

BU CARES

Annual Report

2022-23



BU CARES
RESEARCH CENTRE



BRANDON
UNIVERSITY

About BU CARES

Centre for Aboriginal and Rural Education Studies

BU CARES is an applied research centre established in 2008 and housed in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. BU CARES helps identify and answer research questions generated collaboratively with community partners, develop faculty and graduate student research capacity, facilitate connections between university researchers and community members, and promote research related to rural and Indigenous education.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Highlights	5
Conducting Research	5
Supporting Research	6
Building Community Connections & Mobilizing Knowledge	6
Advisory Board	7
Finances	7
Current Projects	8
Completed Projects	9
Knowledge Mobilization	10
Thank you	11

Introduction

This annual report is submitted per the Brandon University Senate policy governing Research Centres, Institutions, and Groups – Policy and Procedures. This annual report details the initiatives and activities of the centre and its personnel, research accomplishments, graduate training, and other research-related activities, and financial information for the 2022-2023 year.

This year we have begun a partnership with Myera Group, which is an Indigenous-led organization interested in the potentials of virtual reality technology for carrying on traditional Indigenous practices through education. With funding from Myera, we have begun two large-scale scoping reviews on the use of virtual reality in education, and curriculum connections for this type of Indigenous knowledge. We have also applied for Mitacs funding together with Myera to develop this project further.

In addition to this new funding, we continue to conduct research on the benefits and challenges of using Zoom for community-based research funded through the New Frontiers in Research Fund (SSHRC). We also are continuing into our second year of a postdoc position, funded through Mitacs and Westman Immigrant Services. This position is aimed at further exploring our work on community belonging for newcomers arriving in the Westman area.

This year we completed our research on anti-racism, funded by Canada Heritage. We have also completed our research on rural homelessness with funding through the Government of Canada's Reaching Home strategy. Several other projects funded through BURC and community partners have also been completed, including several studies on learning through the pandemic.

This year we have seen a great deal of interest in our anti-racist education materials, developed through the project with Canada Heritage. To date, the films produced through this project have been viewed online half a million times. As a result of this work, our director, Dr. Michelle Lam, has been invited to speak at multiple conferences, events, professional development, and training opportunities. These conversations are important for building connections for BU/CARES, and for sparking new initiatives.

This year, BU CARES was also able to provide support for multiple other projects, led by members of the Faculty of Education. These types of support include making connections in the community, providing access to software and training, providing space for research assistants, helping with recruiting participants, and helping with knowledge mobilization. We are currently supporting nine projects in these capacities, including topics such as culturally responsive teaching, Indigenous curriculum content, digital well-being, epistemic beliefs in science, and cultural competency in post-secondary education.

This year has seen growth in the area of knowledge mobilization. With funding from the Brandon and Area Community Foundation and the Research Support Fund, we have supported the creation of a new knowledge mobilization studio, which supports video and audio recording. Last year, our audio podcasts were played 1078 times. The print-based Research Connection released 28 briefs this year, highlighting BU research from multiple disciplines, and the third compilation magazine released this year furthers this reach.

Knowledge mobilization at BU CARES through social media has also grown this year. Two years ago, we had 837 followers across our social media pages. Last year we had 1561, an increase of 86%. This year, we have 3707, an increase of 137%. Our membership is also steadily growing, with 92 members subscribed to our bi-monthly newsletters. Last year, our website was visited 6842 times.

In addition to conducting, supporting, and mobilizing research knowledge, we also support students on their research trajectories. Our video series of research support tutorials are some of our most popular, and have been accessed 166,731 times on YouTube, and have begun to generate revenue for the Centre. More directly, we have employed one research facilitator and nine research assistants for a variety of projects. We also created six positions through student service learning, and employed one more assistant to support our social media presence.

The research initiatives at BU CARES serve rural and Indigenous educators and community members both by building collaborative partnerships for specific topics and by widely sharing our knowledge and research findings.

Highlights



Conducting Research

Working with community and government partners enables BU CARES to conduct research on issues of relevance to rural and Indigenous communities:

- Four completed projects, including (1) Anti-Racism Education; (2) Rural Homelessness; (3) Community Voices: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Board Governance; (4) Exploring Intersections of Digital Disinformation and Relational Ties
- Four ongoing projects, including (1) Innovative Approaches to Research in the Pandemic: Exploring the Potential of Large-Scale Online Community-Based Discussion Platforms; (2) Indigenous STEM Curriculum and Technology for Engagement; (3) Relational Divisions, Social Media, and Healing; (4) Umbay Nagamon: Come and Sing

These projects bring further benefits through:



**Supporting
Students**



**Building
Connections**



**Mobilizing
Knowledge**



"Thank you once again for starting our day with such a meaningful, powerful presentation. All day long the educators were reflecting on all that they learned in a short period of time. I would love to have you present again!"

Linda Connor
Social Studies Consultant
Manitoba Curriculum Development



Supporting Research

BU CARES supports the research of other faculty members through securing external funding, providing software access, providing space for research assistants, and facilitating community partnerships. Through these, we are supporting:

- Seven ongoing projects, including (1) Pre-service Teachers and Indigenous Perspectives in Curricula; (2) Spirit of Hope: Celebrating the Inspiring Lives of Indigenous Educators; (3) Understanding and Supporting Pre-service Teachers' Learning Processes and Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy; (4) Understanding the Counselling Role of the School Principal; (5) Digital Well-Being and Social Media Use; (6) Epistemic Beliefs in Science Education; (7) Microaggressions and Cultural Competency in Post-Secondary Education

We are also supporting two additional funding proposals in conjunction with other faculty members and community partners.

Building Community Connections & Mobilizing Knowledge

"I think the network has been reached in ways I couldn't have imagined, to bring this topic [anti-racism] front and center into conversations. If anything was going to influence next steps and future decisions, it was that. Thank you for taking time to impact PEI with your messaging too. What you did was very impactful and special for our PEI network."

–Melanie Bailey
Project Manager - PEI Provincial Immigration Partnership (PEIPIP) Immigrant and Refugee Services Association (IRSA) of PEI

Written Engagement

- 4 Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles
- 3 Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters
- 5 Publicly Available Research Reports
- 3 Non-Peer Reviewed Articles
- 30 Research Connection Briefs

Discussion-Based Engagement

- 2 Invited Conference Presentations
- 5 Conference Presentations
- 2 Invited Community Presentations
- 4 Research Tutorials
- 18 Podcasts

Social Media

YouTube - 1.93K Followers
Facebook - 184 Followers
Twitter - 643 Followers
Instagram - 340 Followers
LinkedIn - 145 Followers
TikTok - 465 Followers

Advisory Board

- Dr. Heather Duncan
- Elder Kevin Tacan
- Ms. Michelle Bessette
- Ms. Leah LaPlante
- Dr. Aloysius Anyichie
- Dr. Jacqueline Kirk
- Dr. Cathryn Smith
- Chief Karen Batson
- Ms. Valerie McInnes
- Dr. Chris Beeman
- Ms. Susan Barteaux

Finances

April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2022

New Research Project Funding Received

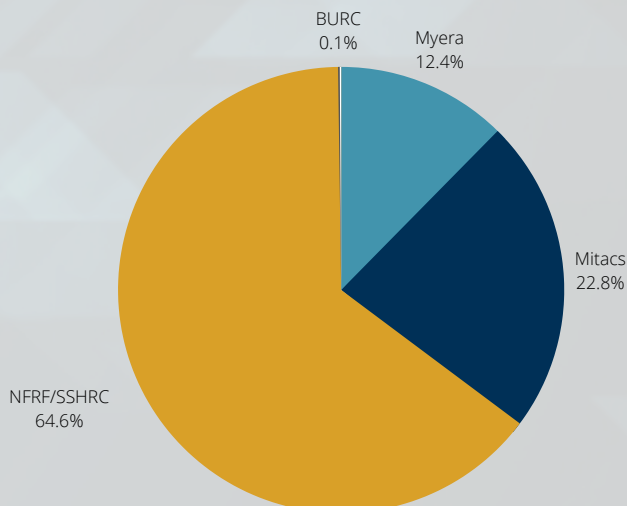
Myera Group, Inc.	\$32,500
Mitacs	\$60,000

Ongoing Projects (April 2022 Balances)

NFRF/SSHRC	\$169,585
BURC Knowledge Mobilization Grant	\$325

Other Income

YouTube	\$258
---------	-------



Research Projects

Ongoing in 2022/2023

Virtual Reality in Indigenous STEM Education

This project, funded in collaboration with Myera Group, aims to explore the potentials of virtual reality technology in educating Indigenous youth about traditional practices, including wild rice harvesting, growing traditional medicines, and fish farming. This project is led by Dr. Michelle Lam, Dr. Ellen Watson, and Mr. Matteo Di Muro.

Umbay Nagamon - Come and Sing

This project is an invited collaboration with Mountain View School Division in response to a reconciliation initiative underway in the division. This project is led by Dr. Michelle Lam, Dr. Heather Duncan, Dr. Jacqueline Kirk, Dr. Cathryn Smith, and Dr. Zahra Kasamali.

Innovative Approaches to Research in the Pandemic: Exploring the Potential of Large-Scale Online Community-Based Discussion Platforms

The project, funded through the New Frontiers in Research Fund (SSHRC), aims to explore three major questions: 1) What are the impacts of employing online platforms such as Zoom for community-engaged research? 2) What challenges may be encountered by shifting to an online methodology, and 3) How might these challenges be creatively overcome? This project is led by Dr. Michelle Lam and Dr. Gustavo Moura.

Community Voices Postdoctoral Project

Building on the successes of the BURC/community-funded project with the same name, this postdoc position is continuing to explore the topics of belonging, anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion in Brandon and the Westman Region. This position is funded through Mitacs and Westman Immigrant Services. Dr. Ayodeji Osiname leads this project under the supervision of Dr. Michelle Lam. To date, he has released one report, which focuses on employment barriers for immigrant professionals in Brandon. That report is housed on the BU CARES and Westman Immigrant Services websites and is also available in hard copy.

Research Projects

Completed in 2022/2023

Exploring Intersections of Digital Disinformation and Relational Ties

This research project examines the relationships between pre-service teachers' digital literacy skills when consuming online information and how that information disseminates throughout their lives and affects their relationships with others. This project is jointly led by Dr. Michelle Lam, Mr. Matteo Di Muro, Dr. Zahra Kasamali, Dr. Joe Stouffer, and Dr. Ellen Watson. One book chapter with these findings has been accepted, and the research team will be presenting it at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education next month.

Stronger Together: Examining Rural Roots/Routes of Homelessness

The purpose of this project is to understand rural homelessness, mobility and migration, current support structures in place, and opportunities afforded by increased inter-agency collaboration and communication within rural communities. This project is led by Dr. Candy Jones and is funded through Canada's Reaching Home Strategy, facilitated by Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corp. A report has been written, and four films have been produced through this project, along with two presentations.

Viral Vitriol: Using Online Platforms to Promote Peace

This project, funded by Canada Heritage, is a multi-stage project. The first stage was comprised of a provincial interview exploring Manitobans' perspectives of and experiences with racism. Drawing on this data, the second stage was comprised of creating scripts based on common experiences and then testing them with diverse focus group participants. The final stage was filming and launching the [videos on social media](#), then analyzing the comments and discussion they prompt. A facilitation guide, survey report, and final report have all been released, as well as a peer-reviewed journal on the ethical considerations of the project. Two other journal articles have been submitted, one on the survey statistics and another on the social media discussion.

Knowledge Mobilization



Refereed Journal Articles

A full list of 46 peer-reviewed journal articles published by our members between April 1, 2022 and March 20, 2023 is available on our website at www.bucares.ca/publications



Research Connection

Research Connection is a weekly publication that features a 2-page summary of a research project from Brandon University. It provides information about the impact of Brandon University's academic research, creative activities, and expertise. BU CARES is responsible for administering this publication, which is supported by the Office of Research Services.

During 2022-2023, we released 28 Research Connection publications, and one compilation magazine. We are currently conducting interviews for a student-focused compilation.



Podcast

Leaning in and Speaking Out: The Research Connection Podcast, supported by BURC, the Research Support Fund, and Brandon and Area Community Foundation, released 18 new episodes this year. These episodes can be found on iTunes, Spotify, and other podcast stations, in addition to our website. Each podcast features a minimum of two guests--one academic and one community member--who demonstrate mutually beneficial conversations, sharing knowledge in both directions and forming connections between the university and the community.

Thank You

Thank you to all who have contributed to the work of BU CARES over the past year:

- The advisory board for their advice, insight, support, and collaborations.
- Christiane Ramsey, for her careful attention to detail, consistent coordination and communication in preparing the Research Connection briefs and annual compilation, and editing expertise.
- Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Ayodeji Osiname and Research Facilitator Dr. Gustavo Moura for their leadership and insight.
- Student research assistants Stephanie Spence, Akech Mayuom, Denise Humphreys, Grace Stone, Meghan Hack, Simone Miranda, Shyla Mills, Lynn Cliplef, and Kyle Berg, and social media coordinator Chandra Elston for their thoughtful ideas, creativity, consistency and dedication.
- Podcast guests who dedicated their time and expertise to the Leaning in and Speaking out Podcast.
- Contributing authors who highlighted their research in the Research Connection publication.
- Colleagues who share their insights, passions, and expertise in collaborating to support community-based research.