

**Building stronger
urban communities**

in partnership with North Minneapolis

ROBERT J. JONES
**Urban Research and
Outreach-Engagement Center**

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Self-Study Report for University-wide Centers and Institutes

University of Minnesota Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center

Established 2009

Reporting to the Office for Public Engagement (OPE) in the Office of the Executive Vice President and
Provost

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III. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) emerged from a vision of an engaged, place-based entity that would support the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UMTC) in fulfillment of its land grant mission in the campus' urban environs. In 2005, UMTC formed an Urban Agenda Task Force with a mission "to fulfill the University's land grant and civic missions through addressing issues of urban communities in collaboration with those communities, in order to improve the quality of life for all Minnesotans."¹ An early manifestation of this vision was the formation of the University Northside Partnership (UNP) in 2006, which connected the University to the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, and which engaged with community concerns. The UNP envisioned a physical university presence in North Minneapolis with a facility that would house a joint University-county health facility focused on research in mental health, child development, and family support.

Initial reaction to the proposed University research facility in North Minneapolis was mixed. Supporters saw the potential benefits of University involvement in an area that had experienced decades of disinvestment, while detractors pointed to a long history of research on, and exploitation of, under-resourced communities. Ultimately, the plans for a research facility dissolved in 2008 in the face of continuing community distrust and worsening economic conditions locally and nationally. However, the community discussions held around the UNP's plans had surfaced support for University-community engagement. In 2008, the UMTC purchased an abandoned shopping center at the corner of Plymouth and Penn Avenues North. UROC was to become a physical place, but it needed a strategy for how the UMTC and North Minneapolis might engage with one another for mutual benefit, a key component of the UMTC's definition of engagement.

To address this issue, UMTC engaged for more than two years with community members from North Minneapolis and others to develop a mission and vision for the facility now known as UROC. The process began with the UMTC contracting with The Lyceum Group, a consulting firm that provided convening and facilitation services. The firm conducted interviews with community members and UMTC faculty and staff. From this pool of interviewees, a group was identified to plan a conference intended to kick start the strategic planning process for UROC. The Futures Conference, as it was named, was held in February 2009 and was attended by more than 50 stakeholders including advocates, activists, and representatives from community and faith-based organizations, government, UMTC, students, and local foundations. The attendees drafted mission and vision statements for UROC; after which an action planning team did intensive work over the course of the following weeks to set strategic goals based on the draft mission. Focus groups were held so that community members could review and respond to draft documents. The results of the engagement processes were presented to then-UMTC Senior Vice President Robert J. Jones, for whom UROC is now named.

The two-year engagement process identified clear goals for UROC. The center would need to be accountable, transparent, and relevant. It would need to make use of a collaborative model of work that recognized community assets and valued local knowledge. Work undertaken in partnership with the community would need to result in mutual benefit, with the community driving research, rather than

¹ Maruyama, Geoffery, Robert J. Jones, and John R. Finnegan. (2009). Advancing an urban agenda: Principles and experiences of an urban land grant university." *Metropolitan Universities*, 20: 75-100.

playing the role of “research subjects.” It was with these community mandates that UROC opened its doors in September 2009, and officially opened in full operation in May of 2010.

IV. SCOPE, MISSION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Scope

UROC is a UMTC-wide research center that reports to the University of Minnesota Executive Vice President and Provost through the system-wide Office for Public Engagement. Because UROC’s mission and work was designed to advance the UMTC’s top line strategic goals, the center is positioned within academic reporting lines that include all collegiate and academic units on the UMTC campus. As such, UROC programmatic activities and projects meet the strategic goals of generating knowledge and developing a workforce capable of tackling the world’s complex challenges; recruiting and supporting ground-breaking researchers and teachers who foster reciprocal relationships in the communities with which the University intersects; and empowering students, faculty, and staff to achieve these goals. Additionally, UROC contributes to the University’s broader mission by building the University’s capacity for public engagement while developing models for engaged, partnership-based research focused on the most pressing social issues of our time.

UROC is a place-based research center situated in a North Minneapolis neighborhood approximately five miles west of the UMTC’s Minneapolis campus. UROC’s leadership defines “place-based” to mean those attributes of UROC’s work that result from the center being physically rooted within a neighborhood and geographic community. Those attributes provide unique opportunities for reciprocal engagement through proximity, connection, and trust, but carry with them the obligations of accessibility, inclusion, accountability, and transparency.

UROC leverages its location, as well as its campus and community connections to produce publicly-engaged research models and research results in support the University’s mission. Its operational principles are based on relationships between University scholars and community partners that are rooted in trust, respect, power-sharing, reciprocal benefit, and a shared belief in the benefits of high-quality publicly engaged research in the areas of health and wellness, economic and community development, and education and lifelong learning.

UROC’s contributions to engaged scholarship and community benefits are rooted in its dual nature as a research center and a physical building. Evidence continues to mount that both community and University partners seek out affiliation through UROC because of its “neutral” or “inviting” space. While UROC leadership actively reaches out to the University scholars and community organizations with partnership opportunities, the majority of UROC’s current and emerging research projects and community programs are a result of UROC’s growing reputation as a trusted, high-quality research center, a reputation that one University professor called “UROC’s cache.” Since 2009, the personal impact of UROC as reported by North Minneapolis residents has been increasing consistently. While the sample size does not allow for statistical significance, the consistency suggests an underlying trend.²

As of July 1, 2016, UROC was home to 65 University-community projects involving more than 100 community partners and 42 University units ranging from University of Minnesota Extension, to the

² University of Minnesota Public Perception Survey, 2009-2015

Medical School, College of Design, and Humphrey School of Public Affairs. UROC's own staff are involved in spearheading signature research and engagement projects in the areas of health and wellness, economic and community development, and education and lifelong learning.

The structural organization of university engagement centers typically follow one of two formats: 1) an on-campus center dedicated to connecting students with service learning opportunities or researchers with research sites in a community located in proximity or some distance away; or 2) a university facility located within a community that provides local residents access to services or educational opportunities. These models commonly provide one-way access—the university accesses the community or vice versa—which can exacerbate power and resource differences. In contrast, UROC's "place-based" model provides two-way access—its location in an urban neighborhood provides a place for the University scholars and local residents to work alongside each other in mutually beneficial ways that create and produce knowledge.

UROC's unique dual function necessitates a twofold operational strategy which includes the full-time operation of a public-facing, University of Minnesota building, while developing a programmatic portfolio of high-quality, impactful research and outreach that links University and community assets and needs. On the physical/operational side, UROC's leadership and operational teams work closely with University Services, Facilities Management, Purchasing Services, the Office of Real Estate, and University of Minnesota Police to insure the safety of visitors, staff, and property and that UROC is in compliance with all University policies and procedures. In addition to scheduling and maintaining UROC's public meeting space, UROC staff is also responsible for multiple, ongoing vendor contacts with community suppliers of security and facility-related services related to building upkeep. UROC's gallery coordinator is responsible for the installation and coordination of public works of art as per UROC's commitment to being a showcase for artists from underrepresented communities.

Mission

The mission of UROC is to link the University of Minnesota in vital public partnership with urban communities to advance learning, improve quality of life, and discover breakthrough solutions to critical problems. The vision of UROC is to transform the ways the University and communities work together by surfacing multiple ways of knowing and trying new ways of doing. UROC's mission and vision are aligned with the University's threefold mission of research and discovery, teaching and learning, and outreach and public service.

Projects conducted through UROC advance the community-identified priority areas of health and wellness, economic and community development, and education and lifelong learning. Further, projects must be action-focused and must have been initiated in collaboration with community partners, with outcomes intended to benefit all partners, as well as the broader public.

UROC projects focus on the interests and concerns of urban communities, immigrant communities and communities of color in the Twin Cities and throughout the state. Because UROC does not dictate or require specific research approaches or methodologies, it serves as an academic incubator--a transformative research center in which emerging styles of interdisciplinary research on complex societal issues are encouraged.

Accomplishments

In just six years, UROC's accomplishments have become numerous and wide ranging—from producing meaningful and life-changing research to engaging faculty, students and staff in dozens of cross-disciplinary collaborations across campus. Its reputation for producing high-quality programs through respect and collaboration has strengthened the University's ties to North Minneapolis. Its commitment to mutually agreed-upon outcomes have positioned the University as a trusted public forum for critical conversations around urban issues. Below are five milestones worth highlighting:

1. **Development and launch of an Engaged Research Lab:** The lab aims to foster and promote engaged scholarship through development of an intellectual community, experimenting with models of engagement, and ongoing training of faculty, students and staff.
2. **Development and launch of an University of Minnesota Engagement Zone:** This initiative is an Office for Public Engagement effort co-lead by UROC designed to align research efforts across the UMTC as they impact our place-based community of North Minneapolis.
3. **Establishment of UROC Signature Projects:** UROC's long-term, community-based, participatory and action research high public impact projects that develop and explore models of public engagement. Projects include: The Northside Job Creation Team, The Trauma Recovery Project, Sex Trading and Trafficking and Community Wellbeing, Generation Next Faculty Fellows, and Critical Conversations.
4. **Creation of UROC Affiliation Process and Projects:** UROC provides a formal system of tools and support to University research and outreach project directors working in partnership with community through the UROC affiliation process.
5. **Thought-leadership on Engagement:** UROC's executive director and senior leadership are increasingly requested to participate in both University and external committees, networks, and councils and are increasingly sought after to speak, write, and present on engaged scholarship on the national and international level.

The remainder of this section explores aspects of these five milestones within the categories articulated through the self-study guide we received. These include: intellectual contributions, faculty involvement, student and post-doc involvement, and collaboration, and value-added. Each item is also described in depth later in the report. A list of all UROC projects and initiatives is provided in the appendix.

A. INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACADEMIA AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY WITH RESPECT TO A PARTICULAR TOPIC AND ACROSS MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

UROC's contributions to the academic community cannot be quantified with typical metrics because its mission and scope of work are not defined by a particular academic discipline. However, its contributions to the wider University community—contributions tied to testing, measuring, and refining models of reciprocal engagement—are significant. By being a place where engagement can occur, UROC makes four key contributions to the University and wider community:

1. Legitimacy and Reciprocal Engagement;
2. Proximity and Trust;

3. Training and Scholarly Development; and
4. Model-building and Scholarly Dissemination.

Taken together, these contributions constitute infrastructure that expands the capacity of UMTC to conduct community-engaged research and address real-world, real-time problems.

1. *Legitimacy and Reciprocal Engagement*

UROC's mission and approach were developed through engagement with the community. The engagement process created opportunities for UMTC to both confront its legacy in North Minneapolis (and other underserved, underrepresented communities) and also establish groundwork for new relationships with the community that are built on accountability, transparency, and "being a good neighbor." For example, in 2010 North Minneapolis was hit by a devastating tornado. In response, UROC worked with community leaders and offered specific university resources to support community efforts.

Working with representatives from across the University of Minnesota community, UROC staff researched, and provided demographic maps for volunteers to do a door-to-door assessment of the damage. UROC trained, deployed, and debriefed 550 volunteers for the assessment over a three-day period. This effort represented how the University responds as a partner and part of the community. The principles upon which a new relationship was forged during the formation of UROC as an institution, and have demonstrated through practice, have made the community and community organizations more receptive to collaborating with UROC staff to do research, engagement, and outreach.

This community receptiveness extends to other faculty, staff, and students who elect to base their work at UROC; researchers working at UROC are as a result pushed to demonstrate accountability to the community and transparency in their work with the community. UROC encourages and supports others in cultivating partnerships that will have mutual benefit for all parties, and aims to both disseminate research findings and act on those findings. The work that UROC's founders and staff have done, and continue to do, create a platform of legitimacy that makes it possible for additional University researchers to enter and work authentically with the community.

2. *Proximity and Trust*

UROC's North Minneapolis location is an essential characteristic of its research infrastructure. University faculty, staff, and students working at UROC must travel outside the "bubble" of the main campus and through the neighborhoods of North Minneapolis. Being physically located in a community creates many opportunities for new exposures and deepened connections between the University and North Minneapolis communities.

Furthermore, both research and learning become more salient when researchers and students interact daily with the community in which their work takes place. Convenient, daily University-UROC transportation fashioned along Parking and Transportation Service's Campus Connectors would help to increase UROC's scholarly impact on both researchers and students. In addition, the Connector would become a bridge to the University—and the real and perceived difficulty of navigating University parking would become a non-issue.

UROC's public spaces also provide a bridge to the University in that they provide space for meetings, art exhibitions, workshops, or contemplation. UROC's public spaces break down the formidability of the "ivory tower," making the University and its research resources accessible to the local community. The end result is impactful scholarship that can be used to improve quality of life.

During the occupation of the neighboring Minneapolis Police Department's Fourth Precinct, UROC's doors remained open to both protesters and police officers—a challenging situation for the staff of UROC, but a necessary statement that the University remained committed to the North Minneapolis community even when the going got tough. Working closely with University administration and community leaders in UROC's Trauma Recovery Project, UROC has played a significant role in community healing and reconciliation as other recent traumatic events have unfolded.

3. *Training and Scholarly Development*

UROC's physical presence in North Minneapolis provides a home base for researchers. As a University office building, UROC provides workstations, meeting spaces, and connectivity with the Internet. Research teams can "land" at UROC and operate for the duration of their project while having access to both University and local community resources.

UROC's new Engaged Research Lab will provide even more opportunities for exchange of ideas and perspectives, the development of new collaborations, and the cultivation of new mutual understandings.

4. *Model-building and Scholarly Dissemination*

A key function of UROC is to develop and test models for engaging with communities in mutually-beneficial partnerships to co-create solutions to some of our biggest challenges. To do this, UROC generates dollars to support specific projects, studies its own work, conducts documentation and evaluation activities, and has begun publishing its processes and findings.

Signature research projects are the focus of multiple forms of dissemination activities including written reports; public meetings and special events; videos, brochures, newsletters, websites, and other visual representation of data; news media coverage; and academic and peer-reviewed publication. We are in year six of this experiment called UROC—and year two of having a fully functioning strategic vision and operational processes. Thus, we are poised to begin the journey of sharing the overall model and work of UROC more broadly in the scholarly community.

For example, over the past year we have engaged with community stakeholders to understand their views on our current modes and mechanisms for dissemination. We discovered that our efforts at dissemination have reached some, but not all audiences. So, our work is well-known in the broad circle of people engaged in specific topic area. For example, individuals involved in Minnesota's broad coalitions working on sex trafficking, including service providers, law enforcement, government leaders, and more, are well aware of our signature research in this area. But the general public in north Minneapolis is less aware. In our work on sex trafficking, we also learned that infographics and other visual data strategies are critical for widespread

dissemination and usability of our research findings. In our latest report, the use of infographics to represent the market for juvenile sex trafficking in Minneapolis has allowed police forces across the state of Minnesota to sharpen their departmental training and to guide investigative functions.

By offering legitimacy, proximity, and logistical support, UROC serves as vital infrastructure that makes community engaged research possible and accessible to more researchers and students on the UMTC campus. Currently, UROC is the only research facility in the University of Minnesota system that provides logistical support and methodological framing for engaged research in a space shared with community. UROC is also engaged in the exploration and documentation of models of engagement. There are many different methods, approaches, and theories that underpin engaged research, and UROC is dedicated to developing new models of engaged research that will benefit all institutions involved in this work.

B. FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

Faculty involvement is critical to UROC's mission and growth. UROC engages faculty from more than 42 academic programs across the UMTC campus. A full list is provided in the appendices. We have multiple ways for faculty to align their work with UROC. This includes the UROC affiliation process where faculty (and other UMTC principal investigators and program directors) can "officially" align their work with UROC and use UROC facilities, contributing and capitalizing on UROC's mission. As of July 2016, we have 65 projects aligned with UROC. Starting in the Fall of 2016, research activities in each of the three UROC priority areas will be coordinated by a faculty or staff lead: Yingling Fan, associate professor in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs will lead the economic and community development efforts; Katie Johnston-Goodstar, assistant professor in the School of Social Work will lead around education and lifelong learning; Lauren Martin, UROC Research director, will lead efforts in health and wellness.

UROC also engages faculty from across campus in its own signature projects. Some examples include:

Generation Next Faculty Fellows: Led by faculty from UMTC departments including Organizational Leadership and Policy Development; School of Social Work; Communication Studies; Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies, and the Medical School, this group aims to examine why an "achievement gap" exists, and examine the intersection of structural issues that are at the root of that gap. In 2015-2016 the groups engaged in new or ongoing projects with various communities to generate solutions for addressing the gap. Next steps include dissemination of outcomes from their projects as well as a UROC report on lessons learned about creating spaces for faculty. In addition, the fellows will convene in fall 2016 to discuss next steps as a group, and funding opportunities for the projects in the coming year.

Northside Job Creation Team (NJCT): the NJCT is a multi-sector stakeholder group convened and facilitated by UROC with the charge of creating a 1,000 living wage jobs, in or near north Minneapolis that employ residents of north Minneapolis. Deep-dive business research is led by a team from Carlson School of Management. Research and scholarship efforts are lead and coordinated by Prof. Yingling Fan from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

Sex Trafficking and Community Wellbeing: This initiative coordinates over 6 distinct research projects to generate community-grounded and action-oriented research on sex trading and trafficking in Minnesota. Lead by Lauren Martin, the initiative engages faculty and students from across campus. For example, UROC partnered with Tasoulla Hadjiyanni in The School of Design on an exhibit at the Goldstein Museum.

Looking forward, the new engaged research lab (see page 15) will offer another opportunity for faculty to engage with one another around their projects and around the practices, philosophies, and epistemologies that drive community-engaged research.

UMTC faculty and staff are also deeply involved in programmatic engagement and outreach activities at UROC, providing a venue for dissemination to new and broad audiences with information on community-driven areas of interest. In so doing we provide a dual benefit to faculty and community. Examples of this include:

Critical Conversations: community convenings facilitated by UROC where community members, activists, elected officials, and UMTC faculty engage with members of the community to discuss critical local issues, including homeownership, sex trafficking, community safety, and healing trauma.

Room rental/reservation: all members of campus can utilize community space at UROC and our ability to advertise and promote events.

C) UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, GRADUATE STUDENT, AND POST-DOC INVOLVEMENT

UROC does not offer students credit-bearing courses. It is a place-based engagement center that houses ongoing community engaged projects, and serves as a learning lab for doing engaged work. Graduate students, undergraduate student staff, and research and dissertation fellows all contribute to projects housed at UROC. There are currently more than 50 undergraduate and graduate students involved in UROC-based projects in various capacities, including graduate research assistants, research fellows and interns, students whose dissertations and theses are being advised by UROC staff, and data collectors. Many of these projects require close collaboration with students and faculty from departments from across the UMTC, and with community leaders and community experts. Project-based work provides students opportunities to develop research skills, but to also develop new perspectives as they work alongside collaborators from different departments and communities. UROC, in partnership with the College of Liberal Arts, Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies, also hosts a postdoctoral fellow. The post-doc was funded in 2015-2106 through a community partner focused on youth. This year, the post-doc will be funded through the department to continue a project piloted with St Paul Public Schools that this year will be piloted in a North Minneapolis school.

Examples of specific projects aimed at engaging students include:

Josie Johnson UROC Dissertation Fellows, a group of graduate students who are developing their engaged research skills as part of dissertation work. The program aims to support professional development, deepen understandings of the theories and practice of engaged scholarship, and provide a space for mutual support and reflection for graduate students engaging in this work.

The Sex Trading and Sex Trafficking Initiative, a multi-year, multi-partner project, engages numerous graduate students as research assistants each semester. During the summer of 2016 we engaged 13 interns and graduate research assistants from multiple disciplines to learn and engage in research activities on our ongoing research related to sex buyers. The team entered and analyzed data from interviews with over 157 law enforcement and service providers across the state of Minnesota. Students learned how to do literature searches, media review, transcription, coding and analysis. Not only did students gain valuable, hands-on training, they also contributed to a publically engaged project that will impact statewide and national efforts to reduce the harms caused by sex trafficking.

Carlson Ventures Enterprise (CVE) partners with the Northside Job Creation Team in a unique experiential program for full-time MBA students at the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. The goal of CVE is to give students an opportunity to evaluate new business opportunities in the real world and to give students the tools to assess markets, craft business models and understand funding mechanisms for all kinds of new ventures.

UROC also engages students in project specific ways for engaged projects. Two examples include our partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota to evaluate Nice Ride Neighborhood (NRN) and our partnership with the Northside Achievement Zone and Wilder Research to identify a representative sample of households in north Minneapolis for the NAZ community survey. NRN engaged five students in participant-observation, community engagement and interviews. For the NAZ community survey project UROC hired 27 students and community members to go door-to-door collecting data. Both are mechanisms for students to learn while building scholarship and research that contributes to the public good.

D) COLLABORATIONS WITH DEPARTMENTS, COLLEGES, OTHER CENTERS/INSTITUTES, AND NON-UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS

UROC coordinates and collaborates with other colleges and departments on projects that have both local and regional impacts. These collaborations are successful in part because of the infrastructural role UROC plays in supporting them. Some projects utilize UROC's physical spaces; for others, UROC facilitates access to the North Minneapolis community. One of the challenges faced by all engagement units is documenting collaborations in real time. Over the past year, UROC has focused on the process of documenting projects that are affiliated with UROC. To date, 65 projects have been documented. Each project lead was asked to complete a 17-question survey, which asked about project demographics, connections to the community and the University, and about the goals and activities used to achieve those goals. Essentially, the data gathered provides UROC with important information about affiliated projects, allows UROC to report on a variety of data on individual and multiple projects (e.g., number of partners, types of partners, areas of impact, source of funding, goals and activities, etc.) This portion of the documentation process is aligned with the *Outputs* column as identified on the UROC logic model.

The next step in the documentation process is to identify how projects are connected to UROC specifically. The *Short Term Outcomes* column on the UROC logic model indicates a focus on building relationships, establishing trust, and sharing both in the creation and the dissemination of knowledge. The role UROC plays will vary depending on the needs of the partnership/project. It is important that

UROC establish a way for projects to identify their own connection with UROC as opposed to UROC deciding what role it plays in the partnership.

A full list of documented projects is provided in the appendices. Below are a few examples.

Integrated Urban Infrastructure Solutions for Environmentally Sustainable, Healthy, and Livable Cities. This project is implemented with the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and focuses on identifying the priorities of North Minneapolis residents with respect to environmental sustainability, health, and livability, with a goal of policy development and long-range planning that meets the needs of area residents. The project engages community residents, faculty, and planning professionals.

Second Chance Saturdays. Students from the University of Minnesota Law School, in collaboration with the Legal Rights Center and attorneys from the Volunteer Lawyers Network, meet with community members with criminal records to understand their situation, their rights, and any barriers they may face.

Power to Quit. Headed by Medical School Professor Kola Okuyemi, UROC-based Power to Quit II program focuses on how to improve smoking cessation rates in homeless populations. Its goal is to determine whether intensive smoking intervention coupled with integrated alcohol abuse and smoking counseling can help homeless people kick the habit.

University of Minnesota Extension Service. The Extension service coordinates a number of projects housed at UROC including one aimed at developing urban farmland and incubating urban farming businesses.

In addition to our affiliation with departments and schools across the university, the UROC director's team participates in important committees across the university. For example, the executive director was selected to serve on the Faculty Consultative Committee, two major committees leading the university strategic planning process, the review team for Grand Challenges Research, the Office for Public Engagement Public Engagement Council and others. The UROC directors of research and outreach are part of the IRB review committee for student research.

E) DESCRIPTION OF ACHIEVEMENTS THAT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN REALIZED WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULAR DEPARTMENT AND COLLEGIATE STRUCTURE—CENTER/INSTITUTE'S VALUE ADDED

UROC's interactions with other place-based engagement centers across the country and internationally has shown that although we often have common goals (such as community–university partnership), our approach is different. The approach is often different because the context is different. For example, the University of Nebraska, Omaha created an engagement center on campus to bring the community to the university where all engaged campus activities are located. Our colleagues at York University, Toronto have a place-based engagement center in a rented storefront space in the community with a focus of enhancing education through civic engagement. UROC's community based location, our vision of transformation and focus on research and outreach and cyclical connection is unique. The connection of our work with the Office for Public Engagement's 10 point plan, our work with faculty, students and staff

to enhance the institutionalization and advancement of engaged work, and positioning in the academic structure of the university, connects us to the university community as an integrated unit.

The work to create an integrated university unit that is well positioned in the community has been intentional. UROC, through our signature programs, modeled with the community and the university, demonstrates how research, as a university resource, could be mutually beneficial. In this vein, UROC represents to the community the commitment to, and demonstration of, the land-grant mission of the university. For the university, UROC represents a way in which scholarly engagement is rewarded, where like-minded academics may grow their work, and a place where students can learn to be the next generation of engaged scholars. UROC is not the only place this work happens at the University, but it is unique in our alignment across goals, including alignment with the university's engagement goals, commitment to addressing difficult urban issues, support of multiple sustained community and university relationships, and our strong and growing reputation among our partners and communities in general.

In addition, UROC takes educated risks, meaning we walk toward urban topics that are often the most difficult. UROC is willing to take educated risks because we recognize and accept that failure is an excellent opportunity for learning, refinement, reflection and eventually growth. The best example of this was the Broadband Access Project (BAP), a three year federal grant designed to increase access to high speed internet via computer labs located throughout the metropolitan area. Metrics indicate that we reached many of our objectives, with 12 computer labs created or enhanced, over 15,000 hours of free, public technology training and over 90,000 visits to our computer labs. However, sustainability was not achieved past the end of the federal grant and the actual execution of the project was difficult. UROC learned that the traditional model of executing a large grant from a top-down decision making structure, or a mechanistic paradigm, was not successful and did not meet our mission of engagement or transformation. Future projects needed to be based on relationship building, ensuring mutual benefit, alignment with UROC's vision and community needs all leading to transformation. The BAP oscillated between two extremes of meeting rigid University and federal policies and goals and appeasing the demands of community partners. UROC learned valuable lessons from the BAP that we've applied to our subsequent projects, lessons that would not have been possible without taking educated risks and being willing to fail. Although we do work with housing, job creation, and smoking cessation, we also work with communities and the university to process topics that are often taboo for underserved communities such as mental health, sex trafficking and trading, and unequal incarceration practices. UROC is persistent in the projects we commit to, a persistence that also leads to sustainability and impact. For example, our work in sex trafficking is an initiative of multiple projects that is built to discover root causes. Our job creation team, through research and outreach, has uncovered some root issues in land acquisition for new businesses, moving through these issues to bring four new businesses to the area. The way we work allows for community, students, and faculty to all have input and to have the unique assets they bring shared and valued.

Finally, UROC is seen as a "neutral space" for tough community discussions to happen. For example, when a Northside pastor asked Governor Dayton to meet with the community about the lack of jobs UROC was asked to host the convening. When Minnesota Public Radio MPR wanted to broadcast a live show from the community following up on the 2010 tornado, UROC hosted and provided MPR with an orientation to the Northside. The UROC gallery offers underrepresented, local artists a space to share their work with communities in close proximity. The gallery curates three or more exhibitions a year

with an opening event where community and artists meet. Exhibits are also often tied to yearly events such as the Critical Conversation series. All of these events and projects provide real and positive connections between communities and the university.

V. STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY

UROC continues to explore strategies for facilitating intellectual community-building among faculty, graduate students, and the wider North Minneapolis community in ways that leverage academic resources, physical location, and community relationships. UROC frames intellectual community in three primary ways: (1) structured fellowships and internships (2) communities of practice (3) community engagement through sharing of space and dissemination of research findings. UROC has a history of offering structured fellowships for faculty and doctoral students. Following is a review of the past and current intellectual community-building work.

Looking Back: Structured Fellowships

Fellowships at UROC facilitate engagement within the university community around community concerns, but they also play an important role in supporting the development of engaged scholars. Josie Johnson UROC Dissertation Fellows provide professional development support for graduate students as they conduct community-engaged research for their dissertations. Dissertation fellows support one another's work, engage in reflection about their work as community-engaged researchers and as community members, and deepen their understandings of the theory and practice of community-engaged scholarship.

Fellowships that engage faculty play an important role in providing space for engaged-scholars to share their work, but they also help to legitimize community partnerships in research. UROC has thus far hosted three cohorts of faculty fellows. The first cohort brought together tenure-track faculty of color. This cohort produced a special journal issue focused on faculty of color and urban education, and reached a mutually agreed upon ending point in its third year. A second cohort was formed to explore the gaps between research and practice with respect to narratives on sex trafficking. This second cohort, supported by the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS) was an interdisciplinary space where researchers, policy makers, and practitioners could find common ground to address issues around sex trafficking. The cohort was completed after a year and half. This cohort led to members publishing articles, a new course on sex trading and marginalization at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, an exhibition at the Goldstein Museum, and more.

The current faculty cohort, the Generation Next UROC Faculty Fellows formed out of UROC's partner organizations' interest in addressing the educational achievement gap. The Generation Next Faculty Fellows involves five faculty teams, each of which meets monthly. The teams also come together to share their work. Each group received funding through UROC in 2015 (provided by a grant from the UMTC's Metropolitan Council) to initiate a pilot project with a community partner that aimed to support student access to education. The projects include YPARs, language arts curriculum development, and a study of school discipline policies, among others. Participation in the current cohort continues to be strong, and UROC continues to document the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of this current fellowship.

While each of the cohort of faculty fellows had a different focus and a different method of convening, it has been possible to identify factors that contribute to the success of the cohort, and those that have resulted in a lack of cohesion and, ultimately, lower participation. The first cohort of engaged faculty was supported by a piecemeal budget, cobbled together by the UROC executive director, and it engaged faculty who studied community engagement, but who did not actually *do* community engagement. The second cohort successfully formed an intellectual community but met sporadically. The cohort sparked individual members to collaborate with one another across campus on issues related to sex trading and trafficking, creating greater campus-wide alignment, but it did not result in group-level community engaged efforts. The current cohort, however, has been the most successful at integrating scholarly efforts and cross-campus alignment with sustained community engagement. It is believed that this success arises from three main factors: (1) the cohort was formed in response to a tangible need expressed by the local community with a clear mandate and expected products; (2) the cohort is made up of engaged scholars who are accustomed to working in the complex, murky-defined environment that surrounds academic success and underserved communities; (3) a small amount of funding and coordination support for the groups was provided. Although some internal funding has provided one-time funding for our fellows, to be most effective in our work, UROC would need a consistent funding source to benefit faculty fellows. We have initiated discussions with university development about a possible Engaged Research Chair as well as engaged scholarship for graduate students. Our colleagues at Brighton University fund an engaged scholar sabbatical, providing the gap pay for faculty to take a leave from regular duties and work full-time for a year on developing as an engaged scholar.

Looking Forward: Community of Practice and the Engaged Research Lab

The Engaged Research Lab (ERL) is a new initiative at UROC that launched in 2016. Its genesis arises from recognition that engaged research does not simply “happen”; rather, researchers must develop knowledge and skills to apply specific methods and practices in engaged research. This development happens best in the context of iterative practice and reflection with a cohort of fellow travelers. The proposed model of the ERL will use four primary strategies to develop a community of engaged research practitioners:

1. ***Orienting researchers to engaged research***, UROC, and the Northside. This component introduces students and staff to both UROC and the North Minneapolis community. It also offers participants an introduction to the theories and methods around engaged research.
2. ***PI learning circles***, which give researchers opportunities to deepen their engaged research practice and reflect on their work. Learning circles will be directed by the participants themselves, and is intended to cultivate a scholarly community within the building. Our first year starts in the fall of 2016 and will likely focus on theorizing and building models for re-conceptualizing the research encounter between researchers and participants and exploring research as “practice”. We envision model development, experimentation, trial and learning, and publication.
3. ***Formalized learning opportunities for student researchers*** that support development of engaged research competencies. These competencies include community engagement skills and an understanding of the foundation of engaged research approaches. These learning opportunities will include the Josie Johnson UROC Dissertation Fellows program, as well as opportunities to work on UROC research projects.
4. ***Research on engaged research approaches*** for the purposes of developing models for, and measuring the impact of, engaged research.

In shifting from a focus on mainly formal learning opportunities to a blend of formal and informal community building opportunities offered by the ERL, UROC is broadening the impact of its engaged research emphasis on the UMTC community. By launching the ERL, UROC will provide infrastructure for engaged research that will support the UMTC's ability to do high-impact research for the public good by building the capacity of students, faculty and staff to engage communities through research. UROC will continue to iteratively refine its methods for engaging with/bridging between academic departments, community organizations, and cross-disciplinary research.

As part of our focus on dissemination UROC is in the process of developing a new discussion format, modeled somewhat on a "fresh air radio" style of interview. We are looking for ways to develop pithy and publically accessible sharing of information on topics relevant to the UMN and broader communities. Similar to our Critical Conversation series, we envision building and involving thought-leaders from the campus and community. We are currently exploring an emerging partnership with the University of Minnesota public relations and Minnesota Public Radio.

VI. RESOURCES

A. OFFICE SPACE (LOCATION, SIZE, AND QUALITY)

UROC occupies a refurbished strip mall at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Plymouth Avenue North in North Minneapolis. The building is 22,700 square feet, with over 14,322 square feet of usable office and meeting room space. The refurbishing of the space was completed in fall of 2009, with the grand opening taking place in spring of 2010. Maintenance of the building is contracted through UMTC Facilities Management and UMTC Classroom Services. The grounds and snow removal are maintained through an external vendor from the community, as are the janitorial services. Utilizing local vendors is part of UROC's promise to the community to be a good neighbor and to support North Minneapolis economic development.

B. OFFICE AND RESEARCH SPACE

UROC's dedicated research and office space totals over 6,100 square feet, divided between assigned offices, shared collaboration space and hoteling space. Space is assigned based on project needs through the UROC affiliation process.

C. SPECIAL FACILITIES (PUBLIC SPACE)

The UROC facility is divided between research/office space and "public" space that can be used by members of the public. The research space is described above. For public space, UROC has an art gallery (with a part-time curator), a hospitality station, a reception area, large meeting space (1,800 sq. feet), two classrooms, a "board room", and a suite of offices located in the public side of the building.

D. STAFF POSITIONS

UROC currently employs three full time Professional and Administrative class employees; the Director of Research, the Director of Outreach and Engagement and the Director of Administration and Projects. The Director of Research is "soft" funded. UROC's Executive Director is currently a .40 FTE position. There will be two additional .25 FTE positions in fiscal year 2017 for the faculty leads engaged in education and lifelong learning and health and community wellness, one from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and the other from the School of Social Work. There are three full time Administrative

Specialist positions that support the operations of the building, rental of UROC meeting space and project support. UROC employs a .25 FTE Arts and Special Projects Coordinator that serves as gallery curator. Finally, UROC's IT needs are met through a .25 FTE position shared with the College of Education and Human Development.

Additional support is provided through central administration and the Provost's office, including a Human Resources Manager, a Financial Analyst, and a Senior Public Relations Consultant. UROC also hires graduate assistants, undergraduate students and community members for projects and events.

F. TOTAL BUDGET – ALL SOURCES (DETAILS PROVIDED IN THE APPENDIX)

UROC's total budget for fiscal year 2016 was \$1,389,944. Carry forward for the center totaled \$650,719 entering fiscal year 2016. Expenditures totaled \$1,480,673, as UROC spent \$90,729 in carry forward funding in addition to the fiscal year budget.

UROC's O&M budget allocation increased from \$829,817 in fiscal year 2016 to \$836,970 for fiscal year 2017. Carry forward for fiscal year 2017 is \$534,185. UROC is awaiting the award of several federal, state and philanthropic funding requests for fiscal year 2017.

UROC's O&M allocation was \$640,836 for fiscal year 2012. It increased by 2.5% each year through fiscal year 2014. A staff line was added in fiscal year 2014 for the Director of Administration and Projects position. Previously, this position had been funded through one-time funding, or "soft" money. A large increase to the annual budget was awarded in fiscal year 2015, as UROC contracted for on-site security to comply with University safety recommendations made by the University of Minnesota Police Department.

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE, AND MANAGEMENT

A. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OR SCHEMATIC INCLUDING REPORTING STRUCTURE

Please see the appendix for the organizational chart

C. LEADERSHIP (DIRECTOR AND OTHER RELEVANT LEADERS) RESPONSIBILITIES, SELECTION AND REVIEW PROCESS, AND CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR REPLACEMENT.

UROC, with a dual role of building management and engagement, has worked over time to establish two teams; a directors team and an operations team. The Directors team includes the executive director, and the directors of administration, research, outreach, and communication. The directors team is led by the executive director. The operations team includes 3 full-time Administrative staff as well as the directors of administration and outreach who co-lead the team.

The UROC's first executive director was appointed by UMTC's Senior Vice President with oversight of UROC. The current executive director position occurred through a search and review process. The search committee was made up of university and community representatives and included a community presentation. The directors of administration, research and outreach were also searches done through university human resources with recommendations from a review committee of university representatives.

D) INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD(S) COMPOSITION AND ROLE

UROC has been guided by strong community and university input and will continue to engage in broad participation. Sustained input from the community occurs through our Community Affairs Committee (CAC) which continues to keep us connected to community ideas and needs. By 2015, UROC had established an effective operational infrastructure and had sufficient growth to prompt us to seek the expertise, wisdom and influence of an Executive Advisory Committee (EAC). After broad consultation with both university and community input, the executive director established a list of individuals with strong standing in the community, expertise, and influence that could further develop UROC. The EAC is not a governing body. Rather, the EAC is a collection of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills that are value-added to the knowledge and skills of the organization. The role of the EAC is to bring their experience and expertise to influence the future direction of UROC, support the mission and goals of UROC, proactively share the work of UROC with others in their networks, strategize ways in which to support UROC financially, and to support the growth and impact of UROC.

The EAC has met twice. The first meeting in October 2015 provided committee members an introduction to UROC and offered an opportunity for members to get to know one another. The second meeting was in May 2016, when signature projects were discussed in more detail. A full EAC membership is provided in the appendices.

A second UROC board is the Community Affairs Committee (CAC) which was formally established November 15, 2006. Today the CAC members consist of Northside residents; community and faith-based organizations; local businesses; University of Minnesota faculty, staff, and students, and representatives from the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. To date, the CAC has served as a forum for participants to gain information about the University's engagement efforts in North Minneapolis, share knowledge and resources, allow the Northside community to voice its criticisms and offer suggestions, exchange information, and facilitate the development of new partnerships as a way to promote consistent and transparent two-way communication that will strengthen community and university partnerships. The CAC is co-chaired by a community member and the UROC director of outreach.

E. FACULTY MEMBERSHIP (ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN CENTER/INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES)

1) SELECTION AND REVIEW PROCESS FOR MEMBERSHIP/PARTICIPATION

UROC engages faculty from more than 35 academic programs across the UMTC campus. A full list is provided in the appendices. We have multiple ways for faculty to align their work with UROC. This includes the UROC affiliation process, where faculty (and other UMTC principal investigators and program directors) can "officially" align their work with UROC and use UROC facilities, contributing and capitalizing on UROC's mission. As of July 2016, we have 65 projects aligned with UROC. Starting in the Fall of 2016, research activities in each of the three UROC priority areas will be coordinated by a faculty or staff lead: Yingling Fan, associate professor in the Humphrey School of Public Affairs will lead the economic and community development efforts; Katie Johnston-Goodstar, assistant professor in the School of Social Work will lead around education and lifelong learning; Lauren Martin, UROC Research are the director will lead efforts in health and wellness.

The affiliation process

1. Meet with directors of research and outreach to determine project fit with the mission and goals of UROC. During this meeting expectations and responsibilities for faculty/university unit/community organization, membership/participation and UROC's role, community benefit, and dissemination are discussed.*
2. Complete affiliation survey.*
3. When missions align, the faculty/university unit/community organization meets with the director of administration to determine space needs and availability.
4. Unit receives keys, access and a building orientation with the operations team.
5. Unit attends Know North Orientation held once in the fall, spring and summer.
6. Faculty submit membership/participation numbers, including summary statistics by college and academic rank
7. Each project will meet annually with research and outreach to team to share learnings, new directions and updates.

**steps one and two are interchangeable*

There are approximately 50 UMN faculty members engaged in the mission-driven work of UROC. We have faculty from many different schools and colleges across the UMTC, including College of Liberal Arts, the School of Social Work, College of Education and Human Development, Institute for Child Development, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, School of Nursing, Public Health, Family Medicine and Community Health, Carlson School of Management, and the College of Design.

Faculty involvement is a priority for UROC. In order to meet UROC's mission it is essential to engage, support and develop faculty work in all of UROC's three core areas. UROC's purpose is to serve as infrastructure and capacity-building for faculty, students and staff. Thus, the number of faculty who engage in UROC's core programming and bring their own research and outreach activities is a foundational measure of the success of UROC. Faculty are engaged in UROC in a variety of roles including leadership of UROC, development of UROC's research enterprise, Principal Investigators affiliated with UROC, contributors to UROC's outreach and engagement programs and more.

The expectations and responsibilities for faculty participation and affiliation are as follows:

- (1) their work aligns with the broad principles of UROC's mission and values;

And that they:

- (2) conduct ethical and relevant engaged scholarship
- (3) conduct research in partnership with a community entity (for affiliated research projects)
- (4) possess a willingness to help develop models and participate in the intellectual life of UROC.

Faculty are invited to participate in all aspects of UROC's projects and programming, including as featured speakers, content contributors, partners in UROC's signature work, leading UROC programmatic efforts, and serving on the Executive Advisory Committee. Formal affiliation of a project with UROC is a three step process that involves an informational meeting, completion of a short documentation form, and review by the Directors team to make sure there is appropriate alignment with UROC's principles and mission. The primary criteria are that project has a community partner, uses some form of engaged research/scholarship, pays attention to dissemination at all project phases, and

that the content and scope fits in at least one of UROC's priority areas, and the PI demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the public good.

A full list of faculty involvement at UROC, including department, rank and role at UROC, is provided in the appendix.

VIII. EVIDENCE OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Anchor institutions are frequently described as “place-based” institutions³ that “bring together economic and financial assets, human resources, and physical structures”⁴. Anchor institutions draw their identities to a large degree from their urban locations and contribute to the economic stability of their surrounding communities. Non-profit and for-profit institutions can all act as anchor institutions, providing employment opportunities, creating markets for goods and services, and partnering with other institutions and businesses to develop new partnerships and economic, and cultural, and educational opportunities within communities.⁵ Taylor and Luter further refine the definition of anchor institutions by suggesting that an authentic anchor institution should have a social justice mission that allows it to act as a “change agent” within its surrounding community.⁶

Urban universities are uniquely positioned to act as authentic anchor institutions in their communities. Universities have traditionally played a role in urban development as the “eds” of “eds & meds”-- institutes of higher education and medical centers that both provide a market for goods and services and generate jobs for area residents.⁷ While job creation through hiring local residents is an instrumental contribution to local communities, universities are increasingly leveraging their geographic locations to cultivate partnerships and sustained relationships with their surrounding communities to achieve benefits that extend beyond employment. This new focus on more meaningful engagement with surrounding communities comes from a growing understanding that increased economic well-being does not necessarily perpetuate individual and social well-being, and that development of a community is different and more impactful than development *in* a community.⁸

To this end, some urban universities are reaching out to their geographic communities, working with local neighborhood organizations to find ways to meet local needs. More importantly, universities are finding ways to co-produce knowledge with communities that lead to strategies for addressing pressing community concerns. For example, the Netter Center at the University of Pennsylvania focuses on developing mutually-beneficial partnerships with community organizations to address community

³ Birch, E., Perry, D. C., & Taylor Jr, H. L. (2013). Universities as anchor institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 17(3), 7-16.

⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2013). Building resiliency: The role of anchor institutions in sustaining community economic development. Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/AnchorInstitutions.pdf>

⁵ Ehlenz, M. M., Birch, E. L., & Agness, B. (2014). *The Power of Eds and Meds: Urban Universities Investing in Neighborhood Revitalization and Innovation Districts*. Penn Institute for Urban Research.

⁶ Taylor, H. T., & Luter, D. G. (2013). *Anchor institutions: An interpretive essay*. Anchor Institutions Task Force.

⁷ Harkavy, I. R., & Zuckerman, H. (1999). *Eds and meds: Cities' hidden assets*. Brookings Institution, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.

⁸ Bridger, J. C., & Alter, T. R. (2007). The engaged university, community development, and public scholarship. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 11(1), 163-178.

concerns, resulting in the development of new courses for University students and new programs and initiatives for the surrounding geographic community of West Philadelphia⁹. The Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha provides a discrete, dedicated, on-campus space for the university's outreach and engagement efforts; the building provides office space for community partner organizations, public meeting spaces, and a centralized location for students seeking volunteer opportunities.¹⁰ The TD-York Community Engagement Centre at York University is located off-campus in a shopping center in the Jane-Finch neighborhood of Toronto and offers a variety of academic and lifelong learning opportunities, both for York University students and local residents.

UROC shares characteristics and strategies with the institutions described above, yet it is unique in many ways. UROC is geographically situated in North Minneapolis, approximately 4 miles west of the main UMTC campus, in the heart of a historically African-American community that today is home to a wide diversity of cultural groups. The building itself houses offices used by research and outreach teams and by community-based organizations, an art gallery, and meeting spaces available for use by the public. UROC is a dedicated space for projects that are initiated in partnership with community members or organizations, and it is physically located in the community in which many projects are based. UROC is a University research center that faces outward as well as inward toward the scholarly community; it provides space for the community, but it is not a service center; it is a place where students can engage with research and with North Minneapolis, but it is not a dispensary for service learning opportunities.

UROC is relatively young as a research/outreach engagement center, and its combination of characteristics and modes of operation are fairly novel; as such, the identification and measurement of UROC's impacts is only beginning to emerge. These impacts can be divided into two main categories: the impact of knowledge surfaced by the work, and the impact of the approach/orientation to the work.

Impact of Work

Because work at UROC is conducted in collaboration with community partners, it is action-oriented, with a focus on impacting the local community. Some examples of projects that are having a local impact are:

Trauma Recovery Project: The Trauma Recovery Project (TRP) is a Northside initiated partnership to impact thriving communities by reducing and preventing trauma. It is an inclusive, participatory and strengths-focused process facilitated by UROC. We have surfaced wisdom *from within North Minneapolis*, developed innovative solutions to trauma prevention/recovery and have built some trust among important resources in the community. The TRP is a fresh approach to trauma because it does not seek to create a program or provide service. Rather, it is a process to build collective understanding and shared community-based solutions. Stakeholders had committed 1.5 years before there was funding available. As we complete the preparation for maintenance and sustainability of three of the stakeholder groups we are confident the community has a strengthened ability to heal and respond to trauma.

⁹ Netter Center for Community Partnerships. (2014). *Partners for Change*. Retrieved from https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/sites/netter_internal/files/Netter_Center_Case_Statement_2014.pdf

¹⁰ Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved from <http://www.unomaha.edu/community-engagement-center/faq/>

Northside Job Creation Team: Led by a community member with support from UROC, the NJCT has grown into a coalition of 32 members representing the community, the university, and civic leadership. Through the coalition’s work, 905 living wage jobs have been created in North Minneapolis since 2012.

Sex Trading and Trafficking Initiative: Launched in 2011 with a community conversation, this initiative layers findings and methods from over 10 distinct research projects to build new knowledge about commercial sex and its negative consequences for health and community wellbeing in Minneapolis and Minnesota. Research conducted through this initiative has helped pass new legislation, raised public awareness, changed law enforcement training and practices, informed victim-services, shaped philanthropy, helped build a statewide system, and more. The initiative conducts research and produces public presentations and high-impact reports.

Impact of Approach

The ways in which research, partnership, and engagement are conducted at UROC build on an existing foundation of engaged scholarship. UROC’s principles are those of engaged scholarship: mutual benefit for academic and community partners, transparency of methods and practices, dissemination of findings, action taken on those findings, and, ultimately, transformation of the University, of the North Minneapolis community, and extending metro-wide communities. Because of its physical and reputational position in the community, UROC can support sustained work on issues, resulting in cyclical action research that has the potential to delve deeply to illuminate root causes of complex issues. This combination of assets is relatively unusual and also has the potential to support the development of new approaches in engaged research. The new Engaged Research Lab, which has developed out of our experiences and reflection, will focus explicitly on developing capacities for conducting this type of research, testing models of engagement, and documenting and disseminating findings. UROC’s model of engagement and research has the potential to influence approaches to research, not only at UMTC but at universities around the country.

UROC is not simply a space for housing engaged research—it is an experiment in sharing physical space with the local communities. Sharing space requires being adaptive, adjusting ways of working, and questioning assumptions. UROC can contribute new perspectives on what it means to do engaged research in this unique setting and influence the field of engaged scholarship.

IX. VISION STATEMENT

Vision

Over the long term, UROC will build thriving, innovative, and respectful collaborations for a healthy and vibrant North Minneapolis, create new models of urban and community development, and strengthen the University of Minnesota as a vitally engaged 21st-century university serving the public good.

A strategic planning process was conducted in 2009 as part of the UROC Futures Conference. Data from this conference, as well as from the pre-conference planning process and from post-conference focus groups and strategic planning events was used to develop a SWOT analysis of factors that would impact the implementation of UROC’s strategic plan. The interplay of these factors continues to strongly influence UROC’s ability to achieve its vision for the future. In addition, UROC worked with the

Evaluation Studies program at UMTC to develop a logic-model that provides benchmarks for living into the mission and vision of UROC.

UROC draws on a variety of strengths that stem not only from its connection with a large research university, but also from the strong ties UROC has, and continues to form, with urban communities, including the North Minneapolis community, through its partnership-building efforts.

A) PERCEIVED CURRENT AND LONG-TERM STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

Among UROC's strengths are an acknowledgement of the urgency of the many issues caused by and stemming from disparity and disinvestment in urban communities in Minnesota and across the United States. UROC has tremendous potential to address these issues by drawing on the expertise and capacity found within the UMTC's numerous academic departments and research facilities. However, UROC's strength also lies in its recognition that expertise and capacity exists outside the University, and that this knowledge and know-how reside within the communities most affected by challenges. The community feels recognized by the University, and as a result is willing to engage with UROC as the University's representative in efforts to rebuild trust and strengthen relationships. The community has clearly expressed its expectations of UROC and the University and monitors UROC's work and responses to community struggles as well as celebrates our successes.

Weaknesses

Along with strengths, UROC has potential weaknesses that stem largely from its existence as a unit that must function within a much larger institution. Many disparate pieces must be "in place" for any process to begin such that it can be challenging for UROC to be agile and responsive to opportunities as they arise. Further, even though UROC has access to a vast body of academic expertise, mobilizing that expertise is inhibited a need for stronger communication among central administrative units, academic departments, and research units. It is not clear how many university entities understand the types of research that occur or are possible at UROC, nor does the larger University understand the unique role and relationships UROC maintains within the North Minneapolis community. These internal challenges, coupled with the sometimes overwhelming volume of community needs, limit UROC's capacity to meet all community needs.

Opportunities

UROC has numerous opportunities to transform how the UMTC engages with communities. Its formation has in essence created a visible point of access between the UMTC and the North Minneapolis community. This access point creates opportunities for building capacity within the University and within the community to engage with one another and to conduct action-oriented research for community benefit. This access also gives the community an opportunity to help set priorities for research, and to shape the narrative of both challenges and assets that exist in North Minneapolis and across urban communities more generally. What we learn specifically related to our neighbors in North Minneapolis has the potential to benefit multiple urban communities that have a common context. UROC has worked to and has successfully expanded our interactions with organizations and communities in South Minneapolis and St Paul. Attention to context is something we consider imperative to growing these opportunities. UROC has the opportunity to demonstrate the University's

commitment to many urban communities through ongoing dialogue and engagement, and to potentially transform how the University works with communities. Key to the UMTC strategic plan and focus on grand challenges is the university's transdisciplinary work, emphasis on reciprocal engagement, and identity as an urban university. UROC provides a space in which intentional, thoughtful, reflective engaged scholarship connects with community knowledge and assets that does not shy away from urban grand challenges. In addition, the current University of Minnesota Capital Campaign has the opportunity to impact the grand challenges that exist in the urban core. In light of the disinvestment in the urban core over the past 30 years, committing even a small percentage of the Capital Campaign funds has the possibility of transforming both the university and the community for the common good.

Challenges

UROC's challenges reside in misunderstandings, lack of coherency in communication from the University as a whole, to some degree a lack of factual information about UROC, and uncertainty around the University's commitment to the engaged work that UROC does. The primary misconception is that UROC is a "community center" that houses direct service programs. Moreover, some at the university believe that engaging with community is primarily done through direct service rather than partnership. For this reason, we are continually communicating that we are a research/outreach engagement center with the primary goal of bringing university research resources to work with community to address critical issues. This challenge is exacerbated to some degree from the fact that research is often siloed in individual disciplines. Although the UMTC has strong activity related to defining and understanding engaged scholarship, there remains a struggle in communicating that understanding across the campus. The UMTC, lacking a clear understanding of what happens at UROC, is then less likely to continue to commit resources that will support ongoing work. The lack of clear communication within the university also impacts the community with whom UROC and the University must continually work to rebuild trust and communicate research findings. What is most impacted by internal misunderstanding is that UROC must also continually work to deliver on the promises the university has made to the community in order to maintain trust, an outcome that is challenging given its uncertain funding and communication relationship with the larger University.

Like all centers, UROC actively works with local and national funders to support our research activities. We also have in common with other centers the difficulty of finding funding for program evaluation, sustained funding for important educational initiatives such as fellowship programs for students, faculty and community, as well as named chairs. Unique to UROC is the need for funding related to the building. We are currently working with a graduate student and a faculty from the College of Design to assess space-use. We have found that some of the original predictions of how space would be used have not been realized in the last 5 years, and that some needs were not predicted. Once the space assessment is completed, funding to make some changes to the interior space would support the most effective use of the facility.

Strategies to Achieve UROC's Vision

UROC utilizes 5 main strategies to work toward its vision: partnerships, convening, networking, education, and infrastructure. These strategies address the persistent challenges identified in the SWOT analysis by leveraging UROC's strengths to take advantage of opportunities.

Trust-building and communication

Despite North Minneapolis' historic distrust of the UMTC and of other institutions it sees as having misused and abandoned it in the past, the community has expressed a willingness to forge new relationships and understandings with UROC. As such, UROC has become an access point for the North Minneapolis community and for the UMTC. Through the development of partnerships, UROC uses its awareness of local knowledge and its connections to the University to bring community leaders and academic researchers together. In some cases, UROC facilitates partnerships between community organizations and academic departments. In others, UROC plays the role of partner, working with community groups directly to address local concerns. Open dialogue also helps to build trust and increase communication. UROC hosts convenings that bring the University and local community together to discuss critical issues. These convenings raise the visibility of issues, but they also raise the visibility, both of the work UROC does, and of the assets and resources participating communities possess. Communicating UROC's work to the North Minneapolis and UMTC communities is an ongoing process.

Cross-sector collaboration

UROC engages in networking within the University community and with the larger geographic community. Networking allows UROC to facilitate and promote meaningful relationships between university departments and community organizations. It further illuminates the unique role UROC plays in both communities. UROC also engages in education efforts aimed both at the university and the larger community. UROC hosts the Engaged Scholarship Dissertation Fellows program, which brings together doctoral students from a variety of disciplines to learn and reflect together on the methods and issues surrounding community-engaged research. UROC has also sponsored fellowships for faculty who are engaged in community-based research, with the most current cohort being focused on educational achievement disparities. These educational efforts are aimed at developing capacity within the UMTC community, but they are also aimed at broadening understandings across the University of the work required to sustain community partnerships and to engage in authentic, community-engaged scholarship.

Commitment and responsiveness

UROC is a unit within a large institution; this relationship means that UROC has access to the University's vast resources. However, it can also mean that the hierarchical nature of decision-making (used by many large institutions) could inhibit UROC's ability to respond to local community concerns, causing the local community to question the University's commitment. The infrastructure in place within UROC is aimed at addressing these concerns. UROC's staff is largely comprised of individuals who live in North Minneapolis--they represent UROC to the community while being of the community. Similarly, UROC's work is guided in part by the Community Affairs Committee (CAC), made up of community leaders. The CAC's leadership ensures that UROC's work continuously connects with community concerns. UROC serves as an infrastructural element of the University, serving researchers and community members in North Minneapolis. The addition of the Executive Advisory Committee (EAC), whose goal is to help us grow and progress, will also contribute to our spheres of influence both internally and externally.

B) TOPICS AND QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE VISION FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE SITE VISIT TEAM

1. How can UROC ensure the sustainability of its signature research projects as they move from being driven by UROC staff to being supported by UROC, but driven by community members and external organizations?
2. While UROC has a system to review its affiliated programs on an annual basis, it lacks a formal policy to ensure that its resident affiliated programs are in alignment with UROC's mission and vision. How do you suggest UROC might go about creating a review process that would include a policy to safeguard the integrity of UROC's work?
3. UROC is preparing for a leadership transition with the departure of its current Executive Director Heidi Barajas in 2017. How do you recommend UROC's staff and related units prepare for the transition?
4. What are the opportunities you see for UROC's future growth?