



London Poverty Research Centre at King's becomes new academic Centre for the University

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King's and the London Poverty Research Centre have formed a partnership to become the London Poverty Research Centre at King's. Details of the new partnership which gives the Centre a home as an academic Centre at King's were outlined by Dr. David Sylvester, King's Principal and the new Board of the Centre which includes co-chairs from both King's and the community.

“Having this Centre at King's is a demonstration of the commitment we have with our mission. We have more than 40 years of community work through our School of Social Work,” says Dr. Sylvester. “We can now bring an inter-disciplinary team of academic researchers from departments such as Social Justice & Peace Studies, Economics, Sociology and more to answer important local questions around food security and precarious work, and mental health and homelessness.”

Dr. Barbara Decker Pierce, Director of King's renowned School of Social Work will co-chair the new Centre with Ross Fair, a community member from Fanshawe College. The new Board is comprised of Glen Pearson, The London Food Bank; Sue Wilson, Sisters of St. Joseph; Dr. Tracy Smith Carrier, faculty of King's School of Social Work; Sean Quigley, Emerging Leaders of London; and Sidney Robertson, a King's student in Social Justice & Peace Studies. Generous funding to establish and support the London Poverty Research Centre's operations was provided by the London Community Foundation through a Vitality Grant in December 2013. Additional grants have been received from the Sisters of St. Joseph, the London Food Bank and the London Intercommunity Health Centre.

Dr. Sylvester notes that King's will also provide IT, Library/copyright and administrative support to the Centre. As well, the Board will use space at King's for meetings.

“It is research that leads to impact,” says Dr. Decker Pierce. “The work of the Centre excites our faculty as we feel this research will impact policy and service development within our own community of London.”

Enthusiasm for the new partnership was echoed by Sue Wilson on behalf of the Board. “The London Poverty Research Centre is excited to partner with King's not only because of the research expertise and student energy that they bring, but especially because of King's commitment to social justice as part of its mission.”

Research is now underway looking at questions such as: Is there an alternative to the direct distribution of food to individuals and families in need? What is it like to have to use a food bank to meet your family's needs? What does current literature tell us about precarious employment and about homelessness? What are the characteristics of social assistance recipients in London and how are these similar or dissimilar to residents of similar communities in Ontario? Are there unique features in London's population of social assistance recipients? What is the impact of participating in a poverty simulation on understanding the experience of living in poverty and on people's attitudes toward the poor in our community? Is reliance on social assistance support intergenerational and if so, what are the factors that contribute to this phenomenon?

The London Poverty Research Centre at King's joins other Centres at the university including the Centre for Creativity; Centre for Jewish, Catholic, Muslim Learning; Centre for Social Concern; Centre for Education about Grief and Bereavement; Centre for Advanced Research in European Philosophy; and the Centre for Advanced Research in Catholic Thought.

King's is a publicly-funded Catholic post-secondary institution founded in 1954. King's provides general and honors degree programs in the liberal arts, social sciences, business, and a master's degree in social work. It is positioned in the top rank of institutions of higher learning in Canada for the high quality of its teaching faculty and student experience. Institutionally-autonomous, King's is academically-affiliated with Western University. King's is open to students of all faith backgrounds, with its community centered on the values of social justice, equality and the education of the whole person.

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