Chapter Two: Rapid Growth

By 1986, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives was established. It had an operating mechanism and mandate through its agreement, full funding, full staff and faculty, and a physical home. At that point, energy shifted from the CSC board to its faculty and staff. While the board retained its management style, approving budgets and providing general direction, members would meet only three times per year. The CSC's identity became enmeshed with the Diefenbaker Centre and particularly through the Centre Scholars and staff who were the "face" of the CSC. The next ten years were witness to rapid growth. This chapter will focus on the broader thematic issues where the new CSC put energy and time. It was a period of consolidation, of forging the identity of what became the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives.

Academic Autonomy

As the first director, Chris Axworthy led the charge to set the Centre's priorities, from research to teaching to relationships with co-operatives, university departments, the provincial government, and the Co-operative College of Canada. Setting research priorities came down to somewhat of a battle of wits and power between the nascent CSC and its funders, some of whom wanted more say in setting academic and research priorities or, like the provincial government, to set the CSC up as a consulting service. "Fair to say that when the Centre was established, the big co-ops didn't know how a research centre would be established. Some wanted more of a say, others less,"[42] Axworthy remembered. When I asked one of the co-operative leaders at the time, did you understand how the university worked? The answer: No. But, he added, that wasn't the

[42] Interview with Chris Axworthy, 29 November 2017.

issue, because there was incredible trust. They knew Leo Kristjanson and trusted him to set things up in a way that would help both the co-operative community and the university.[43]

Setting research priorities when the majority of the funding came from off campus created a sensitive issue for the CSC. The priorities of funders cannot be ignored, "but this is a constant stress and strain when private funders are involved. They were putting up a lot of money and wanted value."[44] Yet, given the need for the faculty to serve two masters — their academic home department and the Centre — it was important to set research priorities and projects that could be applicable and useful in multiple parameters. All of the faculty, except Axworthy, were hired into tenure-track positions, which meant that they had to research and publish extensively within a short timeframe to achieve tenure and promotion. Axworthy was hired with tenure, which simply meant he didn't need to prove himself academically and could focus on setting up the Centre.

Heavily invested in the concept of collectivism, Axworthy preferred a team approach to shaping research: "We made collective decisions about research priorities."[45] Those priorities included both individual research projects and collaborative research, which meant either multidisciplinary work from different academic disciplines or truly interdisciplinary work, in which collaboration was part of the process. Setting the Centre's research priorities — the collaborative projects — was a bit of a messy process. "One of the things that happened was, you're always talking and no one's getting anything done. But it was where we hammered out our research agenda and sorted out ideas of what we would research and write about. We were a mostly close and quite dynamic small group …"[46] At the time, Brett Fairbairn was asking shrewd questions about the Centre's research agenda. Axworthy admitted that "our approach

[43] Interview with Ted Turner, 29 January 2018.
[44] Interview with Chris Axworthy, 29 November 2017.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

… has been a mixture of planning and disorder."[47] Murray Fulton remembered the original research strategy as "chaotic." With no particular parameters other than the mandate to "undertake research of particular interest and relevance to co-operatives," as laid out in the contract, and in addition to "undertake research concerning the legislation governing co-operatives and credit unions," the faculty and staff were allowed to find their own way.[48] The advantage of the chaos, noted Fulton, is that the Centre faculty quickly established that they were interested in just about everything, from large co-operatives to small, from legal issues to co-operative development to social structures and everything in between. Yet, all of the research retained one specific focus: The CSC would study "co-operative-ness," the nonbusiness aspects of being a co-operative, the "elements of co-operation that distinguish it from other forms of economic activity."[49] That way, what the CSC studied could be broadly useable by many kinds and sizes of co-operative business.

From time to time, during board meetings, Axworthy remembered pushback from the board regarding some of the research projects. "Why are we paying for that?" was a popular comment, showing the occasional gulf between what the academics were interested in studying or supporting versus what the funders thought would be useful or interesting to them. A major bone of contention was the Centre's focus on worker co-ops. It was a special area of interest for Chris Axworthy, both as a researcher and as an activist. Remembering his time as director, he remained proud of the CSC being "instrumental in the beginning in support of worker co-operatives, a worker co-op magazine that we sponsored that shared experiences of

[47] Letter, Chris Axworthy to Brett Fairbairn, 1986. Leo Kristjanson Fonds, University of Saskatchewan Archives.
[48] Agreement between University of Saskatchewan and the Co-operative Sector, 1982.
[49] Axworthy, "Report on the activities of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives for the period ending August 31st, 1985," in Leo Kristjanson Fonds, RG 001 s6 Box 12.I.22.22, General 1985, University of Saskatchewan Archives. It should be noted that none of the research projects laid out in that report were about credit unions, but that credit union topics dominated the "wish we could do this" list.

worker co-ops across the country. Grassroots, community purpose, but it didn't have a big impact because worker co-ops aren't very important."[50] But board minutes from the period tell a different story. At the November 1985 board meeting, they questioned Axworthy directly on the validity of publishing the worker co-operatives magazine. How, they asked, was that a justified budget line? The story also illuminates a central thread within the larger co-operative community: There is a difference between studying co-operatives from a practical or critical standpoint and taking an active role within a larger ideological movement that centres co-operative research through an ethical perspective. Former CSC student Mitch Diamantopoulos would categorize the difference as "walking the co-op walk instead of just talking the talk."[51]

Axworthy felt strongly, at the time and later, that it was important to stand firm on the issue of research priorities. "We [the board and Axworthy] had a dispute about the academic priorities of the Centre and who was to set them. I have always been someone who, when I decided something was right, I wouldn't back down. The co-op leaders weren't used to that. We felt that the academic priority should be set by the Centre, not the funders. These matters continue about independence and academic freedom, and this matters more now than then."[52] Other researchers at the CSC at the time also remember Axworthy facing down the board over academic autonomy, even to the point of threatening to resign.[53]

Yet the board, particularly the co-operative sector members of the board, were not as curmudgeonly as Axworthy remembered. At a particularly lengthy meeting in April 1986, there was a robust discussion around the role of the board as a "think tank" for the Centre to help identify research priorities, as well as support research projects. The impetus for the discussion was a questionnaire designed by Centre associate David Laycock and sent to Saskatchewan Wheat Pool members.

[50] Interview with Chris Axworthy, 29 November 2017.
[51] Interview with Mitch Diamantopoulos, 19 January 2018.
[52] Interview with Chris Axworthy, 29 November 2017.
[53] Interview with David Laycock, 8 December 2017.

The Centre was dismayed by the lack of response to the questionnaire, while the SWP was dismayed by several of the questions on the survey. Vern Leland of Federated warned that the Centre was at risk if it was perceived as "too political in its research." But others demurred. J.A. Salomons from the Co-operative College, stated: "Care should be taken to ensure that the Centre not be turned into a service centre for the co-operative sector." L. Hillier of the sector added, "The co-op sector should learn from research, be it positive or negative." This point about the Centre being a source of constructive criticism for co-ops was welcome; Axworthy stated categorically that the CSC "cannot follow co-op sector views at all times; views must be based on analysis and data."[54] In the end, the two sides agreed to pass surveys and questionnaires through the board before sending them out. Those that met approval would receive internal support from the co-operative, and the board offered several concrete ideas for research projects to help set the Centre's research program. The discussion defined the board's role in research as intermediaries and allies for the researchers, but also as a sounding board and place of sober second thought.

The timing of the discussion around autonomy and guidance is critical, as Axworthy had just been elected to the board of Saskatoon Co-op, a local consumer co-operative. At the time, Saskatoon Co-op was in dire financial trouble and had experienced a number of rancorous union negotiations, strikes, and meetings. Because of the financial crisis, the second-tier co-operative, Federated Co-operatives Limited, became involved. This left Axworthy in an awkward position. As director of the Centre, he was, in a sense, an employee of FCL, but as a director of Saskatoon Co-operative, it was part of his role to be critical and to push back on some of FCL's "heavy handed" interventions.[55] At that same April 1986 meeting, board members made it clear that they were unhappy about Axworthy's foray into local co-operative politics.[56] In a way, CSC faculty and staff

[54] All quotations this paragraph from Centre for the Study of Co-operatives Fonds, board minutes, April 1986.
[55] Interview with Chris Axworthy, 29 November 2017.
[56] CSC board meeting minutes, April 1986.

were also government employees, since the province contributed 40 percent of the Centre's original funding. Government employees, Axworthy was rebuked, were expected not to run for politically charged positions. In the end, FCL was instrumental in putting Saskatoon Co-op back on track, but the push-pull of negotiations put Chris Axworthy, and by extension, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, in a precarious position with its main funders.

Having those early discussions, even showdowns, with the board of directors around research autonomy, research priorities, and direction was a critical aspect of setting the Centre firmly within its role as part of the larger university institution, and also reinforcing the separation between funding and research outcomes. For a centre funded primarily from outside the university, this separation was of vital importance, for two reasons. First, the area of academic co-operative studies had not yet coalesced, in Canada. It required time and focused energy to be recognized and viewed as rigorous and reliable, through steady publication of peer-reviewed work. There could be no hint that the work was in any way shaped or directed by expected outcomes set by the co-operative sector. It was a difference in timelines; co-operative funders may have expected more immediate returns on their dollars via practical research results, but the Centre was aiming for the long game, to develop its academic *bona fides,* which would, of course, ultimately be a major service to the sector. Second, separation allowed the Centre to research co-operative issues beyond the interests of large consumer, producer, or credit co-operatives. The Centre understood it played a leadership role in co-operative studies, with its critical mass of researchers in a cohort, working together. With that base, as well as adept administrative backing, the Centre could spread its research, writing, and teaching interests broadly and take on larger contracts or research projects that required administrative support. As the Centre coalesced, it grew in strength, knowledge, and influence.

The risk in being autonomous is working out how to remain relevant to and supportive of research topics of interest to the funders. It's a balancing act and, for the CSC, rested on

multiple (and sometimes moving) high wires. While the CSC asked the board to bring forward ideas, there was the distinct possibility that they wouldn't be rigorous or focused enough to pursue, or that they would be from the individual on the board but not necessarily from the larger co-operative organization. From the government's perspective, the Centre had the ability to do three kinds of research: theoretical, historical, and "change directed." In a 1987 letter delivered just as the provincial government had fulfilled its financial contractual obligations, Walter Safinuk, then executive director of Co-operative Development (now demoted from its own ministry and moved to the Department of Tourism and Small Business for the Province of Saskatchewan), chided Chris Axworthy on these research areas. Theoretical work, Safinuk declared, was of interest to other co-operative researchers but had little practical use "on the ground." Historical research on co-ops helped give a large picture of co-operative history, and so had some limited use — but not much. The real benefit, for the government, would have been research into the concept of change, particularly innovative social and economic solutions to problems, using co-operative ideas — but this was "the most limited area of research undertaken by the Centre." His letter was a clear signal of disharmony and separation between academic interest and practical usefulness, which would lead the provincial government to withdraw, for a time, from the Centre.[57]

It quickly became a practice to have faculty come to the board meetings to discuss their work-in-progress. This gave the board a first-hand look at ongoing research, a chance to assess strategies and directions, and an opportunity to make meaningful relationships beyond the director. Faculty and research staff were also invited to spend time with funders. Murray Fulton worked closely with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and met local representatives; Brett Fairbairn focused his efforts on FCL; and Lou Hammond Ketilson did research with

[57] Leo Kristjanson Fonds, RG 001 s6 Box 12.I.22.22, General 1987, letter from Walter Safinuk to Chris Axworthy, 23 April 1987. University of Saskatchewan Archives.

health care co-operatives.[58] Bill Turner of Credit Union Central, who replaced Norm Bromberger on the board, noted:

> We saw [the Centre] as a strategic resource. In fact, we would want someone from the CSC to challenge us; sometimes you need to be shaken out of your comfortable chair or your comfortable spot.… There was a lot of respect for the expertise and the leading edge thinking that would come from the staff at the Centre. We could use that when we did our strategic board planning; a CSC member would be a presenter on a current issue facing co-ops. It was viewed in my opinion as a strategic resource for the broader sector. Insight, absolutely.[59]

Direct discussions with the funders, whether at presentations to their boards or at large annual meetings, became common, yet it remained important for the faculty to establish and maintain personal relationships with the board members and funders.

While Chris Axworthy's position *vis-à-vis* Saskatoon Co-op and Federated Co-operatives caused a short-lived storm, Murray Fulton and Brett Fairbairn would later come head-to-head with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The story continues to resonate for the Centre as an example of *why* academic autonomy was so necessary. During the 1990s, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool began to face a financial crisis. The Pool wanted — and needed — a better cash flow, which related directly to its co-operative business form. A corporation could simply issue a share purchase, raising capital through the market. Few co-operatives, and fewer still in Canada, have that option. In 1994, SWP proposed a financial restructuring that included splitting shares into Class A voting shares and Class B nonvoting shares. This restructuring meant that the co-operative could be publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange to raise capital, a move that began in 1996.

The choice wasn't simple and generated heated discussions and debate. Murray Fulton and Brett Fairbairn wrote two

[58] Board minutes, November 1985.
[59] Interview with Bill Turner, 15 January 2018.

opinion pieces published in the regional farm newspaper, *The Western Producer,* in June of 1994*.* These pieces reminded both the SWP and its members that such financial restructuring ran the real risk of changing basic co-operative ownership principles, such as separating owners and users of the business, ending competitive pricing and service at cost, and basing equity returns on shares instead of use of the co-operative. The change would also privilege existing co-op members over past and future members: they, and they alone, would benefit financially from the conversion. Such benefits ran contrary to co-operative business practices. There was a real danger, Fulton and Fairbairn noted, in this change: The SWP would cease to be a co-operative. Brett Fairbairn later recalled: "We tried to phrase the articles diplomatically, but we came out publicly against one of our sponsors. It was a test, an exercise in academic autonomy."[60] Yet, there were no direct repercussions for the Centre — no recorded censure from the SWP via the board in the minutes, no change to their financial support. The SWP's financial restructuring led to a period of expansion, but over time, as Fairbairn and Fulton predicted, the SWP was less and less "co-operative" in both structure and thought. The SWP continued to be a sponsor for two more operating agreements, but declined to continue in 2004. It had, in effect, ceased to be a co-operative.[61]

Teaching Priorities

Teaching was a major focus for Centre builders during the CSC's origin and consolidation phases. The original University–Co-operative Task Force and board wanted co-operatives, including co-operative history, thought, legal parameters, policies, and co-operative business structure, to be taught at the university level. Only through teaching about co-operatives would students learn, and eventually become both co-op leaders and trained co-operative employees. Once the CSC was in

[60] Interview with Brett Fairbairn, 23 November 2017.
[61] After a rancorous public takeover of Agricore United, another major grain company, the company restructured to become Viterra in 2007.

operation and had a faculty component, education initiatives boiled down to convincing university departments to offer classes about co-operatives, or to at least allow each faculty member to teach courses that included co-operative content. Convincing departments and colleges of the importance of co-operatives in the curriculum was never an easy task, and never completely satisfactory from the point of view of the board members from the co-op sector. Yet, it was suggested that perhaps misunderstandings of the way academia worked was their own fault. Vern Leland, president of Federated Co-operatives Limited from 1978 to 1996, admitted that "most of us were not really that knowledgeable about the university. Our sole purpose was just to get that education into the university curriculum and system. We relied totally on Leo Kristjanson and the deans of the various colleges."[62] The co-op sector really pressed the curriculum issue, hoping to see new and expanded programs at the university level providing education about co-operatives. At the same April 1986 board meeting where Chris Axworthy and the board discussed research priorities, one of the co-operative directors, J. Derbowka, categorically commented that research should have one focus — educational purposes, particularly for course development, and more broadly for larger co-operative education purposes.[63] What that meant, though, was anyone's guess.

But the university had its own standards and priorities for course development and curriculum. Unlike elementary and secondary school curriculum, which is set by the provinces in Canada, university curriculum for each course is set by the professor. On the surface, it might seem easy for each faculty member to start teaching about co-ops. But, each new class must be approved by the department before it can be taught. While Leo Kristjanson and others across campus could *continue* to teach existing co-operative courses,[64] any *new* courses would be scrutinized and debated at the department level. Some CSC professors had an easier time getting department

[62] Interview with Vern Leland, 20 January 2018.
[63] Board minutes, April 1986.
[64] Murray Fulton, for example, took over teaching some of Leo Kristjanson's courses in economics that were already in the university calendar.

approval than others. Brett Fairbairn remembered an uphill battle to have his second-year course on worldwide co-operative history approved, in part because he wanted to ensure that students were not required to take a first-year history class as a prerequisite. It was important, to honour the CSC contract with funders, that the class be open to anyone across campus. Eventually, the history department capitulated.[65]

Once a class is approved as "on the books" or in the university calendar, any professor trained in that discipline with a working knowledge of the subject matter (or willingness to learn) could teach it. Broad-scale first- or second-year courses, which would draw the most students, were preferable over smaller third- or fourth-year seminars. However, departments usually reserved those large courses for comprehensive introductory topics, like world history or Canada's legal system or introductory economics, not a specific look at co-operative issues. By April of 1986, Axworthy was writing extensive memos to the board, outlining roadblocks to course development, and, in particular, how hard they had worked, with little success. There was specific frustration over the failure to convince colleges that did *not* have faculty representation at the Centre to develop co-operative courses, or even to add co-op content to existing courses. One option to solve the impasse was for the Centre to take on a larger role in creating courses, even to hiring specialists to develop and then teach them. This move would use resources, but would remove the burden from faculty members bound by their own college and department restrictions. However, the university offered no specific mechanism for centres or schools separate from established departments to create or offer their own curriculum. They simply weren't allowed to create and teach co-operative courses for credit through the Centre; it could only be done through colleges and departments. The Centre was stuck.

Over the years, faculty continued to try and teach first- and second-year undergraduate courses, where and when possible. These classes, it was thought, would reach the broadest

[65] Interview with Brett Fairbairn, 23 November 2017.

number of students, the majority of whom would not be specializing in co-operative studies, but would leave university with at least an introduction to co-operative ownership concepts. The co-op sector leaders on the board of directors favoured this approach and looked for success. At times, it came down to a question of numbers: How many classes are you teaching with co-operative content? How many students are taking these classes? Annual reports focused heavily on describing courses, counting students, and expanding the concept of "undergraduate learning" to include seminars, lectures, and presentations beyond specific courses. Progress on developing undergraduate classes was slow and uneven throughout the Centre's existence.

As early as 1986, the CSC noted that it was easier to develop graduate-level courses, and find willing college and department hosts for them, than it was to create large-scale undergraduate classes.[66] By 1989, the first CSC *Annual Report* noted only six courses, one of which was still in development, about co-operatives: two in ag economics, two in history, and one in law, with the "in-development" course in management. It wasn't an auspicious beginning. By 1997, though, faculty were more set in their departments, with growing reputations and the ability to insert co-operative content into their courses. The 1997 *Annual Report* lists fourteen classes with co-operative content or specifically about co-operatives: one in agriculture, four in agricultural economics, one each in commerce and management, one in economics, three in history, and three in sociology. Six of the fourteen classes, though, were advanced seminars for honours or graduate students.

The downside, of course, is that graduate classes attracted far fewer students. The upside is that graduate students would often come to the Centre to work on projects, as part of their course or thesis work, or as independent researchers, and so would advance co-operative knowledge and publications in those directions. Once the Centre started issuing annual reports in 1989, there was always a section that discussed teach-

[66] Memo from Chris Axworthy to CSC board, "Options for the development of courses on co-operatives," 9 April 1986. CSC board files.

ing, courses, and students. The section tended to emphasize undergraduate course offerings, focusing on classes offered by the core faculty. Board minutes reflect the co-op sector's continued expectation of teaching as a central, even primary, role for Centre faculty. Murray Fulton later commented:

The co-op sector was interested in teaching; they thought that teaching co-ops was the answer to the problem of people not knowing co-ops. That fixation on education showed up all over the place. You go to meetings and always there was someone who would say, we need to get education into the curriculum, from primary school to university, and that's the problem.[67]

Despite many students pointing to their experiences with CSC faculty as a definitive part of their future career working with co-operatives, the link between undergraduate teaching and co-op knowledge in the larger community was never clear. Fulton commented, "For a variety of reasons, to be honest, the faculty never quite believed that getting more students to learn about co-ops was the panacea, the magic bullet."[68]

But graduate student education, a far better fit for both the teaching and research expertise of the Centre, was somewhat hit-and-miss, always at the ebb and flow of research dollars and faculty time. The University of Saskatchewan, with strong leadership from Murray Fulton, developed an Interdisciplinary Studies program after the turn of the millennium. This move opened up graduate student learning and became the primary method by which the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives could access and support graduate education. Graduate students could take their degree via Interdisciplinary Studies instead of a traditional department or college. Research centres such as CSC could develop courses that satisfied the requirements. The Centre quickly developed several co-op classes within this mechanism and ushered through both individual and small cohorts of graduate students. At the same time, the CSC became a highly successful grant recipient, earning large

[67] Interview with Murray Fulton, 12 December 2017.
[68] Ibid.

research contracts that operated across several years with money designed for graduate students. During those grant periods, graduate student enrolment soared.

Over the course of the CSC's existence, Fulton argues, university teaching has changed:

Instead of the undergrad degree being the thing that everyone needs, now it's a graduate degree. Academic inflation: You need a master's degree now to get what an undergrad degree used to be. Where the CSC has gone, due to its research and outreach mission, is to move to graduate education and get students involved in co-ops in a way beyond what they can pick up in a class. A real deep knowledge of how the co-op model works. Now we see the fruits of that. The people who did co-ops for their master's and PhDs occupying critical jobs in industry and government. We're only going to see more of that and we need to do more of that.[69]

But the University of Saskatchewan formally moved away from its Interdisciplinary Studies graduate program back to a focus on undergraduate students, so the Centre once again became a misfit, its teaching and research interests better suited to the graduate level than the undergraduate. To compensate, the Centre cast around for a fit that would give it good access to graduate students. In 2014, it became formally affiliated with the new Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.

[69] Ibid.

Interdisciplinarity[70]

In the 1980s, as the Centre took shape, the concept of interdisciplinary work wasn't well understood — and, in some cases, caused snorts of derision and even outright revulsion and contempt. Interdisciplinarity grew as a concept during the 1950s,[71] just as Leo Kristjanson arrived at the University of Saskatchewan to work with the Centre for Community Studies. Yet despite these interdisciplinary roots at the university, professors who came to join the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives during the 1980s faced "great suspicion": Was a position within an interdisciplinary centre a real academic job? Was the Centre actually a good home for a true academic? Would connection to the Centre hinder the academic path? Use of the word "interdisciplinary" stagnated, even fell off, during the 1980s.[72] The concept was "strange and off-putting" for many University of Saskatchewan faculty — a problem which, no doubt, contributed to its uneven acceptance at the university.[73]

Leo Kristjanson might have envisioned that interdisciplinary scholarship, pulling from different departments is, in fact, *multidisciplinary,* rather than interdisciplinary. Multidisciplinary simply means making sure that the issue at hand is being studied from multiple viewpoints, such as economics, law, or business. The Centre has produced many such publications, where each faculty member and other invitees contributed chapters, each researched and written from individual disciplinary perspectives. Interestingly, even while each chapter

[70] For a more in-depth look at how interdisciplinarity was developed at the CSC, see Merle Massie, "A (Limited) Study in Interdisciplinarity: Origins of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan," paper presented at "Co-operative Strength in Diversity: Voices, Governance, and Engagement," the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation, 30 May–1 June 2018, Regina. That paper delves in more detail into the development of the concept, its different acceptance by university and co-operative board members, and its connections to co-operative studies.
[71] See Google Books Ngram Viewer for *interdisciplinary*. https://books.google.com/ngrams
[72] Ibid.
[73] Interview with Brett Fairbairn, 23 November 2017.

was produced by different authors, there was a large measure of sharing during the process. Chris Axworthy, in a director's report from 1987, stated:

The process of writing the book has shown the merits of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of co-operatives. Our frequent meetings, in which each chapter is discussed by everyone involved, has served to point out the links between the various chapters of the book and the disciplines represented in the preparation of the book. Our lively debates have given rise to suggestions for a wide array of joint, interdisciplinary projects to be attacked in the future. As has been indicated, each member of the staff has learned a good deal about their colleagues' disciplines as a result of the close working relationship which has been required on the book.[74]

Despite Axworthy's description, later interviewees recounted that the process of multidisciplinary book production was, at times, "a painful experience." Some disciplines are vocal, territorial, and not overly kind to other ways of doing research. Some faculty experienced plenty of critique, but less constructive criticism.[75] It's a disciplinary strategy to narrow your scope, to become adept at a particular technique, to hone a focus or test a theory, to become a leader in a particular field. Such a technique can sometimes be inimical to working with others.

The act of *being interdisciplinary* is much more complex than simply throwing people trained in different disciplines at a problem. There is a level of integration, of deliberately choosing to look at something with more than one lens *at the same time.* Yet the practice of interdisciplinarity was fairly new, and at the time, there were few descriptions of actually how to undertake it. Chris Axworthy noted that interdisciplinary work was "not all that common at the time. We did a lot of that, which was in a sense groundbreaking. Useful to do." But, he admitted, it was messy, and it did take work.

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[74] Chris Axworthy, "Director's Report," November 1987. Leo Kristjanson, President's Fonds, University of Saskatchewan Archives.
[75] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

Murray Fulton described the practical way faculty and researchers invested time in creating an interdisciplinary focus for the Centre. They started by explaining their disciplinary views. Each wrote overviews on how they would approach a topic, what they would do, and what tools they would use. These documents formed the basis for formal and informal deep discussion, debate, and intellectual arguments about the models and their underlying assumptions.

We wanted to be formal about this, because we were bumping heads as we were having conversations about our research. We needed to understand the depth of our assumptions. That was an exciting time intellectually; we were all learning a tremendous amount. We had to figure out how we could coexist and operate together with other disciplinary perspectives."[76]

It wasn't enough to draw from different disciplinary backgrounds, throw them together, and expect interdisciplinary work. The act of being, or becoming, interdisciplinary required the faculty and staff at the Centre to focus on it, debate and understand it. As Lou Hammond Ketilson described, "We started doing seminars for each other, so we could help others to see what each discipline brought to the table. That was a good exercise. That is what built a sense of community within the centre."[77]

Building a sense of community through interdisciplinary work took off at the CSC in part because so many of the faculty were *from* Saskatchewan. David Laycock, a research associate and productive staff member at the CSC, noted during his interview that the "CSC really was far more than the sum of its parts because of the interdisciplinary bonus." The act of working together to build something meant, perhaps, a little bit more for those faculty members from the province. "I had in a sense a cultural orientation to and fondness for Saskatchewan," Laycock noted, "but I wasn't a Saskatchewan person the way Lou, Brett, and Murray all were. That helped a lot. They

[76] Interview with Murray Fulton, 12 December 2017.
[77] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

saw the value of interdisciplinary work partly through the lens of wanting the CSC to succeed, and that it had value independently of their employment." Sometimes, Laycock noted, interdisciplinary work is "just a catchphrase." But in the case of the CSC, it became foundational, and "led to its functioning in a meaningful way in the long term," a place that re-mapped the landscape of co-operative studies.[78]

Almost immediately, they could see the difference. In 1990, the group published a classic multidisciplinary study, with each member contributing a chapter drawn from their own discipline. It was well received, but less coherent than purely disciplinary work, as multidisciplinary volumes usually are. But soon after, a call came out from the Canadian Co-operative Association to do a study on the role of co-ops in Canada. Fresh from months of concerted effort to understand each others' disciplinary strengths and assumptions — the work of being interdisciplinary — the Centre bid on the contract, but it was awarded to a private research firm. "To put it bluntly," Murray Fulton noted, "we were pissed off."[79] Centre faculty and staff quickly pulled together what was to become "the little green book," *Co-operatives and Community Development: Economics in Social Perspective.* The process was radically different from the previous group publication effort. Every week or two, the combined expertise of faculty and staff (led by communications officer June Bold and Brett Fairbairn) met to discuss pieces of the manuscript. Revisions, additions, and conversation swirled, then Bold and Fairbairn would edit. Piece by piece, the book emerged as a collaborative, interdisciplinary product over the course of about six months. It wasn't a case of individual silos of experience, mashed together in the introduction and conclusion. This time, each chapter received the attention of every discipline and CSC member, *including* staff. Its authors are a who's who of the CSC at the time: Brett Fairbairn, June Bold, Murray Fulton, Lou Hammond Ketilson, and Daniel Ish. June Bold, the CSC communications officer, was an active contributor and listed as second author.

[78] Interview with David Laycock, 8 December 2017.
[79] Interview with Murray Fulton, 12 December 2017.

Published by the Centre in 1991, the book was a runaway bestseller, used in classrooms worldwide. It touched a nerve and drove much of the discussion around the role of co-ops at the community level. It was used in classrooms, in communities, and in community economic development, as a resource and strategy support. It was also timely: the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) was revising its list of core co-operative principles to add "Concern for Community." The green book, although not responsible for the addition, was a factor in the discussion. Interviewees remembered this book as a definitive event for the CSC, not so much for its success, but for its deliberate interdisciplinarity. It showed the way the Centre had moved from its multidisciplinary origins to a new interdisciplinarity that showcased the strength of each member, to create something new and unique.

While the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives provided a place where interdisciplinarity was valued, faculty members were bound by their home departments, so disciplinary publications remained important. The interdisciplinary nature of some Centre publications, with multiple authors, caused consternation: Evaluators "can't tell what percentage of the work is yours," Hammond Ketilson noted bluntly. For some, she strongly suggested, the interdisciplinary publishing path, so valued by the co-operative and community collaborators, caused individual hardship for some of the faculty, who never achieved full professorship or chose to leave the University of Saskatchewan to seek opportunities elsewhere. But the concept of interdisciplinarity within the CSC has again shown its merit. A number of recent publications showcase an interdisciplinary focus and reach for new ways to speak about, and to, co-operatives. Still, "It takes work and effort to value what interdisciplinarity means."[80]

Because the CSC had developed internal publishing capability via the Occasional Papers Series as well as books and other publications, much of the interdisciplinary co-operative work was self-published. From an academic perspective, these

[80] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

publications held less merit than those published via peer-reviewed journals. From the co-operative perspective, they were the primary output of the CSC scholars. They were accessible to read, could be purchased through the Centre, and dealt specifically with co-operative issues. Some were conference proceedings or bibliographies; some were how-to books or membership training; many were histories of co-operatives or co-op movements; while others were discussion papers or reflections to guide policy decisions or provide CSC commentary on community or public issues.

Time is a factor in the process of interdisciplinarity. Over the years, CSC faculty have picked up perspectives, tools, and viewpoints that have broadened each of their research capabilities. Fulton recalled, "All of us at the Centre went on the same journey and became more interdisciplinary, more willing to accept and be fascinated by these other perspectives, to understand perspectives and to tell stories." From this point of view, interdisciplinarity is also the product of the journey, something that remains after the work is complete.[81] But at its core, interdisciplinary studies are a group endeavour, produced in the spaces between. Interdisciplinary implies breadth, carries depth, is borne of real work by a diverse group, is mobilized to solve complex problems, values diversity, listens with humility, and builds a legacy of expanded knowledge over time. Excellence will not come from even a dedicated scholar with interdisciplinary experience working alone; it is in the struggle to work together that scholars produce interdisciplinary co-operative studies.

Core Funding

The original funding agreement saw CSC funding split essentially sixty/forty between the co-operative sector and the provincial government, with small amounts from the Co-operative College of Canada and the in-kind support of the University of Saskatchewan via office space, technology, logis-

[81] Interview with Murray Fulton, 12 December 2017.

tics, accounting, and other support services. The financial obligations of that agreement, which had been signed in 1982, ended in 1987. High interest rates in the 1980s were a financial boon; the University of Saskatchewan, on behalf of the CSC, was able to generate an interest windfall. Hiring Chris Axworthy in 1984 as the first director led to an amendment of the original agreement, to adjust for the lag time between the initial signing and the actual opening of the Centre. Yearly funding increases became tied to inflation based on the Saskatchewan Consumer Price Index plus one percent, which allowed for salary raises and benefit increases. Yet, the financial obligations finished 30 June 1987 while the contract would expire 6 June 1989 — five years after the opening of the Centre. The signatories expected that the capital and accrued interest deposited before the CSC opened would carry them through the final two years of the contract.

Negotiations surrounding the first contract renewal occurred during a period of upheaval for the CSC. First and foremost: There was no executive director. In 1988, Chris Axworthy left the Centre to pursue a political life, having won the New Democratic Party candidateship for the federal electoral riding of Saskatoon–Clarks Crossing. When he made the decision to run for office, Axworthy visited each of the board members, concentrating in particular on the co-operative sector and the president. The general response: What kind of trouble are you getting the Centre into now? There appeared to be a clear disconnect, particularly in the minds of the funders and board members, between democratic and co-operative ideals, and supporting such ideals on the ground. A direct marriage between co-op ideals and politics, or showcasing overt political affiliations, was not welcome. Axworthy not only won the nomination, but also the riding, ushering him straight from the directorship of the Centre into national political life.

His departure coincided with renewal negotiations, which, absent an executive director, became the responsibility of the

board.[82] Before he left, Axworthy and the Centre staff, knowing that contract renewal was imminent, had provided guidelines and reports specifically geared towards financial longevity. By 1987, the provincial government had fulfilled its financial contract and opted out of any further support for the Centre, including no longer sending a provincial government representative to the board meetings. This decision was, at least in part, financial; Saskatchewan's Conservative Government was in dire financial difficulty. Combined with the antipathy between conservatism and the Centre's other co-operative funders, the withdrawal was not unexpected.

Discussions ensued at the board table in December 1987. Who, they wondered, should be at the funding table? This was no small question, as it related directly to the mandate and scope of the CSC. Was it meant to concentrate geographically on Saskatchewan (if so, funders should come from within the province), or should its scope — and by extension, possible funders — be broadened? Co-operative commitment to the CSC remained steady, and their funding was not expected to change substantially. The board decided to retain its provincial focus, approach other provincially based large co-operatives for financial support, and pursue funding negotiations "at the highest levels" with the provincial and federal governments. FCL's Vern Leland undertook a persuasion campaign directed at other co-operative entities, including both existing and potential future funders: Credit Union Central, Co-operative Trust; Dairy Producers Co-operative; The Co-operators; Co-operative Hail Insurance; and CUMIS. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool indicated its continued commitment. The university, via the President's Office and the CSC, created a proposal for a combined provincial-federal funding arrangement, going

[82] During interviews with long-term faculty, none remembered the chaos of the 1989–90 contract renewal negotiations. Only Dan Ish as incoming interim director knew about it.

forward,[83] but despite numerous meetings and correspondence, the Centre never managed to entice federal funding.

While the removal of substantial provincial funding was disconcerting, the University of Saskatchewan, pleased at the Centre's academic output, was poised to intervene. At the college and department levels, support came in for individuals. Dan Ish from the College of Law replaced Chris Axworthy as director of the Centre. The law college had always been a strong proponent of the Centre, serving as its virtual home base and offering clerical support and interim directorship during its establishment phase. Axworthy's dual appointment had been with law and the CSC; Dan Ish's appointment continued that relationship. To ease the financial crisis generated by the provincial government's withdrawal, the College of Law released Dan Ish to become the director but retained his salary line. Agricultural Economics picked up Murray Fulton's salary, and Commerce began the process of taking over Lou Hammond Ketilson's. These measures created a significant shift for the Centre's financial structuring and started a trend that would continue. Faculty salaries, one of the largest components of the CSC's annual budget, became more and more a university responsibility. The funding line coming from the co-operative and government sectors was, in practical terms, used to hire staff, whether into full-time positions or short-term contracts.

Leo Kristjanson, still at the helm of both the CSC board and the University of Saskatchewan, also committed the university to pick up any shortfall generated by CSC operations during the financial black hole of contract renewal negotiations and salary line shifts between 1987 and 1990. This commitment, given at the board table, was soon tested. In the spring of 1988, the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association went on strike for the first time in university history. Part of the reason for the strike was the growing disconnect between faculty and administration over decision-making power at the university — and Leo Kristjanson owned some of that blame. Faculty work on

[83] The federal proportion was targeted from Western Diversification funds. See "Government of Saskatchewan Centre Funding 94–99" file folder, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives files.

Council committees, setting priorities and direction, could be (and occasionally was) unilaterally ignored. Peter Millard, a strike leader in the negotiations, spoke of "having worked and worked on a committee and then you discover that the president … has made a decision without bothering to tell you, and which has pre-empted that work."[84] Creating the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives behind the back of University Council in the first place had irritated many faculty members. Getting agreement from the board of governors to continue financing it rankled even further. Kristjanson's continued commitment to the Centre, including this new significant financial obligation in the wake of the provincial government's withdrawal, set teeth on edge across campus.

Nonetheless, Kristjanson asked the board of governors directly for bridge funding; an agreement with co-operatives, he assured them, was in the process. He was backed by co-op sector board members prepared to face down the university governors. Failure to support the CSC would result in several of the large co-operatives re-evaluating their overall relationship and commitment to other university undertakings, including capital projects. Gathering ammunition, the co-ops tabulated both their financial and in-kind contributions to the University of Saskatchewan. The threat was real. The university had expansion plans that included a new agriculture building, and the large co-ops had committed support. The co-ops expected *quid pro quo*.[85] The university, via the board of governors, approved interim funding until the new agreement was in place. The new agreement was a four-year (1990–94) half-and-half split between the university and the co-op sector. Co-operative funders included the three main original signatories (SWP, FCL, and CUC, minus the Co-operative College of Canada, which had folded into the Canadian Co-operative Association) and added three new ones: The Co-operators, CUMIS, and Co-operative Trust. The provincial government was conspicuously absent. These co-op funding partners would continue through two

[84] "An Interview with Peter Millard," *Vox* 12 (March 1993).
[85] December 1989 Centre board meeting minutes.

more contracts until the demise of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and its withdrawal from the co-operative sector in 2004.

While the co-op sector, through the task force and the board, took the lead in negotiating Centre financing for the first two agreements (1982 and 1990), funding leadership moved inexorably to the Centre in subsequent years. As noted above, the College of Law's Dan Ish took over as director of the Centre in 1989, first on a one-year contract, then a five-year position. With the backing of the Canadian Co-operative Association Region Council led by Norm Bromberger, as well as board support, most notably from Federated Co-operatives, Ish reopened dialogue with the provincial government. They used every measure at their political hand, especially face-to-face meetings and phone calls, supplemented by letters, proposals, and negotiations. It took the full four years of the contract to hammer out an agreement. Action items included convening meetings, conducting internal CSC discussions on what government funding could do, and identifying the key government players to convince. Centre scholars adamantly defended the need for academic autonomy, expressed concern over being seen as or becoming a consulting firm for government, and reinforced the need for freedom to use the research for academic publications, not just projects or reports to be tabled or shelved.[86]

A direct conversation between Hartley Furtan and Dan Ish revealed much about the government's perspective on the CSC. Furtan, a member of the Saskatchewan government's Co-ops Directorate, had been a faculty member in agriculture, and in that capacity sat on the Centre's board in the 1980s. By 1993, he was the deputy minister for agriculture for the province. His perspective, revealed in a phone call that Dan Ish later transcribed to a file memorandum, showed that the government viewed the Centre as a distinctly academic department. Furtan pointed out that the Centre wasn't particularly useful to the government because it lacked hands-on co-op developers with practical experience. It wasn't in the field at the community

[86] File, "Government of Saskatchewan. Centre funding 94–99," Centre for the Study of Co-operatives files.

level, working to build co-ops. Without this expertise, all the Centre had to offer was theoretical, which was beyond the bounds of government interest.[87]

In response to Ish's calls for renewed provincial funding for the Centre, the Co-operatives Directorate set up a working group with representatives from the university and the CSC, the co-op sector, and the government. Their discussions and subsequent report outlined three funding options:

1. tripartite equal core funding from the university, co-ops, and the government
2. core funding from the university and co-op sector, with *matching* funding geared specifically towards research and consulting for the government
3. core funding from the university and the co-ops, with a non-defined level of government support for contracted research

It was critical that the government agree in principle to work with the co-operative funders and the university to hammer out an arrangement; otherwise, co-op board members stated, they would face opposition within their own organizations. Without government support, co-op funding was at risk. The Centre had a specific connector role to play, as a place to bring co-operatives, university, and government together to work and interact. But directed research, such as consulting, was at the time viewed as working against university and CSC autonomy and could, potentially, interfere with independence. Dan Ish stood firm. If the government committed to core funding — without specific government-related objectives — it could have a seat at the board table with other funders and have a say in research direction. Without funding, the government could not sit on the board. Other, or additional research, would fall outside the operating agreement. In the face of fiscal restraint on all sides, the Government of Saskatchewan re-entered as a funder, offering core funding of $50,000 per year

[87] File, "Government of Saskatchewan. Centre funding 94–99," Centre for the Study of Co-operatives files.

and signing the new five-year agreement.[88] A public announcement, including a signing, cemented the arrangement.[89] The CSC once more became the centre of a three-way conduit for the provincial government, the University of Saskatchewan, and the co-operative sector. It would stay that way until 2014.

The behind-the-scenes negotiations around the government's new commitment to the CSC in 1994 reveal the brittle character of the Centre's overall health and stability. Funding was not a given. It was a conversation to be negotiated, trust earned, and results proven every five years. As the CSC evolved, board notes reveal a continued awareness of the precarity of funding, a need to examine the funding model, and an ongoing call to invite new funders into the fold. Approaching other large co-operatives in western Canada — and potentially across Canada and even elsewhere — required effort, strategy, and connection. In addition, the co-operative sector, through its negotiations with the University of Saskatchewan, brought demands and expectations. Those demands would have merit, and teeth, only in relation to co-op financial power *and* to the willingness of the co-operatives to use that power as a tool to force the university to meet them halfway in supporting the Centre. Senior co-op leaders made a significant and special effort to meet with and create relationships with the new president, George Ivany, following Leo Kristjanson's retirement. Although Centre faculty could certainly contribute to forging these relationships, it wasn't enough; only the funders, through their leaders, could exert sufficient influence to ensure university support for the CSC. It's not the negotiation skills of the executive director, but the power and dedication of the co-operatives at the funding table that matter.

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[88] This agreement allowed the government to renegotiate for the final two years; it increased funding to $75,000 per year.

[89] In 1993–94, the Centre partner contributions were: University of Saskatchewan, 50% ($279,000); Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, 16.5% ($93,000); Credit Union Central, 16.5% ($93,000); Federated Co-operatives Limited, 8.5% ($46,500); with the rest split equally among The Co-operators, CUMIS, and Co-op Trust at 2.8% each ($15,500 each). In 1997, Murray Fulton, who succeeded Dan Ish as director, renegotiated the government contribution up to $75,000 per year, which continued until 2014, when the government once again withdrew.

The demise of the Wheat Pool as a co-operative led to another internal reorganization at the CSC. At that time, Brett Fairbairn negotiated to move his salary line from the Centre to the College of Arts and Science, easing financial strain on the CSC. It was the final faculty salary to move. Even so, during the period of the Wheat Pool's withdrawal, there was real fear that the Centre would cease to exist.[90] The demise of the Wheat Pool induced other co-op funders to increase their contributions to the CSC, while government support remained the same. The Centre continued with less internal funding available for research projects or other activities. Fortuitously, the withdrawal of the Wheat Pool occurred at the kickoff of one of the largest externally funded research projects ever to come to the University of Saskatchewan, via the Centre, a point to which we will return later. So while core CSC funding was diminished, it was offset by external funding that helped smooth the transition and mitigate the damage.

Contract negotiations in 2009 were unremarkable, but 2014 saw another major change. The provincial government, with a more conservative party at the helm, cut its yearly contribution and withdrew from the CSC.[91] While this cut was in part offset by a new international funder, CHS Inc. of the United States, the change was important. It was a recognition that provincial politics still mattered, and provincial government funding reflected the will of the party in power. The 2014 agreement also signalled complexity at the co-op sector level: Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan, which had been an original signatory and funder since 1982, agreed to fund the CSC for only three years, not five, with an option to renew for the final two years. In 2017, Credit Union Central ended its funding relationship with the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives. The 2019 renewal cycle will have an almost completely new landscape, with only Federated Co-operatives Limited remaining of the original signatories, along with the University of Saskatchewan.

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[90] Interview with Brett Fairbairn, 23 November 2017.

[91] In the 1994 agreement, the provincial government committed $50,000 to the CSC for three years; in 1997, that commitment rose to $75,000, where it stayed until 2014, when all funding was withdrawn.

Funding changes made the university financially responsible for half of the Centre's operations. These changes ushered in a greater need for the Centre to create and promote activities that would ensure continued university support. The board directed faculty and staff to "concentrate on projects within the university's mission."[92] Centre staff and faculty put renewed effort into "university-approved" paths, aligning CSC direction with larger university mandates. Lou Hammond Ketilson noted, "We were trying to keep in tune with where the university was going. We devoted energy to make sure that the university valued what we were doing and saw our value as a research centre."[93] One direction included funding formulas related to student enrolment, but as a centre and not a department, the CSC could never conform to or perform well in such measurements. The Centre didn't have its *own* students; undergraduate teaching was through the home department. Acknowledgement for graduate teaching, particularly through the Interdisciplinary degree program, led to some improvement, but overall, the Centre was never as successful using tuition as a measurement. Research productivity, on the other hand, became the gold standard by which the CSC could bolster university approval.

Research Funding

There is a difference, within a centre or institution, between *core* funding and *research* funding. While crossover and spillover is common, the two are usually kept separate within accounting and reporting mechanisms. The difference is simple: Core funding is what keeps the base of a centre functioning (primarily viewed as staff and office expenses), while research funding is specific to projects, whether consulting work fees for service or grants for large research projects. Each of the five-year agreements set the core funding of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives. In the first five years, when this funding came from government and the co-operative sector, it paid

[92] Board meeting minutes, March 1992.
[93] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

mainly for salaries and benefits for faculty, staff, and other researchers, as well as travel, conference fees, and other central services such as communications and library, which will be discussed below. CSC scholars could access additional research funds at the director's discretion, drawn from the lavish interest reserves, but these amounts were generally small and focused on short-term outputs.

After the provincial government pulled out of the Centre, the University of Saskatchewan stepped in, matching the co-op sector fifty/fifty for core funding. Over time, more and more of the faculty working at the Centre were paid salary lines through their home departments. These slow shifts in how the university increased its funding support allowed for somewhat of a separation in how the co-operative sector's funding was allocated. This separation was never listed specifically in the published annual budget but became part of how the director understood and used the co-op sector's core funding. That money first went to support staff salary lines, such as office manager, communications, and library, then into items like travel, office supplies, membership dues, and so forth. In some cases, co-operative funding would "pay" sessional lecturer fees as part of the agreement to release that faculty member from departmental teaching.

But over and above core funding, as the Centre solidified its staff and faculty, research productivity soared, and with it, an increase in outside research funding. In the first five to ten years, some of that funding was internal to the co-operative sector, such as special projects with the Co-operative College of Canada, various provincial or federal Co-operatives Secretariats, or the federal Canadian Co-operative Association. Faculty and staff would outline project proposals (sometimes competitive, sometimes not) which, when funded, would provide money to hire extra researchers (short-term or summer contracts, for example) or to pay graduate students, who would do the work alongside, or as part of, their graduate projects. Examples of such work abound. In 1988, soon after his arrival at the Centre, Brett Fairbairn, a trained historian, bid on a contract to write a history of the Co-operative Retailing System and Federated Co-operatives. Awarded the contract, Brett worked with

an editorial board from FCL, "who commented on drafts, back and forth." Such a collaborative approach could lead to concern for academic autonomy: What if Fairbairn felt the need to point out something that FCL considered sensitive or problematic? Writing corporate history, as with, institutional history, carries its own challenges. Nonetheless, the book supported Fairbairn's bid for tenure in the History Department and led over time to two more, successive, corporate history research and publishing projects between Fairbairn and FCL. While criss-crossing western Canada in the fall of 2017, working on the latest book (due for publication in 2018), Fairbairn noted that he has now become more knowledgeable about the CRS and FCL than many who actually work for the co-operative retail system.[94]

Another example of contract work came in 1993, when the Centre undertook research on the connection between co-operative development and community for a national task force. This project was geared towards identifying an action plan around the services and supports that would contribute most to co-operative development success. The research involved interviews, surveys, and compiling public information — time-consuming tasks taken on by a contract researcher, Peter Krebs.[95] The final report for this project was published both electronically and in print and distributed to national and provincial groups. There were limits to such reports, though. According to Fairbairn, "Data-driven reports have short-term impact, quickly forgotten. It's the kind of thing that governments look for, because they love reports and stats."[96] But the interest in co-operative development as an area of study led to another project — Murray Fulton's work on New Generation Co-operatives in the 1990s. Funded in turn by both Credit Union Central and the Agriculture Development Fund, Fulton's work on New Generation Co-operatives and banking would build a case for the Saskatchewan government to develop new legislation. In 1999, the province created *An Act respecting New*

[94] Interview with Brett Fairbairn, 23 November 2017.
[95] Centre for the Study of Co-operatives *Annual Report*, 1992–1993.
[96] Interview with Brett Fairbairn, 23 November 2017.

Generation Co-operatives, opening the door to a new form of co-operative ripe for development, in part due to Fulton's research leadership.[97]

Research contracts fulfilled a dual role for the Centre. Consulting contracts, typically funded by government or other components within the co-operative sector, produced useful reports, some of which would take on a trajectory of their own, influencing the development of new co-ops or changing policy or legislation affecting them. These types of contracts would fulfill some of the provincial government's expectations of the Centre — to be a resource for thought work on aspects of co-operatives or co-operative development. But such "push" factors have always been far outweighed by "pull" factors operating both within the Centre and, even more, as norms from within academia. Aiming for tenure and promotion within their home departments, faculty had to show research and publication success. Consulting contracts had the potential to produce new information that could be repackaged and written for academic publication.[98] Such reports or their outcomes are hard to measure if they do not fit the life cycle of a government or produce tangible results at the optimum time for public policy change. The Centre has generally experienced more success doing direct contract work for co-operatives and credit unions rather than government, but those contracts rise and fall depending on the personal research needs, interests, and time of each of the faculty members or research staff, as well as the interests of co-operatives.

By far the larger draw was the growing importance of vying for, and winning, large and prestigious research grants. Over the history of the CSC, funding for research within universities changed from internal support through departments or other university funding pots to external support from large, Canada-wide research funders such as the Canadian Institute

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[97] See CSC *Annual Reports* from 1996 through 2001. Fulton's research opened the concept of the "New Agriculture."

[98] See, for example, Murray Fulton, Brenda Stefanson, and Andrea Harris, "New Generation Cooperatives and Cooperative Theory," *Journal of Cooperatives* 11 (1996): 15–28.

of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Winning competitive grants from these agencies built the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives from an entity known primarily to Saskatchewan and Canadian scholars into an international powerhouse.

Success bred success. Establishing a core of staff support and faculty expertise, then building a Centre identity of interdisciplinarity and excellence through the 1990s, led to a fluorescence of SSHRC research grant success by the turn of the millennium. In early 2003, Brett Fairbairn won more than $.5 million to study the relationship between co-operatives and community social cohesion, while Murray Fulton garnered another almost $100,000 to study agricultural co-operatives. In 2005, these huge grants were dwarfed by the Lou Hammond Ketilson–led $1.75 million SSHRC grant to study co-operatives as part of the "social economy." The largest grant to that date in University of Saskatchewan history, Ketilson's grant brought the Centre together with the newly created Community-University Institute for Social Research and leaders across Manitoba and northern Ontario to create a large, interconnected research team drawn from multiple universities. Both the social cohesion and social economy grants vaulted the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives to the forefront of university success in interdisciplinary, multi-year research projects that could leverage multiple partnerships across Canada and organize researchers and students to put a laser focus on co-operative issues.

Faculty and research staff at the Centre had the capacity to bid for, accept, and carry out larger and larger research projects for three related reasons. One, it was a team environment. As a unit, the Centre could bounce ideas, solicit help and support, and share research or divide workloads for large projects in a way that wasn't as readily available to those who worked in more insular or academically competitive departments. Often, the lead investigator had co-investigators drawn from CSC faculty. Two, the Centre was supported by up to four dedicated staff members whose workload could accept some short-term adjustments and changes. Staff resilience and project support

mattered, and produced project success, timeliness, and professional output. If books weren't reshelved for a few weeks, or other nonvital tasks were put off, the Centre would still function and could devote that energy, as needed, towards a project. Lou Hammond Ketilson pointed to staff as critical: "I have made this argument before; the ability to have permanent staff, publisher, administrative support, and a librarian was absolutely critical. That enabled us to go after the big grants, because we had admin to back it."[99] Three, working within the university, with faculty spread across campus, meant that there were multiple ears and eyes available to find extra support. Short-term research, writing, and other project requirements could be met by tapping the extensive pool of students or recent graduates. Connected to multiple colleges, the Centre could draw broadly for student and short-term staffing. An off-campus research hub, less connected to departments and colleges, would not have been able to function as effectively.

Faculty

As the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives entered its growth and consolidation phase, and the University of Saskatchewan became part of the contractual cycle as a core funder, there was a more defined split between staff and faculty. The migration of faculty salaries, over time, to home departments, eased the Centre's financial burden. But this created an unexpectedly brittle relationship between the Centre and faculty hires, which had a direct effect on faculty renewal, turnover, and new appointments. Following the end of Dan Ish's directorship, the CSC board looked only within existing university personnel to find a new director, as they couldn't support the salary of a new faculty member without compromising core staff. So the position had to be filled by someone already on the university payroll — someone who was interested, obviously, and further, whose home department and college was willing to allow them to take over the director's role. Murray Fulton became the new director in 1995, instigating a new era

[99] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

in which the director would be drawn from current faculty on a rotating but competitive basis.

The departure of Dan Ish meant that the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives had a faculty position open; after a cross-campus search, Michael Gertler of Sociology took it on. With deep interdisciplinary roots, Gertler was a logical choice. His first degree was in the environment, his master's in agriculture, and his PhD in rural development sociology.[100] When Gertler arrived on the University of Saskatchewan campus in 1987, the Centre actively supported his candidacy in the Sociology Department, knowing that his knowledge of co-operatives and rural development would be an asset. Coming on board as a Centre Fellow, Gertler's major contributions were in the classroom, teaching about co-operatives. He carried the heaviest teaching load and spent energy as the graduate chair, supporting CSC graduate students completing their work in the Interdisciplinary Co-op Concentration.

As faculty members mature within a campus community, administrative talent becomes important. Throughout the Centre's existence, Murray Fulton, Lou Hammond Ketilson, and Brett Fairbairn all took on administrative positions either as head of their home departments, heads of colleges, administrative leaders in new campus initiatives, or won roles in senior administration, as well as taking turns as Centre director. Campus administrative positions helped to shore up on-campus support for and knowledge of the CSC, but the positions would also draw core faculty away from the Centre. Hammond Ketilson became associate dean of Commerce; Murray Fulton served as head of Agricultural Economics, was a leader in developing and running the Interdisciplinary Studies program, and later was integral in creating the new Graduate School of Public Policy. Brett Fairbairn, who succeeded Fulton as director of the CSC in 2000, volunteered to be the head of the History Department in 2004, negotiating with the dean of Arts and Science to take on his salary line and ease the burden on the Centre. Hammond Ketilson took over from Fairbairn as

[100] Interview with Michael Gertler, 9 February 2018.

director of the CSC, first on an interim basis, then as an appointment from 2005 to 2014, when Murray Fulton once again took the directorship. In 2008, Brett Fairbairn became the university's provost and vice-president academic, a senior administrative role he held until 2014. During sabbatical leave of an appointed director, other faculty, including Michael Gertler, would step in to handle the director's administrative tasks, though Gertler to 2018 never took the reigns directly.

Shuffling core faculty through the director's position created continuity and stability, but when core faculty accepted senior administrative positions away from the CSC, the question became, should they resign from the Centre? The problem was, with their tenured salary lines picked up by the university and CSC funds dedicated to supporting administrative staff, there was limited funding available to hire new faculty to those positions. A starting faculty position (assistant professor level) at the University of Saskatchewan in the mid-1980s garnered an annual salary of about $30,000 to $35,000. As of 2018, a starting assistant professor can expect between $95,000 to $100,000 per year. Calculated just for the cost of inflation, that $30,000 salary from 1985 would be $64,000 in 2018 dollars; the difference is the inflated salaries imposed by the university to attract and hold out-of-province faculty.[101] It would be near impossible for the co-op sector to pick up salary rates for both faculty and staff at these levels. In fact, although the five-year agreements list the co-op sector and university as equal partners, the annual report budgets since 2001 have shown the university contribution as higher than the co-op sector, and growing over time to accommodate the rising salaries of the faculty, in line with University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association guidelines.

Knowing that faculty renewal was an issue, the CSC created a "bridging hire" in 2000 for Cristine de Clercy from Political Science. The idea was that the CSC would support her position to begin with, but that the department would gradually take over. Although associated with the Centre as a faculty member

[101] See the Canadian inflation calculator, www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/

for a few years, de Clercy experienced the same dual-master issues as the other faculty. Trying to do well in two different areas of research meant more work. A secondary issue is that she had no contemporary cohort with whom to undertake the hard work of building interdisciplinarity. That kind of deep work required more time and energy than the more senior faculty members, now busy in administrative positions with the university, could provide. The disciplinary bridge couldn't hold, and de Clercy eventually relocated to a different university. Other partial faculty hires as Centre Fellows have included Eric Micheels in Agriculture, Dionne Pohler at the School of Public Policy, and Isobel Findlay and Abdullah Mamun from the Edwards School of Business. Depending on the nature of their appointment, their work at the CSC on co-operative issues has varied. Again, the inter-faculty work of creating interdisciplinary work by addressing issues as a team was difficult to recreate and produced uneven results.

To counteract the issues of faculty renewal and faculty absence, and as a complement to the full-time Centre Fellows, the CSC created a secondary line of associates known as Centre Scholars. These individuals, who came from both within and outside the university, remained within their home department but offered their expertise for occasional teaching or seminar work, committee work for graduate students, or as co-applicants and node leaders for large research grants. Highly visible Centre Scholars have included Ian MacPherson, Morris Altman, and Isobel Findlay, who later became a Centre Fellow. Others have included Marj Benson, Dan Ish, Rob Norris, Sheryl Mills, and Len Findlay. While this model waxed and waned over time, depending on the energy expended to keep existing scholars and identify new ones, it served to extend faculty resources, knowledge, research, and presentation expertise, as well as graduate student support.

Communications

From the start, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives invested in communications. One of the Centre's core mandates, reiterated in *all* of its operating agreements throughout the years, is to prepare publications. Faculty and staff knew that producing exclusively peer-reviewed publications that would be viewed only by those who had subscriptions to esoteric journals would not be acceptable to the funders and would not address their responsibility to the larger co-operative community. The CSC had to create a presence in all its spheres of influence: the University of Saskatchewan, the co-operative sector, *and* the disciplinary homes of faculty. It was a daunting task.

At first, publishing was almost entirely a paper process. The Centre soon developed its own Occasional Paper Series, and by 1989 had published papers on the relationship between co-operatives and employees, democratic procedures in co-ops, a history of Saskatchewan co-op law, and several encompassing bibliographies on co-op management, worker co-ops, and co-op organizations in western Canada. In some cases, these occasional papers offered a means to publish conference proceedings, sector-related information, or aspects of research projects that wouldn't fit as classic academic publications. In 1989, the annual report listed sixteen occasional papers and one monograph, all available for purchase.

By 1999, that list had more than doubled, and changed to include not only occasional papers, but resource information, videos, and electronic forms of publication, which could be accessed through the Centre's website. Sales of these publications became part of the revenue budget for the Centre, though it never adequately recouped research, writing, editing, production, printing, and related creative costs. Nonetheless, these activities became central to the CSC's growing identity, a tangible result of the commitment to outreach and service, particularly to the co-operative sector.

The computer age came early for Centre staff and scholars. The innocuous line that read Office Supplies in the original op-

erating agreement, to be paid by the university, became a lever to garner state-of-the-art personal computing and Centre printing systems. The CSC quickly became a haven of Apple computer fanatics. Dan Ish, the second director, told me with a laugh that about once a year, someone would come into his office to complain about something. He'd listen, then promise them a new computer and they'd leave, happy. Yet technology was foundational to the exponential growth of the Centre's research and publication output. Almost from the beginning, technology helped the Centre establish internal communications, organize large research projects, write and edit effectively and quickly, and share information widely.

The staff complement at the CSC soon reflected communications as a critical core resource. Jo-Anne Andre, in one of the first two staff positions, took on a major publication and communication role in fostering the *Worker Co-ops* magazine, though her title didn't necessarily reflect her workload. In 1990, the Centre hired June Bold as communications officer, responsible for publications, liaison, and resource centre coordination, as well as research, writing, and editing as needed. June was succeeded by Byron Henderson in 1992, whose work took the Centre into the forefront of digital and electronic communications, including online databases and Co-op Net, the Centre's first in-house computer network. He was instrumental in creating an online presence for the Centre as the world moved inexorably towards what was then called the World Wide Web. Henderson eventually moved on to work more directly with computers and expand online knowledge. His successor, Nora Russell, took over in 1997 and has been head of communications and publications through the Centre's longest and most prolific publishing era. In many ways, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives was far ahead of similar departments or colleges across campus. One of the largest staff expansions at the University of Saskatchewan in the past ten years has been in communications, where individual colleges, schools, centres, and institutes fill communications coordinator positions to handle a multitude of internal and external communications and publishing responsibilities. The Centre has been doing that all along.

While much of the Centre's communications output involved occasional papers, booklets, books, and academic papers, the board asked the CSC to find ways to reach the broader co-operative audience and to be more generally visible. Communications received special consideration at a joint staff/board meeting in 1993. Publications would be split four ways:

- occasional papers, books, and articles, which would showcase new research and theory
- resource papers, which would compile and disseminate general information
- fact sheets, with statistics and shorter resource information
- *CSC Developments*, a new Centre newsletter to be launched immediately[102]

By December of that year, the newsletter was up and running and the CSC was eyeing a move online to e-publishing and databases as well as considering distance education options. The CSC embraced online technology from its infancy; the problem, then as now, was in finding ways to ensure a readership for what the Centre had to offer.

From the beginning, the Centre's publication mandate was more than just disseminating its own work. With a core commitment to in-house expertise in editing, writing, and publishing, the Centre offered scholars across Canada, the US, and around the world a publishing vehicle. Core communications staff could work with co-op authors to produce a wide array of publications and offer them for public distribution through the Centre's growing channels. Over the years, the Centre has published everything from bibliographies to histories to biographies to thought pieces, project reports, conference proceedings, director handbooks, community organization handbooks, policy notes, international co-operative comparisons, and community reports. Straddling the line between research centre and publisher, the CSC commitment to communications of-

[102] Board minutes, March 1993.

fered a valuable single-point publishing vehicle that supported co-operative publishing and gave the co-op community a focal point for its work.

While external communications for the co-op sector, funders, and the general public remained the primary role for the communications officer, internal communications to the university were also critical, and it takes a language of persuasion and boldness to inform and sway university leadership. By the 1990s, the University of Saskatchewan began a long series of internal reviews and evaluations, to "trim" budgets and outputs, shoring up success and eliminating line items. The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives initially came under fire, derided as catering to a "special interest group" of co-operatives. In a 1991 letter to president George Ivany, the Centre fired back. The letter pointed out that co-operatives at the time made up about one quarter of Saskatchewan's GDP (gross domestic product); the CSC was multidisciplinary and linked to the public (exactly what large funding groups like SSHRC were looking for); its scholarly output was tremendous; and finally, cutting the Centre would affect the university's overall budget by eliminating the co-operative funding the CSC attracted.[103]

Over time, faculty and CSC communications became even more adept at showing how and where the CSC aligned with and actively promoted the university's goals. The director and communications officer worked together to produce two reports — one for the co-op sector and one for the university, each emphasizing what would be most appreciated, understood, and acknowledged.[104] The communications director took on a major role in responding to and creating internal reports, self-assessments, and other strategic documents designed to find key ways to promote the Centre within the university. By 2005, in the midst of the CSC's external grant success, the university listed the CSC as a Centre of Excellence and the Centre

[103] Board minutes, March 1991. Note that the letter used "multidisciplinary" instead of "'interdisciplinary." The University of Saskatchewan remained skeptical of interdisciplinarity until the turn of the millennium. See Massie, "A (Limited) Study in Interdisciplinarity."
[104] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

ranked well during the aborted TransformUS process on campus.[105] By strategically placing core emphasis on the role of communications, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives demonstrated a critical understanding of the importance of influence, persuasion, and knowledge mobilization. With the retirement of Nora Russell in 2018, it is as yet unclear if communications will remain a key component of the Centre, or if that role will migrate to the desk of communications officers within the larger School of Public Policy. If so, it is possible that the Centre's publishing role, particularly as a point of concentration for the larger co-op research community, will cease.

The Library

For much of its existence, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives was home to a library resource centre, a mainly English-language repository of co-operative knowledge, the largest of its kind in Canada. In the 1980s, no research could take place without a physical library; print power ruled, and the Internet and computer technology were far into the future. The co-operative research library at the CSC began at the convergence of three related points. First, in the original founding document, the University of Saskatchewan committed cash to the tune of $3,000 per year for "library acquisitions." The CSC, set up in the Diefenbaker Centre, chose to interpret that innocuous statement as leeway to create its own library instead of requesting co-op related material to be purchased, accessioned, and stored in the main library. Identifying and controlling purchases was important, and this budget allowed for co-op accessions, disciplinary books, and interdisciplinary materials to be conveniently housed near the staff and faculty offices, right in the Diefenbaker Centre.

[105] The TransformUS process at the University of Saskatchewan was a major review exercise undertaken to identify areas of strength and weakness to help address a projected budget shortfall. The process asked each department, centre, institute, and school to complete an exhaustive self-reflective review. Nora Russell produced the CSC report, which led to a good ranking for the Centre. The process was aborted in 2014 due to outcry within the University of Saskatchewan community.

Second, director Chris Axworthy remembered that research officer Skip McCarthy, a CSC staff member in the early years, was a connector.

He had really good connections with all kinds of grassroots organizations. I don't know where the first books came from, but he engineered a donation. They were looking for someplace to put them. We just took them and started storing them, other people gave us books and so on. I suppose we thought it was important to have books of interest to co-ops in our library.[106]

These donated collections included the materials gathered by Pestalozzi College in Ottawa, as well as contributions from Federated Co-operatives, including a complete set of the *Co-operative Consumer* newspaper from 1939–1982, and many local co-op history books. Adding to this rather serendipitous origin story, and the third point of convergence, was the demise of the Co-operative College of Canada, which formed part of the original Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) in 1987. At the time, the Centre had passed its solid third year, with a full complement of staff and faculty. With Skip McCarthy's book collection growing, part of the Co-op College library moved to the CSC instead of moving to Ottawa with the CCA.

Almost as soon as a library began to take shape, the Centre hired library technicians and librarians to keep track of, contain, and tame the growing beast. As early as 1985, director's reports showed librarian expenses outweighing book purchases by a factor of three. Linda Tanner came on board in 1986 to help catalogue both the Centre's growing number of tomes, reports, booklets, and papers, and to work with the Co-op College to make sure their catalogues were up-to-date. Her work set the stage for at least a partial amalgamation. Centre staff and faculty identified which, if any, reports, books, or other items they wanted from the Co-op College library before it was sent to Ottawa. More items, particularly historical and archival

[106] Interview with Chris Axworthy, 29 November 2017.

materials, moved back from Ottawa to the Centre in 1994 as the Canadian Co-operative Association underwent change.[107]

The library was, for much of the CSC's existence, a defining feature. It was a physical space, curated and well kept — a treasure trove of co-operative research and knowledge, including both books and archival material, as well as photographs. Students taking classes in co-operatives or with co-op content could be found working on papers in the library, chatting with each other and with staff, discussing co-op issues and debating concepts. Staff and faculty used library materials for research and publication purposes. Not having to cross campus and contend with countless other students, faculty, and staff in the university's main library no doubt enhanced research productivity. Even as the library holdings went online, first through the CSC's internal server, then via the university's system, its physical presence remained at the CSC within the Diefenbaker Centre.

The library became a major component of the Centre's mandate for research communication and dissemination, as well as outreach. Centre visitors would always be found perusing the shelves and using the stacks. Lou Hammond Ketilson noted multiple instances where new co-op employees, particularly those less familiar with the co-op model, would drop by for an informal "crash course" in co-ops, and more particularly, Saskatchewan co-ops, in the CSC library.[108] International visitors frequently cited the library as part of what drew them to the Centre — its extensive provincial, but also national and international co-operative holdings in one convenient space. From its somewhat haphazard beginnings, the library became known as the Resource Room, a space for dedicated co-operative information. By 1995, it held more than two thousand items, and the Centre renovated and expanded to create a better space. By 2013, the last year the library was *in situ* at the Diefenbaker Centre, it contained well over five thousand items, ranging from books to magazines and newspapers, reports and periodicals, to sound recordings and videos. Yet as the modern

[107] Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, *Annual Report*, 1994.
[108] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

age of digital publications rose, questions came to the forefront. If online publishing is at the touch of a few keystrokes, and researchers both have and demand digital access, of what use is a physical library? How does a physical library serve the needs of rural, remote, northern, or international communities? These questions became part of the contentious debate that led to the relocation of the co-op holdings to the Special Collections area of the larger university library, a point to which we will return later.

Outreach and Extension

Outreach and extension activities have always been a central part of the CSC's mandate. And while that mandate has been met, in part, by its communication work and its research library, outreach and extension have played a key role in maintaining the vigour of the Centre's relationship to the broader co-operative and academic communities. It is difficult to define outreach and extension activities, as they cross over into research pursuits, governance, relationships, teaching, and service. They also vary from year to year and by faculty member. Nonetheless, examples abound. The simplest forms include meeting with senior managers and directors of co-operatives, creating back-and-forth dialogue and check-ins, producing internal policy papers and commentaries, keeping tabs on industry changes, and ensuring research relevance. Other examples include providing support services to co-operatives, such as helping run discussion groups, providing expert advice or feedback, presenting at annual general meetings, or working together on specific projects.

In reading board minutes for the Centre's entire history, it is clear that there were continual shifts in the importance of or emphasis on outreach and extension activities, and multiple discussions on how to handle them, how they should be counted, if they should be remunerated, and how to categorize and report them. If a co-operative asked for help with board training, or for someone to speak at public meetings about co-ops in general or co-op research in particular, the CSC board won-

dered: Should the Centre charge a *per diem*? Does that money accrue to the faculty member, or to the Centre? How often can the faculty or staff accept such speaking engagements? How should those requests be split, and how should the Centre allocate its time? Can the Centre reasonably ask staff or faculty to volunteer for evening and weekend extension work on a regular basis? Such discussions were folded into both staff meetings and board meetings, but also became part of intense retreat sessions, where the Centre would map out its mandate, priorities, and strategic plans.

One obvious area of extension and outreach is in co-operative development. By the mid-1990s, the Centre had a large provincial profile, and requests would come in for direct co-op development, i.e., working with groups to create new co-ops. Tom Marwick, the Saskatchewan government representative on the board, pushed for co-op development to move out of the hands of the provincial government and into the Centre. But the time, energy, and extension services required for co-op development were not available at the Centre, whose mandate, focus, and core operations were in research and teaching. Extension flowed from those activities but could not accommodate the time-consuming process of direct co-op development. For faculty, such community engagement rarely led to academic publications, supported tenure or promotion decisions, or other career-enhancing activities. As well, co-operative development tends to happen within communities, at meetings and on coffee row. Asking groups of people to travel to Saskatoon to meet with professors wasn't feasible; neither was asking professors or staff to travel out to communities, except on occasion. A push towards community development in the early to mid-1990s led to several staff and faculty acting as meeting facilitators, but this initiative was short-lived. It was more common for staff or faculty to present at annual general meetings of large rural groups such as the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities or at gatherings of regional economic development authorities. Larger venues and events, often with workshops, efficiently disseminated co-op information to a broader audience, and also offered the opportunity for questions and answers.

Other university-linked co-operative centres, such as the Center for Cooperatives at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, had a formalized co-operative development mandate and focus, with in-house staff dedicated to supporting nascent co-ops, and for this reason, it might have been expected that the CSC would be similar. But the Wisconsin–Madison centre is an extension division; the number of research faculty is dwarfed by the staff complement and co-op development mandate. The two centres function quite differently. Other Saskatchewan groups — the fieldmen of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, provincial government co-op developers, and later, those working for the Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Co-operative Association, and still later, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association — had a clear mandate for co-op development.[109] Research projects would occasionally send staff, faculty, or graduate students to communities, but the relationship was one of research, not co-op development. For example, during the Co-operative Innovation Project (2014–2016), funded with a $1 million investment from Federated Co-operatives Limited, Centre researchers visited numerous rural and Indigenous communities across western Canada for research purposes. Revisiting each community multiple times, as would be required by co-op development, was never part of the research plan, although one aspect of the work *identified* communities and business opportunities conducive to co-op business development. But the development process itself needed to build from the community level, bringing in co-op development specialists when possible.

Conferences offered obvious opportunities for extension and outreach work. Both faculty and staff attended public or government conferences, workshops, or annual meetings, giving papers or presentations. Rural development groups in particular were a close fit. Such public engagement was complemented and extended by academic outreach. The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives grew and coalesced alongside other

[109] For an overview of co-operative development in western Canada, see the Co-operative Innovation Project final report, especially the chapter devoted to co-operative development, https://coopinnovation.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/3-co-op-development-in-western-canada.pdf .

Canadian regional research centres, clusters, and chairs studying co-operative business practices. A critical vehicle for unifying these groups is the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation/L'Association Canadienne pour les Études sur la Coopération (CASC–ACEC). CASC grew alongside and in concert with the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, which has always served as its home base and office. CASC has a broad mandate to bring together academics and practitioners such as co-op developers, co-op educators, and co-op staff whose positions involve co-op outreach, extension, and education. The annual CASC conference coincides with Congress, an annual gathering of Canadian academics. Since 1984, both faculty and staff have attended, given papers, reports, stood for CASC office, and supported the association. The gathering attracts co-operative researchers and practitioners from across Canada and around the world; it is an event where new research projects and collaborations, knowledge sharing, support, and community come together. The relationship between CASC and the Centre is strong. During a period of funding renewal, the question is, how can CASC members be mobilized to support a new contract for the CSC?

With its footprint in the recently renamed Diefenbaker Building, anchored by the Diefenbaker museum and archives, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives has had a unique and enviable avenue for outreach and extension through public history. The Centre has worked with museum staff on multiple occasions to showcase co-op history and research generated by the CSC. Museum displays offer a unique form of public outreach. Academic research must be distilled to its essential points and combined with visual artifacts or photographs to tell a particular story. The first such collaborative exhibit was in 1986, when Centre and museum staff produced *Building Windbreaks against the Future: The Co-operative Movement in Saskatchewan.* The Centre hosted a reception to mark the exhibit's opening, as well as sponsoring a special visit from delegates at Federated Co-operatives Limited's annual general

meeting that year.[110] Through the years, the CSC worked with the Diefenbaker Centre on smaller exhibits, or provided input into co-operative history for larger or longer exhibits. That relationship underpinned the 2010 *Building Community: Creating Social and Economic Well-Being.* With almost one hundred panels written by Centre staff Nora Russell, Roger Herman, and summer student Norma Quaroni, designed by the Diefenbaker Centre's Teresa Carlson, alongside artifacts co-curated by a team from both units, the exhibit showcased both the role of co-operatives in communities and the history of the Centre. Opened to much fanfare in May 2010 by the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, Gordon Barnhart, the exhibit was visited by numerous school groups throughout May and June. The full exhibit also travelled to Melfort and Moose Jaw, regional Saskatchewan cities.[111] This museum experience led to three smaller, travelling exhibits, which pulled in information from communities in Manitoba and northern Ontario that were part of the "Linking, Learning, Leveraging" SSHRC-funded research. These travelling exhibits, available in both French and English, launched in concert with the United Nations 2012 International Year of Co-operatives.[112] The exhibit went through a third iteration in an online digital format, which was accessible across the world for several years on the Centre's website but is unfortunately no longer available.

Another major thrust of outreach and extension for the CSC has been in training, particularly training co-operative employees. As with other activities, this mandate has gone through ebb and flow. While the Co-operative College remained in existence throughout much of the 1980s, the Centre worked with the college to create instructional material and deliver courses. Once the college folded into the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), its training and education mandate became less well defined. In the 1990s, Lou Hammond Ketilson worked on highly successful co-op director training with the new CCA, which was well received. Communications

[110] Centre for the Study of Co-operatives "Director's Report," 4 April 1986. Leo Kristjanson Fonds, University of Saskatchewan Archives.
[111] "Director's Report," Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, June 2010.
[112] "Director's Report," Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, April 2012.

officer Byron Henderson looked into the possibilities of creating online training modules, but this initiative fizzled when he moved on. With grant successes, training shifted focus to graduate students — many of whom would go on to work for co-operatives or co-op associations — and direct training of co-operative employees diminished, simplified into shorter occasional presentations or concentrated workshops during larger events. By 2014, the Canadian co-operative education landscape had changed dramatically, with numerous other institutions creating courses, both in-person and online, to reach co-op employees. In response, the Centre developed a certificate course in co-operatives and the social economy through its new relationship with the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, while continuing less formal events such as public seminars and a lecture series.

International Presence

From its beginnings, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives made its presence known not just in Saskatchewan or across Canada, but actively connected with researchers and co-operative practitioners across the United States and around the world. The first director, Chris Axworthy, spent time establishing these relationships as a way to link the new centre with other co-operative researchers, and to purchase publications for the library. As centre faculty began to publish, the connection point flipped. It soon became clear that having *four* faculty in such a close multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary concentration, along with dedicated research and administrative staff, meant that the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, even at a remote western Canadian university, became a world-class hub for co-operative research interests. The Centre became a magnet and international meeting place for co-operative scholarship.

There is a consistent vein of tension throughout the Centre's minutes, strategic papers, and files around addressing its core mandate. Since the majority of its financing came from within Saskatchewan, how much of its output should focus on

the issues facing Saskatchewan, or at the least, western Canada? Was there a pan-Canadian or international mandate for research, and if so, shouldn't that be reflected in its co-operative funders? The first big stone to set ripples on this pond was the hiring of Brett Fairbairn. While Saskatchewan born and raised, a large portion of his research interests were set in Germany, around German social movements and connections to co-operatives. In fact, Fairbairn has been the only Centre scholar to publish in more than one language. But, what could Saskatchewan co-operatives learn from the German experience? Fairbairn simply split his research interests to pursue some topics of direct interest to western Canadian co-operatives, including researching and writing, to date, three sequential histories of the Co-operative Retailing System and Federated Co-operatives Limited, but his German work created the first major international link. It wouldn't be the last.

A Visiting Research Fellow program began officially operating (dependent upon funding) in the early 1990s, with fellows coming to the CSC from around the world. International researchers would make a point of dropping by the Centre while touring Canadian co-operatives. Visitors have come from every continent (except Antarctica) and from places as varied as Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, and Zaire. While in Saskatchewan, visitors often spend time with local co-operatives, touring enterprises in the area, and meeting delegates, boards, and members. Many have hunkered down in the Resource Centre, making copious notes and immersing their minds in co-op content. Centre staff and faculty enjoy international visitors, relishing the opportunity "to learn about other countries and how they operate."[113] Visiting fellows have developed professional working relationships with CSC scholars, some of which have led to collaborative curriculum and research program development, as well as study tours, overseas workshops, and international courses on co-operatives.

[113] Interview with Patty Scheidl, 16 January 2018.

One of the Centre's partners for major international work has been the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) through the Co-operative Development Foundation (CDF). Its mandate is to promote and support co-operative organizations as a solution to local issues around the world, from poverty to agricultural problems to gender disparity. Centre staff and faculty have been tapped to travel the world working with the CCA and CDF on specific projects. Bringing a background of academic research and knowledge into play on international projects contributes significantly to the creation of solid, effective working relationships. Credentials buy respect at international universities and with governments. Some of those working relationships on the ground multiplied through the years. Dan Ish, an expert in co-operative law, has travelled extensively on CDF projects, working in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sierra Leone, China, Indonesia, and Ukraine.[114] Lou Hammond Ketilson's work in Moshi, Tanzania, led to an international book shipment when Moshi Co-operative University accepted the duplicate books from the Centre's research library when the rest of the materials moved to Special Collections in the main library. "They were thrilled to accept our books. That was a huge deal. We shipped sixty-eight boxes that had to be crated; we had them boxed, couriered to Lou's acreage, and stored in her garage. Then they were trucked to Montreal and put in crates to be shipped by sea. The books got there, and they were so happy."[115]

The CSC maintains a membership in Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada (CMC), the bilingual Canadian co-operative apex organization that succeeded the CCA. CMC is a member of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), an international nonprofit organization that pulls together co-operative leaders, practitioners, and researchers from around the globe. Reflecting the importance of the Saskatchewan centre, Lou Hammond Ketilson was chair of the ICA Committee on Co-operative Research from 2007 to 2013 and remains an active member. Centre faculty are often called upon to give keynote speeches at

[114] Interview with Dan Ish, 1 December 2017.
[115] Interview with Patty Scheidl, 16 January 2018.

international events, reflecting the high regard in which they are held. Travelling to international conferences or events, there is instant recognition of — and respect for — the so-called "Saskatchewan mafia" from the Centre.

Having or promoting an international presence has always been somewhat of a misfit with the Saskatchewan-based funders: Is an international presence part of the mandate or expectations? How does that play back to the local co-operative level? Is international "galivanting" how the funders want energy spent? Centre annual reports tended to emphasize visitors *to* the CSC, while mentioning but de-emphasizing international work or travel. Yet even while occasionally questioning the international connections, local funders expressed pride in these accomplishments. Bill Turner, a long-time Centre board member representing Credit Union Central, spoke about the CSC's international presence: "On the national and international partnerships, those would have to be viewed as enhancing co-op development in this country, and perhaps in the broader world."[116] It was about sharing that core of expertise, helping people around the corner and around the world. Saskatchewan people tend to value personal relationships; if those relationships carried a bit of Saskatchewan around the globe, then in the end, Saskatchewan won.

Reflection: System Dynamics

The rapid growth of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives shows how the original strength of the foundation played out within the time and space of the university and the co-operative sector. It is tempting to assert that the CSC remained the same throughout its history: after all, so many of the original and established components are visible today, from the five-year funding agreements to many of the core faculty members. But within those components, adaptation led to sometimes incremental, sometimes monumental changes. Thinking about the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives

[116] Interview with Bill Turner, 15 January 2018.

through a resilience lens, the system dynamics contain fascinating patterns of rapid growth, conservation, release, and reorganization. Resilience theorists speak of these phases as the *adaptive cycle.* An ecological example might help. In a boreal forest ecosystem, forest composition flows through the adaptive cycle. A forest grows when plants become established and quickly develop into woodland. The forest might hold its mature structure for a long time, stabilizing the forest floor and supporting particular plants and animals. A disturbance event, such as a major windstorm or forest fire, causes a rapid release of resources and collapse. Following the collapse, the system renews itself as plants and animals recolonize it and the adaptive cycle repeats.

There are key growth variables within the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives that led to adaptive change. The first can be understood as the body of the Centre, its form and function: the five-year funding cycle based on renegotiated agreements. The second can be described as the movement of the Centre, its energy in building and disseminating a body of knowledge, and particularly the influence of grant funds on its expansion and contraction. Third, let's consider the ways in which the Centre's form and energy have touched the larger community, particularly relationships and renewal. Each of these deserves a closer look.

A major indicator of the Centre's health is the ease with which contracts are negotiated. Each contract cycle (five years), bookended by a period of negotiation, mirrors that of the adaptive cycle. Positive negotiations and signing the agreement represent the period of exploiting the resources of the university, government, and co-op sector to create space for the CSC to exist as an institution. The funding period — five years — is the phase of growth and conservation of resources, keeping the institutional aspects of the Centre steady and recognizable: administrative staff, location, mandate, and activities. The end of the funding cycle and the period of negotiation for a new funding cycle is a time of release and reorganization, often met with discussions, position papers, and the application of professional persuasion. Successful signing of a new

contract, often with new partners, brings a new start to the adaptive cycle.

Although it took some time to hammer out the agreement between the founding funders for the first contract, its necessity and support was never in doubt. All parties agreed to the fundamental need to create the Centre, and the first contract was signed with great speed, considering the technical aspects of creating a completely new kind of contract that drew together such large players: the provincial government, multiple large co-operative enterprises, and a public university. Subsequent contracts, however, showed that economic, political, and institutional change had a direct effect on the Centre's very existence. Contract renegotiation in 1989 was messy and had a high probability of failure. In fact, the Centre actually operated *without* a formal agreement for more than a year, between the end of the contract in June 1989 and before the new contract was signed 26 October 1990. With the withdrawal of the provincial government and their 40 percent funding, the University of Saskatchewan backfilled the CSC with bridge funding. But the clock was ticking. With all of its faculty either still on the tenure track (but not yet tenured) or on political leave, the Centre was at a real risk of disappearing — and for those faculty members whose salaries were paid by the Centre and not yet through the university, their very jobs were in peril. Strength and determination came from the co-op sector representatives, who stood their ground and used personal persuasion and pressure to bring the university on-board as an active funder of the second contract, while expanding their own cadre of supporters. Faculty salary lines began to migrate to home departments, easing the Centre's financing and creating what became a financial separation between faculty and staff salaries, with staff paid via the Centre's co-op sector support.

Negotiations leading to the third operating agreement signed in 1994 showed the university and the co-operative sector acting together to pressure the provincial government into coming back on board. What followed was a period of relatively stable funding and contract negotiations. The same panel of co-op sector, government, and university funding held steady

for ten years, from 1994 through 2004, when the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the largest contributor, ceased to operate as a classic co-operative and dropped its external funding to a variety of organizations, including the Centre. While co-operative groups stepped up, the university also became more and more financially responsible through funding the tenured faculty lines. In 2014, the provincial government once again dropped out, but an international funding source — CHS Inc., a huge farm supply co-op based in Minnesota — joined the other co-ops at the board table. CHS's endorsement of and financial support for the CSC underlined its importance as an international centre of co-operative excellence.

Each funding renewal negotiation revealed important dynamics among the university, the provincial government, and the co-op sector. In each case, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives had to continually prove its success and ongoing relevance. Some negotiations proved easier; others, more difficult. While the Centre could contribute to successful negotiations via strategy, positioning, or output, there were some factors over which it had little influence, such as the demutualization of a major funder or a change in government politics. The threshold event, the point at which the CSC funding system changed, was when the University of Saskatchewan became responsible for 50 percent plus of the CSC's financing via faculty salaries and other in-kind supports (office and classroom space, office supplies, and so forth). Both on paper and in practice, at the board's direction, the Centre moved to align itself clearly with university priorities. It is probable, and was suggested by at least one interviewee, that the decision to direct so much energy to serving university goals meant that "the CSC remained successful but in an academic sphere, not the co-op world."[117]

One of the major limiting factors for the Centre was the board decision to emphasize provincially based co-operatives as funders, with the exception of Federated Co-operatives Limited, which covers western Canada but has its head office in

[117] Interview with Myrna Hewitt, 5 February 2018.

Saskatoon. The first nonprovincial (and international) funder was CHS Inc., which, as mentioned, came on board in the 2014 contract. In limiting funding to provincial co-operatives, or co-ops with dominant Saskatchewan roots, the Centre found both strength and weakness. The connection to those core co-operatives, many of which were also co-investigators on research projects or even the subject of CSC research, was important and helped to maintain the close personal ties that gave the CSC its original boost. But it became a weakness as funders left and financing became more constricted, shifting inexorably to the university and limiting the reach to other large-scale co-operatives. It's too early to say whether the CHS Inc. move may lead to more nonprovincial co-ops coming on stream. As was the case with early funding negotiations, there are limits to what the Centre, via the director, can do to promote new funding relationships. To bring new funders on board, existing funders (including the university) must actively court, negotiate, and create those relationships.

The larger question is, has the overall funding landscape changed? Some would argue, yes. "We've been successful over the years that our dollars are not tied to deliverables. I don't know how much longer we'll be able to argue that," noted Lou Hammond Ketilson, who took the reigns for more than ten years as the Centre's director. She went on, "The willingness and commitment to that isn't there. Ted Turner and Vern Leland, for example — there was a generation who were so determined to support research and teaching about co-ops that they were willing to let us do our thing. That kind of leadership is no longer there." It's changed, she said, with funding tied to deliverables, boxes to be checked, fees paid for services rendered. Investment in academic knowledge for its own sake, or even for the broader co-operative public good, might be at risk.[118] Success in one area of the original mandate — to allow academic autonomy to build co-op research and gain a viable reputation for research excellence — may prove to be a detriment, even though the overall goal of building a cadre of researchers and a body of *bona fides* co-op studies knowledge

[118] Interview with Lou Hammond Ketilson, 4 December 2017.

has been met, and met spectacularly. The co-operative community overall has more than benefitted from the Centre's activities — but those benefits are not always direct.

Another identifiable cycle that regularly drove change within the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives was the continual rise and fall of external research grants. Right from the start, the Centre applied for and won these types of grants, which were used to expand staff on a short-term, contract level. Those grant hires (sometimes as short as a few months, others over a few years), in turn, generated by far the majority of the Centre's research output. Directed by faculty and developed with extensive input and guidance, such grants are common within academia as the primary means for faculty, departments, schools, and universities to conduct research and fund growth and change. A smaller grant might support one to two graduate students or contract researchers (at set University of Saskatchewan salary guidelines), along with funds to conduct research, including travel and sundry expenses. Outputs in such cases might include a graduate thesis, one or two academic papers, a few conference presentations, and perhaps some outreach and engagement for research or informational purposes. The CSC has won numerous small grants, the majority of which are administratively handled as part of the everyday work of CSC staff.

Larger awards, such as Brett Fairbairn's $589,000 Social Cohesion grant (2002), Lou Hammond Ketilson's $1.75 million Linking, Learning, Leveraging project (2005), both funded by SSHRC, or Murray Fulton's $1 million FCL-funded Co-operative Innovation Project grant (2014), were major events in the Centre's history. Each led to short-term expansion in staff, students, and/or publishing output. Long-time office manager Patty Scheidl described the difference between regular operations and large-project activity: "It's a good thing, the CSC feels going, thriving, pumping out stuff. There is energy, and it's busy."[119]

[119] Interview with Patty Scheidl, 16 January 2018.

Through a resilience lens, each of these grants can be viewed as drivers that changed the functioning of the CSC as a system for a period of time. While core staff, paid by co-op sector funds, remained stable, they would be called on to help, support, and in some cases, train incoming grant staff and students. Since the early 2000s, the larger Canadian academic community, pushed to win external agency funding, has recognized the administrative drain of these large projects, both in creating the extensive applications and, when won, managing the administrative tasks associated with running large grants. Hammond Ketilson's Linking, Learning, Leveraging (aka the Social Economy project), for example, was a community-university partnership that brought together groups from four provinces (twenty-five academics in ten disciplines from thirteen universities), multiple research nodes, and upwards of sixty community-level partners in Canada, the US, Colombia, and Belgium. From telephone conferences to physical meetings, the logistics of bringing together far-flung partners to work together placed a heavy burden on CSC administrative staff and participating faculty. But the CSC benefited from increased graduate student work, more students learning about co-operatives and the social economy, a larger national profile with research connections, and a solidified presence within the University of Saskatchewan as a centre of excellence.

The Co-operative Innovation Project (CIP) 2014–2016 had different logistical issues than the Centre's SSHRC-funded work. Whereas the Social Economy project focused on pulling together multiple partners, the CIP was housed in one place (the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives) but was an ambitious, multifaceted undertaking that generated an immediate staff increase at the Centre. A research manager, a research officer, a data officer, community engagement specialists, and multiple student researchers ran the project under the guidance of both faculty oversight and a board, separate from the regular CSC board. The research itself involved both telephone and web-based surveys, twenty-six on-site community visits across four provinces, interviews, data analysis, and voluminous writing and meetings. The logistics of creating community connections, planning and organizing meeting spaces and

food, getting researchers to remote northern or rural communities, conducting the research, and collating the massive amounts of data generation took the greater part of two years. Project leaders and students needed office space within the CSC's allocation in the Diefenbaker Building, stretching limits to desks, chairs, and computers. CSC staff supported the project through handling logistics, managing financial reporting, editing, providing much-needed project backbone, and facilitating its connection to the larger University of Saskatchewan system. The project produced an unanticipated outcome. Its recommendations led to the creation of a new nonprofit entity in western Canada, Co-operatives First, dedicated to supporting an increased use of the co-operative economic and social model within rural and Indigenous communities across western Canada.

Each of these grants was a threshold event that led to change within the Centre, both during the granting period through increased activity, and afterwards, through communications, increased exposure, connections, and publications. The staff complement shrank once grant monies were fully expended. Yet grants have a way of bringing in more money; success begets success. Lessons learned in handling one large grant are held in the institutional memory of both staff and faculty and brought forward into the next grant. Staff brought on board for a large project become a pool of experts available for contract or permanent staff. Publications build a larger digital library of resources available to advance other research projects and point to new directions for future work. None of these external grants would have been as successful if the Centre did not have the ability to support core staff. In fact, it was the continuity of core staff that allowed the Centre to bid for, and win, large external grants; the short-term staff hires enabled by these large grants simply did not allow for institutional learning, memory, and continued growth.

The opposite should also be considered: If the CSC ceases to win outside research funding to generate new knowledge, what will be the result? It has maintained a role in outreach, extension, and training for the larger co-operative sector, which would continue for a period of time. But without new

research questions driving new insights, training and education components will suffer. The relocation of the library away from the Centre is also a factor; the move transferred knowledge from physical sources to only those materials that have been digitized for on-line access, which are a precious few. Special Collections in the university's main library, which now houses the Centre's former holdings, does not allow clients to borrow items; they must use them *in situ,* which many regard as a major inconvenience in the digital age. Teaching priorities have firmly shifted to graduate studies, which means fewer students overall but better training, which probably ends in a net win for co-operatives. But without research projects and new questions, what will happen to collegial interdisciplinarity? Faculty across the board reported that working together on projects, deliberately taking the time to view research problems and questions with a broad set of tools, has been foundational to the Centre's energy and output. While grant funding may look on the outside like a nice-to-have, it has consistently proven to be much more — a major energy driver, cross-cutting CSC activity and stitching together strength.

As noted so clearly in chapter one, the Centre was built on the cornerstone of the strong relationships among the original task force and board members. What is the relationship between board members and board connection, and the overall health of the CSC? This is a theme I will return to later as I think about the role of governance. Another area of strength for the CSC was the long-term stability of and ongoing relationship with its core faculty, particularly Murray Fulton, Lou Hammond Ketilson, and Brett Fairbairn, and later, Michael Gertler. Others such as Dan Ish and Isobel Findlay have retained close ties. Although Hammond Ketilson retired from the university in 2014, she remains an active researcher, with multiple projects with Isobel Findlay, also retired. However, the cohesive connection of that early cohort has been a liability for faculty renewal throughout the CSC's existence. When these faculty members were involved with other initiatives or took administrative roles across campus, their positions could not be replaced due to the individualized and departmental salary

structure. Board minutes, originally excited as the University of Saskatchewan took over the faculty salary lines in the 1990s and into the 2000s, soon showed concern. Moving CSC faculty salaries to the university has proven to be a threshold event that created a new kind of system. How would the Centre replace or renew faculty members, should any choose to leave? What leverage would they have with larger university hiring processes or position openings? Conversely, each time the CSC went through the process of the five-year funding renewal contract, it wasn't just the co-operatives that had to be wooed. The university also required attention to ensure its support, particularly for funding in-kind office and teaching space, as well as tenure lines. The Centre did not have enough funds to hire, on its own, new full-time faculty, and departments and colleges across campus could or would not necessarily bring in and share new co-operative researchers, just to have their department time cut due to commitments to the CSC. Bridging hires, where the CSC would partly fund new faculty but ask a department to take over the salary line over time (or similar arrangements such as term appointments or postdoctoral fellows), could offer some fresh perspectives and new research and teaching energy for the CSC, but these were either short-lived or otherwise less successful than the original hiring model.

The next major hurdle for the CSC faculty is a factor of time: many are past or getting near retirement. Although Michael Gertler's active role with the Centre began in 1996, his tenure at the university is almost as long as the original three. All four of those core faculty are either close to or actively changing the nature of their teaching, research, and engagement relationship with the CSC. In fall 2018, Brett Fairbairn began an appointment as president of Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, BC. As with any department, the departure of a faculty member leaves both a gap in institutional memory and sometimes a hole in the curriculum. Will an incoming faculty member be able to pick up those classes exactly as taught, or will there need to be curriculum renewal as well? These are legitimate questions of concern as Centre faculty look to retirement. Will the University of Saskatchewan com-

mit to hiring co-operative–focused faculty researchers across campus to replace those who have or are nearing retirement or leaving the university? Using the original parameters, these new faculty might be in education, law, history, business, health, sociology, economics, or other unthought-of disciplines, or might be interdisciplinary scholars whose work fits well into a nontraditional school, such as the School of Environment and Sustainability or the School of Public Policy. If yes, the CSC might continue in its current, recognizable form. The 2018 hiring of Marc-André Pigeon as a Strategic Research Fellow in Co-operatives through the School of Public Policy showcases the possible success of this direction.

A related aspect of faculty renewal is the relationship to the larger co-operative community as both funders and subjects of research. What if there are large, ongoing research projects or community relationships built on years of trust and history? How will those continue if key people leave? The opposite is also true: What if there is a dissonance between the kinds of research expected by the funders and the research interests of existing or incoming faculty members? What influence should funders have on choosing faculty? The landscape of the co-operative community is also by no means stagnant. The demise of the Wheat Pool and other large co-operatives throughout the Centre's history, the continued amalgamation of large credit unions and regional retail co-ops, and changes within the co-op research and teaching community all have an impact on the Centre's resilience. Its origins clearly show the importance of personal relationships and trust. What will be the impact as those relationships change?

The separation between staff and faculty, even in a small institution such as the CSC, showcases two separate cogs in an engine: They work together to make it run, but they are different pieces. There have been changes over time to the core staff complement, but overall there have been five key roles: office manager, administrative support, communications lead, librarian, and education/research/ outreach combined as a fifth position. These positions are key variables that show great continuity and resilience within the CSC. As funding waxed and waned, these roles would double up or constrict, or

stretch out to accommodate incoming large grants or different funding allocations, but they have been, in general, easily identifiable. With the removal of the Resource Centre, the librarian's position was cut — the first major staff change. Staff positions are far more vulnerable to changes in the five-year funding agreements than faculty positions. In essence, the question becomes: Would the Centre as an entity built for teaching, research, and knowledge sharing remain the same if it lost staff? What would be the impact on its ability to address its core mandate if there were no dedicated staff component to bridge, complement, and extend faculty resources? As the Centre nears its next funding cycle in 2019, coupled with staff retirements, there is an opportunity to reassess staff positions and potentially make changes to capture the energy needed to drive the CSC forward in its new configuration, whatever that may be.

The Centre's system dynamics show a state of continual flux, expansion and contraction in response to a rise or fall in funding resources, especially core and research funding. In examining some of its central dynamics, including an assessment of the importance of academic autonomy, teaching priorities, interdisciplinarity, and presence (from the local to the international), we see how these dynamics flow through the work of the Centre to drive its energy and output. The critical roles of communications and library resources, as well as outreach and extension activities, are the lines through which its energy (research knowledge and expertise) flows out from and back to the Centre's core. Changing any one of these areas has a direct impact on the direction, pace, and inclusivity/accessibility of its work.

The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives has remained remarkably resilient throughout its lifespan. Interestingly, the structure of faculty and staff, combined with a solid connection to its physical space in the Diefenbaker Building, have allowed the Centre to withstand a multitude of changes, both internal and external. The longevity and continued presence of the Centre have had an impact on the larger spheres within which it operates: the co-operative sector, the provincial government, and the University of Saskatchewan. The next chapter will explore these spheres in depth.

Interlude Two: Timelines

The life cycle of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives can be viewed in multiple ways. The two most popular would be to consider either each of the successive five-year contracts, or the leadership style and activities of each of the directors.

While both provide insight, resilience theory offers a few other lenses. The origins of the Centre constitute the original "disturbance" to the larger co-operative, university, and government system of research and education about co-operatives. What followed was an organizational and establishment phase that covered the first two agreements and the beginning of the third. It took those iterations and that time to find a model that was sustainable, both for the Centre as an entity drawing from across the university, and for Centre scholars to become well established in their fields.

That period of establishment was followed by one of rapid growth and development, leading to a clear sense of maturity.

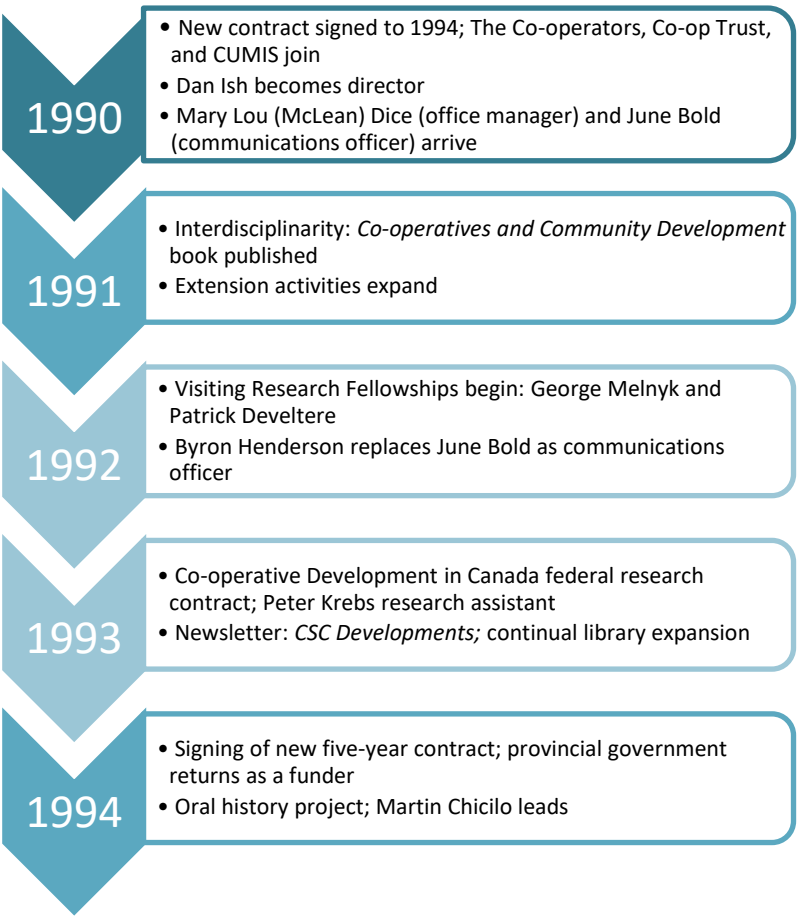

Figure 5: Timeline, 1988–1994

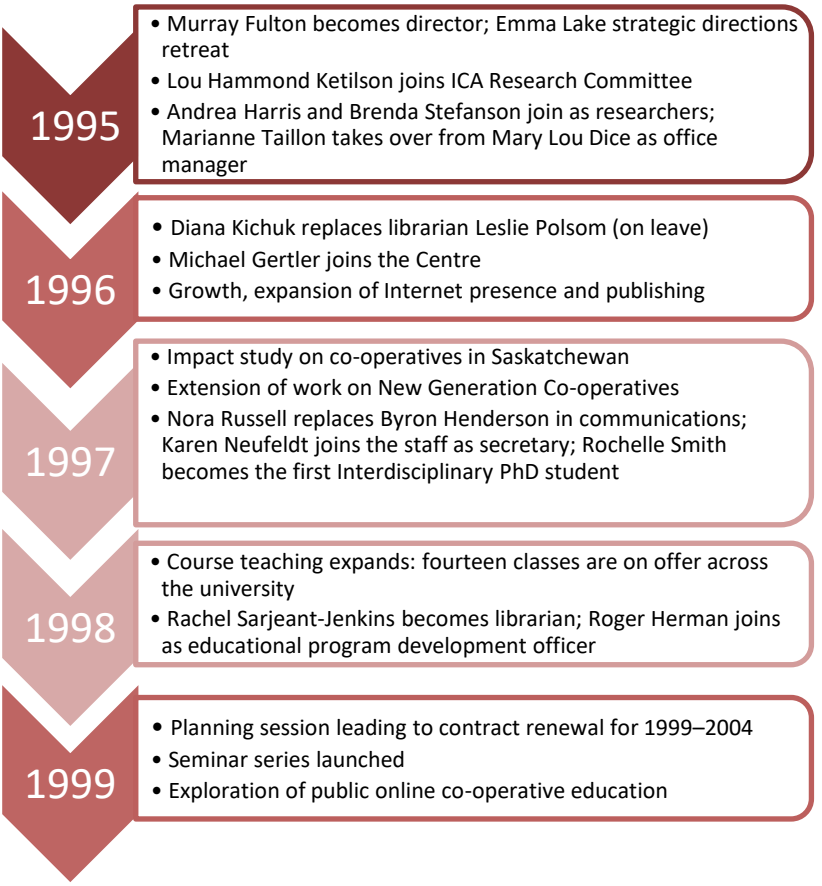

Figure 6: Timeline, 1994–1999

From 2002 to 2014, the Centre was able to capitalize on its core capacity to win and shepherd small, medium, and large research projects, expand and contract easily through those projects, develop major relationships, and bring in scholars and visitors, while successfully producing and mobilizing pertinent knowledge via many channels. Its stability showed every time it faced a potential setback or change, including funding changes or strategic planning initiatives.

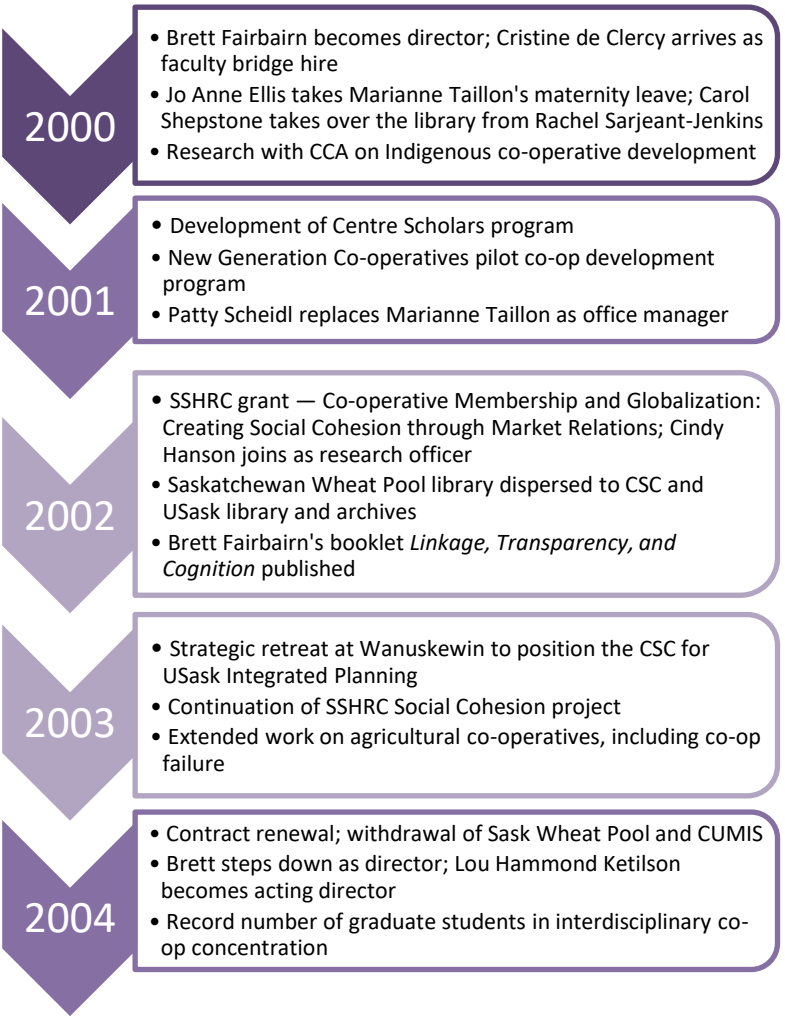

Figure 7: Timeline, 2000–2004

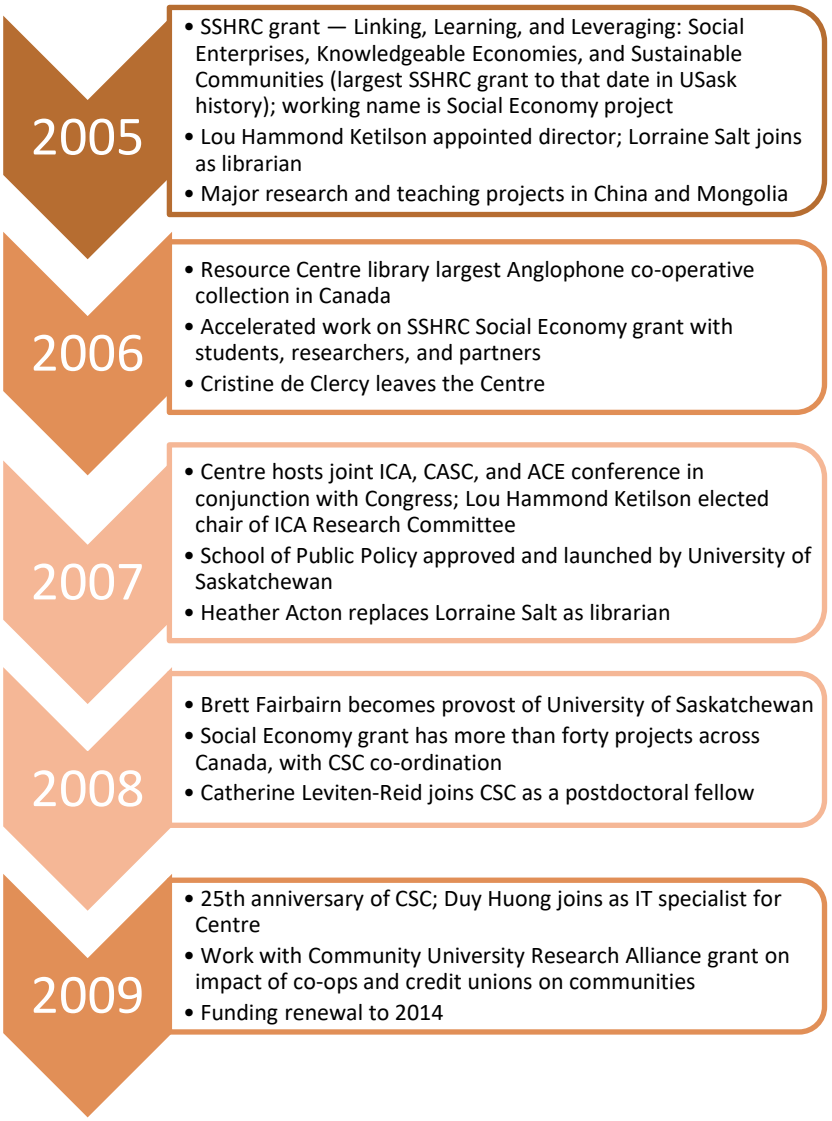

Figure 8: Timeline, 2005–2009

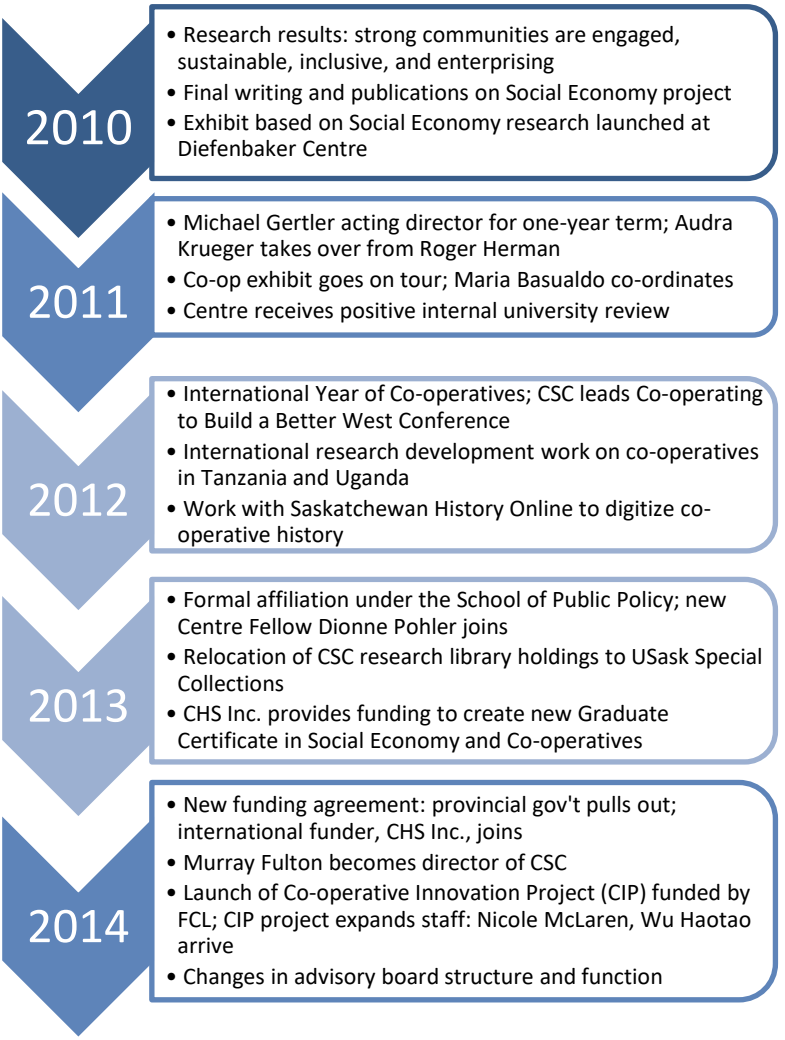

Figure 9: Timeline, 2010–2014

The Centre changed significantly between 2013 and 2014, ushering in its first major period of extensive release and reorganization. In some ways, these fundamental changes were less visible due to large grant projects in progress, and it may be too soon to tell how or if these changes will redirect the Centre going forward.

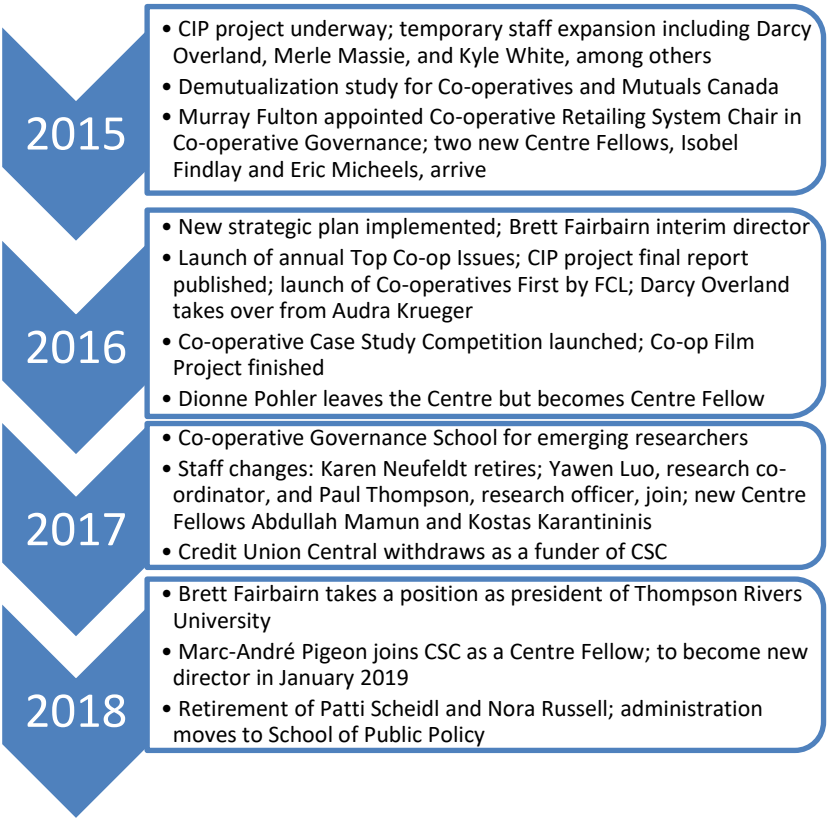

Figure 10: Timeline, 2015–2018

As of 2018, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives is in a period of contract negotiations and renewal. As of the writing of this history, a new contract is not yet in place.