What’s new at the CommNS?

Welcome to CommNS Ties - a quarterly update on all things CommNS! If you haven’t done so already, be sure to check out the updated CommNS website where you can find more information on our projects, team, and events. Through the “Co-Create” link, you can learn more about exciting new initiatives that leverages campus resources and the skills of CommNS staff, students, and affiliates to support the aims of community organizations.

This summer, we coalesced input from our Steering Committee and other partners and finalized a 5-year strategic plan. We continued community-engaged projects such as our Obesity Prevention Initiative work, our collaboration around youth civic engagement and the environment with University of Guadalajara partners, and various Co-Create projects that helped us bring campus resources to Wisconsin community organizations.

Focusing on the CommNS Focus Areas

The CommNS is a hub for faculty, students, and community partners to collaborate on research, practice, and evaluation that examines and advances the well-being of communities, and the civic and nonprofit sectors. The work of the CommNS happens through collaboration among faculty, staff, and students from across campus; other institutions of higher education; and community members and organizations. These collaborators connect through our seven (7) Focus Areas:

- Sustainable Communities, Wellbeing & Empowerment
- Youth Development & Civic Engagement
- Program Evaluation
- Nonprofit Studies
- Community Based Design & Placemaking
- Food Systems
- Alternative and Solidarity Economies

Focus Area Leads have autonomy over where, when, and how Focus Area groups meet and exchange ideas. The CommNS supports Focus Areas by assisting with collaborative grants, community outreach, organizing Lunch and Learns, recruiting affiliates, and connecting partners who should be included the conversation. Starting this fall, the CommNS will dedicate additional staff for administrative support of the Focus Areas including room reservations, reminders about Focus Area events, and additional on and off campus outreach. If you would like to be connected to any of the Focus Areas or have any questions please contact Sara Ansell (sara.ansell@wisc.edu).
What's new at the CommNS? (Cont.)

We continued to hone our approach to our seven (7) focus areas, UW-Extension, and affiliate engagement. We participated in statewide efforts to support the nonprofit sector and civic engagement in Wisconsin. Our affiliate Connie Flanagan received an NSF grant to continue work on urban youth engagement and the environment. We connected with Mandela Fellows from various African nations and began planning future international collaboration with their community efforts.

The CommNS has an exciting year ahead and we’re thrilled to connect and collaborate with you as we strive to advance inquiry and action for social change. Be sure to get on our email lists and follow us!

- Mary Beth Collins, Executive Director of the CommNS

Keep an eye out for upcoming CommNS events!

- SAVE THE DATE -- April 24, 2019 CommNS Annual Event
- Regional Meetings to discuss “Funding and Social Change”
- Additional Lunch & Learns from the other CommNS Focus Areas

Become a CommNS Affiliate!

Affiliates of the CommNS have access to many benefits including:

- Joining a network of researchers, practitioners, and community partners working on engaged and action research for social justice and community change
- Support in identifying and developing funding sources, including grant proposal and award management assistance
- Access to resources and expertise in various dissemination and outreach approaches
- Opportunities to share information and inquiries through the CommNS listserv, website, and social media
- Connections to undergraduate and graduate students interested in social change and action research.
- Participation in CommNS talks, community convenings, and other events
- Sharing ideas to shape and advance the ongoing work of the CommNS

For more information on becoming a CommNS Affiliate, please contact Sara Ansell, sara.ansell@wisc.edu

Stay in touch with the CommNS!

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