

# The Work and Learning Network ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13



Submitted by Julie Salembier

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## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



*I want to welcome you to the 2012-2013 annual report. As this was the first full year for me as network's director I have come to realize that the learning is ongoing. I have been amazed and encouraged at the innovative work that our members are involved in. As you will see we continue to be engaged in vital dissemination activities. As stated in the 2011-2012 report, the objectives for this past year were to focus on transition, renewal and continuity. I could say with confidence that we certainly accomplished those objectives through our seminars and new partnerships.*

*At the heart of the network has traditionally been to broker relationships through our broadcasts, research symposia, and seminars. We held several well-attended seminars and we have started to establish new partnerships with different organizations, including the Alberta Teachers Association, the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, and the BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance. Our e-broadcasts continue to be a vital source of information for our members. For 2013-2014 we will foster new relationships with organizations and research centres in order to enhance our goal of reaching out to new audiences. To that end, we will continue with our seminar series, but we will also be exploring the possibility of holding a national conference on the theme "Work and Learning in the New Economy" as well as exploring the feasibility of holding a practice-based institute in the future.*

*The WLN is only as successful as those committed to planning, organizing and participating in our different activities. In addition to the ongoing presence of our members at our events, I want to acknowledge the commitment of the advisory board. Not only have they provided key direction for the network, but they have also contributed to the seminars as presenters as well as attendees. Special acknowledgment must go to Art Deane's continued contribution to establishing key policies and organizational practices for the network, and to Jason Foster for his role as the board chair, so a big thank you to them. In all activities for this past year our graduate research assistant Sasha Wittes provided key organizational and research support. We also continued to have strong support from the Department of Educational Policy Studies and the Faculty of Education.*

*Finally, as we approach a new year we will continue to focus on building and moving the organization towards achieving a clearer pathway towards sustainability. However, there are significant resource challenges that we will need to address in order to achieve that stability. I will end by acknowledging and thanking Julie Salembier, our indispensable administrator who is responsible for the network's day-to-day work and activities. I am encouraged that the direction of the network will involve seeking innovative opportunities for fundraising, dissemination and research. Stay tuned!*

**Dr. Jorge Sousa**  
Director Spring 2013

# The Work and Learning Network ANNUAL REPORT April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013

## INTRODUCTION

The Work and Learning Network for Research and Policy (WLN) was founded in 2002 and is located in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, at the University of Alberta. It is a community of individuals and organizations that have come together to engage in research related to work and learning policy and practice with a Western Canadian focus.

The Network's key values focus on understanding and promoting learning and education through work. The Network's intent is to help facilitate the building of inclusive workplaces and equitable opportunities for work-related learning. Areas of focus embrace issues relating to diversity and

equity, lifelong learning, school to work transitions, educators' work-lives, workplace reform, social economy, and work and learning issues for particular groups such as older workers, youth, immigrants/migrant workers, and Indigenous peoples.

This year, 2012-13, has been a year of developing strategic priorities and completing transitional work of the previous year. The director and the board have worked together to develop and solidify the processes and frameworks for the Board Terms of Office and Renewals, research partnerships, a board orientation package and a members' profile.

## MANDATE

Our aim is to build a community of individuals and organizations to engage in research and to share ideas related to work and learning policy and practice.

Our specific purpose is to:

1. Actively promote collaboration and partnerships among researchers, practitioners, and policy workers engaged in work and learning issues.
2. Undertake research related to work and learning and to disseminate our findings and those of other researchers.
3. Give visible presence to work and learning issues within the University of Alberta and among collaborating individuals, organizations, and institutions.

### Current WLN Research Interests

1. *Equity and diversity in work and learning*
2. *Lifelong learning processes and assessment: informal learning, organizational learning, mentoring, continuing education and training*
3. *Workplace reform through learning (for workplace democracy and quality of work life)*
4. *School-work transitions: work experience, apprenticeship, partnerships, policy and practice*
5. *Educators' work-lives and professional development*
6. *Work and learning issues for particular groups: e.g., older workers, youth, immigrants/migrant workers, and Indigenous peoples.*
7. *Social economy including non-profit and community development.*

## ANNUAL REPORT CONTENTS

This report highlights the activities undertaken to support the organization's mandate that help define the WLN. The components of the report include the following:

1. Infrastructure
2. Year in Review
3. Research
4. Budget

### 1. INFRASTRUCTURE

- A. WLN Board Advisors
- B. Advisory Board Changes
- C. Board Meetings
- D. Sub-Committees
- E. Graduate Student Involvement
- F. Membership

#### A. WLN Board Advisors 2012-13

The Advisory Board oversees WLN activities, provides suggestions, approves expenditures, makes decisions and assists in organizing WLN seminars, symposia and the conferences.

##### Board Advisors - as of May 2012

###### Director

Jorge **SOUSA** Associate Professor, Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta (U of A)

###### Advisors

Mandie **ABRAMS** Manager, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, Work Force Strategy  
Walter **ARCHER** Director, Teaching & Learning Program, Faculty of Extension, U of A  
Art **DEANE** Consultant, HDC Human Development & Manager, SafeThink™ HDC  
Jason **FOSTER** Academic Coordinator, Industrial Relations, Athabasca University  
Blessie **MATHEW** Manager, Career Education, CAPS, University of Alberta  
Milosh **RAYKOV** Post-doc & Statistical Research Analyst, Centre for the Study of Education and Work at OISE, Toronto, ON  
Laura **SERVAGE** Graduate Student, Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta  
Alison **TAYLOR** Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta  
Bonnie **WATT-MALCOLM** Associate Professor, Secondary Education, University of Alberta  
Omar **YAQUB** Manager, Workforce Development Edmonton, Economic Development Corporation  
Deborah **HICKS** Graduate Research Assistant, Educational Policy Studies, U of A (to August 2012)  
Sasha **WITTES** Graduate Research Assistant, Educational Policy Studies, U of A (Sept '12-March '13)

## B. Advisory Board Changes 2012-13

### Director

At the May 2012 board meeting, a motion to appoint Jorge Sousa for a one-year term as director was approved.

**Departures** – The following board advisors resigned from the board in this past year:

- Laura Servage (August 9, 2012)
- Blessie Mathew (October 24, 2012)
- Alison Taylor (March 31, 2013)

**New Advisors** – Deborah Hicks joined the 2012-13 WLN Board as the graduate student representative in September 2012.

## C. Board meetings 2012-13

In the fiscal year 2012-13, the WLN Board met three times: May 12, 2012, September 25, 2012 and February 6, 2013.

## D. Sub-committee

### WLN Board 'Renewals and Terms' Committee

A sub-committee to revise the WLN terms of reference was struck. Laura Servage and Art Deane reviewed the existing terms and developed a proposed draft of new terms for the board advisors.

Guidelines were created to identify:

1. The term length for board advisors;
2. A process for recruiting individuals that should balance individuals representation and representation of different constituencies;
3. Staggered terms for the board to ensure institutional memory; and
4. Clear criteria and a process for removing inactive advisors from the board.

A final document outlining the terms will be presented at the May 2013 Board meeting.

## E. Graduate Student Involvement

### Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)



A GRA, by assisting in a variety of tasks, is an important component in the operation of a non-profit organization such as the WLN. The WLN, on the other hand, provides the GRAs with an excellent opportunity to gain experience in working with the board in research projects, literature reviews, data collection, report writing, and arrangements for WLN hosted events.

This year, the WLN was granted one GRA by the Department of Educational Policy Studies for both fall and winter terms.

**Sasha Wittes** (Fall 2012- Winter 2013) was assigned to the WLN. She prepared an annotated document on work and learning in the new economy, a Board orientation package and developed a profile of the WLN members.

*Working as the GRA for the Work and Learning Network this year has been a positive and interesting experience. Researching knowledge in the new economy allowed me to explore new areas of educational work that I otherwise would not have had the opportunity to learn about. I hope that it will provide the necessary framework for the network as the network continues to grow and flourish over the next few years. I was able to hone my own skills as I worked on the membership database to understand more about our members and what resources they can provide for us, as well as what we can provide for them. I hope that this will help sustain the work and learning network through developing positive partnerships with its members. I found everyone involved with the network to be warm and friendly, which helped me feel welcome throughout the year. Thank you for a wonderful learning opportunity. ~Sasha*

## Graduate Student Representative on the Board

The composition of the WLN Advisory Board, since its inception, has included a graduate student representative from the Faculty of Education. **Laura Servage** was the representative until her resignation in August. Prior to that, she had been working on the Board renewals & Terms sub-committee. In September 2013, **Deborah Hicks** joined the board as the graduate student representative and the co-chair for the WLN Board meetings.

## Membership

The member in this fiscal year consists of approximately 430 individuals. Members join through the following avenues:

- Sign-in sheets at WLN events (seminars and symposia).
- After mail-outs with the broadcast and seminar notices/reminders.
- The [subscribe](#) feature on the WLN website.
- Random e-mail messages to the Administrator requesting to be added to the membership database.

**Members' Profile** - A document, which the Graduate Research Assistant is developing, will profile the WLN members to identify who they are and how they may become more engaged with the WLN in such events as seminars or at a conference.

## 2. YEAR IN REVIEW

The Network provides an educational and networking function through planned events such as seminars, symposia and conferences, and through the website and monthly broadcasts. The WLN between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013 continued to initiate and carry out relevant work and learning activities for its members and the general public.

- A. Monthly Broadcasts**
- B. Website**
- C. Research Day Poster Presentation**
- D. Events**

### A. Monthly Broadcasts

The WLN monthly broadcast, initiated in June 2007, is emailed mid-month to the WLN membership list and Faculty of Education-based list serves (Faculty and Graduate Student lists). The purpose of the broadcast is to share information about upcoming events (conferences, symposia, and seminars) sponsored by both the WLN or outside organizations, and to alert members to publications (books, articles, reports) related to work and learning research, practices, and policy. An [archive](#) of all the broadcasts is posted to the WLN website.

### B. Website

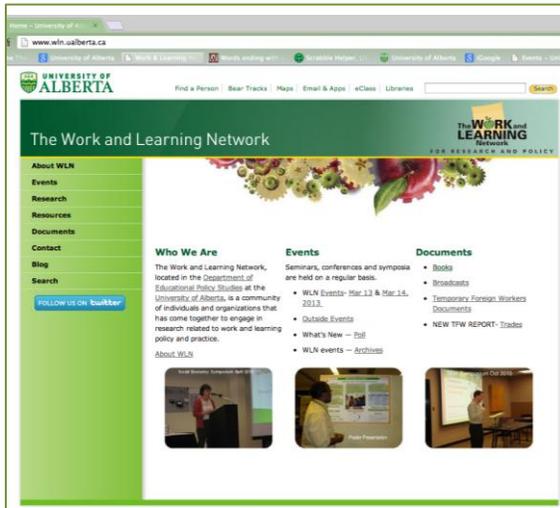
The Work and Learning Network website ([www.wln.ualberta.ca](http://www.wln.ualberta.ca)) includes:

- Information about the Network – mandate, research interests, activities, a list of advisory board members.
- Upcoming events.
- Archives of seminars, symposia and conferences – including PowerPoint presentations and audio files from seminar presenters.
- Resources page – electronic links to abstracts and full text versions of relevant research papers and other resources.
- Members' profile page – contents include members' practice, affiliation and research interests.

- Archives – monthly broadcasts and annual reports.

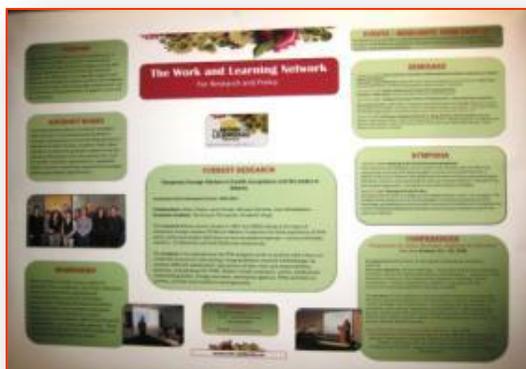
### Website Changes and/or Additions

The website (www.wln.ualberta.ca) was converted and migrated to Sitecore (a web-based content management system) by the Faculty of Education Web Administrator and launched in early April 2012. The conversions will give the WLN website a uniform look with other University of Alberta websites and will allow the administrator to access and update the content in multiple locations using an Internet browser.



### C. Research Day Poster Presentation

Two posters were showcased at the Educational Policy Studies Annual Research Day on April 28, 2012. One poster outlined the WLN structure, its research and educational activities for 2011-2012 while the second poster highlighted the WLN research work on Temporary Foreign Workers in the Nursing and Construction trades which contained the work of Alison Taylor, Cynthia Arku, and Jason Foster.



## D. Events

The activities and accomplishments for the past fiscal year (April 1, 2012 - March 31, 2013) include six seminars, which were either hosted or organized by the WLN or in partnership with another organization.

In order to fulfill our specific purposes to actively promote collaboration and partnerships with community organizations or institutions, three of the WLN seminars were in partnership with community organizations.

### SEMINAR SERIES

#### 1. Education Workplace Learning, Knowledge, Practice And Transformation

April 12, 2012



**PRESENTER: Dr. James Avis University of Huddersfield, UK**

Dr. Avis' presentation was based on his paper that explores conceptualizations of workplace learning, knowledge and practice with a discussion in its socio-economic context. The different ways in which knowledge is conceptualized within these debates were examined.

#### 2. The Changing Nature Of Work In The 'Alberta-Bubble

In partnership with the Alberta Teacher's Association

April 19, 2012



**PRESENTER: Linda Duxbury**

Drawing on recent research on the work-lives of Alberta teachers and other professions and sectors, Duxbury helped to contextualize the changes we are witnessing in the broader workplace and outlined some promising ideas for enhancing organizational health.

#### 3. The Leaders We Need Are Already Here: Now What Do We Do?

In partnership with the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

October 3, 2012



**PRESENTER: Margaret (Meg) Wheatley**

Wheatley described the very simple processes and means for restoring learning to our organizations. In a combination of teaching and small group work, participants had the opportunity to think together; reflect on what they've learned from their personal experiences as leaders; and determine specific actions in their organization to reinstitute learning.

#### 4. The Resilience Imperative: Navigating Transition In Turbulent Times

In partnership with The BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA)

November 1, 2012

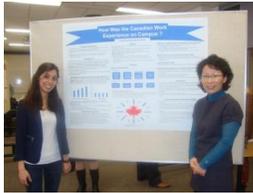


**PRESENTER: Mike Lewis**

Lewis, co-author of *The Resilience Imperative: Co-operative Transitions to a Steady-State Economy*, spoke about his conclusions that we must and can reweave our lives and economies on a more local, resilient and sustainable basis. He brought his message of hope and possibilities to Edmonton.

#### 5. Graduate Student Poster Presentations On Research In Work And Learning

March 13, 2013



**PRESENTERS: The Graduate Students of the EDPS 545**

This session showcased research posters on topics related to work and learning produced by graduate students in EDPS 545: *Learning and the Workplace*. Topics included: Creating expansive learning environments for student practicums in health professions; Communities of practice for teachers and apprentices; Post-secondary student internships; Learning culture and learning organizations in post-secondary education; & Induction/hazing/initiation in the workplace.

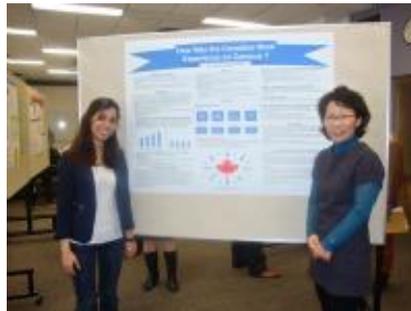
#### 6. The Career-Related And Vocational Education In Japanese High Schools

March 14, 2013



**PRESENTER: Dr. Atsushi Okabe**

Okabe presented an historical overview of the Japanese high school system and their curriculum from the perspective of integrating academic and vocational education. He explored the reasons why he became interested in School-to-Work programs in Alberta high schools by sharing some of his findings from his doctoral research regarding Alberta's education system.



### 3. RESEARCH

- A. WLN Sponsored Research
- B. Board Members' Research

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#### A. WLN Sponsored Research

##### TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS RESEARCH PROJECT

**Investigators:** Alison Taylor, Joan Schiebelbein, Jason Foster, Winston Gereluk

In Partnership with Prairie Metropolis Centre, 2010-12.

- This research addressed the question: “How does the TFW program in Alberta work for two occupational groups in high demand—trades workers and nurses?” Related questions explored issues around credential assessment, education and training, and opportunities for mobility and permanent residence.

##### Journal Articles:

- Taylor, A., Foster, J. and Cambre, C. (2012). *Training ‘Expendable’ Workers: Temporary foreign workers in nursing*. *Globalisation, Societies, and Education*, 10(1): 81-100.
- Foster, J. and Taylor, A. (2012). *In the Shadows: Exploring the Notion of ‘Community’ for Temporary Foreign Workers in a Boom Town*. A special issue of *Canadian Journal of Sociology* entitled ‘Community’ Between State and Market: Thinking Through Fort McMurray. (in press)
- Taylor, A. and Foster, J. (2012). *Migrant Worker Policy and Social Cohesion in Canada*. Citizenship Studies now under review at *Journal of International Migration and Integration*.

##### Reports

- Taylor, A., Foster, J. and Cambre, C. (September 2012). *Temporary foreign workers in trades in Alberta*. Edmonton: Prairie Metropolis Centre and Work and Learning Network. [Web link.](#)

##### Conferences:

- Foster, J. *Solidarity and the Migrant Worker: Union Responses to Temporary Foreign Workers in Alberta*. Canadian Industrial Relations Association Annual Conference, May 2012, Calgary, Alberta.

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#### B. Board Members' Research

The WLN board advisors, not only contribute to the operation and tasks of the Network, but also are involved with different forms of research within their work communities. Although not sponsored by the WLN, the following research projects reflect advisors' pursuit of and commitment to relevant research.

##### TRACKING HIGH SCHOOL APPRENTICES: EXPECTATIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND OUTCOMES

**Principal Investigator:** Alison Taylor, Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta.

**Co-investigator:** Wolfgang Lehmann, University of Western Ontario.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2008 – 2012.

- The purpose of this research is to provide a better understanding of the impact of participation in a high school apprenticeship on young people's subsequent education and employment decisions. Questions to guide the research are: 1) do youth apprenticeships create meaningful post-secondary alternatives that result in positive experiences and outcomes? 2) what are the organizational and institutional contexts that support or create barriers to positive transition experiences and outcomes for youth?



### CENTRALIZED OR AT THE EDGE? ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT UNIVERSITIES

Principal investigator: Heather McRae, *Faculty of Extension, Associate Dean, U of A*;

**Co-investigator:** **Walter Archer**, *Research Office, Academic Advisor Adult Learning, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta*. 2012.

- A study of the administrative support at Canadian universities for community-university engagement, particularly as it involves continuing education or extension units.



### SUSTAINING THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH-TAUGHT PROGRAMS IN NON-ANGLOPHONE ENVIRONMENTS

**Investigator:** **Walter Archer**, *Research Office, Academic Advisor Adult Learning, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta*. 2012.

- A study of the professional development needed by non-speakers of English who are required to teach higher education courses in English in primarily EFL situations (i.e., in contexts where the local language is not English).



### A CENTURY OF EXTENSION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**Investigator:** **Dr. Walter Archer**, *Research Office, Academic Advisor Adult Learning, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta*. 2012.

- This research examines the changing role and activities of the extension unit at the University of Alberta, from the founding of the Department of Extension in 1912 to the centenary of the Faculty of Extension in 2012. During that century the social and economic context of the province has changed drastically, and extension activity at this university has evolved in response to this context.



### CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES (CTS): TEACHER RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND EDUCATION

**Investigator:** **Bonnie Watt-Malcolm**, *Associate Professor, Secondary Education, University of Alberta*. Funded by Alberta Education, University of Alberta Faculty of Education Killam Research Fund and Roger S. Smith Undergraduate Student Award, and Alberta Teachers' Association AACES grant. 2009 - 2013

- The research project consists of three key areas of study. These are to: a) examine CTS teacher recruitment, retention and education practices, b) distinguish the needs of Alberta's CTS teachers (e.g., education, training and resources), and c) explore what it is that attracts individuals to the CTS teaching area (for example: participants' ideas and experiences can inform recruitment, retention and education).



### IDENTIFICATION OF THE FACTORS THAT INHIBIT ALBERTA FARMERS AND RANCHERS PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAMS

**Investigator:** **Professor Art Deane**. (*retired*) *University of Alberta*. 2013

- This research identifies and examines the multiple factors that appear to drive the decisions of some Alberta farmers and ranchers to not engage and avoid participation with SafeThink Agriculture – Alberta, a provincially developed agricultural safety program.



### EDUCATION-JOB MISMATCH, LIFELONG LEARNING AND QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE,

**Investigator:** Milosh Raykov, *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. 2011-13.*

- The research studies the underemployment and quality of work life. In addition, he is involved in studies that examine labour relations, occupational health and safety, and different outcomes of learning.



### UNION RESPONSES TO TFWs

**Investigator:** Jason Foster, *Academic Coordinator, Industrial Relations, Athabasca University. 2012-13.*

- This research examines how unions in Canada responded to the influx of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) during 2000s, looking at steps unions took to accommodate and incorporate TFWs into workplaces and union halls, as well as examining union narratives in public media regarding TFWs. Unions are found to display a range of responses to TFWs varying over time and by industry and occupation.



### RE-EXAMINATIONS OF UNION PARTICIPATION

**Principal Investigator:** Jason Foster, *Academic Coordinator, Industrial Relations, Athabasca University.* Co-investigator: Kevin Kelloway, *Saint Mary's University. 2012-13.*

- This research re-examines the factors that lead union members to become active in their union. In addition to longstanding factors, such as commitment to union, the study introduces a new construct that measures the degree to which members believe their union should be involved in politics. The new measure is found to significantly predict union participation.



### HIRING STUDENT TALENT

**Investigator:** Omar Yaqub, *Workforce Development Edmonton, The Edmonton Economic Development Corporation. 2012.*

- The purpose of this guide, based on research undertaken by the EEDC, is to make it easy for small and medium sized Alberta based businesses find, fund, and refine student talent. The guide answers the basic questions of where to find students and who specifically to call, what funding is available from government and other sources to help cover the cost of hiring and onboarding students, and finally what resources exist to help ensure that both students and organizations get maximum benefit out of an intern/co-op experience.



## 4. BUDGET

- A. In-kind Contributions
- B. Resource Development (Fundraising)
- C. Funding Support

### A. In-kind Contributions

#### The Department Educational Policy Studies

Overall, in-kind contributions play a significant role in the sustainability of the WLN. The Department of Educational Policy Studies (EPS) continued to give their support by providing for a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA). The in-kind contribution for GRAs amounted to \$7,418 while the in-kind value for the EPS accountant and Administrative Professional Officer (APO) was roughly \$7,245 for a total of \$19,532 in-kind funding.

#### Board Members

The WLN Board members recorded the number of hours of in-kind contributions of professional time spent on WLN related activities, which include board tasks, research work, committee work and event organization. Contributions demonstrate the Board's active role and important work to the overall sustainability of the WLN. Approximately 160 hours (not including the director) were recorded for the board's work with the WLN in 2012-13. By including the director those hours jump to 400 hours.

### C. Resource Development

The Resource Development (Fundraising) Committee is a standing committee and work on funding has been tabled.

### D. Funding Support

The Department of Educational Policy Studies provided in-kind donations of office staff, office space, office supplies, and access to internet/printer in addition to in-kind support for a GRA. See "In-kind Contributions" above for details.

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## 5. Partnerships

The WLN's mandate is based on the belief and importance of sharing knowledge, ideas, and skills across sectors by linking academic and community agencies to engage in research related to work and learning policy and practice. Partnering with organizations is a good opportunity to strengthen our profile and achieve our goals.

The first three partnerships have been forged in the past fiscal year in the presentation of seminars:

- The Alberta Teachers Association
- ECVO - the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
- BALTA - The BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance
- Prairie Metropolis Centre, partners for the TFW research project.

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## 6. Plans for 2013 - 14

- Two seminars for Fall 2013:
  - Changes to the immigration policy
  - Blended Learning with Erika Smith from the Faculty of Extension
- Conference on Work and Learning in the New Economy – March 2014