

# **Leadership Practices for Place-Based Community Engagement Initiatives**

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## **Abstract**

Place-based community engagement (PBCE) is a contemporary form of community engagement gaining popularity throughout the United States. PBCE provides a comprehensive strategy for universities and communities to more democratically partner with each other through long-term efforts focused on distinct geographic areas. Drawing from one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and observational data, this research examined the leadership at five institutions currently engaged in PBCE. In particular, this research involved an analysis of the leadership role of community engagement professionals within a framework of the five elements of PBCE (Yamamura & Koth, 2018). Findings revealed three leadership competency areas for community engagement professionals: (1) Managing geographies of place and space, (2) actualizing a 50/50 approach to community and university impact, and (3) leading with multicultural competency and inclusion. The findings illuminate the need for stronger training and development in these areas, especially for institutions that seek to start a PBCE initiative. *Keywords:* leadership, place-based

## **Introduction**

The field of community engagement in higher education is evolving at a rapid pace that reflects the maturity of the field; the rapid changes in higher education; and the dramatic cultural, political, and social shifts occurring in the United States. With this rapid evolution, community engagement professionals (CEPs) at every positional level need to continue to learn new skills, attributes, and competencies in order to lead ethically and effectively. In this article we make distinctions between positional leadership with the CEP model, in particular with CEP directors versus CEP staff members. We make this distinction because a CEP director often, though not always, leads PBCE. The preliminary competency model for community engagement professionals (Dostilio, 2017b) provides an extensive set of competencies to assist CEPs in navigating the shifting landscape they encounter on campus and in the community. Yet, as Dostilio (2017) note, the ever-evolving nature of the community engagement field calls for

revisiting the competency model to deepen and expand key considerations for community engagement professionals.

The growing use of place-based community engagement in higher education and the skills needed to lead and work within this subfield of community engagement invite community engagement professionals to further develop competencies in several significant areas that are less conspicuous in the current competency model. Most notably, place-based community engagement calls for community engagement professionals to center efforts deeply, cooperatively, and in innovative ways in a particular geographic area.

Drawing upon a recent research study and book on place-based community engagement in higher education (*Yamamura & Koth, 2018*), this article illuminates three significant emerging leadership competencies for CEPs involved in place-based community engagement (PBCE): (1) centralizing geographies of place and space for community, (2) actualizing a 50/50 approach to community and university impact, and (3) leading with multicultural competency and inclusion. Although perhaps most salient to professionals involved in facilitating place-based community engagement, these emerging competencies can inform all CEPs, regardless of position and engagement approach, as they probe the outer edges of the community engagement field.

## Literature Review

Although the community engagement field is over 40 years old, very little research has focused on the leadership and professional competencies in this area. In the past 5 years, practitioners and researchers have increased attention on the leadership and administration of community engagement (*Dostilio, 2017b; Post, Ward, Longo, & Saltmarsh, 2016; Welch, 2016*). Welch's (2016) book provides university–community engagement leaders with research-based structures and practices to enhance their work, in particular for institutions that seek to prepare for and/or align their practices with the national Carnegie Classification in Community Engagement. Post et al.'s (2016) work provides the context and history of key thinkers and researchers in community engagement in higher education. Contributors to this work articulate the concept of next-generation community engagement professionals who are more diverse and can be scholar-practitioners as well as nonacademic knowledge experts. Dostilio (2017b) build upon this new research by codifying the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to lead and facilitate community engagement efforts in higher education.

Taken together, these works suggest maturation of, and a movement toward professional standards for, the field.

Another recent evolution within the field of community engagement in higher education is an increased intentional focus on place. Place is not a new concept in education. Public K-12 educational systems have always been place-centered in the United States, with one's home address often determining the schools one attends. K-12 schools have historically had a variety of community engagement partnership models with families, community organizations, higher education, and philanthropy (*Guajardo, Guajardo, Janson, & Militello, 2016; Martinez-Cosio & Bussell, 2013*). In recent years the Harlem Children's Zone has provided a significant model of the development of an intensive place-based pathway of educational and social support to improve outcomes for youth in Harlem, a historically working-class African American neighborhood (*Tough, 2009*).

Focusing on place in higher education is growing in popularity, with multiple institutions of higher education utilizing a paradigm of place to guide their community engagement strategy. For example, numerous institutions of higher education are embracing their role as an anchor institution to situate themselves within the context of a local community (*Harris & Pickron-Davis, 2013; Hodges & Dubb, 2012; Percy, Zimpher, & Brukardt, 2006*). The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities and the Democracy Collaborative are currently working with 31 colleges and universities to identify resources and develop new tools for implementing, expanding, and evaluating anchor mission practices within their institutions, higher education, and the communities they serve (*Democracy Collaborative, 2017*). Another example of the burgeoning focus on place in higher education is the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program (<https://sci.uoregon.edu/>), which matches university students with one Oregon city for an entire year. Other universities are drawing upon the model to positively impact municipalities in their geographic regions.

Neighborhood-based approaches to educational partnerships, particularly approaches that focus on the assets of the community to improve social and educational outcomes, are yet another example of the growing emphasis on place (*Dostilio, 2017a; Guajardo et al., 2016; McKnight & Block, 2010*). McKnight and Block (2010) call for partnerships that focus on community assets that form building blocks for neighborhood development. More specifically in higher education, Dostilio (2017a) shares her research on "neighborhood enclaved centers," in which she profiles four universities that are

engaged in high-quality and deep relationships with their local communities. A key distinction Dostilio makes is between being *in* a place (“place-based”) and *of* a place (what she calls “being emplaced”). Another neighborhood-based approach is Guajardo et al.’s (2016) community-based work known as the Community Learning Exchange, in which they use introspective and narrative methods (storytelling and dynamic reflections) to engage with and for community. A key strength of this approach is the deep individual, community, and collective layers of understanding that are explored to connect with each other and empower the community, especially in racially diverse and marginalized communities.

### **Place-Based Community Engagement Framework**

Curious about the burgeoning focus on place in higher education, particularly within the field of community engagement, we embarked on a research study to better understand the lessons arising from universities with a proven commitment to place-based community engagement. In our study we defined place-based community engagement (PBCE) in higher education as a long-term, university-wide commitment to partner with local residents, organizations, and other leaders to focus equally on campus and community impact within a clearly defined geographic area. This definition of PBCE includes a number of key components:

1. a geographically defined focus,
2. equal emphasis on campus and community (50/50 proposition),
3. long-term vision and commitment,
4. university-wide engagement that animates the mission and develops the institution, and
5. drawing upon collective impact (*Yamamura & Koth, 2018*).

Most institutions of higher education have a dispersed approach to community engagement, often directing resources to dozens of projects and in multiple local, regional, and international locations. PBCE intentionally emphasizes a local geographic focus with clearly defined boundaries. Moreover, in what we’ve termed the 50/50 proposition, PBCE also places an equal emphasis on campus and community impact. This is a departure from the practices and infrastructure that frequently emphasize

campus impact (student learning outcomes, faculty engagement, etc.) over community impact. Recognizing that significant change takes time and deep investments in relationships, PBCE focuses on long-term, multiyear commitments from all parties. In addition, PBCE, when fully actualized, is a university-wide strategy that animates the university mission. For example, at Jesuit institutions this provides an opportunity for enhancing mission-aligned social justice opportunities for students. At public institutions, this may help develop the university engagement policy with faculty research and clinical experiences. Finally, PBCE is a communal effort and draws upon the concept of collective impact. Common elements of the collective impact approach include a common agenda, shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone support organization (*Kania & Kramer, 2011*). Institutions of higher education pursuing PBCE may take on the role of backbone organization for the collective impact approach.

As noted above, when embraced fully PBCE differs significantly from the most popular and predominant community engagement approaches in higher education. Leading and working within a PBCE initiative thus calls for drawing upon the common set of competencies presented by *Dostilio (2017)*, as well as a distinct set of additional leadership skills, philosophies, and attributes. Utilizing our (*Yamamura & Koth, 2018*) place-based community engagement framework, we explored this question: What are the competencies for leading a place-based initiative? Our study allowed us to observe and engage with numerous leaders of place-based community engagement, which enabled us to begin to surface competencies for leading these complex efforts.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

This article draws upon a larger study that examined place-based community engagement in practice at five institutions. In the larger study, we conducted site visits and a number of focus groups, group conversations, and one-on-one interviews with a variety of stakeholders. In total, we collected qualitative data from approximately 190 stakeholders, including 50 staff members of place-based initiatives, 55 on-campus stakeholders (faculty, noninitiative staff, and students), and 85 community partners. For this study, we will utilize data that speaks to CEPs.

## Data Analysis

We began with an open coding process (Creswell, 2014) highlighting narratives focused on CEPs. Thereafter, we completed thematic coding of our transcript and on-site field notes by examining five components of place-based community engagement and the role of CEPs in their respective initiatives. Three areas that are complementary to the Dostilio (2017) CEP competency model emerged. For trustworthiness, we engaged in a peer debriefing process to illuminate biases and assess clarity and strength of the themes (Creswell, 2014).

## Place-Based Initiatives

Drawing from over 35 institutions performing place-specific community engagement work, we examined mature place-based initiatives in five institutions of higher education: Drexel University, Loyola University Maryland, San Diego State University, Seattle University, and the University of San Diego. Each initiative engages a local geographic area with structural and programmatic components that are developed to support communities in the long term. A brief description of each initiative is provided below.

**Drexel University.** Drexel is focused on the Powelton Village and Mantua neighborhoods that are adjacent to the university. Some distinctive components include their Federal Promise Zone designation in collaboration with the City of Philadelphia, a local school district, and other community organizations; their Dornsife Center, which serves as an extension center for the university; and their curricular engagement, with a required University 101 course for all undergraduates.

**Loyola University Maryland.** Loyola's York Road Initiative is centered on the York Road Corridor in Northern Baltimore, a historical corridor for the area. Key elements include their Loyola Clinical Centers, partnerships with the local school district, and their unique farmers market that provides fresh produce to the local community.

**San Diego State University.** San Diego State University's over two-decades-long P-20 college access partnerships with Price Philanthropies and the San Diego Unified School District is the longest-lived formal place-based initiative. Unique components include their College Avenue Compact program, which provides precollege and wraparound services for P-20 college success, their "schools in the park" curricular model, and clinical graduate training programs at an extension center in the community.

**Seattle University.** Seattle University's Youth Initiative (SUYI) is focused on the communities in the Central District, Yesler Terrace, and the International District that surround the institution. Notable features include a Choice Neighborhood Grant with the Seattle Housing Authority, strong partnership with Seattle Public Schools (especially schools in their catchment area), and their role as a convener of other institutions and organizations seeking to engage in place-based community engagement.

**University of San Diego.** The University of San Diego's anchor and place-based initiative is focused on the Linda Vista neighborhood, which is located east of the university. The university has a history of strong partnerships with community organizations that their recently formalized anchor and place-based work has deepened. Similar to other campuses doing this work, they have had strong partnerships with local schools and the Bayside Community Center. Their strong curricular training of their undergraduate leaders and students centralizes identity development, multicultural competency, and servant leader for marginalized communities.

It is important to note that all of the initiatives had K-12 educational partners. Partnerships with schools and school districts allowed universities the opportunity to create substantive P-20 partnerships and to enhance college access, including to their institution.

## Findings

Through our research we identified three key competency areas central to CEP leadership of a PBCE initiative: (1) centralizing geographies of place and space for community, (2) actualizing a 50/50 approach to community and university impact, and (3) leading with multicultural competency and inclusion.

### Centralizing Geographies of Place and Space for Community

The current CEP competencies do not acknowledge or centralize place or space within the framework. However, all of the place-based initiatives did so with intentionality and long-term commitments to the communities.

**Proximity.** All five of the institutions identified a geographical region that was in close proximity to the campus to develop deep, mutually beneficial partnerships with the community (and enhance existing ones). For university leadership and CEPs, the process of identifying these locations often involved careful plan-

ning (Seattle University and Loyola Maryland) and significant diplomacy (Drexel and San Diego State University).

**Socioeconomic challenges.** Each of the geographical areas linked to the universities in our study has historical and contemporary economic and social challenges as well as community assets that are acknowledged and built upon. Drexel University and Loyola University Maryland both partner with African American communities. San Diego State University and the University of San Diego partner with communities consisting of immigrants from multiple countries. Seattle University's partner communities benefit from having both a historic African American community and immigrant (Chinese, Japanese, Somali, and Vietnamese) communities. CEPs involved in launching and sustaining their PBCE initiatives demonstrated significant acumen in bridging their historically White institutions with these culturally, racially, and economically diverse communities.

**Collaborative priorities.** The CEPs worked collaboratively with campus and community partners to identify needs, assets, and strategies to improve community outcomes in their respective geographic areas. However, the process and practice of these CEP leaders looked different depending on the respective campus's approach to developing their PBCE. Several of the campuses took a more formal approach to building campus and community collaborations. For example, Seattle University engaged in a multiyear planning process starting with senior campus leadership (non-CEPs) and a CEP executive director visiting different campuses and facilitating a formal campuswide task force. Loyola University Maryland also had a yearlong "year of listening," which provided the basis of their planning process. In contrast, San Diego State University did not pursue as formal a process and relied on the expertise and research of their philanthropic partner, Price Philanthropies, which had already committed to community development of their geographical area, City Heights. Finally, the University of San Diego pursued more of an organic multiyear process of growing out partnerships that culminated in their PBCE in the neighborhood of Linda Vista. Despite the vast differences in planning processes, the critical skills for the CEPs involved in all five initiatives were the ability to listen, to facilitate complex multi-partner conversations, and to move groups toward a shared vision of focusing on place.

**Physical meeting space.** The CEPs leading and supporting their respective PBCE initiatives strategically developed and used spaces on campus and in the community to provide dynamic



sites of collaboration and learning. Drexel University and Loyola Maryland both developed off-campus spaces that gave faculty an opportunity to provide services to the community through offering clinical training of their graduate students. The University of San Diego's key community partner, Bayside Community Center, worked closely with the campus to build a produce patch at their community center and host a multicultural farmers market in the community.

**Physical office space.** In addition to meeting spaces, CEPs also worked to recenter physical office spaces in the interest of community visibility and partnership. For example, Seattle University and Loyola University Maryland located their community engagement office space within their geographic focus areas in order to increase access and visibility of their partnership within their communities. In moving their office spaces, the CEPs at Seattle University and Loyola Maryland had to balance the polarity of remaining connected to campus and becoming more accessible to the community.

## **Actualizing a 50/50 Approach to Community and University Impact**

In addition to centering geographic space and place, CEPs leading PBCE initiatives also embraced the opportunities and tensions of the 50/50 approach, focusing equally on campus and community impact. As noted previously, pursuing an equal emphasis on campus and community impact departs from the predominant approach to community engagement in higher education, which tends to significantly emphasize student learning with less attention paid to community impact. In utilizing the 50/50 approach, the CEP leaders within our study (1) hired external-facing CEP staff, (2) significantly incorporated community voice, (3) pursued curricular innovation, and (4) emphasized assessment and evaluation of community impact.

**Hiring external-facing staff.** Recognizing the importance of developing thoughtful strategies to pursue community impact, a number of the CEP leaders within our study created new CEP positions with an external-facing portfolio. Drexel University created an executive director for their off-campus community engagement space (the Dornsife Center), Seattle University established a director of community partnerships, and the University of San Diego created a director of their community-based youth program. CEPs in these positions spend most of their time off campus pursuing intensive community partnership work. Two universities took the

50/50 approach even further by creating university staff positions that spent all of their time at community partner sites. The CEP leadership at Seattle University created multiple positions located on their elementary and middle school sites. During their 20 years of partnering in the City Heights neighborhood, San Diego State University has had a number of university staff members who spent all of their time at partner elementary, middle, and high schools. In creating these external-facing and externally located positions, the CEPs leading place-based engagement at their institutions demonstrated tremendous political and financial acumen.

**Community voice.** The actualization of the 50/50 approach requires creating mechanisms to give community leaders and members more voice and influence. One way in which CEPs leading place-based initiatives effected greater community voice and impact was through creating community engagement advisory boards. For example, Seattle University's place-based initiative received strategic and financial input from community partners serving on two distinct boards. In addition, CEPs, especially executive directors and external-facing staff, also served on a variety of community-based advisory boards.

**Curricular innovation.** Curricular innovation in which community members took courses on campus was yet another area of the 50/50 campus and community impact approach in practice. At Drexel University and the University of San Diego, CEP leaders created new structures offering community members opportunities to take university courses. Drexel offers "side-by-side" classes that allow community members to take university courses alongside university students at no cost. The University of San Diego has piloted a similar opportunity with community members.

**Assessment and evaluation.** Finally, CEPs within the initiatives we examined also placed significant emphasis on the assessment and evaluation of community impact outcomes. Although all the CEP leaders spoke of the importance of community impact, CEP leadership at Seattle University and Drexel University frequently measured the impact of various community metrics associated with their place-based initiatives. Utilizing funds from a federal grant, Seattle University even hired an internal assessment and evaluation analyst to measure and track community impact outcomes, especially with their partnership schools.

## **Leading With Multicultural Competency and Inclusion**

All of the higher education institutions examined in this article are majority White institutions that serve majority non-White communities. Four of the five initiative directors are also White. Although race is not the only component of multicultural competency and inclusion, it is an important one in higher education and U.S. society today. Even though attention to multicultural competency and inclusion is often a student training concern for CEPs, our research revealed that CEPs pursued even more robust and dynamic practices within PBCE initiatives.

**Multicultural competency.** All of the PBCE initiatives explored and uncovered the racial and socioeconomic histories and contemporary context of their respective neighborhoods, including systematic exclusion, discrimination, and prior negative relationships with the institution. CEP leaders from Drexel and San Diego State developed awareness of cultural and racial dynamics through community meetings and meetings with community partners. CEP leaders at Loyola University Maryland, Seattle University, and the University of San Diego utilized more on-the-ground approaches to learning their community context and educating their staff, faculty, and students. These institutions used immersive experiences that involved multiple day visits in the community to hear stories, share perspectives, and, as one director put it, “break bread” together. These experiences significantly informed the strategies and partnerships of the place-based initiatives. In addition, such opportunities also provided important information that is often visible to or “understood” by community members but perplexing for privileged college students, faculty, and staff—many of whom assume their own experience of living in middle-class, racially homogenous, and economically affluent communities is universal.

Individual identity development (race, class, gender, immigration status, etc.) is a critical part of PBCE work—this developmental work is required of all parties, including staff, faculty, students, and even community partners. This work was most often brought up with CEPs of Color who were typically charged with performing it. Some of the White CEP directors were also actively engaged in this work, but not the majority. To engage campus and community members, CEPs used storytelling and counternarratives that provided asset-based perspectives on stereotypical views of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Two CEP directors of PBCE initiatives and one community partner also shared their own experiences as university alumni; some also included the relevant

experience of having been raised in the communities in which they now work. When CEP directors did not have the training or skill set to do this work, consultants were brought in to train faculty, students, and staff.

**Inclusion.** Although frequently utilizing different tactics, all of the campuses in our study pursued strategies to foster inclusion. For example, several institutions used trainings and professional development to foster inclusion. CEPs at Seattle University have focused their efforts on racial justice, including training for staff and students, as well as work with the community. CEPs at the University of San Diego partnered with faculty to incorporate into courses the exploration of individual identities, antiracist leadership, and advocacy for racial and social justice.

CEPs at several institutions piloted inclusive practices through staffing. For example, CEPs incorporated community visits and interviews with community partners into interview and search processes for new staff. The University of San Diego CEPs were atypically inclusive and multicultural in this regard in that the majority of their CEPs are people of Color and hold other marginalized identities (first generation, veteran, low income, etc.). In addition, some White CEP directors who have access to privileged spaces on campus or with community organizations have mentored their staff of Color to socialize them into these predominantly White, male, and privileged spaces. One benefit identified by a CEP PBCE initiative director is that such opportunities provided partners with privilege an opportunity to see these CEPs of Color as leaders.

## **Implications for Research and Practice**

PBCE brings forth another dimension to community engagement work in higher education: centering efforts deeply, cooperatively, and innovatively in a particular geographic area. As our findings suggest, for CEPs who seek to lead such initiatives, this work is multidimensional at the institution and in the community—with new ways of thinking and working internally with staff and on-campus stakeholders, as well as with community partners.

The findings suggest that place-based work requires intentional community representation and engagement embedded in university structures, spaces, practices, and staffing. Symbolically interacting or providing unidirectional service is a transactional community exchange and not genuine partnership and engagement. As our study illuminates, with intentionality, collaboration, and some ingenuity, CEPs can maximize their institutions' positive impact on

a particular geographic area. Place-based initiatives require CEPs to question assumptions about power, privilege, space, and place in deep and meaningful ways. In some instances CEPs must reimagine traditional systems and structures (office space, physical space, etc.) in college service and community engagement offices. Other aspects require changes in approach and behavior: active listening, focusing on trust building, and treating community partners as knowledgeable and valuable stakeholders, even if they do not have the professional experience or college degrees to give them traditional legitimacy in the higher education setting.

For CEPs involved in place-based community engagement, the focus on a distinct geography means staying connected to the local context in new and challenging ways. For example, if an initiative is focused on the geography of a particular school feeder pattern (elementary, middle, and high school) and the school boundaries shift, CEPs will need to pursue creative new approaches to engaging place. If the CEPs were not involved in a place-based initiative, they could simply move efforts to another school district or system quite easily. Given the long-term nature of place-based work, CEPs must demonstrate adaptive leadership, strong political acumen, and continuous learning.

Moving toward a 50/50 approach to university and community impact is likely to be the most difficult proposition for CEPs involved in PBCE. At present, many community engagement offices claim to be 50/50 in their campus and community impact. However, closer examination of structures, services, and outcomes usually demonstrates a much greater emphasis on campus and over community. The 50/50 approach requires an overhaul of a core value that has led to these programs' historical emphasis on colleges and college students. As the experiences of the institutions in our study suggest, when CEPs empower communities and value community impact, and when they employ strategies that reflect these values in hiring, curriculum development, evaluation, and incorporating community voice, deeper and much more authentic partnerships become possible.

Finally, as presented above, exercising multicultural competency and embracing practices of inclusion are essential leadership skills for CEPs. Service and community engagement offices in higher education seem to be slower to diversify than other areas of campus, such as student affairs. The field of community engagement must attend to this area to strengthen partnerships and avoid the damaging effects of "White saviors" (Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012). White CEPs, particularly those leading PBCE

initiatives, need to move with urgency and clarity, with a focus on individual work to explore how the lens and paradigm of Whiteness may inhibit growth and positive impact.

More resources must arise to assist CEPs in leading for diversity and inclusion. Many professional associations have training or preparation programs to diversify their leadership ranks—organizations like Campus Compact and the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) have the potential to positively impact the field in this area. The field would also move toward greater inclusion if narratives of CEP experiences from racially diverse and underrepresented communities, such as Gonzalez and Padilla's (2008) work on Latinx higher education professionals' community engagement, had a more central place in our professional practice.

### **Limitations**

Although our research provides some starting points by highlighting competencies for CEPs doing place-based work, a few notable limitations exist. One limitation was our focus on place-based initiatives that had reached a state of maturation. More research is needed on emerging, and even unsuccessful, place-based initiatives to gain a comprehensive understanding of CEP knowledge, competencies, dispositions, and critical commitments. In addition, many of the institutions that are pursuing a place-based strategy are also anchor institutions and/or utilizing anchor institution principles to inform their work. The skills and competencies needed to lead place-based and anchor institution development is another area that could benefit from further research. Finally, within the place-based context, exploring the varying professional experiences of CEPs of Color vis-à-vis White CEPs might provide more insight into strategies and tools to make place-based community engagement more successful and, perhaps just as important, diversify the wider field of community engagement.

### **Conclusion**

In Katz and Nowak's (2018) recent book *The New Localism*, the authors observe that power is shifting downward from the federal government to states and local municipalities. They provide evidence that real power to create change lies in creative local alliances that focus on specific neighborhoods, towns, and cities. As this shift in power occurs, universities can play a significant role in creating positive change in their local communities. Place-based

community engagement, while calling for modifications in how universities engage their communities, offers great promise for the campus and community.

Since place-based community engagement is a new and evolving subfield within the field of community engagement in higher education, there is not a fully refined leadership playbook for facilitating these complex efforts. The work of leading place-based community engagement requires continuous learning, political acumen, and a multidimensional skill set.

This article explored several significant emerging competencies that community engagement professionals need to facilitate place-based strategies in higher education. By centralizing geographies of place and space for community, actualizing a 50/50 approach to community and university impact, and leading with multicultural competency and inclusion, community engagement professionals can harness the potential of higher education to make meaningful long-term change on campus and in local communities. In modeling this emergent form of leadership, these community engagement professionals can also impact community engagement professionals within the wider field of community engagement. In this way, leading hyperlocal community engagement efforts can impact not just local communities but the nation.

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