Notice of the Final Oral Examination for the Degree of Master of Social Work of

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“Sheltered Work to Social Enterprise: A Case Study of Haley Street Adult Services Centre Society”

School of Social Work

Thursday, September 6, 2018
9:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B021

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Bruce Wallace, School of Social Work, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Mehmoona Moosa-Mitha, School of Social Work, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Michael Hayes, School of Public Health and Social Policy, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Alexandra D’Arcy, Department of Linguistics, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Supportive work programs for people with disabilities have historically included sheltered workshops; while social enterprises are now more commonly found in policies and programs providing opportunities to address social, environmental, or economic challenges through revenue generating activities for this group. I began this thesis as a person who works at Haley Street Adult Services Centre Society in Nova Scotia, Canada and who is part of the changing provision from sheltered workshops to social enterprises. My primary research question is what is a non-profit, community-based organization working with people with disabilities, and a history of sheltered workshops, response to the current social enterprise movement? The study provides a case study analysis on Haley Street Adult Services Centre Society and its woodshop and thrift store programs for people with disabilities. The research includes interviews and focus groups with 19 participants (7 staff, 12 program participants) that work in the agency social enterprises as well as an organizational financial analysis. A thematic analysis of the interview and focus group transcripts resulted in the emergence of four themes that explore different aspects of social enterprises that support persons with people with disabilities. The themes included community engagement, demonstrating individual and agency capabilities, improved individual well-being, and agency social-economic tensions. Social enterprise at Haley Street is an integral part of its identity and emergence in the community. The profitability of social enterprise at Haley Street appears to be secondary to the social well-being and engagement of participants. The current research found that sheltered work and social enterprises are comparable entities, with sheltered work a subgroup of social enterprise.