

Unsettling a Settled Discourse: Faculty Views of the Meaning and Significance of the Land-Grant Mission

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Abstract

In this study, we explore how faculty members from one land-grant college understand the meaning and significance of the land-grant mission, and their own motivations, purposes, roles, work, and experiences as publicly engaged scholars and educators in pursuing it. Our findings carry important implications for the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in American higher education, both within and beyond the land-grant system.

Introduction

In the preface of his now classic book, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Ernest Boyer issued a call for change in the way academic institutions measure themselves. As he put it, “we need a climate in which colleges and universities are less imitative, taking pride in their uniqueness. It’s time to end the suffocating practice in which colleges and universities measure themselves far too frequently by external status rather than by values determined by their own distinctive mission” (Boyer 1990, *xiii*).

This brief passage from Boyer’s book points to two important problems that have received little serious and sustained attention, both in the everyday culture of academic life and in literatures related to the study of American higher education. First, there is the problem of identifying, analyzing, interpreting, theorizing, and critiquing not only the meanings academic professionals make of their own college’s or university’s distinctive mission (or missions), but also the meaning-making processes they engage in. Second, there is the problem of determining, analyzing, interpreting, and theorizing the significance of distinctive missions with respect to (1) the degree to which they do and/or should influence the measurement, assessment, motivation, and development of educational and scholarly practice, products, and policy; and (2) how and why they do and/or should matter with respect to the interests, power, values, and ideals of academic professionals and their various external constituencies, funders, partners, and publics.

These are extraordinarily complex problems. By definition, they must be taken up in the context of specific institutions and institutional types. Working in the context of the national land-grant system, we have begun to take them up in a multiphase action research initiative examining one of American higher education's most distinctive missions: the "land-grant mission" (Bonnen 1998).¹ We report some of our findings from the second phase of this initiative in this article.² We explore how faculty members from one land-grant college understand the meaning and significance of the land-grant mission, and their own motivations, purposes, roles, work, and experiences as publicly engaged scholars and educators in pursuing it. In our analysis and interpretation of transcripts from forty-eight individual and focus group interviews, we found conflicting and conflicted views about these matters.³ Our findings carry important implications for the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in American higher education, both within and beyond the land-grant system.

Main Research Goal and Questions

We situate ourselves in the relatively new field of the study of university engagement in civic life. We are also active participants in—and are biased in favor of—an emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in American higher education, through which a variety of people and institutions are seeking to strengthen and renew democracy by (in part) deepening and expanding the scholarly engagement of academic professionals in the everyday politics of public work (Ehrlich 2000; Benson, Harkavy, and Puckett 2007).⁴ By "scholarly engagement," we mean engagement in which academic professionals function as scholars and/or educators. By "everyday politics," we are not referring to partisan electoral politics. Rather, we are referring to a view of politics as a means by which individuals and groups develop and exercise power in everyday settings (e.g., neighborhoods, communities, schools, various kinds of workplaces) as they seek to promote, consider, deliberate upon, negotiate, and take action to pursue their self-interests, their common interests, and larger public interests (Mathews 1994/1999; Boyte 2004). By "public work," we are referring to what Harry Boyte (2004, 5) defines as "sustained effort by a mix of people who solve public problems or create goods, material or cultural, of general benefit."

There are many questions and problems that must be raised and addressed in pursuing the project of deepening and expanding the scholarly engagement of academic professionals in public work.

For example, there are serious questions and problems having to do with the nature and exercise of power. One of the most important of these is the specific problem of understanding and working through what Thomas Bender (1993, 128) has called “the dilemma of the relation of expertise and democracy.” The dilemma for academic professionals is to decide, among various options, how and for what purposes they should bring their specialized knowledge and skills (which are forms of power) into the public sphere. Additionally, there are challenging epistemological, pedagogical, and methodological questions and problems related to the implications of political engagement—both positive and negative—for the trustworthiness, quality, integrity, and effectiveness of academic professionals’ research and teaching.

In the first phase of our research initiative, we developed a set of case studies that examine the practice of public scholarship in the national land-grant system (Peters et al. 2005). By “public scholarship,” we mean creative intellectual work that is conducted in the context of public settings and relationships, facilitating social learning and producing knowledge, theory, technologies, and other kinds of products that advance both

public and academic interests and ends. In examining why and how the academic professionals in our case studies became engaged as scholars in public work, we were intrigued by their views of the land-grant mission. We came to see that in many cases, these views not only motivated but also authorized and even compelled them to become engaged in public work and life.

Building on our previous work, our main goal for the second phase of our research initiative was to examine more closely and critically the ways land-grant faculty members understand the meaning and significance of the land-grant mission and how it is, and should be, pursued. Believing that much can be learned from exemplars, we chose to recruit as our research participants a purposefully selected sample of land-grant faculty members who have reputations as outstanding practitioners of public engagement. Working from an interpretivist theoretical perspective (Rabinow and Sullivan 1987; Crotty 2003), we posited the following as our main research questions: How do land-grant faculty who have reputations

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as outstanding public engagement practitioners understand and articulate the meaning and significance of the land-grant mission, and their own values, motivations, purposes, roles, work, and experiences as publicly engaged scholars and educators in pursuing it? What are the implications of their views for the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in American higher education?

Presumptions

In developing our research design, one of our first steps was to sketch our presumptions about the ways land-grant faculty members define the land-grant mission and how it is and should be pursued (see figure 1). Our presumptions were not informed by studies of faculty views about the land-grant mission and their work and experiences in pursuing it, for the simple reason that no such studies have ever been published. Rather, they were informed by our review of several academic literatures, by our prior research (*Peters et al. 2005*), and by our personal experience over more than three decades spent in a variety of student, staff, faculty, and administrator roles at five different land-grant universities.⁵

First presumption: For some, the land-grant mission is meaningless and irrelevant

Our first presumption was that for some land-grant faculty members, the land-grant mission carries little or no significant or distinctive meaning. For all practical purposes, it is simply irrelevant. Faculty identities, motivations, purposes, and practices are not informed and influenced by values that are determined by the land-grant mission, but rather by values that are determined by a mix of other sources, including their personal commitments, interests, philosophies, worldviews, and experiences, the culture and politics of their academic disciplines and fields, the culture and politics of the research university, and more generally, middle-class American culture.

Second presumption: The prevailing view of the land-grant mission is responsive service

Our second presumption was that for some land-grant faculty members, the land-grant mission does carry a significant and distinctive meaning. In essence, it signifies a legal and/or moral obligation on the part of faculty to serve agriculture and rural communities in ways that help solve technical problems and meet the needs and advance the economic and material interests of individuals,

Figure 1. Presumptions

	First presumption	Second presumption	Third presumption
What is the land-grant mission?	Meaningless and therefore irrelevant	Simple and settled meaning centered on legal and moral obligation to serve agriculture and rural communities	Complex and unsettled meaning centered on an obligation to serve a range of interests and a commitment to direct, face-to-face engagement with others in addressing social issues and problems
How is it pursued?	NA	By providing information and technical assistance and access to resources and expertise, by transferring technologies, and by conducting applied research	Same as left, plus forms of engagement in which faculty take up not only expert, but also social critic, educator, and change agent roles
For what purposes?	NA	To solve technical problems and meet the needs and advance the economic and material interests of individuals, families, communities, businesses, states, and the nation	Same as left, plus to advance particular economic, social, individual, cultural, and political interests
What are the values determined by the land-grant mission?	NA	Responsiveness, dollars-and-cents practicality, unbiased, disinterested, instrumental, and apolitical neutrality, and a view of democracy as a commitment to serve, benefit, and be responsive and accessible to individuals and groups at the local community level	Same as left, plus a non-neutral valuing of technical expertise, expressed through an embrace of technocracy over democracy, and a nonneutral and inherently political valuing of various specific interests, expressed through an embrace of social critic and educator roles

families, communities, businesses, states, and—ultimately—the nation as a whole.⁶ This is to be done by conducting applied research, by providing information, technical assistance, and access to university resources and expertise, and by transferring technologies. These activities are to be performed from a normative stance of apolitical, disinterested, and unbiased neutrality. They are mainly pursued in and through the institutionalized extension and experiment station systems of land-grant colleges of agriculture and human ecology.

In our judgment, this is the prevailing view of the land-grant mission, both in the academic literature and in organizational and popular discourse.⁷ According to this view, the land-grant mission has a simple, straightforward, and settled meaning. It is neither

complex nor a matter of debate and disagreement. The values that are determined by this view of the mission include responsiveness; a hard-nosed, dollars-and-cents practicality; unbiased, disinterested, and apolitical neutrality; and “democracy,” with the latter understood mainly as a commitment to serve, benefit, and be responsive and accessible to individuals and groups at the local community level. An integral component of the prevailing view of the land-grant mission is that it has been and continues to be a great success, so much so that it is considered by many to be *the* exemplar of academic public service. As Patricia Crosson (1983, 22) put it in her landmark study of the ways public service has been understood and pursued in American higher education, the land-grant system provides the “most celebrated and successful example of the articulation and fulfillment of the service ideal.”

Third presumption: The prevailing view is incomplete and misleading

Informed by our experience, our previous research (*Peters et al. 2005*), and our reading of several academic literatures, our third presumption was that the prevailing view of the land-grant mission is at best incomplete, and in some ways misleading and factually wrong.⁸ In our judgment, one of the main problems with the prevailing view is that it attends to only one of the roles scholars take up in their public engagement work: that is, the role of responsive expert. It both ignores and obscures the additional roles scholars take up in such work as proactive social critics, educators, and change agents. Such roles are not and cannot be taken up from stances of unbiased, disinterested, and apolitical neutrality; rather, they emerge from stances of specific and often deep and passionate commitment to particular interests and ends. These additional roles have been taken up throughout the history of the extension and experiment station work of land-grant colleges of agriculture and human ecology, particularly but not only in relation to the technocratic project of “inducing” farmers to apply and adopt scientific knowledge and industrial methods and technologies in order to advance a national “cheap food” policy (*Rosenberg 1976/1997; Danbom 1979; Marcus 1985; Neth 1995; Fitzgerald 2003*).⁹

Our third presumption carries several important implications. Instead of being simple and settled, the nature and meanings of the land-grant mission are complex and unsettled. Its purposes are more than instrumental and technical, its pursuit political rather than neutral and apolitical in nature, and its values sharper, more incisive, and at times more technocratic than democratic in nature.

In sketching our third presumption, we theorized that the prevailing view of the land-grant mission is significantly shaped by (and therefore reflects) a cultural neglect of normative or practical reason (Fischer 1990) and a “triumph of technical reason” (Dunne and Pendlebury 2003, 197). As a result, it privileges faculty engagement in the pursuit of people’s technical interests in meeting basic material needs through processes of instrumental learning and the development of technical knowledge and theory that are oriented toward prediction and control and principles of economy and efficiency. It also marginalizes if not entirely ignores faculty engagement in the pursuit of people’s practical interests in communicating and interpreting meaning and significance through processes of communicative learning and social interaction aimed at the development of practical knowledge and judgment about what is to be done about social problems.¹⁰

In our review of the literature on higher education’s public purposes and work, we found a consistent pattern of privileging technical interests and instrumental learning in descriptions of the land-grant system’s extension and experiment station work. For example, Crosson (1983, 25) views land-grant extension

work as a neutral and responsive mechanism for disseminating and applying the “results of research and experimentation.” Similarly, Ward (2003, 71) views extension as a “conduit” for “the transfer of information to meet agricultural needs.” Both Crosson and Ward are silent about the possibility that land-grant extension and experiment station work does or might include attention to practical as well as technical interests. In designing our study, we not only presumed that such work *should* include attention to practical interests, but that *it already does so* in ways that have long been rendered invisible by a discourse that characterizes the land-grant mission as having a simple, settled meaning that is apolitical and narrowly technical and instrumental in nature.

Here it is critically important to note a highly problematic consequence of the prevailing silence about and inattention to the ways that practical interests are and have been pursued not only by land-grant extension and experiment station workers, but also by the academic profession as a whole: namely, that they obscure a key

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tradition that Thomas Bender (1993) and William Sullivan (2003) have referred to as *civic professionalism*. As Stephen Brint (1994) notes, professionalism has two aspects: a technical aspect having to do with the competent performance of skilled work, and a social aspect that grounds and guides professionals in an appreciation of the larger public ends they serve. According to Sullivan (2003, 10), civic professionals attend in equal ways to both of these aspects by making a “public pledge to deploy technical expertise and judgment not only skillfully but also for public-regarding ends and in a public-regarding way.” The question of what it means and looks like to work for public-regarding ends in public-regarding ways is perhaps the most important one that can be raised in the context of the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in American higher education.

Our research provided us with an opportunity to test our third presumption in ways that we hoped would illuminate—and therefore help us and others to understand—the obscured civic professionalism tradition in the land-grant system. To be transparent about our motivations, we want to disclose that we also deliberately sought to use our research as a means of unsettling the settled discourse about the meaning and significance of the land-grant mission that is reflected in the second presumption we laid out above. However, we did not seek to do so only or mainly as advocates, drawing on our own normative convictions. Rather, we sought to do so also and mainly as scholars, drawing on our analysis and interpretation of our research findings.

Methodology

The nature of our research goal and questions called for methods of data collection and analysis that would enable us to draw out and interpret the subjective views and experiences of our research participants. In line with our goal and questions, we chose to take a narrative orientation in both our methods and analysis. Narrative inquiry and analysis involves the construction, interpretation, and analysis of storied accounts of life experience (Riessman 1993; Ospina and Dodge 2005). It calls on researchers to “make themselves as aware as possible of the many, layered narratives at work in their inquiry space” (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, 70).

Our inquiry space was a college that is part of a large land-grant university. To protect the anonymity of the faculty we interviewed, we will refer to it by the pseudonym “State College of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences” (SCALES). Our decision to select a college of agricultural, life, and environmental

sciences reflected our personal interest in studying faculty members' engagement in issues and problems that are related to the pursuit of sustainability in agriculture, the management of natural resources, and rural community and economic development. We selected SCALES because of its reputation as an exemplar of public engagement in the land-grant system. Through a process of querying key contacts, we learned that many of SCALES's faculty from a wide variety of disciplines and fields (including both natural and social sciences, as well as engineering and planning and design) are significantly engaged in addressing social issues and problems related to agricultural sustainability, natural resource management, and rural community and economic development.

In line with our narrative orientation, we centered our data collection and analysis on the development and interpretation of faculty narratives of their public engagement work. Our central method of data collection was in-depth interviews with a purposeful sample of SCALES faculty. We selected research participants on the basis of two main criteria. First, we sought research participants who are significantly and directly engaged *off campus* in addressing domestic social issues and problems with nonacademic audiences in ways that both their peers and college administrators viewed as being extensive and exemplary.¹¹ Second, we sought a measure of diversity among our research participants in terms of academic discipline and field, type of academic appointment, gender, and stage of career. Through discussions with administrators, department chairs, and department extension leaders, we identified 149 potential research participants. Using the above two criteria, we narrowed the list down to fifty-six potential participants. Our final sample included forty-four faculty. Thirty-five were faculty in tenure-line positions (twenty-three full, nine associate, and three assistant professors), and nine faculty with non-tenure-line extension positions. Twenty-three were from natural science disciplines, eighteen from social science disciplines, two from an engineering discipline, and one from the field of landscape architecture and design. Thirty-one were male and thirteen female.

From September 2003 through December 2004, we conducted in-depth interviews with our research participants. Interviews were conducted both in person and over the phone, and lasted 60 to 150 minutes. Our interview protocol consisted of three sections of open-ended questions. The first section focused on participants' personal and professional backgrounds, the second on their accounts of specific practice stories of their public work in addressing social issues and problems, and the third on their interpretations of the meaning

and significance of their work and experiences. Following Chase (1995b), Seidman (1998), and Forester (1999, 2006), our interview protocol was deliberately designed to avoid questions that elicit responses in the form of reports. Instead, we invited participants to tell first-person practice stories that featured themselves as primary actors. To elicit practice stories, we asked “how” questions. For example, we asked participants how they came to be involved in a particular project related to a social issue or problem, how they came to take up specific roles in their projects, what kinds of challenges they encountered and how they dealt with them, and how they assess the meaning and significance of their work, roles, and experiences. At the end of each interview, we also asked faculty members what the land-grant mission means to them, and

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whether, and if so how, they view the practice story they told us as an example of that mission in action. The way we posed this question invited personal interpretation, rather than the recitation of a “correct” answer. In addition to taking notes during interviews, we recorded and transcribed them.

Our second method of data collection was focus group interviews. Our focus group consisted of a diverse subset of fifteen of our research participants, including eight faculty members from the natural sciences, six from the social sciences, and one from engineering. From December 2003 through December 2005, we conducted four interviews with this group, lasting 90 to 120 minutes each. We used these group interviews, each of which was recorded and transcribed, as a means of supplementing the data produced in our individual interviews. The first two focus group interviews were designed to stimulate dialogue and collective reflection on the nature and meaning of the land-grant mission and how it is, and should be, pursued. In these interviews, we made a concerted effort to press faculty to illustrate their views with examples and practice stories from their own work and experience. The third and fourth focus group interviews were designed to elicit collective interpretations of edited excerpts from the transcripts of two different individual interviews that we considered to be especially interesting and provocative. We made an effort during these focus group interviews to probe for areas of agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty.

In analyzing our data, we chose (with one exception) not to follow the standard protocol of segmenting and coding data based on particular categories or themes. Rather, following our narrative orientation, we edited the transcript of each individual interview into a single narrative. Following Forester (1999, 2006), we called these narratives “practitioner profiles.”¹² We also identified narratives in the transcripts from our focus group interviews and edited them into short practice stories. The only theme we used to segment our data was the theme of faculty members’ views of the nature and meaning of the land-grant mission.

In analyzing our research participants’ narratives and views, we focused both on their discursive strategies—that is, how they situated themselves and their work—and on what they said.¹³ We examined how and where they positioned themselves in their discursive strategies with respect to normative questions about the social roles faculty and their institutions “should” take up in their public engagement work, and the nature and meaning of the land-grant mission. We looked for patterns, continuities, discontinuities, contradictions, tensions, dilemmas, uncertainties, and unresolved questions within and across faculty views and narratives.

In order to address the important issue of the credibility of our research participants’ views and narratives, and of their and our interpretations of the same, we conducted intensive “member checks” (Guba and Lincoln 1989) with the faculty we interviewed. Member checks enable research participants to contribute to the work of analyzing and interpreting research data. We performed member checks at both individual and collective levels in two main ways. First, we shared both raw and edited transcripts with each individual we interviewed, asking them to correct errors and to clarify and/or expand upon particular passages. Second, we shared our interpretations of these transcripts with each participant individually and with our focus group, asking in each case for their responses and interpretations.

Findings

Our research findings generally confirm our third presumption about the ways land-grant faculty members define the land-grant mission and how it is and should be pursued. That is, our findings reveal that for our research participants, the nature and meanings of the land-grant mission are not simple and settled but complex, conflicted, and unsettled. Further, its purposes are more than instrumental and technical, its pursuit is political rather than

apolitical in nature, and its values are sharper and more incisive than those of the prevailing view that we laid out as our second presumption.

Most interestingly to us, we found that in sharing and interpreting their views of the land-grant mission and their practice stories, most of the SCALES faculty members we interviewed employed a discursive strategy in which they positioned themselves as responsive, unbiased, and neutral experts whose social role is to inform the thinking and the decision-making needs of specific external clients and audiences by providing them with technical expertise and scientific, research-based information. Yet, in articulating their views and practice stories, many of these same faculty members also employed a conflicting discursive strategy in which they positioned themselves as proactive, nonneutral educators and change agents who consciously strive to advance the interests of specific external constituencies and/or the general public good. While many of our research participants noted that there are conflicting views of the land-grant mission and faculty social roles among their colleagues in SCALES and elsewhere, they were (for the most part) nonreflexive about the conflicted nature of their own views and discursive strategies on these matters. By “nonreflexive,” we mean displaying a lack of critical self-reflection about biases, commitments, politics, and normative identities and stances (*Potter 1996; Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000*).

Views of the land-grant mission

As noted above, near the end of each of our individual interviews, and in our first focus group interview, we asked faculty members what the land-grant mission means to them. This proved to be a surprisingly difficult question for many faculty members to answer, eliciting a high degree of stumbling, hesitation, uncertainty, and tentativeness. A handful of faculty members offered little more than vague generalities. For example, one associate professor in a natural science discipline described the land-grant mission as “the notion that the university has some role out there in the real world.” Another handful of faculty members spoke of the land-grant mission in less vague ways, as being about the provision of information, the transfer of knowledge, and/or access to university resources. As a full professor in an engineering discipline said during our first focus group interview, “The whole idea is exactly, in short, knowledge transfer. And you do that through a lot of different mechanisms. And so, if I had to say, ‘What is the land-grant mission?’ in

two words, I would say, ‘knowledge transfer.’” Expressing a similar view, an extension faculty member in the social sciences said that the “land-grant mission is extending the information that we’re constantly researching and discovering here.”

After their initial uncertainty and hesitation, most of the SCALES faculty members we interviewed provided more complex answers to the land-grant mission question. The following example is from an associate professor in a social science discipline. During our first focus group interview, he said:

As I understand the mission historically, it was to identify the needs of local people, identify solutions through research, and then communicate those back to improve local conditions in farming. The way I think about it today is that we’re still using that model, but one of the things that’s happened is, the problems today in terms of society and communities and families and individuals have become so much more complex, and impacted by so many different forces, that individuals within the community can’t see what that problem is. And so I think of the land-grant mission, to some extent, as trying to help local communities and individuals and families see what those associations are, and to make relevant to them the kinds of information that scientists are identifying. I guess I look at it as a process. I don’t look at it so much as a product. You [speaking to the natural scientists in the room] have products. You discover things, you learn things. And to me, the land-grant mission is the process then of trying to take that and make sense out of it at local levels.

Here we have a view of the land-grant mission as a proactive process that is centered on identifying and addressing not only the “needs of local people,” but also complex social problems and forces that individuals “can’t see.” In this faculty member’s discourse, natural scientists are positioned as knowledge creators who stand outside the process of pursuing the land-grant mission with external audiences. However, in their answers to the land-grant mission question, many of the natural scientists we interviewed positioned themselves inside this process as a deliberate means of developing and influencing their research agendas. This can be seen in the following example from a full professor in a natural science discipline.

Beginning his answer by acknowledging that a “small part” of the land-grant mission is about communicating already existing information through extension workshops, he went on to say that

the larger part is having constituencies that you interact with, not in the formal sense of extension workshops, but more in the context of what they do, and what the issues are that they are facing, and identifying from that whether there are researchable things within the issues they have. Now, there are plenty of things you can look at and say, “Well, the research has already been done, it’s a communication thing. There needs to be a workshop focused on this.” Sure! That’s fine, but I think the real difference is a faculty member that can see what issues have not been addressed, and bring that back, particularly if you can see within those issues where there are unanswered questions or unsolved problems that you have some idea of how to address through research. And the reality is, unless you can get integrated with a constituency in terms of being outside the university and interacting in a more real-time sense with what their issues and problems are, then yes, extension would seem to be very detached and is just a communication thing in short workshops and short courses and things like that. And that’s important. But this other part is probably more important, and more consistent with the land-grant mission as I see it.

A full professor in a natural science discipline expressed a similar view, but with a sharper, critical change-agent edge to it:

I understand the land-grant mission as a way of interacting with the greater community. I think our obligation is to look around and try to understand how we can use the resources that we have at our disposal—intellectual and human as well as the infrastructure that we have—to drive an intellectual and a practical solution to problems that we perceive. Not just in our local area or our national area, but it should be global as well. I’m a scientist, and I think science is really an approach to solving problems that are important to human beings. But it’s more than science. I mean [this university] is a lot more than a scientific institution. I think it has an opportunity to look ahead and try to understand where

the problems of the future impinge on the problems of the present. And that part of what we're confronting as a global community are issues of equity, are issues of not just the material well being of people but how people feel that they're empowered to solve problems themselves. I'm in a university partly because I really, really enjoy feeling that my job is to empower others to solve their own problems.

In another similar response, an associate professor in a natural science discipline employed a discursive strategy in which she positioned her view of the land-grant mission against an older view that she thinks is no longer valid. As she put it in her individual interview, the land-grant mission

used to be conceived of as, "We have the knowledge, you learn it, and that's kind of the way it goes." But it's not clear to me that that's really anything like the model. There's information from a million sources out there; we don't have a lock on that. If that's what the land-grant mission relies on—the university as a source of information—I think we're sunk. On the other hand, information is not knowledge. So if we want to contribute to the collective wisdom—and that includes us as well as everyone else around the state—then I think it means interacting with people, wrestling with people to understand the issues that are being confronted and figuring out what our piece in that picture is. What can we do to contribute to greater understanding or better dialogue or public policy that really will help address them?

Here we see a view of the land-grant mission as a process that is not only proactive, but also highly relational and reciprocal. During our first focus group interview, this same faculty member said the following, prompted by her disagreement with the "knowledge transfer" view of the land-grant mission expressed by the engineering professor quoted above:

I would argue that the mission of the land-grant is interaction with the people in the state, to learn from them and then do research that addresses some of the things we've learned from them that are issues. So I don't think it's just about knowledge transfer. I think that's what makes it different from the outreach that any organization would

do. What I work on is guided by some sort of information gathering process or interactive process that reflects what's needed and what's important in the state.

She went on to name a specific thematic focus for SCALES's land-grant mission:

My little catch word for what we as a college should be about, as a college that focuses on food, food science, agricultural areas, environmental areas, that sort of revolve around that, is that I think our piece of this is about sustainable landscape design and management, and thinking about how are the landscapes—urban, semi-urban and rural—in the state used, and how can we make that something that is more sustainable, in the most honest sense of that word. That's what I think of as the land-grant mission for our college, particularly given the kinds of disciplines that we represent.

Some faculty members, particularly (but not exclusively) those who recounted practice stories about their work in addressing the social problem of unsustainable practices in agriculture and pest management, expressed views of the land-grant mission that imply a rejection of a normative stance of disinterested and unbiased neutrality and an embrace of a nonneutral stance that is biased in favor of the “public interest.” For example, one full professor in a natural science discipline said that the land-grant mission

is doing the kind of teaching and the kind of research through extension programming that will benefit the public interest. The land-grant should, as it's supported by the public, be concerned about protecting the public from private, commercial economic interests. I don't think there's much hope for getting the people of this country excited about the quality of life for dairy farmers. But there is a lot of hope for getting them excited about the quality of our food system and the environment. So the land-grant mission has to do with our food, with our environment, and with doing all kinds of work that are relevant to the public interest.

Similarly, another full professor in a natural science discipline offered a view of the land-grant mission in which he positioned himself as working “for the public good as I see it”:

I started thinking, who are my clients? We have an onion industry in [this state] that's worth about \$X million or so, and these people, they have told faculty members, "You work for us. You work for the onion industry." A number of different commodities somewhat have that attitude. But when I think about who I work for—and I think this is part of how I started to feel comfortable with the land-grant mission—I work for the people of [this state], and I work through some growers to achieve an end. And the end would be things like environmental quality and pest management. It would be supporting an agricultural community, because I think it adds to the landscape and to the quality of life in the state. All of these things, I work through growers to obtain. But my clients are really the people of [this state], not necessarily the onion or cabbage growers, for example. I mean, I don't like to look at it that I'm working just for the cabbage growers. I work for the public good as I see it.

Not only is this faculty member rejecting an impartial stance of disinterested neutrality, he is also rejecting a certain kind of partiality: that of working on behalf of the special interests of particular client groups. Many other faculty members made the same move in their discourse, often by using a discursive strategy in which they positioned themselves in opposition to the views of their senior colleagues and/or the expectations of external clients and stakeholders. This can be seen in the following story told by an associate professor in a natural science discipline:

I recently went back and read parts of the Morrill Act.¹⁴ We were having a big strategic planning session in our department, and I was arguing with some of the senior faculty about what our relationship should be to a big commercial fruit grower. And a lot of the older faculty basically took the attitude of, "The only reason I'm here is to take care of the fruit growers in [our state], and that's my constituency right there—that's the beginning of it and the end of it." And the way we really got into the battle was that we had to come up with a mission statement for the department. And two of the senior faculty said, "Well, the mission of the department is to serve fruit and vegetable growers in [our state]. Period."

And a couple of us were like, “Wait a minute, what about the other 99% of the people in the state?” And they said, “Well, this is a land-grant college.” So I went back and read parts of the Morrill Act and it didn’t say anything about serving farmers; it says, “serve the population.”

After telling this story, he went on to drive home his point:

Even if you agree that your primary mission is to serve fruit growers, then the question is, how can you best serve them? And I would maintain that if you feel like you’re their servant in the literal sense, and you do whatever they think you should do, then you’re really not going to be much good to them. We’re in a research university, we have information available to us, we interact with people from around the world and we live in a much more information-enriched environment than growers do. And what they really need us to do is to be able to anticipate stuff that they’re not even thinking about, and to know what their kids are going to be trying to deal with. So even to really serve the traditional land-grant constituents in the food system, we’ve got to be responsive to and aware of the whole rest of the population and the environment.

Practice stories

In both the individual and focus group interviews we conducted, faculty told more than fifty practice stories of their work and experiences with audiences external to the academy that are struggling to understand and address social issues and problems. Some of their stories were brief accounts of single events or short-term work. Others were lengthy, elaborately detailed descriptions of long-term work that unfolded over many months, sometimes even many years. In these stories, faculty spoke of how they developed close working relationships with particular constituencies, including small- and large-scale farmers and their associations (e.g., onion or cabbage growers, grape or apple growers, dairy farmers), golf course managers, government agencies, legislators and elected officials, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and community organizations and institutions.

Most of the practice stories faculty members told were focused on social issues and problems related to the environment. These included environmental pollution and human health problems

caused (or thought to be caused) by farming practices, or by the use of chemicals to control weeds and pests by golf course and park managers, businesses, and homeowners. A smaller number of stories focused on work related to public policy debates, such as whether or not genetically modified organisms (GMOs) should be promoted, adopted, regulated, or banned, what to do about an overpopulation of deer in residential areas, and a number of other wildlife management problems. Other stories involved community disputes related to migrant labor, racial, ethnic, and class issues, zoning and land-use planning, and urban sprawl. Still others focused on problems associated with poverty, economic decline, population loss, the loss of a sense of community, youth violence and substance abuse, and public policies related to student achievement in rural and small-town schools.

While we found many points of difference across faculty members' stories of their engagement in social issues and problems, we also found a recurring pattern in their discursive strategies. In recounting their practice stories, most faculty members spoke of taking on the role of the responsive, unbiased, impartial, and/or objective expert by conducting research and providing knowledge and technical expertise aimed at informing the thinking and the decision-making needs of external audiences. But most also spoke of taking on a proactive role as critics and educators in which they went beyond informing by deliberately aiming to challenge individuals and groups to change the way they think and act. In speaking of this role, faculty embraced a commitment to advance particular interests, including those of specific stakeholder groups, consumers, and/or the general public. In doing so, they spoke in ways that made it clear that they are not impartial or disinterested, but rather passionately interested in and committed to advancing such things as environmental and human health, sustainability, the survival of small-scale family farms, rural community vitality, and economic and social justice.

While it may well be possible and even desirable for scholars to hold opposing views about their social identities, stances, and roles, particularly if they are consciously contingent on context, a

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discursive strategy that simultaneously positions faculty as responsive, impartial experts and partial, proactive, and critical educators and change agents is inherently conflicting. In our judgment, our research participants' adoption of such a strategy reflects their conflicted views about their social identities and roles. This was especially pronounced among the faculty members we interviewed from natural science disciplines who work in areas related to horticulture, entomology, plant breeding, agronomy and plant genetics, soil sciences, and the like.

By way of illustration, consider the work of a professor in the natural science discipline of horticulture that we interviewed. The focus of this faculty member's academic work is problems related to growing berry crops. According to him, berry growers face different problems depending on which crop they grow. For example, strawberry growers face serious challenges in managing weeds, birds are a special problem for blueberry growers, and soil diseases cause problems for raspberry growers. As we learned from our interview with him, in helping growers address such problems, he takes on a responsive expert role as a scientist. However, as we also learned, he intentionally takes on a proactive change-agent role as a critic and educator as well. We saw this in a practice story he told us about his role in addressing a deeply controversial social problem related to the development and use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in strawberry production.

The biotechnology corporation Monsanto has developed a powerful herbicide called Round-Up. It can be used only with "Round-Up Ready" crops: that is, crops that have been genetically engineered to be compatible with the herbicide. To help them combat weeds, strawberry growers are calling for the development of Round-Up Ready strawberries. The problem, this faculty member told us, is that "there are a lot of issues about Round-Up Ready strawberries that most growers don't think about," including consumer acceptance and potential effects on the environment. In relation to this problem, he gave a talk on the advantages and disadvantages of Round-Up Ready strawberries at the annual meeting for his state's berry growers' association. After he gave his talk, he handed out a survey asking growers for their views about the issues he had raised. He then shared the results of the survey with the association's members.

Speaking of his role in this story, this faculty member told us: "I was intentionally not being biased. I gave the advantages and said what some of the concerns are." According to the results of his survey, his talk changed growers' minds. The last question on

the survey asked whether growers would use Round-Up Ready strawberries if they were available today. Most of them answered no, even though just a few months earlier their association had taken a public position strongly in favor of the development and use of GMO technologies, including Round-Up Ready strawberries. While few growers said on the survey that they would never use GMOs, most now reported some uncertainty about whether or not they *should* use them. Importantly, their uncertainty was not solely about the technical and economic aspects of strawberry production. As this faculty member noted, “a lot of it had to do not with the biology, but with the marketing and the social and environmental implications that they hadn’t thought of.”

In reflecting on the meaning of his story, this faculty member told us the following:

Some people take the position that the desires and the needs of the growers, the producers, trump everything else. If they say, “We want Round-Up Ready strawberries,” we give it to them. But I contrast that with other people who may have different views of what the land-grant university should do. My approach would be to see if we can’t balance these in some way.

“Balancing” different views of what the land-grant university should do has implications for how this faculty member views his roles and work with growers. As he put it,

I see my role as trying to identify some key areas of research that I can work in that will not only help growers with some immediate problems, but maybe push their thinking a little bit in terms of issues that might involve sustainability, and get them thinking a little bit broader than how they thought in the past. I do this because I feel not only a commitment to them, but a commitment to society, to people who pay my salary, to [this state’s] residents. My work should not be focused exclusively on the grower community. I have an obligation to the greater part of society, too, and if I can help growers produce high quality fruit in a way that is more environmentally sustainable, everybody wins.

In this practice story, we gain insight into why and how a faculty member from a natural science discipline views his work with growers in a way that compels him to take on both respon-

sive expert and proactive critical change-agent roles. In telling his story, this faculty member utilizes a conflicted discursive strategy. While he positions himself as being “unbiased,” when he says that he seeks to “push” growers’ thinking, he reveals what amounts to a bias. We see that he is neither impartial nor neutral. He is partial to and nonneutral about environmental sustainability. To pursue his commitment to sustainability, he moves beyond the disinterested expert role of imparting scientific knowledge by taking up a role as a purposive educator aimed at changing growers’ social and environmental consciousness. Against the grain of the neglect of normative or practical reason (*Fischer 1990; Dunne and Pendlebury 2003*), we see that in his work with growers he seeks to pursue both technical and practical interests, encouraging growers to think not just of what they *could* do to address technical problems related to growing strawberries, but what they *should* do, given the potential environmental and social risks and implications of a new technology.

The discourse we see in this particular story mirrors the historical discourse about one of the university’s most important roles in a democratic society that was articulated in the AAUP’s 1915 report on academic freedom. By its nature, the report declared, the university “is committed to the principle that knowledge should precede action, to the caution (by no means synonymous to intellectual timidity) which is an essential part of the scientific method, to a sense of the complexity of social problems, to the practice of taking long views into the future, and to a reasonable regard for the teachings of experience” (*AAUP 1915, 870*). By giving a talk about the advantages and disadvantages of Round-Up Ready strawberries, this SCALES faculty member put this multidimensional principle into practice. Although he says he was “intentionally not being biased,” his discourse reveals that he was relating his academic expertise to the decision-making needs of a particular constituency from a nonneutral stance that was biased in favor of environmental sustainability. Rather than being disinterested, he tells us that he is self-consciously working on behalf of both the interests of growers and of “the greater society,” including “people who pay my salary.”

We gave a three-page edited version of this practice story to the SCALES faculty members in our focus group. In a focus group interview, we asked for their responses and interpretations. A full professor in a natural science discipline said that the story shows that faculty “can be an unbiased source of information about risks and benefits. We’re supposed to be a neutral party.” An associate

professor in a natural science discipline agreed. “We’re supposed to be neutral. I’m not sure any of us can really be neutral, but to me, that’s the unachievable goal. We’re trying to present information and help people make a decision based on that.” Not one faculty member in the focus group directly disagreed with this view of the meaning of the practice story.

However, as the discussion evolved, it mirrored the same conflicted discursive strategy we found in the practice story. This can be seen in the comments of an associate professor in a social science discipline. This faculty member began his comments by saying that he is “very sympathetic” to the role he sees the natural scientist playing in the practice story. “This is the kind of work we all do: trying to bring knowledge to bear, looking at the question from all sides, not taking, not advocating a particular point of view.” As he continued, however, his comments suggested that while it is not proper for faculty to advocate a particular side or point of view in a debate, there are things they rightly serve as advocates for: namely, “open and intellectually led discussions of all social issues.” He argued:

Everything that goes on in society should be discussed, and things should be decided democratically. I think that universities are places that produce knowledge, and I think that our proper role is to use that knowledge to move social discussions—social decisions—in some way, to put the knowledge out there. I mean, we are not decision makers ourselves, we are intellectuals or scientists or technical people who can provide information, provide knowledge, create knowledge.

He added comments that suggest that faculty should take on a social role that is about more than providing information from an unbiased or neutral stance. Referring to the natural scientist in the practice story, he said: “He has to help growers make a good decision and not be hoodwinked by a corporation that is going to want to sell something that might be very shortsighted and profit driven.” Rather than remaining neutral, this suggests that faculty should protect growers’ interests against the corporate interests. This comment provoked a response from a full professor in a natural science discipline. Instead of working to protect growers’ interests, she said, land-grant faculty should “work for the public interest.” She argued that land-grant faculty members have “a unique opportunity and obligation to provide analysis on behalf of the public’s

point of view. That's our job, and for me, it ultimately traces back to democracy." The role of land-grant faculty in a democracy, she went on to say, is to serve "as an objective resource for accurate, thorough, considered analysis." Speaking of her own work during the previous five years, she added, "I felt I almost became an activist, but it was an activist on behalf of the public, my perception or my interpretation of the public interest." In her view, then, land-grant faculty members must—and apparently can—simultaneously serve as "objective" resources, and as advocates or activists on behalf of their personal interpretations of the public interest.

As members of the focus group continued to articulate and discuss their views and interpretations of the practice story, an associate professor in a natural science discipline used a discursive

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strategy in which he positioned both himself and the faculty member in the practice story in a "middle" position between activist environmentalists, client groups (such as strawberry growers), and private corporations. Like the faculty member in the practice story, he said, "I have tried consistently to get myself in a middle position. I say what I think needs to be said, which is maybe not what either side wants me to say." He stated that what needs to be said comes not from his personal opinions, biases, and interests, but rather from his "objective" scientific knowledge and expertise. While he agreed that land-

grant faculty should be activists on behalf of the public interest, he argued that they must avoid becoming "either an activist for a particular position or a henchman for an industry." His statements suggest that at least some land-grant faculty members in his field fail to stay in an objective middle position. "I can tell you that in my field, there are people who show up every day for work, and they think they're here to work for the apple industry, for example."

The idea that the "middle" is the proper place for land-grant faculty in understanding and addressing social problems emerged not only in this focus group interview, but in other focus group interviews and many individual interviews. Given faculty members' personal commitments, convictions, and interests, this is

not an easy position to maintain. The close association that land-grant colleges of agriculture have historically had with farmers also makes it difficult. According to many of our research participants, some farmers think that land-grant faculty are supposed to be on their side rather than in the middle, and some faculty members apparently agree.

In one of our focus group interviews that was devoted to discussion of another practice story, an associate professor in a social science discipline said,

I've gotten in a lot of trouble in ag groups for saying that it's the public's right to decide they want no pesticides used at all. They may be wrong, they may be right, I don't know. But it's their right. But what I insist on is that that decision be made on the information, on an informed decision-making process. They can still decide they don't want pesticides. To me, that's what we're all about.

Responding to these comments, an associate professor in a natural science discipline emphasized that by insisting on and participating in informed decision-making processes about difficult social problems, "we are functioning as agents for change. And I think that we can be an agent for change not by advocating a position, but by helping people to think about something differently."

This exchange captures quite well how the SCALES faculty we interviewed used conflicted discursive strategies in describing how they view and deal with the tensions between their expert and critical change-agent roles, and how they should understand and work through what historian Thomas Bender (1993, 128) has called "the dilemma of the relation of expertise and democracy." In both their practice stories and their views of the land-grant mission, these faculty members told us that they proactively seek to become engaged in public decision-making processes. In doing so, they try to maintain a middle position between conflicting sides. But while they strive to be objective, impartial, and/or unbiased, they also seek to advance nonneutral commitments to sustainability, the interests of growers against those of corporations, and their personal views of the public good. In doing so, they function as more than experts who work out of a simple and settled view of the land-grant mission as responsive service that attends only to technical reason and interests. They function, too, as proactive critics, change agents,

and educators who have a complex and unsettled view of the land-grant mission as proactive engagement that attends to practical as well as technical reason and interests.

Implications

In this section, we briefly identify three key implications of our findings for the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in American higher education.

First, *our findings highlight the need to rethink what academic administrators, policymakers, external constituencies, and the general public should ask for and expect from faculty members who choose to pursue their work in ways that are guided by their views of the values that are determined by their institution's "distinctive" mission.* In the land-grant system, our findings suggest that we should not ask and expect all faculty members to interpret the land-grant mission in ways that compel them to work *only* in the technical realm of learning as responsive experts who solve technical problems and advance the economic interests of particular groups, including farmers and consumers. Rather, we should ask and expect at least some faculty members to work in both the technical *and* communicative realms of learning, not only as responsive experts, but also as proactive critics, educators, and change agents. We should ask and expect them to strive to advance not only the narrow economic interests and values of particular groups (such as strawberry growers or consumers), but also larger cultural, environmental, and political ideals and values that reflect their personal and/or collective judgments about what constitutes the public good or public interest.

Second, *our findings suggest that participants in the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement need to find ways to encourage and support faculty members to be reflexive about their biases, commitments, interests, roles, politics, identities, and stances.* This implication is directly tied to the most serious problem we found in our study: that is, when faculty members employ relatively nonreflexive discursive strategies in articulating their views and experiences, tensions within and between the political stances and social identities and roles they seek to play go both unacknowledged and unexamined. Specifically (and most importantly), without the skills and habits of reflexivity, it is not possible for faculty members to perceive and work through the dilemma of the relation of expertise and democracy. If individual faculty are not reflexive regarding this matter, institutional reflexivity and learning

will not occur. Therefore, it is not possible to fulfill what we take to be the central promise of the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement: improving higher education's roles and work as an agent of democracy.

While it is impossible to force faculty members to be reflexive, it is possible to encourage and support reflexivity at both individual and collective levels. Administrators can (and we think should) do so by including explicit attention to political stances and social roles in faculty review, promotion, and tenure processes. Reflexivity can also be encouraged and supported through faculty and organizational development initiatives that are designed to provide not only opportunities for individual and collective reflection and inquiry, but also products and tools that enable academic professionals to discern, respect, and integrate in their work different kinds of epistemologies, reason, interests, and learning. Practitioner profiles such as the ones we constructed in our research provide one example of a product or tool that offers a rich source of learning about how normative and practical questions related to higher education's civic engagement work are understood and addressed by publicly engaged faculty. However, unless specific measures are taken to draw out and examine experience in critically reflective ways, such learning is unlikely to occur.

It is important to acknowledge that pursuing even a moderate commitment to individual and organizational reflexivity in land-grant (or other) colleges will be difficult. Although the land-grant system is widely viewed as the exemplar of American higher education's public engagement work, our interviews with SCALES faculty left us with the distinct sense that reflexivity about such work is sharply at odds with SCALES's dominant culture. We found no evidence in our study of any formal encouragement or support for reflexivity in SCALES about either organizational or faculty social roles, or the philosophical and historical groundings for these roles. Neither did we find evidence in most faculty narratives of their graduate training, job interviews, and early careers that would lead us to believe that it is any different elsewhere in the land-grant system.

“Specifically (and most importantly), without the skills and habits of reflexivity, it is not possible for faculty members to perceive and work through the dilemma of the relation of expertise and democracy.”

We want to emphasize that, in addition to being difficult, pursuing reflexivity may be risky as well. In the context of certain kinds of power dynamics and political realities, open reflexivity and transparency about biases, commitments, and political stances and roles may have negative consequences for both individuals and institutions. Such dynamics and realities may not only subvert or co-opt efforts to encourage reflexivity, but punish them as well. This danger compels us to suggest that all efforts to encourage and support reflexivity should be closely attentive to the realities and dynamics of politics and power. It also compels us to suggest that participants in the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement need to find ways to encourage and support reflexivity not only among faculty members, but also among American higher education's wide variety of external stakeholders, partners, and publics.

Finally, *our findings suggest that participants in the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement need to develop a research agenda that explicitly and intentionally attends to the politics of academic professionals' and institutions' engagement in civic life.* Despite consistent claims to the contrary, especially but not only in the land-grant system, the public service and engagement work of academic professionals and institutions is political. It has value biases, consequences, dilemmas, and tensions that are inherently political in nature. All these need to be carefully and critically documented, examined, theorized, interpreted, and debated. Scholars who are helping to open new lines of research about engagement can and should play key roles in breaking the silence and rethinking presumptions about these matters. They can and should do so in ways that invite and provide opportunities for academic professionals and their various external partners to explore and learn from their own experiences, to develop habits and skills of reflexivity, to identify factors motivating and shaping their commitment to community engagement, and to better understand the nuances of practice that offer promise of bridging the gap between experts and citizens. They can and should do so in ways that help to illuminate and advance civic professionalism by helping faculty members and their various external partners to take up the question of what it means and looks like to work for public-regarding ends in public-regarding ways. Finally, they can and should do so in ways that help to unsettle stale, misleading, and factually wrong discourses in particular colleges and universities about what Boyer referred to as the values that are determined by their own distinctive mission.

Conclusion

In *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills (1959, 192) argued that the “educational and the political role of social science in a democracy is to help cultivate and sustain publics and individuals that are able to develop, to live with, and to act upon adequate definitions of personal and social realities.” Reflecting on what we learned in this study, we are compelled to add that such a role can be taken up in other fields and disciplines as well, including the natural sciences. Indeed, we think it should be a key role that all land-grant faculty members take up when they pursue the land-grant mission by becoming engaged with their fellow citizens beyond the campus in public work. While our study drew out and examined faculty perspectives on this role, we are left wondering how or even if those external to the academy perceive and evaluate its meaning and significance. Those of us who have chosen to join the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in and beyond the land-grant system need to figure out how and where and when we might engage our external partners in discussing this issue.

Endnotes

1. The land-grant system consists of 105 colleges and universities located in all fifty states and several U.S. territories. It includes twenty-nine tribal colleges that were granted land-grant status through the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (*NASULGC 1995*).
2. The second phase of our research was made possible by financial support from the Charles F. Kettering Foundation.
3. Transcripts are on file with Scott J. Peters, Cornell University.
4. It is important to note that not all participants in the emerging civic engagement and responsibility movement in American higher education are supportive of or interested in deepening and expanding the scholarly engagement of academic professionals in the everyday politics of public work. Many are mainly if not solely interested in deepening student rather than faculty engagement. Others are interested in studying public life and work rather than becoming directly engaged in it. Still others are interested in “serving” communities in ways that are not directly related to the work of scholarship at all. Our particular interest is in deepening and expanding the direct, scholarly engagement of academic professionals in public life and work.

5. The five land-grant institutions in our personal experience include Michigan State University, Penn State University, the University of Illinois, the University of Minnesota, and Cornell University.

6. We are well aware that some faculty members hold a view of the land-grant mission that does not restrict faculty members' legal and/or moral obligation of service to agriculture and rural communities, but which obligates it to serve and address a wide variety of constituents and issues in urban and suburban communities as well. Our second presumption is limited to agriculture and rural communities because we believe that such a view is still widely held in the land-grant system.

7. Among many other sources, this view of the land-grant mission can be found in Mumford (1940), Ross (1942), Eddy (1957), Nevins (1962), Edmond (1978), Crosson (1983), Rasmussen (1989), Campbell (1995), National Research Council (1996), Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (1999), and Ward (2003).

8. We reviewed literatures in the fields of science and technology studies, the philosophy and sociology of science, agricultural history, higher education studies, adult education, political theory, educational philosophy, and qualitative research methods.

9. Such roles were also taken up in a lesser-known democratic project of building a new rural civilization that would, in Liberty Hyde Bailey's (1909, 1) words, be "worthy of the best American ideals." For more on this project, see Peters (2006, 2007, 2008) and Morgan and Peters (2006).

10. For discussions of the distinction between technical and practical interests and instrumental and communicative learning, see Habermas (1972, 1984) and Mezirow (1995).

11. We acknowledge that if asked, most if not all faculty members would claim to be addressing social issues and problems in some way through their on-campus research and teaching. This study is intentionally limited to the examination and interpretation of the views and practice stories of faculty who are directly engaged with external, nonacademic audiences in understanding and addressing social issues and problems in off-campus settings.

12. For general guidelines about the methods for developing and analyzing practitioner profiles, see <http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/practicestories/>.

13. In taking this approach, we were especially influenced by Chase (1995a, 1995b).

14. The Morrill Act this faculty member is referring to is the Land-Grant Act of 1862 that established the land-grant system. It was sponsored by Representative Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont.

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