Dr. Mike DeGagné:

So, what does community engagement mean to Nipissing University? Or how do we play a part in that? Well, I think we have to understand or situate ourselves within the dynamic of who the university is and what the community is. And so, when we look at how we do community, community engagement, generally, we can go back to all sorts of reports that have emerged over the past decades about, you know, the Royal Commission, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the principles that were developed by the government recently on relationships with indigenous people, indigenous communities. And there is a theme that emerges, and that theme is, is that communities should be self-determining that they should have control over their own affairs. And they should be empowered to make their own decisions. And so, I think that's, that's a critical piece of this is the idea that when we are engaging with communities that we keep in mind, that we are part of as institutions, the self-determination process. So, what does that mean? What it means is, is that we feel at universities that we're there to help. And it feels good to help, it feels good to give to another person. And it feels nice to be needed. So, the university regardless of how big it is, or how important it is, to that community comes in and says, we have so much to give, we have so many so much information, so many qualified people, so many opportunities. So, we're here to help. And if you need us more tomorrow than you do today, that's good. And I think that's a bit of a hole that we tend to fall into to say that we are the well-informed, all-knowing institution. And we're going into community where there isn't any information, and there isn't any knowledge. There aren't the skills that are required. And so, we're there to help. And then tomorrow, you'll need our help a little more. And then the third day, you'll need our help even more. I think we need to reframe that whole discussion. When Nipissing University certainly tries to reframe that discussion to say, we're not here to help, we're here to be a partner. And what that means in terms of respect for partnership is that we need to listen to what the community has to offer. And so, we can come in and say, we have this to offer. We have faculties and disciplines and knowledge and skill development and capacities. We put that on the table respectfully, and you now can offer what you have and then community says we offer a different worldview, we offer a different perspective, we have offered a different way of knowing and being. And that's what we put on the table. And together we work together to make to make something more than the sum of those two parts.

Dr. Cindy Peltier:

I've asked everyone to come today to share a little bit about what they know from their own experience about what it means to work in relationship with community and doing that in a good way.

Elder Carol Guppy:

Ahow boozhoo [Greetings], Giiwedinong Animikii Bineshii-Kwe ndizhnikaaz [North Star Thunderbird Woman is my name], Bizhiw ndoodem [lynx is my clan], Temagami Anishinaabe Nipissing ndoonjiba [Temagami Anishinaabe Nipissing is where I come from] My name is Carol Guppy. I'm very pleased to be here. And I was thinking about that question of what it means to us to be community work in community. I think when we talk about that open mind, that keeping that open mind and really listening to each other, really keeping an open mind and always be aware that maybe somebody else has another idea or can give a different perspective on something and really listening to each other.

Dr. Katrina Srigley:

When we're thinking about community and working community, something that I have really learned in my years of living here is that relationship is in fact, the point. And so many of us have already spoken about relationship here. When I came to realize that relationship was the goal, right? It actually wasn't the next research grant or the next publication, or the next lab curricula that you were developing. There were a lot of other teachings that came into view or pieces of the puzzle that started to fit together for me. One of them has already been mentioned about always being a learner. If relationship is your goal, then you you're constantly supporting and developing and working in that relationship to further that relationship, and better that relationship and strengthen it so suddenly, expertise or credentials are absolutely unimportant. You bring your knowledge and your skill to the circle, however big or small, that circle is.