Call for expressions of interest

The UBC Learning Exchange (http://learningexchange.ubc.ca/) is seeking a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) at Master’s or PhD level for one year to provide research support to the Academic Director.

Job summary
The Learning Exchange is core to UBC’s Downtown Eastside (DTES) campus and works to engage, inspire and lead local residents, students, faculty and organizations to work and learn together. In 2013 an Academic Director was appointed to strengthen the Learning Exchange as an academic unit of the university through activities related to UBC’s commitments to Student Learning, Research and Community Engagement. This GRA position will focus on issues of research in the DTES.

The DTES has been the venue for a lot of research involving residents as research subjects, much of it done by faculty at UBC. Despite all the research that has been done, however, residents report that their lives have changed little, in part because research findings are rarely made accessible to DTES residents. The Making Research Accessible in the DTES initiative was started in response to this feedback. Previous GRAs have: i) created a bibliography of research focused on the DTES; ii) identified key areas of interest among DTES organizations; iii) provided research support to successful community/university partnerships (RICHER) and a group of waste pickers (The Binners’ Project); iv) collaborated with UBC library to develop a digital open-access repository of peer reviewed literature; v) assisted with the planning, implementation and evaluation of knowledge exchange events organized in partnership with community organizations and university researchers. The GRA is expected to continue this work in the following areas:

- Contribute to the overall planning and development of the Making Research Accessible in the DTES initiative;
- Provide support to the Making Research Accessible initiative Steering Committee and Working Groups;
- Develop the Learning Exchange’s capacity to act as a space where researchers can come to gain input from the community on their research projects and share their research findings.
- Maintain a bibliography of research articles and collection of community-generated materials relevant to Vancouver’s DTES;
- Organize community consultations and pilot testing of the prototype open-access repository;
- Work with DTES community groups and residents to promote equitable participation in research and access to research findings;
- Support the Learning Exchange as a resource to build capacity for Community Based Research, including supporting students to do research in the DTES.

Role of the graduate student
The project provides an excellent opportunity for a graduate student to develop expertise in community-based participatory research and knowledge exchange involving people who are marginalized and live in an area that has been stigmatized. The graduate student will be responsible for supporting all aspects of the Making Research Accessible initiative, including planning and project management, community outreach and consultations, event planning, report writing, dissemination and communication, and grant writing, as well as information sharing between UBC faculty, students and
DTES residents and organizations. This position is an opportunity to be part of developing new approaches to making research accessible to the public as well as to interact with DTES residents.

Attributes required for the role include proven ability in the following: convening different groups, committee support, verbal and written communication skills, planning and project management. Connections across the university and with DTES communities are an asset.

The student will be expected to work 15 hours per week starting at the beginning of September 2016. The stipend is in the range $1250 to $1350 / month, depending on skills and experience. The position is available for one year with the possibility of extension beyond this period.

If you think this might be the project for you, please contact the Academic Director, Dr Angela Towle, (angela.towle@ubc.ca) with a preliminary letter of interest and up-to-date resume that includes your relevant experience by Friday 5 August 2016.