

University of Minnesota **Organizational Structures**

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Over the last few years, several task forces charged by the University of Minnesota's associate vice president for public engagement have collaborated with various university and community stakeholders in identifying policy recommendations for advancing the university's public engagement agenda. Since 2009, four major public engagement task forces—Accounting and Assessment; Faculty Scholarship, Development and Rewards; Student Experiences; and Graduate Student Community-Engaged Scholarship—have completed their work and have put forth a series of important policy recommendations designed to further the institutionalization of high quality public engagement work at the university.

Following the submission of each task force's report, questions were raised concerning how to transform the recommendations into official policies. Many of the recommendations required the involvement, input, and approval of administrative units and governing bodies other than the Associate Vice President's Office for Public Engagement.

Concurrently, a number of issues that lacked clarity in policy, procedures, and protocols for conducting community-engaged work were brought to the associate vice president's attention. These issues included inconsistencies in the awarding of academic credit for community-based work, liability responsibilities regarding student and faculty participation in community-based experiences, and rights concerning intellectual property for work co-constructed with community partners.

In response, the university established the Public Engagement Council in August 2011. This council serves as the university's official consulting body to the senior administration and the university's senate committees on issues pertaining to publicly-engaged research, teaching, and outreach. The council focuses on reviewing, assessing, and improving the university's structures, policies, procedures, and programs in ways that further the institutionalization of all forms of public engagement.

The council's charge encompasses consultative and steering duties: to serve as a deliberative body of the university on all major items pertaining to the advancement of publicly-engaged research, teaching, and/or outreach; to evaluate and respond to public

engagement–related actions taken or issues presented by university committees or individual units and departments; to receive, respond to, refer, and/or act upon public engagement–related recommendations or issues presented to the council by university senior academic administration, governance committees, or other units, departments, or programs; to address critical issues or policies concerning the advancement of publicly-engaged research, teaching, and outreach and make recommendations concerning such matters to relevant bodies for their consideration, review, and/or approval, as appropriate; and to report any matters pertaining to public engagement which, in the council’s judgment, should be brought to the attention of the university community at large.

The council is composed of 15 members, including a chancellor from one of the campuses, four vice provosts, two collegiate deans, two associate deans, three faculty representatives from academic senate committees, one at-large faculty member, one engagement unit director, and the associate vice president for public engagement, who serves as the chair. The senior vice president for academic administration appoints the council’s members. The council holds at least four meetings during the academic year.

Since its establishment in August 2011, the council has addressed eight issues: (1) building greater clarity of the university’s liability policies for various types of community-engaged work; (2) reviewing and clarifying standards for awarding academic credit for community-based experiences; (3) enhancing and coordinating faculty rewards and incentives for community-engaged research and teaching through alignment of incentive and awards programs; (4) offering options and tips for securing higher indirect cost recovery for community-engaged sponsored research projects; (5) streamlining the process for monitoring and cataloging background checks that are required for some community-based programs; (6) establishing nomination protocols and a university-wide process for reviewing nominations/applications for internal and external public engagement–related awards; (7) clarifying intellectual property policies for co-constructed, community-partnered work; and (8) establishing recommendations for advancing incentives and opportunities for community engagement in graduate education.

For more information, contact

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