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Are Your Findings 'Finding' Their Way to the Community? A Faculty Learning Community Approach to Broad Dissemination

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Abstract
Presented at the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement Conference on September 27, 2016 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Keywords
dissemination, CEnR, Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU, community-engaged research, community engagement, faculty learning community

Disciplines
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Purpose: A Faculty Learning Community (FLC) with a goal to develop personal and university-wide expertise in wide dissemination of research findings using web-based platforms.

Who?
Ten faculty members:
- represented a wide range of disciplines (including education, social work, literature and rhetoric, health, cancer prevention and control, and African-American studies);
- had varying levels of experience with communicating with the public via web-based platforms; and
- brought research findings they were interested in sharing beyond academic audiences.

What?
The FLC met face-to-face every 3 weeks over the course of the 2015-2016 academic year in order to:
- co-learn about web-based platforms for sharing research findings;
- create and implement their own dissemination plans; and
- develop and vet a research dissemination guide that incorporates these web-based platforms.

Why?
The transfer of research findings beyond scientific publication is often slow and haphazard.1 Broad dissemination:
- finds its way to real and potential end-users in a timely, understandable, and accessible manner.
- follows the best practice of community-engaged research (CEnR)2 which values and prioritizes the broad dissemination of research findings.

References and Resources
2. VCU Community Engagement Definitions: http://www.opds.vcu.edu/decisions/119.html
VCU Research Dissemination Guide: http://guides.library.vcu.edu/dissemination
VCU Division of Community Engagement (DCE): www.community.vcu.edu
VCU Academic Transformation Lab (ALT Lab): altlab.vcu.edu
VCU Libraries: www.library.vcu.edu

Research Findings: The Journey Begins Here

How will you find those who could benefit from your research?

Execution

Web-based Platforms

When and how frequently will you share your data, preliminary findings, final outcomes, process, methodology, and any lessons learned?

Open Access Publishing
Open access journals, monographs, and textbooks provide free, online content to readers while maintaining academic rigor.

Social Media
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. allow brief & highly interactive information exchange.

Blogs, PodCasts, Infographics, & More!
The platforms offer creative and interactive formatting for communicating complex or esoteric ideas to the general public.

How will you evaluate dissemination & utilization?

Attention

How will you ensure the sustainability of your project?

Caution

What actions and strategies will you take to disseminate your research?

What resources are available for dissemination (people, funding, skills)?

What potential barriers to utilization and communication exist?

Attention