
The Centre for Community Research, Learning, and Action (CCRLA)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

September 13th 2024

Background and Context of CCRLA

The Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action (CCRLA) was created to develop a centre of excellence for community-based research at Wilfrid Laurier University (Laurier), which encompasses:

- A collaborative enterprise between academic researchers (professors and students) and community members.
- A learning environment to build capacity for community-engaged research, program evaluation, knowledge exchange and action.
- Having social action and social change goals to achieve social justice and community betterment.
- Achieving social action and social change through community development, capacity building, knowledge mobilization, program evaluation and policy development.
- Utilizing and validating multiple sources of knowledge and worldviews.
- Promoting the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination.

COLLABORATION

Our strength is the ability to collaborate with community partners to:

- Generate primary data where community and relational dynamics are poorly understood or limited to secondary information.
- Make use of data to understand social problems and implement an action to build on community strengths and address community concerns.

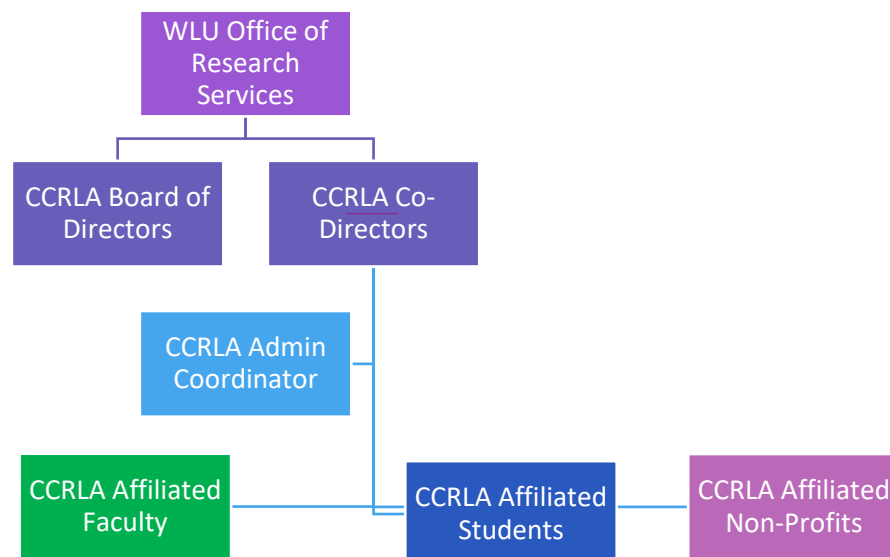
VISION, MISSION AND FOCUS

Our vision is an informed community in which all have a voice and the capacity to advance positive social change.

Our mission is to harness the knowledge and mobilize the resources of Laurier and non-academic stakeholders such as policy, industry and community partners to address complex societal issues.

Our primary focus is our commitment to collaborative research processes that honour the unique wisdom and skills of diverse stakeholder partners.

Organisational Structure



Mandate

The CCRLA Board will provide recommendations and guidance to the Co-Directors of the research centre. The purpose of the CCRLA BOARD is to serve in a governance role providing guidance related to centre activities, direction, scope, research partnerships, funding sources, fundraising, and other related matters as they arise.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the CCRLA BOARD:

- To provide recommendations, advice, and information to the co-directors related to the direction of the research centre.
- To provide guidance and recommendations to the co-directors on issues and matters as they arise.
- To consider the input and perspective of their constituent stakeholders in the guidance they provide.
- Attend board meetings twice a year, and participate by providing varying perspectives, reflections, and insights throughout the discussions.
- Prepare for meetings by reviewing any materials and resources shared in advance of meetings.

Board Member Expectations

- Make every effort to attend and actively participate in all meetings, where attendance is not feasible, provide input in other ways (e.g. by a phone call or email).
- Develop and maintain a climate where mutual support, trust, respect, courtesy, teamwork and creativity are valued.
- Respect the individual worth and dignity of other members and, at all times, work together to achieve a common vision for the community, utilizing the diverse knowledge, expertise and talents of all members.
- Challenge ideas and not people, creating a climate where it is okay to disagree.
- Communicate directly, concisely and honestly, listening without interruption, and be open-minded, allowing a variety of opinions to be heard.
- Communicate using inclusive and non-discriminatory language, respecting the spirit of the Ontario Human Rights Code. Maintain confidentiality of discussions in the group and about CCRLA activities.
- Maintain confidentiality of Board discussions in the group and about CCRLA activities.
- Respect all decisions made by the Board.

Working Group Composition

On Membership

The CCRLA Board of Directors is comprised of approximately 9 members who will provide a diversity of perspectives on issues pertaining to the governance of the research centre. The intention is that all board members are considered equal and active participants in the board.

Voting members of the Board will be selected based on their representation of a diversity of communities, industries, disciplines, and sectors who bring with them community and work experience.

The Co-Directors, with support from the administrative coordinator, will facilitate meeting discussions amongst Board members and will share pressing concerns, questions, and directions as they arise.

Towards this end, staff will participate as non voting members and will provide the following support to the Working Group:

- Administrative support such as recording minutes, scheduling meetings and the distribution of minutes and agendas.
- Policy and research support to gather information about what other communities are doing and to respond to questions about current activities underway or planned by CCRLA.

Membership Term

The initial term for each Board member, will be 2 or 3 years, based on individual preference and capacities, up to a maximum of 6 years.

The Board will meet twice a year (Fall and Winter) to oversee CCRLA operations and move actions.

Conduct and Confidentiality

Board members with a mandate to advise CCRLA leadership have the following expectations.

Members will not:

- Place themselves in a position where the member could derive any direct benefit or interest from any matter about which they can influence decisions;
- Disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, any confidential information acquired during the course of their official duties, either in written or oral form.

Members agree to:

- Maintain a climate where mutual support, trust, respect, courtesy, teamwork and creativity are prioritized
- Challenge ideas and not people, creating a climate where it is okay to disagree.
- Communicate directly, concisely and honestly, listening without interruption, and be open-minded, allowing a variety of opinions to be heard.
- Communicate using inclusive and non-discriminatory language, respecting the spirit of the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Respect all decisions made by the entire Board.

Decision Making

Decision-making at board meetings will strive first for consensus. If this method is not successful, then board members will employ a voting procedure by simple majority or 50% plus one of the board, providing that quorum is met.

Quorum will constitute of at least 7 to 9 board members being present at any given board meeting.

Media

Board members communicating with the media are speaking on behalf of themselves as an individual, not on behalf of CCRLA.