest their knowledge to be more reliable or rich than the *Inventory of SSHA kmb*.

The question is relevant to the extent that part of the problem of valorizing community-focused knowledge mobilization could be linked to the fact that it is not recognized and acknowledged. The extent to which academics—especially those in leadership positions—are familiar with actual SSHA-driven community-focused knowledge mobilization efforts in their organization is thus relevant. We assumed that few people would be familiar with community-focused knowledge mobilization initiatives and that it would be difficult to interpret yes/no/I don't know enough answers at face value. Indeed, all the information we collected was merely anecdotal. For instance, participants mentioned research centres and funding supports not specific to SSHA or referenced their community-engagement offices, knowledge mobilization units (which the Inventory already accounted for). The responses of 50 participants, 38 of which provided comments, only added 23 new entries to the [6000] the *Inventory of SSHA kmb* had generated. In general, even though participants have reasons to believe that community-focused knowledge mobilization activities are taking place at their institution beyond what the *Inventory of SSHA kmb* suggests, their knowledge is often anecdotal and incomplete. In fact, as Part 2 of the survey shows, participants are often unsure or incorrect in their assessment of the existence of dedicated offices and units supporting these activities.

In an effort to identify best practices for community-focused knowledge mobilization, we also asked:

> **Q2: Is there any initiative led from social sciences, humanities and arts faculties in your institution that you think showcases best practices?**

Responses to this question generated more items to add to the inventory than did responses to the previous question, although participants did not explain what about the initiative made it an exemplar of best practices. Out of 67 initiatives mentioned from 39 participants, only 12% (8/67) were already included in the inventory while 58% (39/67) were added to the inventory. Participants referred to community-engaged research centres, specific projects, experiential courses and programs, researchers, and awards for community-engaged work. A small number of identified community-engagement or knowledge mobilization units as exemplars of best practices (9/67), which was captured elsewhere by our analysis. A similar amount referenced a project too generally to identify it and determine its fit in the inventory and what best practices it might emulate (8/67).

NOTES

[1] The permanent DOI for the technical report is: http://hdl.handle.net/11375/28408.

[2] For the purpose of our survey, SSHA leadership includes Deans, Vice Deans, Chairs, and those in similar positions. Senior university leadership includes Associate Provost, Associate Vice President, Vice President Research, and those in similar roles.

[3] It also provided participants with a description of our methodology for the *Inventory of SSHA kmb* and, if they elected to, with full access to the data we inventoried.

[4] Braun and Clarke (2006), Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology 3*, 77-101; Braun and Clarke (2021), Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis, *Qualitative Psychology 9*(1), 3-26.

[5] Braun and Clarke, Using thematic analysis in psychology; Braun and Clarke, Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis.

[6] Braun and Clarke, Using thematic analysis in psychology; Braun and Clarke, Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis.

[7] We used these categories in line with the Government of Canada's Employment Equity Groups (https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/appointment-framework/employment-equity-diversity/employment-equity-groups.html).

[8] The disciplines represented in our sample from the Social Sciences include Anthropology, Business/Economics, Communication and Media Studies, Geography and Environment, Interdisciplinary Studies, Psychology, and Sociology, Criminology and Law. Disciplines from the Humanities and Arts include Arts, Classics, Cultures, Languages and Linguistics, History, Philosophy, and Religion.