May 2017 update of the Regional Socio-Economic Development Institute of Canada (RSEDIC)

RSEDIC was created in 2015 to connect with communities, both locally and internationally. Its purpose is twofold:

1. To impact regional economies, and
2. To provide interdisciplinary research and training opportunities for faculty and graduate students.

RSEDIC houses a number of active interdisciplinary research projects, and is involved in major cross-campus initiatives. 2016-2017 was a busy year for RSEDIC, with the institute now positioned for growth in 2017-2018.

Research Activities
RSEDIC houses three major research initiatives, and all three have seen significant activity during the 2016-2017 academic year.

1. Positioning the BC Wine Industry for International Growth

   Working with KEDGE Business School (Bordeaux, France) since Fall 2012, colleagues from UBC’s Okanagan campus have been engaging the British Columbia wine industry on its strategic development. The group of colleagues organizing the project are: Kim Buschert (UBC Library/Faculty of Management); Malida Mooker, Roger Sugden and Marcela Valania (UBC Faculty of Management); Jacques Olivier Pesme (KEDGE Business School, Bordeaux, France).

   In 2015, Western Economic Diversification Canada provided $630,000 funding as part of a $1.3M project over three years (2015-2018), to enable the institute to support the emergence of British Columbia as a global wine region. Plans for this funding included organizing an industry task force on wine labeling and presentation, establishing a task force on the industry’s identity, analyzing intelligence that the industry gathers from international trade shows, using research and industry knowledge to identify and assess options for the industry’s organization, and modelling from advanced wine regions in the world.

   A notable initiative was the introduction in 2014 of the annual UBC-KEDGE Wine Leaders Forum, which offers winery owners and principals an independent and
challenging arena for open participation, free expression and collective learning. There have now been four Wine Leaders Forums, with the 2017 forum recently held April 23-26 in Naramata, BC. The 2017 forum saw participation grow to 14 winery participants, with the primary outcome an agreed-upon list of tasks and action items to be shared between participating wineries and the industry more widely.

A major achievement in 2016 was the completion of the task force on wine labelling, which had significant impact on the wine industry. Following dissemination of the final report by the task force (see Appendix 1), the recommendations were taken up by industry representatives and used to stimulate discussion and industry deliberations. Based on these deliberations, recommendations were forwarded by the Canadian Vintners Association to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

In 2017, the project team was also awarded $19,115 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) under the Connection Grant program for a dissemination project entitled “British Columbia as a Wine Territory: Catalyzing Shared Understanding of its Identity” (see Appendix 2, summary of project). The project team successfully set up the initial exhibition at the 2017 Wine Leaders Forum, and the exhibition will now be broken into four parts and distributed across BC wineries, including: Okanagan Crush Pad, Painted Rock Estate Winery, Summerhill Pyramid Winery, and Tinhorn Creek Vineyards. The exhibition at the wineries will be available between the busy tourist months of May – August. In September, the exhibition will be brought back together for a final display at the Penticton Public Library, which will run alongside a speaker’s series on the wine industry and its impact on regional socio-economic development. The project employs a graduate student research assistant from the department of Creative Studies, and is providing training in community and industry outreach and engagement.

2. Occupational structure in the Okanagan Nation Territory

This project is a cross-campus and inter-university research project focused around the role that the history of occupational structure plays in the development of regional economic strategies. An initial workshop was held in June 2016, with a follow-up scheduled for June 2017 (see Appendix 3, workshop attendees 2016-2017).


In late 2016, the Occupations initiative received $4955 in funding from UBC’s internal Humanities and Social Sciences grant program for a small project, “The History of
Occupations of Okanagan First Nation Men and Women” (see Appendix 4, summary of project). The project supports a part-time undergraduate research assistant in History/Indigenous Studies.

$10,000 of RSEDIC funds have been allocated for 2017 toward expanding this project in partnership with Snecwips Heritage Museum, in Westbank.

3. Socio-technical change and regional economic development

In 2016, a UBC Okanagan faculty contingent (including RSEDIC director, Sugden) travelled to Germany and the Netherlands to discuss partnerships with the German Aerospace Centre and the Technical University of Delft. This trip precipitated the development of an emerging cluster of researchers around the development and deployment of technology with a concern for shaping and impacting the regional socio-economic development of rural and remote communities.

In February 2017, an application was submitted to Western Economic Diversification Canada to support a post-doctoral fellow to undertake a comprehensive study of the industry potential and economic impact of developing and deploying small-scale electric airplanes in Western Canada (see Appendix 5, summary of project). This project is the first attempt to formalize what is developing as an innovative interdisciplinary methodology around a specific case study (“Clean Flight” – see Appendix 6). The WD application had the full support of all Deans on UBC’s Okanagan campus. If successful, this project will also result in an application for an NSERC Connect grant in the fall of 2017 to support a workshop dedicated to building a cross-sectoral consortium. It is also envisaged that the clean flight initiative will be foundational for a SSHRC Insight grant application to be submitted in October 2017.

Cross-campus initiatives

1. Community-University portal

The primary cross-campus initiative supported by RSEDIC in 2016-2017 has been the planning and initial development of a Community-University portal to support research, student learning, and community engagement (see Appendix 7, summary of project). The portal project is a joint-initiative between RSEDIC and the Institute for Community Engaged Research (ICER) with the support of the UBC Okanagan library. The project team – Jon Corbett (ICER Director), Roger Sugden, Heather Berringer (Chief Librarian, UBC’s Okanagan campus), and Mary Butterfield (Faculty of Management Research Coordinator) – has successfully applied for $25,000 of internal funding, and $5000 of RSEDIC funds have been allocated to this project for 2017. The project has recruited a community-based advisory committee to oversee the development of the portal, and construction of the tool is scheduled to begin in July 2017. The project team submitted an application for further funding ($25,000) for the project to the Canadian Internet Registration Authority in March 2017.
2. 2017 RSEDIC Seed Grant

The Strategic Research Support Plan for UBC’s Okanagan campus prepared by the Vice Principal Research (2017) has outlined a process for the allocation of resources through the UBC Excellence Fund. This process includes funding in support of research cluster development on campus, and identifies six thematic areas and two cross-cutting strategic domains that will receive priority for funding. Regional socio-economic development has been identified as one of the cross-cutting themes, and in an effort to stimulate research activity in this area, RSEDIC launched a seed grant competition in early 2017 (see Appendix 8, RSEDIC Seed Grant program terms). The competition closed April 18, 2017, and funding decisions are expected by the end of May, 2017. These funded projects will be featured on RSEDIC’s website, and will be the focus of an RSEDIC workshop in the fall of 2017. $22,000 of RSEDIC funding has been allocated to the seed grant competition in 2017.

Membership
RSEDIC membership has remained static since its formation in 2015. The primary administrative goal for RSEDIC in 2017 is to re-engage and expand the membership, beginning with an AGM to be held later in 2017. This AGM will include updates on activities to date, and a strategic planning session to co-create goals for the Institute moving forward. Opportunities to be explored include establishing a speaker’s series, engaging with other research institutes based at UBC’s Okanagan campus for further joint-initiatives, and the preparation of a plain-language report on socio-economic research on UBC’s Okanagan campus for local, regional and provincial stakeholders.

Attachments

- Final report and recommendations of the task force of labeling and presentation
- Appendix 1: Summary of SSHRC Connection grant “British Columbia as a Wine Territory: Catalyzing Shared Understanding of its Identity”
- Appendix 2: Occupations workshop attendees 2016-2017
- Appendix 3: Summary of UBC Okanagan Humanities and Social Sciences grant “The History of Occupations of Okanagan First Nation Men and Women”
- Appendix 4: Summary of Western Economic Diversification application “Clean Flight”
- Appendix 5: Socio-Technical Change and Regional Socio-Economic Development brief
- Appendix 6: Summary of Community-University Portal project
- Appendix 7: RSEDIC Seed Grant program terms