Ongoing Efforts to Support Community-Engaged Research at VCU

Within the academy and across VCU there is growing recognition that community-engaged research (CEnR) is a valuable framework that enables researchers to conduct research and produce results that benefits our communities. In support of promoting high-quality, high-impact CEnR, many VCU partners across the university have collaborated to develop and expand infrastructure that seeks to identify, support, and advance CEnR. This document outlines some of the ongoing efforts.

> VCU's official definition states that CEnR is:
> "A collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community. CEnR identifies the assets of all stakeholders and incorporates them in the design and conduct of the different phases of the research process."

Infrastructure to Identify, Support, and Advance CEnR

VCU Community Engagement Terms and Definitions
Developed by the Council for Community Engagement (CCE), these terms and definitions have been adopted by the Office of Planning and Research as the official VCU terms and definitions for engagement at VCU. For the university's data glossary, http://www.opds.vcu.edu/decisions/119.html#c and for a PDF document http://www.community.vcu.edu/research/.

Identifying CEnR involving human subjects – implemented August 2013
The Division of Community Engagement (DCE), Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR), and Office of Research partnered to develop a strategy to systematically identify human subjects related CEnR across VCU. This process involved two parallel activities: 1) collecting CEnR information from faculty who had studies approved by the IRB during the prior two years; and 2) the formulation and addition of questions to the IRB application to track future CEnR. The institutionalization of this data collection process, as well as the results of inventory, will aid in future tracking and the advancement of CEnR.

Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Policies – adopted May 2013
The university promotion and tenure (P&T) guidelines were recently expanded to include language explicitly supporting community-engaged teaching, research, and service. http://www.assurance.vcu.edu/policylibraryAtoZ.html#P.

P&T Guidance Documents – avalable Fall 2014
This document seeks to support the P&T review of engaged scholars by presenting 1) basic guidelines for defining community and partnership, 2) criteria for identifying excellence in community-engaged teaching, research and service, 3) guidance for P&T candidates in documenting their engaged work in a dossier, 4) guidance to P&T review committees in ensuring a fair review process, and 5) a quick reference guide presenting key questions to ask when documenting and/or evaluating CES.

Community Review Board – Instituted Fall 2013
CCTR has established a Community Review Board (CRB) process that provides community consultation in support of CEnR. VCU's CRB is a structured forum for researchers interested in feedback from community members. It is composed of community members who serve as expert reviewers and provide feedback on various aspects of a proposed or ongoing research project, including the design, study implementation, instrument development, recruitment strategies, dissemination and applying research findings to practice. http://www.cctr.vcu.edu/community/reviewboard.html.

Guidance on Compensation of Community Partners in Research – available Fall 2014
This document seeks to aid discussions about compensation of community partners in research by 1) briefly discussing the context of compensation of community partners through universities, 2) presenting the various categories for recognition and compensation established at VCU, and 3) depicting these categories along a continuum to help match the category for compensation with the need for partner accountability to VCU.

FAQ on CEnR and the IRB
In collaboration with the CEnR Interest Group, DCE and CCTR have developed Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) information related to CEnR and the IRB. This FAQ has been developed to provide more in depth information to help support engaged scholars in adequately engaging with the IRB to ensure the protection of human participants in CEnR processes. http://www.research.vcu.edu/human_research/faq_CEnR.pdf.

Communication Networks to Identify, Support, and Advance CEnR

CEnR Interest Group & listserv – established Spring 2013
The CEnR Interest Group is open to all VCU faculty, staff, and students who are active community-engaged researchers or who would like to learn more about CEnR. This group aims to build awareness of the range of interests and research in this area, help facilitate potential collaborations among researchers for future projects, provide information on the efforts to support and encourage CEnR, and elicit suggestions to further develop high quality CEnR. The listserv functions as a communication tool for the CEnR Interest Group. Sign up at http://www.vcu.edu/cgi-bin/listsub?cenr-interest-group-l.

VIVO – in progress
VIVO is a research-focused discovery tool that enables collaboration among researchers across disciplines. It is currently under development by the CCTR, and will include partnering organizations and will allow researchers to indicate their interest in engaging stakeholders in their research.

Professional Development to Identify, Support, and Advance CEnR

Quest Global Impact Award Faculty Development Seminar – 2014-2015 focus is on South Africa
This effort between the Global Education Office (GEO) and DCE seeks to prepare participants to expand their international academic experiences and cultivate their own teaching and research connections with counterparts abroad, as well as create a new course, add a new unit to an existing course, and/or broaden the scope of all courses. http://www.global.vcu.edu/qgia/.

Faculty Learning Community (FLC) on Excellence in CEnR – Available Summer 2014
This FLC is jointly supported by DCE, CCTR, and the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE). Members are collaborating to identify and create case studies of exemplary CEnR projects that have occurred across VCU to highlight the various CEnR approaches that have been used to accomplish both academic and community impacts.

CEnR Lunch and Learn Series – 2013 – 2014
This series is a collaborative effort between DCE, CCTR, Center on Health Disparities, Institute for Women's Health, and Office of Research. Sessions seek to promote high quality, high-impact CEnR by addressing topics including building partnership skills, engaging with review boards, sustainability of partnerships, obtaining grant funding, obtaining IRB approval, dissemination of findings, connecting work to theory, and promoting rigor in CEnR work. http://www.community.vcu.edu/files/2013/11/11-25-13-Full-2013-14-Lunch-Learn-Schedule.pdf.

1st Annual Partnerships Institute - May 7, 2014 and the 2nd Annual CEnR Institute - May 8-9, 2014
Through joint funding, DCE and CCTR will offer the Community Engagement Institute to support faculty, staff, students, and community partners in engagement towards high-quality and high-impact CEnR. This year, the Community Engagement Institute consists of VCU's Service Learning Institute, which will occur May 5-6. May 7 will add a new component, the Partnerships Institute, which focuses on developing community/academic partnership skills. The last two days May 8-9 will be the Community-Engaged Research Institute and focus on topics including methods, evaluation, funding, and sustainability.

Award Recognition to Identify, Support, and Advance CEnR

Currents of Change Award – Nominations currently sought
The CCE highlights and celebrates partnerships that benefit students, staff, faculty, alumni, and our community partners. Annually, CCE seeks nominations of outstanding partnerships in four areas: 1) Community-engaged Teaching, 2) Community-engaged Service, 3) Community-engaged Research, and 4) student initiated engaged projects. One partnership from each area is recognized annually and from these four projects, an overall Currents of Change Award is presented to the partnership that best demonstrates integration of the teaching, service and research categories. http://www.community.vcu.edu/council-for-community-engagement/currents-of-change/.

For more information about CEnR at VCU:	
Division of Community Engagement	www.community.vcu.edu
Center for Clinical and Translational Research	www.cctr.vcu.edu

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