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The Report of the Philosopher Kings

Arts and Science Honours Academy Sixth Cohort

“[...] in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally, either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.”

-Plato, The Republic

Abstract: In this report, the ideal city of Calgary is presented, and the topic areas that need improvement in order to accomplish the best city are investigated. Four key areas of reform are emphasized: proper education for citizens from an early age, community engagement and involvement, the elimination of stigmas, and the need for support systems from the city. The
education system is key to creating the best city; students will be educated on applicable learning that embraces multiple intelligences from a young age, and this will encourage students to expand their interests and skills into the trades, arts sector, and sciences. This will eliminate the stigmas on sciences and trades by educating students on alternate post-secondary options. Education regarding local politics throughout the school system will bridge the gap between bureaucracy and community. Educating children on mental health issues early on will eliminate stigmas and provide them with the resources necessary to cope with and lessen the effects of such disorders. As well, educating children and consumers on the value of nutritious food over “fun food” will optimize citizens’ physical health. A focus on community engagement will encourage citizens and students to get involved in philanthropic actions and reduce poverty. Finally, support systems from the city are a vital component for creating the best Calgary possible. Support systems such as low-income warehouse stores and housing will reduce the level of poverty and build community throughout the city. An expanded City of Calgary website that links the government and citizens will increase civic engagement in the political system, as well as provide job transition support for immigrants. Lastly, creating ties between the sectors of Calgary can help diversify the city and its economy, and help all of Calgary thrive.
As the Sixth Cohort of the Arts and Science Honours Academy (ASHA), this class was transformed from what was conventionally a class for reading great books as well as discussing and writing about them into a truly amazing opportunity. As a new initiative proposed for the 2012-2013 year, this class has been chosen to try to solve some of the most complex issues facing Calgary today. We have listened to experts from across all different fields and disciplines, heard first hand the problems that are facing our city, and have been asked to give our thoughts and opinions in the hope that our ideas, research, discussion topics, and written work will help Calgary move toward becoming a city that will allow every citizen to live their life in happiness. We have looked at ten different topic areas whose impact covers the entire city. We have found that as much as we attempted to give recommendations that focused on a single area, we could not escape the interconnected web that is present within our city. Our discussions about economics, entrepreneurship and innovation bled into discussions about politics, poverty and mental health issues. The ideas within poverty and mental health crossed paths with education, physical health and philanthropy. Education met with science as well as arts and culture with regards to the goal of ensuring every citizen has access to both a career and life that involves their passion. The impacts of the ideas we have do not follow one clear path through a single topic area, but flow through all parts of life. Each of these topics plays a vital role in the way this city runs and how each citizen interacts and cooperates with one another. Many people have endlessly tried to address some of the major issues surrounding these ideas, and have demonstrated to us through various presentations that they are all very complex and require collaboration between many different organizations and experts. We began our project by framing our class around the ideas of Plato by reading *The Republic*. It inspired us to give our ideas to those who have the ability to implement them; thus, we give you the Report of the Philosopher Kings.
Mental Health

“The learning and knowledge that we have, is, at the most, but little compared with that of which we are ignorant.”

-Plato, The Republic

Abstract: This section of the report addresses current issues regarding mental health, such as the stigma surrounding those with mental disorders and how many people are uninformed of the issues surrounding them. The first idea proposed is to teach children and teens about mental health issues in school health classes, which will result in more informed students, thus lessening the social stigma surrounding mental health. The second idea is to alleviate stress and anxiety for high school students by teaching them skills and abilities required for various post-secondary opportunities that are not covered in the high school curriculum. The third and final idea is to encourage breaks throughout the school and work day, to improve efficiency and relieve stress and mental pressure.

Mental health is a pressing and increasingly relevant issue in Calgary today. Although mental health impacts the lives of all Calgarians, it is a subject area that has historically remained hidden within society. When citizens grow up with an intense social stigma surrounding mental health, it becomes extremely difficult to handle a mental health related conflict, which could be triggered by anything from daily stress to a genetic predisposition. How does one go about helping themselves or others in times of mental distress? Through the suggested integration of specialized education classes in elementary and high school, as well as scheduled resting times at the workplace, our hope is to implement lasting changes as well as reverse the stigma and increase awareness of mental health issues that affect our contemporary city, society, culture and everyday lives.
As are many other subjects, mental health is closely tied to education, and it is to our advantage that we examine this overlap in hopes of altering the education system with regards to mental health. A lack of awareness surrounding mental health is a growing and maladaptive trend in our generation. This most likely stems from a shortage of open-minded discussion and education of mental health issues for youth in Calgary. It is unreasonable to assume that a child will be informed about mental illness, the stigma surrounding it, and the terrible effects it can have on a family without any previous related knowledge of such issues. As a result, youth struggle to conquer the obstacles and devastating battles that accompany mental illness. Mental health education should start at a young age—we suggest grade four of elementary school—with the integration of classes that introduce students to mental illnesses and the promotion of mental health and coping strategies in a broad context. This would occur upon consent from parents or guardians, with opportunities for their involvement in the unit. The school board values sexual health education for teens, but education for mental health should be equally weighted within the curriculum. Topics covered should include but not be limited to basic recognition of mental illness, various types of mental illnesses and conditions, coping methods for mental health disorders and stress, as well as ways to ensure students maintain their overall mental health. The desired outcome of this early exposure to mental health is that students will absorb the information during childhood and be able to retain it throughout adolescence and adulthood. Fostering and encouraging early learning in the field of mental health will prevent children from having to deal with mental health issues, which can often arise during teenage years without proper information, resources and support. As mental health is a highly complex and often poorly taught subject, it is crucial that teachers encourage the sharing of knowledge in a non-judgmental and non-stigmatizing manner. To ensure children receive the necessary quality of mental health education, we must not expect traditional elementary level teachers
to approach the subject without support. We suggest contracting mental health counselors, psychologists, and other experts to provide children and educators with the guidance necessary to teach such sensitive subject matter. It is our understanding that a comprehensive yet simple understanding of mental illness will ultimately allow children to grasp and confidently approach mental illness and health issues throughout their lives. The integration of mental health into the Alberta curriculum will ultimately benefit students, teachers, parents and society as a whole.

In addition to early education and awareness to decrease the stigma that surrounds mental health, steady support and encouragement must be offered to students as they continue to grow physically, emotionally and intellectually. Contemporary guidance through significant life choices is crucial to the development of adolescents. Constructive advice will lessen the pressures placed on teens by developing realistic expectations. We should not expect students to make future plans before they fully understand their interests, desires, and talents, and before they can reach their full potential. This guidance, to be provided in the form of a mandatory class, should be emphasized particularly in grades ten, eleven, and twelve, as this period of time marks a substantial transition from public school into the next stage of their lives. A more comprehensive look at the reality of life after high school is a necessity; suggested topic areas would include programs offered by local post-secondary institutions as well as other occupations available to students who choose not to pursue post-secondary education. Practical educational tools such as how to study, time-manage, prioritize, write, research, cite, and take exams properly should be offered to students interested in pursuing a higher education in order to better prepare them for the next phase in their lives. These skills are essential as they will decrease the stress experienced by many future post-secondary students, as research has shown that the transition out of high school can be detrimental to students’ mental health. Furthermore, workplace skills such as
creating a cover letter, portfolio, résumé and curriculum vitae, as well as interview strategies would be provided to all students; when students feel as though they are being set up for success, they will find their education more meaningful. This course could be taught by current education students as part of their practicum. A secondary function of the course would be the continuation of mental health education. At this age, adolescents would have reached the maturity necessary to discuss more serious mental health issues, and in this case specialists would play an essential supportive role for students and teachers. Cooperation between psychology or social work majors from the local universities is a potential option. By offering students the practical knowledge and strategies they need to succeed now and in the future, we can create empathetic citizens whose coping skills match the challenges they encounter as a part of their daily lives.

Although open dialogue regarding mental health will help reduce stigma and decrease stress on our citizens, there are other factors which influence mental health that must be addressed. Calgary is growing at a substantial rate, and although this is beneficial for our businesses, we must also consider the consequences that urban life may be having on our citizens. Individuals living in cities—especially those born and raised in cities—have been proven to be more vulnerable to mental illness because urbanites encounter more daily pressures and increased demands than those living in rural areas. Today’s workplaces and educational environments thrive on long hours and high productivity with little emphasis on individual health needs. University students are especially known for functioning on substantially less sleep than what is required for them to perform at their highest academic potential. This degree of sleep deprivation can also be seen among parents and professionals living in the city. Sleep and anxiety show a negative correlation, in that poor sleep quality can lead to anxiety, depression and other mental illnesses. If rest periods were regularly integrated into workday schedules,
both employees and students would be more productive during
times of work. More sleep would reduce anxiety and in turn
decrease restlessness in order to promote healthful sleep habits.
Although the idea of rest periods is quite unorthodox for the
general work environment in Calgary, they could be taken during
the regular workday break times—the only necessary requirement
would be the provision of designated rest areas. For those who are
unable to sleep during the daytime or who are uncomfortable with
the idea, it has been shown that sitting or resting quietly for the
same amount of time provides a comparable amount of
rejuvenation. University students are enthusiastic about this idea
since designated areas would not only provide students with a
better quality nap, but it would also improve the aesthetic appeal
and function of the University by removing sleepy students from
couches and study areas. Rest times would decrease stress during
the week, allow students and workers to have better quality sleep at
night, and would ultimately lessen the overall anxiety levels of our
citizens. Rest and relaxation should be promoted now more than
ever—we lead increasingly busy lives in a rapidly growing city
and it is essential that we rejuvenate frequently in order to continue
living at the current pace.

Acknowledging the interdependence of mental health
and the overall well-being of our citizens is essential. By
integrating mental health into the curriculum from an early age, we
can help eliminate unjust preconceived notions regarding mental
health and foster healthy coping strategies for youth. In addition,
introducing necessary life skills to all students can effectively
lessen pressures on students during times of transition. Lastly, by
encouraging rest periods and breaks into the school and workplace,
we can produce lifelong benefits for citizens and increase
competence and productivity during times of work. By
implementing the aforementioned strategies in an effective and
timely manner we can increase the overall quality of life of our
citizens—mental health awareness is an inescapable and essential
aspect of a thriving city.

**Further Readings:**


**Education and Entrepreneurship**

“It shouldn't be the art of implanting sight in the organ, but
should proceed on the understanding that the organ already has the capacity, but is improperly aligned and isn't facing the right way.”
-Plato, *The Republic*

**Abstract:** This section of the report addresses the reform that is required in Calgary’s education system from the elementary to post-secondary levels. Starting from kindergarten, students should be engaged in interactive studies, including on campus field trips and multiple intelligence learning that focuses on the importance of arts and trades. Exploration of post-secondary options, like universities, trades and the workforce, as well as applicable studies will be integral facets of reform in the high school curriculum. Such topics will be addressed by restructuring the Career and Life Management classes that are already being offered. Community engagement will be a vital part of the education system through all ages, thereby building a sense of community in the city. An emphasis on the importance of research at the post-secondary level will enhance the learning of pupils and the knowledge of professors, filtering down through the education system.

Calgary’s education system is in need of reform at all levels, from elementary to post-secondary education, to help build better citizens that show diversity in their talents and interests, that are invested in their communities, and that know the value of research and discovering new knowledge.

“Hands-on learning” is often neglected as part of elementary through high school instruction. Research shows that kinesthetic learning propagates memory and makes learning more entertaining and appealing, and therefore should be an important aspect of Calgary’s curriculum. There are many ways to implement this interactive style; field trips are a key element of this. Field trips allow children to experience what they learn about during
class and participate in their learning. Field trips are effective and abundant during the elementary years, but as we grow older they become fewer and less emphasized. They should remain an integral part of the curriculum and remain relevant to students’ learning. As well, they need to be made more accessible; there are many forms and risks for schools and teachers in taking children off school property, which is very time consuming. One way to alleviate these issues would be to bring the field trip to the school instead. For example, students from the University of Calgary could come teach grade four students about chemistry, or bring a play company to the school for a day.

Entrepreneurship is an essential part of a thriving city, and at its base is an innovative spirit. In order to promote these qualities in our citizens we must encourage risk-taking and experimentation in classrooms from an early age. Children need the ability to experiment, and it is far too difficult to experiment freely with interests when there is always a fear of failure. By eliminating the graded component on certain assignments, not only in elementary school, but all the way up to grade twelve, it allows students to try out new ideas and subjects without fearing if they will be able to do well enough. These values will translate into a generation of creative citizens that will create a thriving network of local businesses that effectively serve and meet each citizen’s needs. Outdated businesses will be replaced by innovative companies whose fresh ideas will drive our economy forward, as well as promote Calgary as a culturally diverse city. This process, known as creative destruction, will attract top minds from around the world to fill the top positions in our city. The future of innovation and entrepreneurship in Calgary relies on a sound foundation of modern education.

To foster the creation of well-equipped students, it is important to include life skills in the high school curriculum, and this should be a key component to Career and Life Management
(CALM) class. Students at this age need guidance on many topics; sexual education is a very small portion of the real-life subject matter students require. Students need to acquire knowledge on finances, moving out, universities, trades schools and the workforce, travel, and all other options available to them once they finish high school. CALM needs to be rewritten as a significant class that has valuable life lessons for all students.

There is little connection between citizens and their communities in this modern era, and one of the most effective ways to establish this connection is through schools. From kindergarten through to graduation, students will engage in volunteer opportunities and community events that will establish a link between schools, students and communities. This will be part of a graded system requirement that students must complete, and by engaging them at a young age, as they grow, philanthropic engagement will become less of a chore and more of a habit that will continue to build community. This community engagement will continue throughout university and for the rest of citizens’ lives, helping to build a better Calgary.

Universities are a place of community engagement. After students have developed their interests and become involved in the community throughout their academic careers, they are able to build upon this in post-secondary institutions. When a city creates a university, it creates a new community comprised of both students and highly trained professionals. This unique collaboration of intelligences enables a source of innovation, knowledge and creativity unparalleled by other institutions in a city. This does not mean, however, that the university and the community it represents cannot integrate to expand the employment of knowledge and creativity. Community engagement between universities and the region that they incorporate as their representative is essential to the progression of a successful, innovative city. Traditionally, the perspective was to have the
“more knowledgeable” university members dictate to the surrounding community involved what was necessary for development and improvement for the citizens. This is an incorrect approach, as more often than not, the people in the community are aware of the issues they face and what they feel would improve their lives.

As for the professionals at the University, the idea of knowledge creation and dictation must be reversed, in that they should create knowledge with assistance from members of the community involved in a project instead of dictating what they feel would be the appropriate solution. Modifying the traditional format towards these outlining criteria greatly improves the effectiveness of the project, improves relations between the University and the community and, if not most importantly, creates new knowledge for all participants, which stems into creativity, innovation and prosperity. An example of this type of engagement is the community initiative to start a community garden to address local undernourishment. The members of the community are very aware of who needs food, where the best place to have a greenhouse is and how the project can be carried forward to help even more citizens. Professionals and students at the University have experience and a knowledge base that they can integrate within the project. They know what systems are needed to optimize growth, what the most sustainable practices are, and what the financial or economic implications of the project are. Collaboration between the two facilities enables the most efficient outcome from a greenhouse project as well as creates new knowledge for the University to archive and apply elsewhere. The final element of community engagement is the spin-off, where the completed, successful projects are self-sustaining and even expanding. These new, locally created enterprises allow for lasting, community oriented industries that are catered to the city in which they started; they create new jobs, investment and growth.
Institutions of higher learning play an essential role in the initiative to make education relevant and invaluable to all citizens. There are various ways our local colleges and universities can improve their integration into the community, thereby better serving both students and other members of the community. President Elizabeth Cannon’s “Eyes High Strategy” released in 2011 demonstrates a willingness to improve and reform the way the University of Calgary functions, which ensures support from administration and faculty. By taking a new approach to leadership within the city and across the country and striving to modernize educational practices, the University can achieve its goal of being one of the top five research universities in Canada and, in conjunction with other innovative facilities around the city, become a vital part of what it means to be a Calgarian.

Although community engagement has previously been recognized as an essential role of educational institutions, social exclusion continues to be a problem. In order to effectively connect these institutions to the people of Calgary, we must discard the notion that engagement is something done to people, and begin to work with them instead. By making students and faculty accountable to their communities through innovative programs such as the Arts and Science Honors Academy, we can instill these values on and off campus. Student-centered teaching and learning is an essential part of community engagement because it encourages active participation and aids in the development of necessary skills for the 21st century workplace such as teamwork, cooperation and problem solving.

As a direct result of the increased interaction between universities and colleges and the cities they serve, a second area of weakness in the realm of higher education will also be addressed: the line between pure and applied research will effectively be blurred. Students’ involvement in their communities will extend the reach of their knowledge and better prepare them to tackle the
complex problems of our modern society. Increased awareness of diverse strengths, which include but are not limited to high academic achievement, will ensure that all citizens participate in society to the fullest extent. Professors’ main role should be to uphold a high standard of learning and provide an intellectually empowering environment for students by allowing students to explore subject areas in unconventional yet productive ways.

In order to support the type of community engagement and limitless learning described above, colleges and universities in Calgary must extend their focus on research-based education. Firstly, research is inherently innovative—students cannot reach their full potential by simply studying others’ work. Instead, they must be encouraged to create their own. Similarly, professors must continue to pursue their own research while teaching in order to remain current and relevant in their respective fields. Professors and students must receive the resources and incentives necessary to uphold this standard of learning, which includes libraries (both digital and traditional), tutorials, off-campus opportunities and public support.

Further Readings


Abstract: This section of the report addresses current issues regarding physical health, such as the concerns about consumption of healthy food and overall nutrition. Food corporations have control over their own advertising methods and product distribution in the pursuit of increasing profits. Many of the manners of execution are directed towards children with the premise that food must be fun in order to taste good. A food company in the ideal society would promote healthy eating and meals containing all food groups. However, this is often not the case in regards to products and advertising, especially when directed towards children. Changing the regulations of company protocols and approaches to advertising is a futile goal as profits drive all corporations, and in society today the majority of capital...
Advertising towards a quick and easy lifestyle has drastically swayed the mentality on food and healthy eating in modern society. According to one of our speakers Dr. Charlene Elliott, the concept of making food “fun” and appealing without emphasizing on the nutritional quality has raised some particular concern over the physical health of children for the last few years. The increasing rate of childhood obesity contributes to other negative effects such as depression, social discrimination, and other physical or mental health issues at young ages. We are thus faced with the challenge of how to create a healthy food environment throughout the city such that the physical health of children remains the primary priority.

While as a city we cannot revolutionize the way in which food is advertised and produced, an attempt needs to be made to improve the attitude of society. We believe that this can be done through increased education programs and community awareness to amend the issues surrounding the food industry. Learning about healthy eating from a young age will improve the stigma children have about what tastes good that is created by food companies. It is valuable knowledge that will remain with them for years to come and will continue the cycle of healthy living and eating. Community and school programs to teach children how to choose and prepare healthy meals would also enhance their knowledge and benefit their lifestyles. Based on this idea, the Community Kitchen Program of Calgary (CKPC) has already established Souper Stars as a nutrition class for kids from grades four to six in many elementary schools. While in class, not only do children learn about the nutrition behind the food beyond the labels, but
they also get hands-on practice of simple food preparation, allowing them to participate in their own family’s cooking. Souper Stars has received positive feedback from all of the children and their families by bringing both fun and educational values to the classroom. The program currently runs for 10 weeks in the schools of low-income areas of the city; our suggestion is to initiate Souper Stars at other elementary schools, and to expand the classes to educate every child at the level suitable to them.

While researching on Calgary’s locally grown food, we have found that there are a number of community gardens at different areas of the city. In addition to this, we encourage each school to maintain its own garden, where each class is responsible for a different fruit or vegetable. The food grown in this garden could be used in the school food programs as well as be used to provide for the student population and the community. Students’ knowledge of science would be enhanced by this garden if the University of Calgary became a partner and cooperated with the schools. University students could then be integrated into the educational process and use their studies and knowledge to teach about soil pH levels, the effect of weather, or even conduct experiments involving the garden. This would provide students at school with hands-on experiences and help them relate what they learn in school to real life situations. Not only would the University be able to promote community integration within the educational system, it would also improve the level of learning of both groups of students. By continuously educating the youth about the benefits of healthy eating, they will stray from poor diets and begin to live active lifestyles with improved meal choices in mind.

In addition to nutritional education and creating multiple community gardens, we can implement school breakfast and lunch programs in order to ensure that all students eat at least one healthy meal per day containing all food groups, regardless of family
income. Furthermore, we propose a strict regulation at all schools to ensure that the food provided to children meet Canadian nutritional standards, as determined by the Canada National Food Guide. As with the matter of addressing food security and meeting basic nutritional needs, CKPC provides specific programs such as Tummy Tamers and Food ‘n’ More to focus on processing, storing, and delivering food to children of the less fortunate sectors. These are ideal models that demonstrate how a strong community with a good cause can make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate. However, by improving promotions among the families and communities around Calgary, these programs can receive more donations and assistance, allowing them to grow into much larger long-term services to hopefully combat hunger in Calgary.

Unhealthy food has become increasingly popular among society due to its affordability and low preparation time. However, healthy eating can be easy and affordable; society just needs to be aware of the possibilities and benefits of healthy meal choices. People often avoid produce because it is more expensive in comparison to non-perishables. We suggest that with coupons being offered towards healthier food, consumers would take advantage of the reverse affordability and make the healthier choices at lower costs.

While children have the opportunity to earn about healthy food at school, it is important that at the same time, adults receive the sufficient nutritional education, since as caretakers, they make the decisions on what food to purchase and what meals to prepare for their families. Although Calgary offers a number of cooking programs, they are quite expensive and are only available in certain areas of the city. In order to give Calgarians more opportunities to learn about nutritious food and prepare healthy dishes, we recommend that a Calgary cooking program be established throughout the entire city. CKPC currently provides a cooking program in which families form a group to meet at
different locations once a month, and they learn to prepare and cook 10-14 meals at a reasonable price. Although it is only a small program, it is certainly possible to lengthen the course and expand the program into a larger scale by increasing its outreach activities and community engagements.

The Community Kitchen Program of Calgary is only an example of how a small organization strives to end hunger among certain areas of the city, while ensuring that most Calgarians have fresh food and nutritious meals on their tables at the end of the day. Such a non-profit organization deserves more attention from the community in order for it to grow and provide us with even better services. It is our right and our responsibility to participate in these programs more frequently. Education on the values of food and healthy eating should be emphasized for everyone, from children of elementary schools to adults of all ages through different classes in partnership with the University and community programs. With the increasing level of complexity in food marketing, we strongly believe that nutritional education is the key to prevent obesity among children, and is the most effective way to ensure that their physical health is able to support the new generations of the city.

Further readings:


Lanigan, J. D. The Relationship between Practices and Child Care Providers’ Beliefs related to Child Feeding and Obesity.
Abstract: This section of the report deals with ways to improve the quality of life of Calgary’s poor and how to make it easier for them to escape poverty’s vicious cycle, as well as reducing the stigma that the general population tends to have towards poverty. Implementing opportunities for the teenage population to volunteer in their community and learn about social injustice issues can reform the tendency to look down on those in need. Another way to diminish the negative outlook around being “poor” is to integrate all social classes throughout the community by having low-income housing scattered throughout all sections of the city. A program should be instituted where people can help build the house they are going to live in, giving them a place in the community and a sense of purpose. For the average low-income Calgarian family, a low-income warehouse store can be founded that operates similarly to Costco Wholesale: this store would have memberships with different levels of rewards and discounts and could be thought of as a non-emergency food bank. If these supports were established in our city, poverty would not be removed, but the hindrance it causes would have less of an adverse effect on the lives of Calgarians.

There is a societal stigma that comes with living in poverty that makes it seem like the impoverished person or family
is at fault for living that way. However, in reality it is rarely anyone’s fault that they are living in poverty; it is often a result of circumstances that are out of one’s control such as job loss, divorce, or an illness or death in the family. Services and amenities need to be in place so that when unforeseen events in life occur, people are not left helpless and scrambling to pay for food, rent and other basic needs. If it is easier to live with less money in the city, people can make the most out of what they have and the burdens of poverty can be lessened.

Those living in poverty, no matter how they got there, easily feel isolated and without purpose in their own community. This is especially the case if they are struggling to find a place to live and are surviving paycheck to paycheck while fellow Calgarians are thriving in Calgary’s prosperous economy. All social classes should be integrated in a way such that their daily interactions are incorporated amongst each other. Low-income housing should be scattered all over the city. A course of action that could be taken to produce a variety of low-income housing could be to form a “Build your own Housing” program in Calgary, similarly modeled to the Rona Fabrication Shop that opened in Vancouver in November 2007, and most recently in Montreal in October 2012. The Rona Fabrication shop employs men and women aged 19-55 who possess difficulties entering or staying in the workforce. They enter a twenty-six week program, and upon their graduation, they can follow up with a carpentry apprenticeship or join the work force in manufacturing or renovations. Bringing a program like this to our own city on a larger scale could have an even bigger impact on alleviating the pressures of poverty in Calgary. Instead of having the trainees only build structures such as garden sheds, benches and picnic tables, suppose they build a multi-bedroom house that would be owned by the City, that the trainees would then live in when completed. As a part of their payment and wages, the graduates would earn the house they have just built for a certain amount of time rent-free,
but as the graduates acquire employment in the industry, they can start to pay rent and begin living independently. This self-sustaining program would provide disadvantaged members of society much needed work experience, life skills and, most importantly, a purpose in life and a sense of accomplishment. Yul Hawkridge, a graduate of the Vancouver Fabrication shop, commented on the life-changing impact of a program similar to the one proposed: “Not only do I have work related skills that I didn't have before, but it has shown me that I have a potential that I didn't know I had.” Because program members would be building the house in which they are going to live, they would be more inclined to make sure the work they do is of top quality and have a much greater appreciation of the work that went into the construction of the home. Ideally, that is what it would be become: their home; something the graduates can be proud of, and somewhere they can feel safe in the future. Any apprehension held by neighbours towards this program taking place in their community would be eliminated by observing future graduates commit to a project and seeing their smooth integration into the neighborhood, effectively joining and becoming an active member in the community.

The deprecation connected to poverty begins at a young age when children gain more self-awareness and are exposed to the different levels of well-being. They start to realize that these varying levels have significant impacts on one's life. Youth tend to prioritize themselves before others, and this is only natural as the pressure to be perfect, accepted and have an idea of where their life is going takes prominence in their lives. Providing the high school aged population more opportunities to help out throughout the community can reform the teenaged impulse to be disconnected from their community and “not care”. The clear place to start in preventing kids from having a bitter view of the impoverished should begin in schools. There are currently leadership and volunteering clubs that exist in many high schools. Rather than only having social justice and volunteering opportunities outside of
class in lunchtime and after-school clubs, a class is needed that is offered during regular school hours that teaches local, regional and global social issues. There is a course that is gaining prevalence in British Columbia called Social Justice 12. The goal of the course is to give students a broad view on a variety of social justice issues that exist in our society including homophobia, gender inequality, genocide, racial inequality and poverty. By making the course during class time, it is more likely that more students will take the content of the course seriously and think about the issues more in depth. If schools in Calgary and Alberta can follow in British Columbia’s example and implement a social justice class in our schools, we can prevent the negative and cynical view of poverty that can come from the pressures of high school. Encouraging youth to become active and socially aware citizens should not be limited to schools. While it is an influential place to begin building the foundation for community service, it is important to go beyond the walls of the school and continue to a place where community already has a prominent existence. There are tens of thousands of Calgarian kids who play in all kinds of minor sports leagues such as Calgary Minor Hockey, Calgary Minor Soccer, Ringette Calgary Association and countless others that all support hundreds of teams at a variety of ages. Even if a partnership is created with only one of these associations to start with, such as Calgary Minor Hockey, bantam-aged athletes (13/14 years) would commit to spending at least two shifts throughout their season volunteering at local charities or organizations throughout the community. Whether they are assembling hampers at the food bank or part of a cleaning crew at The Mustard Seed, they are contributing to the community. Both the youth that are volunteering and our city would garner many benefits to having minor sports teams compelled to volunteer in the community. The teams would get an incredible team bonding experience, and by being exposed to the volunteer opportunities at an early age, the players would be more likely to get involved in the community when they transition into adulthood. These types of activities, the social justice class in
schools or encouraging local amateur athletes to help out the less fortunate in Calgary, are building blocks to creating a community full of active and engaged citizens for many years to come.

1 in 10 Calgarians are living in poverty and 1 in 5 children are growing up in poverty in our city. It is common knowledge that when a child lives in poverty, it is more probable that they will continue to live in poverty when they reach adulthood, further driving poverty’s vicious cycle. Poverty cannot be completely eliminated, but in an ideal city, there are various services and amenities which lessen the pressures that it puts on families and improve the quality of life. An approach to reduce the burden that poverty causes is to have a low income warehouse store in addition to having a local food bank for emergency situations. This would be a place where the population living with a low income can purchase food at a reduced cost from regular retail stores, where purchasing good quality food is increasingly expensive. The low-income warehouse store could be operated similarly to Costco Wholesale, who sells their products for as little of a price as possible for the benefit of their members. Costco is able to have such low prices because 55% of their profits come from their membership fees. This would not be possible for the low-income warehouse as it would not be about earning a profit. It would be in place as a support for the community; therefore, it would have to be funded publicly or through philanthropic means from donors in our city. Membership would be based on the income of the family or individual needing the service, with different membership levels according to different income levels. Each membership level would determine not the price you pay to acquire your membership, but the amount of discount that would be applied to your purchases. Those very impoverished would get a larger discount and those who are more financially stable would get a much smaller discount. Membership to the store would have to be available to those on both sides of the low income cutoff. The reason for this is because it prevents the warehouse from becoming
a characterized as a “place only poor people shop”. By having a range of people able to purchase their food there, there is no societal shame that comes with having to shop at the warehouse. The whole business community in the city could get on board with this project. If any of the local grocery stores had a surplus of stock or an extra shipment they were not expecting, it could be sent to the low-income wholesale store. Donations such as this would be vital for this program to survive, as it would not be driven by profits. The key to the success of a store like this would be having an accessible location (i.e. close to public transit) and an exceptional amount of community support, which there is no shortage of here in Calgary.

**Further Readings:**


Economics and Innovation

“[I]n any enterprise, more is produced – and that it is better and more easily produced – when one person does a single task which is suited to his nature, and does it at the right time, keeping himself free from other tasks.”

-Plato, The Republic

Abstract: This section of the report addresses current issues regarding the economic stability and well-being of residents in the city, such as proper immigrant integration into the workforce, a lack of encouragement for non-academic learning and a disparity of resources between business sizes. The basis of our ideas were not to reduce the role of the energy industry but to complement it with a large range of sectors that will help the city to ride out the ups and downs of the business cycle. We also believe that aiding immigrants in their transition from their professional life in their home country to continuing into a similar career when they move to Calgary allows the city to tap into a larger pool of professional talent. In terms of encouraging students to enter into different trades or fields of study outside of oil and gas, the responsibility lies with school counselors to allow students to be aware of all of the opportunities that are available to them. Finally, implementing an agency to encourage cooperation between large and small businesses will help to diversify and support the economy throughout the business cycle.

Calgary already has many programs and services available to aid professionally trained immigrants. Firstly, the Integrated Women’s Mentorship Program (IWMP) at Immigrant Services Calgary is designed to assist immigrant women to re-establish their careers in Canada by connecting them to professional women of the same or related occupations. Immigrant or refugee women are eligible for IWMP as long as they hold a degree in their profession, and are able to communicate in English sufficiently. The one-on-
one assistance significantly increases the immigrants’ understanding of the Canadian workplace, along with other crucial skills to ensure that they are employed by the career for which they were trained. In addition to IWMP’s work in the city, Immigrant Services Calgary delivers a wide range of programs and workshops to support immigrants and refugees, from citizenship classes and assessment of English and literacy skills to child and youth programs. The organization strives to create an environment where all newcomers are welcome and able to reach their full potential. In addition to the short-term mentorship provided by IWMP, immigrants should receive continuous support, as there are many challenges associated with adjusting to a workplace in an unfamiliar culture. We suggest a mentorship program within corporations where colleagues with the same job title mentor the new employee. In order to ensure the quality of mentorship is maintained and immigrants are provided with the best quality support, mentor training will follow the guidance of the IWMP program.

We believe that a stronger connection to communities needs to be established in order to ensure that immigrants are aware of the support they can receive and will not be hesitant to ask for help. Furthermore, by further promoting these resources we will help existing Calgarians be better prepared to assist and welcome new citizens. Similarly, there is a need for a stronger connection between professional immigrants and their related employers. Although the Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC) has developed SmartConnections as the first attempt to address this issue, it requires more participation from both sides in order to genuinely succeed. A city that is accommodating and supportive of foreign workers will attract international business partners and ingrain Calgary further in the international community.

The second major source of Calgary’s future employees is
post-secondary institutions. By overcoming the stigma students may experience regarding a career in the trades, we can address contemporary labor shortages and open doors for students of all talents and interests. There are a lot of scholarships being offered to apprentices and occupational trainees by the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Board, however many students are not aware of these opportunities. This awareness would encourage students to pursue their interests in arts or trades without worrying about the financial stresses. Awareness of these programs would place a value on the non-academic fields, reducing the stigma of choosing a trade or art program. The responsibility lies with high school counselors and advisors to promote these scholarships with the same emphasis that other academic scholarships and awards receive. There is also a significant geographic barrier for Calgarian students who require scholarships for the trades due to the location of the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Board’s home location in Edmonton. The number of Calgarian scholarship donations could be increased by developing opportunities for companies to promote themselves and recruit new practitioners.

The third essential aspect of Calgary’s economy is the small business sector. Small businesses not only provide many Calgarians with the opportunity to fulfill their dreams and be their own bosses, but they also provide an immense number of jobs to our citizens. According to Statistics Canada’s *Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours* (SEPH), 5.1 million people or 48% of the private sector in 2011 was employed by small businesses and enterprises. Basic economic theory also tells us that there is a greater rate of return per employee within small businesses than in large ones. There is a great need to ensure the growth of small businesses not only for a more broad economic foundation but also to increase jobs for Calgarians.

Location is the key in elevating a new business from the ground up. While monetary support for new companies is
essential, the public must have easy access to the business in order for it to thrive. All too often, business owners underestimate the importance of location and simply buy the cheapest real estate possible. If the City of Calgary were to fund the use of a central warehouse for a bi-monthly business fair, they would provide small businesses with the venue necessary for an entrepreneur to test the waters, refine their ideas based on demand, and prevent a major loss in capital as a result of investing in a permanent location. A business fair would allow entrepreneurs to discover who their clientele might be and choose an ideal location based on this data.

Once a business has been established, technology becomes an essential part of their success, yet the vastness of the Internet makes it difficult for small businesses to attract the right clients, especially on a local basis. Our recommendation for the better promotion of small local businesses is a city-based website that provides information about each business in a cost effective and well-organized manner. Listings would be organized both alphabetically, for those who know the name of the business for which they are looking, and by genre, for those who are curious about what small businesses have to offer. Each small business could advertise some popular products or services in the form of a short video, which would allow businesses to establish a personal connection with their clientele and showcase their merchandise. This site would be as visually appealing as possible in order to attract a large and diverse clientele and would feature a “Related Searches” function in order to increase exposure for featured businesses. Specialty businesses can be very profitable, but only if the right customers are able to find them - by providing niche businesses with the publicity they need to establish a customer base we can diversify the local economy in a substantial way and encourage innovation. This website would take advantage of technology by A website of this nature would allow people interested in supporting Calgary’s local businesses to see what kinds of services and products are currently being offered.
Related to enterprise and small business success is cooperation between agencies in the city. We recommend the creation of an agency which would act as a mediator between large businesses who wish to invest their capital, and small businesses who could benefit from corporate sponsorship. The goal of this agency is to enable various members of the private sector to work together for the success of all businesses. Our hope is to reduce government aid towards the small business sector, so that more is spent on other concerns of the city, province, and country. These partnerships could act as a barrier in times of economic hardship and increase the customer base for both parties. By encouraging companies to be involved in many economic sectors, we will be able increase the overall stability of the economy. The benefits for startup businesses are obvious; with an increase in capital, they will be able to make vast improvements towards key goals that are required for small enterprises to transform into more stable and secure businesses. The corporations that aid small enterprises to grow have a large and very crucial business network, which is a great asset to the development of the smaller companies. With the potential access to this network, businesses would be able to increase the efficiency with which they carry out their operations. The management of investment and returns would be controlled on an individual basis based on the particular contract agreed upon by both parties. These investments could mean the purchase of a small portion of ownership that would allow small enterprises to have the knowledge, experience and network of larger businesses, while retaining sovereignty of their dreams and vision. This will allow them to pool resources for the success and stability of both parties.

It is our hope to accelerate the growth and stability of the city with achievable solutions. By making it easier for trained immigrants to work in their field of expertise, we can increase the pool of available talent. If we add emphasis to diversifying the careers our own citizens are entering, it will expand the base of
distinguish different types of labor. Helping to encourage cooperation between businesses both large and small will ensure that both groups do not need to stand by themselves in times of economic turbulence. Together these three strategies will help to diversify Calgary’s economy, and help it to compete as an influential city on the global stage.

**Further Readings:**


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Politics

“The soul takes nothing with her to the next world but her education and her culture. At the beginning of the journey to the next world, one's education and culture can either provide the greatest assistance, or else act as the greatest burden, to the person who has just died.” - Plato, *The Republic*

**Abstract:** This section of the report deals with reversing the current trends of disconnection between the average citizen and their local government, citizen apathy, decreasing civic engagement and a decline of positive relationships within our communities. In order to place Calgary in an even better political situation for the future generation, a youthful and unique outlook may aid in overcoming the acknowledged obstacles. Based on the premise of reworking the fundamentals of our educational upbringing, we suggest an in-depth incorporation of local politics into the education system. The role of municipal government is to assist in the development of culture and community; to reflect this ideal, the City of Calgary should establish a community fund with no strings attached to promote civic conversation. A well-organized website listing all city and business services and opportunities would greatly facilitate community integration. The efficiency of bureaucracy can be judged on the effectiveness of providing services seamlessly to its citizens.

A discussion with members of the Calgary bureaucracy entailed themes of voter apathy, civic engagement, and
community. In a global context, cities are increasingly becoming the focal point for academic research, and Calgary is no exception. Citizen critique of municipal politics is essential to electing the best government possible, ensuring that the government evolves to meet the demands of society. Guided by expert opinion and our own research and values, we decided the most effective way to solve these issues was to use three questions to guide us through our work: how can local government appeal to people for its relevancy in their everyday lives? Does the City of Calgary create an enabling environment for community? How can bureaucracy create awareness of available opportunities? The first question has an undertone of citizen apathy. Our premiere solution is a reformed education that contextualizes the city, specifically engaging students with the local government. The second question examines the fundamental role of city government; our conclusion is the preservation of culture and society. Community and culture are inextricably linked, and bureaucracy must be cautious in its intervention of societal efforts. To promote community, our recommendation is the creation of a generalized community fund by the government. The final inquiry encompasses themes of efficiency and opportunity. A citizen-centric government must empower the citizen to take advantage of the resources made available by its bureaucracy. Although these ideas may not be fully actualized, their importance lies in the voices projecting them—promising students who feel disconnected to their city and disenchanted by the local government. These suggestions are seeds, and if planted in the proper garden, have the potential to engage the newest citizen.

By reframing the raised concern of voter apathy, we can better understand the issue and encourage possible solutions: how can local government appeal to people for its relevancy in their everyday lives? There appears to be a disconnection of current society with political issues that directly concern their livelihood. However, government is the source to which people are apathetic.
The more forceful the government is in engaging citizens, the less people generally care, which induces the negative relationship between the two. In accordance to Plato’s belief, the best government will assist the growth for the greatest society; in our accordance to our belief, the best educated society will promote the best government. Our general consensus was that our upbringing, specifically the education system, ill-equip young people to actively engage in civic life. An aura of anxiety exists among the younger generation as they integrate into an increasingly complex society. Our solution to this problem is a localized educational system that directly engages students in the city around them. By contextualizing the educational upbringing of our children, our premise is that these kids will develop an increased awareness of city life. In Calgary there is already a standing history of the type of schooling we wish to promote: the Open Minds program offers a City Hall School that engages students into political life early on. Our essential suggestion is the city-wide expansion of this idea. If they are taught at an early age about their city, they are more likely to develop an attachment to it later on. Implementing a program starting in elementary through high school which teaches children solely about their city would be a great way to start them on feeling a connection to their city. Each student would eventually understand government function, which would entice a domino effect on the society; purposeful voters lead to a better government, superior policies, and an overall healthier and more prosperous city. The goal is to educate people on the complex intricacies and existing institutions which exist within Calgary. The desired by-product of this education is to develop an appreciation of the crucial administration and network that manages the city. Students of all ages and capabilities are an untapped resource for local solutions to local problems, and with our proposed solution we hope that there is an incubation of ideas capable of shaping the city they want to live in for the future. Richard Florida has popularized the idea of attracting the most creative individuals to a city; however, we want to raise the most
creative and civically engaged minds. By building the capacities and raising the awareness of every single citizen growing up in Calgary, we hope that they develop a positive relationship with their community and choose to stay and contribute later in life. This is not to undermine the importance of a globalized education today, but it is meant to address the lack of local education today. What we are calling for is a greater collaboration between the Calgary Board of Education and the City of Calgary to build a system that does a better job of political enculturation. We would like to see a curriculum that continually builds civic understanding and engagement progressively throughout a student’s life. It is to the benefit of Calgary as a whole to invest in such a program.

Geographically speaking, Calgary is a collection of many different communities, but that is not to say that they have a feeling of community. The average person does not know who their neighbor is. A city-wide increase in the sense of community would benefit Calgary, adding to the atmosphere that both citizens and tourists are surrounded in. A sense of pride in one’s neighborhood would correlate to a sense of pride in their city. The unique position of Calgary being caught between a “large and small city” preserves the idea of a deeper connection between citizens, as well as the places they inhabit. One role of municipal government is to provide the resources and space for culture to grow, but to never guide it in a specific direction. Culture is free flowing and never imposed upon from above. Unnecessary bureaucracy can cause the delay of projects and the hindrance of sharing ideas and their possible outcomes. As a way to provide the resources for community growth, our suggestion is the establishment of a “neighborhood fund” by the City of Calgary. This idea was inspired by the philanthropic model of the Awesome Foundation. The grant can be accessed by any Calgarian, but the fundamental component is the relaxed requirements to receive the money. There are no strings attached, no specific uses for the money other than it going towards the promotion of community. In
the essay “Bowling Alone” by Robert Putnam, the author diagnoses a decline in civic engagement by a means of a lack of meaningful dialogue between people. We hope that this grant would be one way to foster civic conversations again by encouraging people to come together and build relationships that support a strong democracy. The only requirement to access the grant is an undertone of community building or engagement—this could mean anything from a public garden, a neighbourhood barbeque, or more specific purposes like an organized conversation. Coming from tax dollars, a small fund set aside for this purpose has the potential to catalyze meaningful conversation relevant to the city. The ideal format would be a minimum of a thousand dollars awarded monthly to the best bid, judged by a team of advisors. The current government has adopted a mandate of “cutting red tape”, and a no-strings-attached community grant would reflect this direction. The creative possibilities are endless, but it is up to the citizens to capitalize on this opportunity.

One of the best things about Calgary is the multitude of opportunities that are actually present for its citizens. They span a great range of diversity, and there is most definitely something for everyone in this city. The only problem with this is that not everyone is aware of the opportunities that are available to them, so they cannot take advantage of everything that the city has to offer. The communication of available opportunities will certainly be a problem. Our recommendation for the third question may not be as tangible as the other two, but its importance outweighs them. Any plan, program, or opportunity is only effective insofar as it reaches the people it is intended to help. We cannot underestimate the current generation’s affiliation with technology, and the City of Calgary should capitalize on that trend as much as possible. A strong city website and active social media will be the best way to engage current citizens with the Calgarian political agenda and opportunities. But it is not just The City of Calgary that has services to offer. This must be kept in mind when discussing how
bureaucracy can spread awareness about the collection of opportunities that are available to the citizens of Calgary, and, for that matter, anyone visiting our city. We envision an online city-specific social network. We propose one website and database to which all businesses and organizations could post. It would be much easier to network and locate opportunities specific to any interest. Calgarian businesses and organizations could post a short description of what they have to offer and a link to their website on this well-organized and extensively categorized site. It would have to combine both public postings from the City of Calgary, and private postings from other businesses and organizations. As a reflection of the desired educational upbringing, the City of Calgary website could become an extremely useful resource for the next generation. Their integration into the community would hopefully inspire more involvement later in life, and they should be familiarized with the way the City of Calgary reaches them through technology. In order for this to work, absolutely everything has to be found in that one place. In addition, the website must be easy to find, easy to remember, and easy to use. If any of these fail, the motion in its entirety will fail, as the available opportunities will remain undiscovered by many citizens.

The purpose of this report is to provide real solutions to real problems. The solutions are meant to be youthful, creative, and most importantly, non-expert perspectives on some political issues related to Calgary. Our local political integration through education across the city aims to provide the currently lacking understanding of government in our everyday lives. A no-strings-attached community fund provided by the city is a way to promote civic dialogue, but not force it upon its citizens. And finally, the actualization of any opportunity is of paramount importance, and an investment into an inclusive city website could potentially change the way Calgarians interact and live within this city. The purpose of this report is not to dictate how the bureaucracy should conduct their work, but to provide potential ideas that would help
our Calgary and our future in the long run.

**Further Readings:**


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**Philanthropy**

"Good actions give strength to ourselves and inspire good actions in others."

- Plato, *The Republic*

**Abstract:** This section of the report examines the extent to which philanthropy has a dynamic impact on various aspects of society. We discuss the benefits of volunteerism for those who partake in it and its role in integrating newcomers into a community as well as reinforcing current social ties. In addition, the capacity of community engagement as a factor in the growth and development
of a creative city is explored. In order to successfully establish a creative society, it is necessary for Calgary to begin to instill philanthropic ideals in youth and continue to engage adolescents in the community. Lastly, it is evident that the measurability of the charitable sector is an essential component in achieving citizen engagement. To accomplish this, charities need to be held accountable to their donors to secure a substantial return on investment.

It is widely accepted that philanthropy does not increase community engagement and security, but that the community increases philanthropy. Social ties and community engagement are essential to the success of philanthropy. People are more likely to be charitable if they are involved in a series of community networks such as religious groups, clubs, or companies. This is simply because people involved in social networks are more likely to be passionate about several issues or topics, feel as though their contributions are helping their community, and most importantly, are more likely to be asked to engage in volunteerism. One of the main problems in philanthropic participation is that people do not volunteer unless directly asked, and many people do not have social networks that ask them to volunteer. A central goal of the city should be to promote a welcoming and supportive atmosphere in which people feel encouraged to develop connections to their neighbours. This would allow people to develop the social ties needed to encourage philanthropic activity. Bringing back the culture of farmers’ markets, community centres, community gardens, and other engagement activities will create a more positive and social environment for Calgarians.

The most common network, and often the network that people spend the most time engaging in, is their job. Companies have a strong influence on their employees and can often be the factor that either inhibits or encourages charitable actions. Many people believe that they are too busy with their occupation to
engage in volunteerism. However, companies have the ability to change this attitude. An increasing number of companies today engage in “long term strategic relationships” with charities and organizations whereby they commit to a specific organization for some time and donate a certain amount of money or number of volunteer hours to that organization. Many of these companies complete these requirements by offering their employees several paid volunteer days each year. Engaging with the philanthropic community not only encourages their employees to become involved, but it also creates a positive reputation for the company.

Engagement in volunteerism creates a thriving community in which citizens become actively involved. Research has shown that engaging in volunteerism positively affects and benefits individuals throughout every stage in their life. Charitable actions have been shown to increase self esteem, decrease the probability of developing mental illnesses such as depression, increase overall satisfaction in life, help immigrants integrate into their society while maintaining their culture, and even increase the probability of being in good physical health when a citizen is elderly. This research is particularly important because it reinforces the idea that introducing philanthropy to citizens at a young age increases their chances of having an ideal life.

The most effective way to increase community involvement is by engaging people in philanthropic efforts at a young age. Children can be introduced to philanthropy as young as the age of four. During their earliest years, the most influential factor in the life of children is their parents. Children who are raised by parents that are actively engaged in philanthropy are more likely to be involved in volunteerism in the future. This is in part due to mirror neurons in the children’s brains. When people engage in philanthropy, the neurons in their brains responsible for happiness fire off and they experience a “warm glow” feeling. When children see their parents engaging in philanthropy, their
mirror neurons fire off, and they experience this feeling first hand. However, children may not understand this feeling and its relation to philanthropy. Therefore, it is critical for parents and other figures of authority to continuously explain the importance of social responsibility, justice, and morality. As children grow older, education becomes a secondary influence in their charitable actions. Schools can foster current and future philanthropic involvement in children by creating a supportive hands-on charitable experience where children receive praise and encouragement upon completion of volunteerism. As a result, children will feel fulfilled and create positive memories. Nostalgia has been proven to be directly linked to charitable involvement; people are more likely to volunteer if they experience nostalgia when asked to engage in charitable actions. Schools can influence how children view philanthropy by offering leadership or philanthropy courses. People are “primed” to have a negative reaction to words associated with money and monetary value. Although they may experience a nostalgic “warm glow” feeling when reminded of philanthropy, if monetary words are used, this feeling will be replaced with negativity and discourages the individual from volunteering. Schools can teach children to have a more positive reaction to words associated with money, thus increasing volunteerism.

Calgarians need to hold charities to a higher standard when determining the charities or organizations that they incorporate into their lives. Fiscal transparency is a complex yet essential aspect in the day-to-day operations of charities. Currently, many charities are not providing adequate disclosure to their donors. These organizations tend to talk more about how much money they have made, rather than where the money is going and how it is being used. In addition, marketing techniques are often employed to make donors believe that their organization is creating large impacts in society by utilizing non-conclusive information such as personal testimonials and comparisons of participators to non-
participators. Responsible citizen should not encourage this behavior. Organization should be required to publish annual reports with detailed information about the total accumulation, distribution, and use of their funds, as well as information about their social impact and ability to complete goals. This will not only decrease misinformation about the impact of organizations, but will allow important information to be more accessible to charitable citizens. People will be more likely to donate when they can directly see the impact their money is making on society. Potential donors are more likely to donate to basic health care, after-school programs, and land conservation programs because it is easier to measure the impact made on these sectors as opposed to the arts, policy work, poverty reduction, or human rights. By requiring organizations to adhere to strict regulations on documenting charity finances and social impact, donor interest will increase in areas that are more difficult to measure because the information will be accurate and readily accessible. These published documents will not only allow organizations to become more transparent, but will also allow citizens to become more actively involved in responsible charitable spending.

Currently, there is no tangible rating system for organizations within Calgary. Charities can receive memberships or credentials from several philanthropic websites, but there is no citywide rating system. Having a rating system for Calgary-based philanthropy would increase the ease of responsible charitable spending for citizens, and therefore would increase the amount of money and time donated. The factors that would be included in this rating system would be financial health, accountability, transparency, salary pay, cost-effectiveness, dedication to mission statement, and evidence of a strong, positive social impact. An equation would then be developed to determine the rating of each charity or organization.
The rating system used to determine the effectiveness of charities and organizations in Calgary could easily be integrated with an entire online volunteering system. A website could be created that would require organizations within Calgary to be audited and receive a rating to be certified before they could appear on the website. The website would then allow these organizations to post volunteer opportunities for registered users to view. This website would categorize all volunteer positions so that potential volunteers could quickly and easily find the opportunities they desire. This website could also allow the volunteers to build profiles where they could list the categories of volunteerism they are interested in, as well as list their past volunteer positions. This would not only allow the user to create a volunteer dashboard on the website that is customized to their specific volunteer needs, but could be used by future employers to confirm the user’s community participation. Developing a mobile application for Smartphones focused on delivering to-the-minute volunteer information to Calgarians would be another step towards a more productive, philanthropic Calgary.

Volunteers are essential to a progressive, efficient society. In our experience, we have found that volunteering in Calgary can sometimes be inaccessible and difficult to accomplish. Finding a suitable volunteer position is often more time-consuming and challenging than the position itself. A simple, organized, and diverse website that is updated weekly would be a priceless tool in the growth of volunteerism in Calgary. In order to encourage volunteerism among both youth and adults alike, it is essential that

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70 - \sqrt{\frac{(70-\text{Financial})^2 + (70-\text{A&T})^2}{2}}
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Example of rating equation via Charity Navigator
we look at our current volunteer recruitment strategies and update them to meet current standards. This will require a multifaceted approach designed to reach several demographics and interests. Volunteering needs to become something that connects us and is not seen as an obligation, but as a recreational activity.

It is important that philanthropy becomes a part of our culture rather than an activity that a select demographic participates in and that is viewed as separate from the community. By building stronger social networks, more people will engage in philanthropy and experiences the benefits. The current number of volunteers can be increased by directly asking people to engage in charitable actions, encouraging communities such as workplaces to engage in volunteerism, requiring transparency of financial information and social impact in Calgarian organizations, and creating a user friendly website with a charity rating system, volunteer opportunities, and information about local events. Future volunteerism can be increased by having children volunteer with their parents, school, and local community, and teaching them about philanthropy, money, and social responsibility. As philanthropy becomes a way of life, current issues facing philanthropy will gradually decrease and the overall amount of volunteerism and charitable donations in Calgary will increase.

**Further Readings:**


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Science

"As being is to becoming, so is pure intellect to opinion. And as intellect is to opinion, so is science to belief, and understanding to the perception of shadows."
-Plato, The Republic

Abstract: This section of the report examines the challenges surrounding a lack of interest in science and its disconnection to our community, which are evidently prime concerns within the field. Scientific interest must be nurtured at an early age, which can be done so by using more applied teaching techniques and allowing scientific discovery to be an entertaining and pleasurable experience. By reducing the stigma that science is a lackluster area of study at an early age, university scholars can appreciate scientific methods later in their educational career by increasing lab use and limiting excessive, theoretical instruction, leading students to start asking why a phenomenon happens. This curiosity can be further integrated into the community through the implementation of university-community programs, advancing the interest in new discoveries and the discussions of old ones.

The importance of new discoveries within a creative and innovative society cannot be stressed enough. They are the core driver of ingenuity, medical advancement, and technological revolutions, and in today’s information age, they are crucial for societal contribution and communal development. The issues surrounding the absence of attention given to science stems from the inaccurate stigma that science and mathematics are areas of hard work with little payoff, and simply are not fun to engage in. The challenge lies in abolishing this social stigma. Students must be shown at an early age that their ideas can be fully explored in an applied, real-life setting, and that although their ideas may not be conclusive, they are still part of the scientific method. As these students reach post-secondary research institutions, the emphasis of exploration needs to be increased. In doing so, scholars are
exposed to asking questions, rather than just accepting an experimental occurrence. This drives the creative ability of future generations, resulting in scientists who are innovative and intelligent independent thinkers. These newly refined scientists may be more dedicated to the field of science, their career, and their community. As a key objective, the integration of science within the community would be supported by university-community based programs, and would allow the community to speak directly with the scientists themselves in an informal and comfortable setting. By upgrading and enhancing the way they are taught and shared, society can begin to better appreciate science and mathematics.

The reformation of outdated teaching methods in classrooms for younger students is vital in fostering an interest in science and mathematics in youth and adolescents. This can be achieved through the assimilation of applied science in schools. By allowing students to fully explore the use of science in the real world through the demonstration of its practical applications, students will realize that science can be interesting, rewarding, and most importantly, fun! By continuing field trips from elementary school straight through to high school, students will not only understand the importance of science and mathematics in their surrounding environment, but will fully appreciate the significant impact it has on their own lives. The nurturing of this early interest in science must be followed up within the classroom by encouraging students to explore various areas of science on their own. Through the continued use of science fairs and additional implementation of long term field projects (rather than just field trips) during high school years, students will be further motivated to think for themselves, thus strengthening the intellect and cognitive abilities of the future generation of scholars. A local community garden, for example, could be one of the suggested field projects, but the possibilities are endless. This new intellectual training should be reinforced by further incentivizing
risk-taking inside classrooms. Demonstrating to students that the actual methodical process of scientific experimentation is just as important as the outcome would be carried out by remodeling grading systems to reward adventuresome thinking, instead of merely finding the correct answer. This evolution in grade school education would ultimately create a revived way of viewing science within the classroom and within society, which would emphasize the importance of new discoveries, as well as support the potential of many more young minds.

Science and math should not be left to the realm of unstimulating subjects that students are forced to do merely because teachers tell them to. At their core, science and math are the offspring of human curiosity and ingenuity, and this fact should be the guiding principle in their education. However, the easy way to teach science and math, as with any other subject, is to simply dump information upon students and test its retention. In order to allow university students to understand the true essence of science, we offer these suggestions. First would be to modify classroom labs and demos, in which the labs and demos happen first and the explanations come later. In tandem, the encouragement of students to generate their own explanations before revealing the one accepted by the scientific community would be implemented. Some of the most potentially engaging aspects of the scientific method seem very routine - like by having foregone conclusions about them. In letting students try out science in this new way, they will be more active and interested, even if they do not necessarily grow up to be scientists. Encouraging discussions in addition to asking the question “why” in science and math—while helping students catch up with all the information that humanity has discovered—is necessary for the next generation of science. It is equally imperative to emphasize that this knowledge comes from somewhere and forms logically from observations. If students simply learn to accept everything their teachers tell them without question, those pursuing science will be less inclined to look at
phenomena in a different way. It was this curiosity that drove Newton and Einstein in order to make their great advances.

Traditionally, science has been disconnected from the community. A primary recommendation we have is enhancing programs that connect with students in elementary schools. Science FUNdamentals, based at the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta, is a science oriented student club that aims at engaging youth through creative, interactive, and educational demonstrations during visits to elementary schools in the community. Some barriers identified by President Elizabeth Cannon of the University of Calgary branch were acquiring funds for science equipment to be used in classrooms, as well as the difficulty in obtaining access to the Calgary Board of Education schools. Communication was also identified as a struggle between the group and elementary school teachers. This group is the only free science-based program currently offering 14 different science demonstrations for students in grades three to six. The focus of activities range from various topics such as antibiotic resistance, by looking at glowing bacteria, to genetics, by extracting DNA from strawberries. University students are provided the opportunity to develop leadership skills by working with the children, and thus enhancing their university experience whether they are in a science program or not. Critical aims of this program are to show that science is fun, and also to foster scientific interest within schools and communities throughout the city. With continued exposure to science experiences, students are more likely to become receptive and appreciative to the wonder and possibilities that science provides. The transition of children with scientific interests into after-school programs or science summer camps may be a beneficial extension of the Science FUNdamentals program. Easing the process these groups have to endure in order to garner interest from teachers and schools would assist in making similar science initiatives more widespread.
To continue the partnership between students and scientists beyond the classroom, we recommend fostering communication among scientists through the use of science cafés. Science cafés directly address the problem of direct communication. Dr. Hak-Soo Kim, a professor at the College of Communications at Sogana University in Seoul, advocates in bringing community and scientists directly together to affect policy changes regarding controversial issues, such as global warming. Within his report, he emphasizes the fact that the media will often distort facts reported by the scientific community, with issues becoming artificially divided. Kim noted that the majority of scientists accepted global warming, but media coverage was split unilaterally—making the illusion that the problem was controversial. Science cafés will bridge this divide by immersing scientists directly within the community in a regular manner. The TELUS Spark Science Centre currently holds monthly science cafés, and an increase in the frequency of these events is necessary. The success of these events, however, is dependent on the character of scientists and their willingness to be a part of a community discussion. The increased use of social media channels can perhaps serve as a backup solution for the shy scientist, but a direct conversation with the public may be the best method to foster science integration. A deeper bond with the community will inevitably allow scientists to actively collaborate with it. In return, these regular conversations will reduce the traditional archetype of “the scientist” for the public and allow tax-paying citizens to actively see where a portion of their tax-dollars goes.

Recognizing how society is dependent on new discoveries in science is crucial to bettering community engagement and encouraging scientific interest. The communication between scientists and their city is necessary in order to begin a new era of scientific restoration, and this can be fueled by acting early in educational systems to induce novel thinking methods. These advancements may lead to a society in
which science is more integrated and celebrated, and where individuals are able to pursue their passions in the area without having to face the stigmas and stereotypes surrounding science and mathematics.

Further Readings:


Arts and Culture

“We shall give our guardians one further instruction. They are to guard in every way against the city being small, but also against its giving the appearance of greatness. It should be no more than adequate in size, and united.”
-Plato, The Republic

Abstract: This section of the report addresses current issues regarding Arts and Culture within Calgary, specifically the lack of integration between the different sectors of people in the city. Today, Calgary sits at a crossroads. Uniquely positioned by its economic prosperity and a demographic shift, Calgary is transitioning from solely a business and oil hub to a fully-fledged metropolitan centre. This entails countless facets of innovation, preservation, and transformation in dozens of arenas. An emphasis on urban renewal and limitation of suburban sprawl is personified in the innovative initiative of the East Village. The East Village acts as clear indication of commitment from both government and business to refocus on urban development through the utilization of the Community Revitalization Levy and cohesive governmental vision of a socially conscious urban development partnered with numerous private corporations. Still unaddressed, and key to this transition, is the development of community partnerships that could lead to a more vital and visible arts and culture scene. Coming off of Calgary’s year as Culture Capital of Canada (2012) we are fully aware of the presence of a thriving arts community in Calgary; however, we are also equally aware of the bizarre disconnect present between three distinct populations within the city: the arts community, the business sector, and the public at large. Despite the presence of a dynamic local arts community, there is little public awareness, and the tremendous potential between the arts and business sectors is unrealized, as both the arts and business continue to hold each other at arm’s length. It is
here, in this social gap, we propose that the most expedient and exact benefit can be made through a non-profit organization to act as a facilitator between these three spheres.

With the arts and business communities and the public relatively disengaged from each other, it is clear that a presence is required within the city to bring the three together. Our proposed organization would act as a liaison for economic exchange between the arts and business sector, a publicist to connect the arts with the public, and a unified body with the resources to create innovative initiatives to adapt to the dynamics of the arts and culture scene in Calgary. The ultimate goal is to connect all three populations to create a more vital and visible arts and culture scene in a blooming metropolis.

Our proposed organization would act as a go-between, intercessor, palliative, and protector for artists and businesses, small and large. The main purpose would be to catalyze an involved partnership between businesses and artists. This begins by translating respective trade jargon and fostering mutually beneficial dialogue between the spheres, bridging the division between the arts and business. More and more there is a concerted effort within companies to rebrand as relatable and socially conscious—a movement that our proposed organization can accelerate. Beyond the desire for a more relatable and socially conscious image, there is a direct economic incentive for businesses to support arts and culture in Calgary. Albertans spent $3.3 billion on cultural goods and services in 2008. On a per capita basis, Albertans’ cultural spending is the highest of all provinces at $963 per resident. 37% of Albertans spent at least some money on live performing arts totaling approximately $400 million in 2008. Calgarians spent $1,020 per capita on cultural goods and services in 2008—the highest among 12 Canadian metropolitan areas. Of the $1.1 billion total cultural spending in Calgary in 2008, $150 million was spent on art pieces and cultural events, $55 million of
which was dedicated to just live performing arts. A study funded by the Canadian Council for the Arts reported that patrons who spend a large amount of money on the performing arts have 69% higher total household expenditures than people who spend little to nothing, and even higher average spending than low or non-spenders on many non-cultural items. Expenditure on hotels and other travel accommodations were tripled, and dollars spent on inter-city transportation were doubled in this demographic. Additionally, this group exhibits 85% higher average spending on restaurant food with more than double the average spending on restaurant alcohol, and 88% higher on clothing. High spenders on the performing arts are key customers to numerous businesses, and through our proposed organization, sponsors indirectly generate revenue by catering to the demographic most interested in buying their goods and services. Furthermore, the influx of young urban professionals attracted to the vibrant culture of Calgary would also act as economic stimulus. Businesses could not only provide funding and resources towards the arts through the organization, but help artists navigate the waters of a fan-base, demystify foreign terms, and increasing artistic revenue by providing artists with traditional business skills. Additionally, business complexes can also provide artistic venues and spaces for budding artists in light of Calgary’s shortage of venues. The presence of an organization dedicated to helping artists display, perform, and sell their work through the solicitation of privatized funding and spaces, while maintaining artistic integrity, will foster a sense of economic security and artistic freedom within the arts and culture community. Businesses aiding the arts and culture scene would be helping to expand their customer base and make substantial indirect returns on their contributions by encouraging a vibrant and artistic city where people want to be.

The Arts and Heritage in Canada: Access and Availability Survey 2012 revealed that 71% of surveyed Canadians said that they had engaged in online activities related to arts and
culture during the past year. More than half said they had found out about an artist, performer, event, or exhibit via the Internet, 44% purchased tickets for an arts or cultural event, 40% viewed or listened to an arts performance, exhibit, or work of art, and 38% discussed or shared about an artistic or cultural event. The strong online involvement in arts and culture for the average Canadian, in conjunction with relatively low overheads, immediacy in production, and overall accessibility, is the reasoning for hosting our proposed organization primarily online. After an initial multimedia push for awareness (through local radio, television, and newspapers, as well as physical posters across the city), a well-managed website, social media network, and mobile application could provide publicity as well as act as an administrative hub for the organization. The website would ideally cater to all the main uses of the Internet in relation to arts and culture. A comprehensive calendar of events sponsored or aided by the organization would raise awareness of the events. The goal is to create a simple tool that with limited research, Calgarians can use to quickly browse and discover sources of immediate or future entertainment. The ability to purchase tickets online, through the website or through the application, for local events will create ease of access, and the development of online community spaces to discuss various artists will foster a community dedicated to creating and maintaining a thriving arts and culture scene in Calgary. Through coordination with various forms of social media, the organization will have increased capability to reach out to the audience and the artists and connect them in different ways, which are unique to this age of new media. The other side of the platforms would be to aid event planners. The platforms can act as an intermediary between open venues in Calgary and planners seeking venues. An extension would be implemented to allow owners of non-traditional spaces such as bars, restaurants, community halls, churches, and others, to make their spaces available for use by registering their space on the platform. Thus, the current bottleneck on performance areas would be alleviated, while allowing maximum publicity for the
The future Calgary would not be complete without innovative events and initiatives. Thus far the organisation has been identified as a passive body that acts as a medium of communication and collaboration. However, it could also act as an incubator for initiatives originating from the partnerships garnered between the artistic, business and public spheres of Calgary. Calgary is a dynamic city and with that comes sudden changes. Through its collective partnerships, the organization would be well-equipped to quickly respond to any changes within the business, arts and culture, and public communities. Ideas and responses could originate from any party, but the partnerships fostered by our organisation will allow them to be realized. For example, the low population density and large area of Calgary presents a challenge in building enough cultural infrastructures to adequately serve the population in the traditional sense; however, a simple street art program run by the proposed organization can bring an element of street art to all citizens at a relatively low operating cost. Businesses in need of a facelift can offer their plain buildings and fixtures as a canvas for local artists. Artists can then decorate these spaces into visual masterpieces throughout the city. While the idea of street-art is not novel, the prevalence of street art in local communities remains largely unseen. Our proposed organization can aid in extending the program. From the partnerships with both the business sector and the arts, not only will the organization facilitate the implementation of existing programs, but it can also lead to new initiatives. The creative prowess of the artistic community, with the economic and management skills of business, yields untapped potential in the ability to innovate.

A rich undercurrent of vibrant arts and innovative culture carries dynamic cities. Currently, dialogue between businesses, the arts and the public are shunted. Our proposed organization would
act as a facilitator for positive dialogue and exchange between the arts and business, and provide artists with resources and skill to succeed in any environment while simultaneously creating a cycle to increase the revenue of businesses. As a publicist, the proposed organization can connect the arts with the public; thus, ensuring that events are efficient to plan but also well attended. Ultimately, the partnerships will create a large unified community with the resources to create innovative initiatives to adapt to the dynamics of the arts and culture scene in Calgary. Calgary’s continued success will be a function of today’s investment in the arts; it is now that investment should be made for the continued prosperity of tomorrow. The ultimate goal is to ensure that arts and culture in Calgary remain vibrant, innovative, and competitive on a global scale for many years to come.

**Further Readings:**


Conclusion: Through the stated services and initiatives, we, the ASHA class, believe that our city can begin to compete with some of the most developed and competitive cities in the world. After many hours of discussion, debate and research, our class developed this action plan to address the issues that our city is most prominently faced with in today’s society. The solutions presented here are, as we believe them to be, the most effective solutions to the difficult and complex problems and obstacles in Calgary. They are the collection of youthful, and most importantly non-expert, ideas that can affect the city of our future. The city and community will grow as we respond to these initiatives and become inspired to work hard for the city that has given us so much. Through this report, we hope to have inspired and encouraged decision makers who have the capability to implement these changes. The outstanding city we all know Calgary can be depends on collaboration and sound decisions.