

## **Engaging and Investing in Communities and the Non Profit Sector in a Time of Change**

Remarks for the Association of Family Serving Agencies' 2008 Fall Luncheon

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### **Why School of Public Administration?**

- Thanks for those kind words of welcome!
- How did a SPA Director get invited to this group
- Catalyst was our proposed MA in Community Development...and abiding interest of SPA in public and non profit management
- Raised the broader question of engagement of the University with the communities comprising Victoria and the region
- Involvement with The Centre for Non Profit Management and the Government-Non Profit Initiative
- June and her colleagues also wanted me to address the worsening economic circumstances
- I hope that I can generate some discussion & dialogue

### **Overarching Themes To Touch On**

- Thanks for those words of introduction
  - universities have multiple connections to communities
  - The non profit and other sectors tell universities much about emerging challenges and leading practice
  - Despite daunting economic circumstances, there are interesting initiatives proceeding here in BC, and the conditions are ripe for exploration and innovation
  - Networks more resilient than individual organizations or even particular clusters of organizations
  - Boundaries are dissolving, with new ways of looking at world, undertaking work, and finding solutions

### **Several Ongoing UVic Initiatives**

- Top support for Leadership Victoria
- Community-Based Research Initiative
- Discovered: community linkages everywhere”
  - Many professional schools – CYC, Social Work, Nursing, Business, Law, SPA, Indigenous Governance – who regularly deal with local communities...
  - research centres, such as the BC Institute for Cooperative Studies, Centre for Youth and Society, Centre for Aging, etc.
  - Chair in Aboriginal Economic Development, etc.
  - Several First Nations programs
- Advisory boards that reach out to the community

- We have long trained the leaders of tomorrow – indeed, many come to us fully or almost-fully formed leaders

### **University in Communities**

- Universities are more than “academic” research...
- Students, staff, faculty consume NPS services
- Faculty and many staff sit on NPS boards and volunteer
- Faculty researchers and administrators often work closely with NPS organizations on projects
- Faculty often take on special projects for NPS orgs
- Student projects are often done for community orgs
- Universities groom the “next generation” of leaders
- We provide training & development through Continuing Studies, Business, Public Administration, etc.
- UVic a complex organization with diverse linkages – it may seem big and distant, but comprises of smaller parts

### **Example: SPA and CNPM Collaboration**

- CNPM/SPA strategic partnership: mutual interest in building capacity; provide office space for CNPM and collaborate on some initiatives
  - Excellence in non profit management
  - Building skills and knowledge for non profit leaders
  - Promoting dialogue and mutual understanding between the non profit sector and government/business/University/community
- CNPM known for: Help the Helpers series; VSKN web site; Board Governance initiative; E-D Network meetings; Externs program; and Gilda’s relationship-building work
- But the key initiative I want to discuss today concerns the Government Non Profit Initiative

### **Government-Non Profit Initiative**

- Origins: May 2007 SPA-CNPM Round Table on Strengthening the Relationship (Govt NPS relations)
- The invited co-chairs took on full leadership of the initiative for the next round
- Three task forces – working together, procurement, and capacity-building – were created to explore issues and generate action proposals (practitioners/government)
- The GNPI Summit was held on Nov 19 in Vancouver
- Big challenge is how to anchor the initiative and concert on the many, many ideas that were generated
- Worthy of note: premise was never how to get new \$\$\$ into NPS, but rather how to collaborate better within and across the sectors –to make better use of resources

### **Proposed MA in Community Development**

- A joint initiative: CED, coop & NGO and SPA and colleagues from Education, Business, BCICS, etc.
- Still in the proposal phase...but likely not pursued at all if the MA was geared for any one sector
- Features...
  - Residential program (three rounds) along with online courses
  - Exciting blend of context, transformation, and management

- Broad perspectives on the sector, its challenges, and strategy
- Anchored by common courses and “stream courses” – idea is to encourage learning within and across the sectors
- Delivered by a combination of practitioners and scholars
- Papers and major project on home or partner organizations
- Goal is to groom the next generation leaders
- One challenge: language and priorities of the sectors

### **The Challenge of Economic Change**

- It is clear that we are experiencing dramatic economic change which is already having a profound effect on our communities and our programs – UVic will soon be feeling effects in many different ways
- But are these the most profound changes? What about the demographic rollover and technological change?
  - These promise to be more important in the longer term
  - BC public service before recession planning on 1/3 less staff
- We need to find new ways of working and organizing
  - Pressures to consolidate and collaborate
  - We need to think outside the box in a dramatic way
- It is for this reason that the sector will need to get better organized as a sector, to learn from sub-sectors and to leverage and ask for resources in business-like ways (MCFD and delivery agencies may be leading the charge!)

### **Conclusions and Questions for You**

- How do we better galvanize the non profit sector? How do we make it more resilient in a time of change?
- What sort of structures should be put in place, or should we rely more heavily on new structures?
- What learning and design priorities that we should incorporate into the MA in Community Development?
- What are the implications of demographic and economic change for the sector? Are we really focusing on this? Do we need to think much differently than we are?
- How do we reach out to the “next generation” of leaders and volunteers?