Linking Academic and Community Guidelines for Community-Engaged Scholarship

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Abstract

Research universities seeking to promote community-engaged scholarship (CES), defined here as research of mutual benefit to community and academic interests, will discover that it requires capacity building and institutional support. At the University of California at Merced, our 7-year experience in building a new public research university that integrates CES into the fabric of the campus has benefited from the lessons of pioneers in the field. We have also gained valuable experiences that can serve those who wish to integrate CES into their research and problem-solving activities. In this article, we extend Blanchard et al.'s *(2009)* useful guide for faculty development in CES. By adding reference to the competencies that can guide community participation in and support of CES, the expanded guide encompasses both academic and community interests and highlights best practices necessary for supporting CES in our universities and communities.

Introduction

*I*n fall 2005 the University of California (UC) opened the doors of its 10th campus, University of California, Merced (UCM), with full awareness that locating it in the Central San Joaquin Valley was a response to a region desperate for problem-solving research. In addition to deep poverty, the region faces grave disparities related to health, economy, environment, and education. Thus, building a 21st-century research university in an underserved region of the state created an ideal opportunity to integrate the values of community-engaged scholarship (CES) into the fabric of the university and community alike. We define CES as research that is of mutual benefit to community and academic interests. Community is commonly defined as a group of people sharing a common goal, geographic area, or both. CES is guided by a few principles and by key questions like these: Does the research matter to the community it is focused upon? Do community stakeholders have a meaningful role in the research design? How will research results be disseminated to the community and for what ends? How does the research serve the goals of the academic partners?

UCM, like many universities in the United States, seeks ways to become more civically engaged with its community and the broader public. Civic engagement extends to practices of teaching, research, and public service. In December 2006, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the independent body that informs the classification of our diverse university contexts and conducts research and offers policy on the improvement of teaching and learning, confirmed the trend toward civic engagement in higher education when it introduced the elective classification for "community-engaged" colleges and universities. The Carnegie Foundation *(n.d.)* defines community engagement as "describing the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."

The Carnegie classification for Community Engagement applies across all campus activities to involve faculty, students, and staff who make contributions via teaching, learning, research, service, volunteerism, philanthropy, and other activities. The classification includes CES but is not limited to it. Driscoll *(2008)* analyzed information from the 145 universities that applied for the inaugural opportunity to receive the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement classification. Ultimately, 76 colleges and universities were recognized with the new Carnegie category. Driscoll attributed shortcomings in many applications to a lack of core competencies necessary for successful CES. For example, unsuccessful institutions did not provide documentation of having assessed the "community's need for and perception of the institution's engagement" and showed an absence of "developing substantive roles for the community in creating the institution's plans for that engagement" *(p. 41)*. This points to the need for genuine reciprocity between community and university actors. Another challenge noted by Driscoll is the lack of significant institutional support for faculty who engage in this work. Whether providing workshops, seminars, minigrants, and/or travel to conferences, academic institutions can do more to recognize and reward CES, particularly in the review, promotion, and tenure process. Community stakeholders also have an important role to play in faculty development for CES and career success.

In 2005 the University of California (UC) demonstrated its interest in community engagement when a report on civic engagement was generated by the Center for Studies in Higher Education

at UC Berkeley *(Anderson & Douglass, 2005)*. The report outlined the following potential benefits of increasing civic engagement:

1. bolstering the links between civic and academic achievement and between research and teaching;

2. improving diversity, student retention, and time to degree;

3. reenergizing the faculty around scholarship;

4. connecting the university to policymakers;

5. building interdisciplinary research capacity;

6. building a research community around California's most challenging policy issues;

7. bringing in new resources and funding;

8. building social capital among students, faculty, and communities;

9. leveraging UC's multicampus structure and size; and

10. allowing UC to become a leader in a growing national movement.

For UC and other universities, it is increasingly clear that a better alignment between academic and community inter-ests allows the university to fulfill its research mission *(Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 1999, 2000)*. Illustrating the relevance of research to local, regional, and statewide concerns and priorities will also lead to an increase in public support for the university. The current economic crisis and the trend toward reducing state support to the UC system make such support increasingly essential.

CES can also motivate and enhance public participation in research. Conducting research *with* communities, as opposed to conducting research *on* communities, is quickly becoming the standard approach to gaining public participation in research. Recognizing and valuing the knowledge of community mem-bers and finding meaningful opportunities for their participation in research—including the co-creation of knowledge—is trans-forming many traditional modes of conducting academic research. Another change in academic practices that has become a corner-stone best practice for CES is making results of research available to communities as well as to academic audiences. Furthermore, researchers engaged in CES are asked to be explicit about solutions

or policy implications that might accompany community-based research, and to share such information with key stakeholders.

The Movement to Increase CES

There is a growing academic literature about CES *(Fitzgerald, Burack, & Seifer, 2010a, 2010b)*. Most literature traces the impetus for CES to Ernest Boyer's *(1990) Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate.* Classic references also include Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff *(1997)* and Holland *(1997)*. In the years since that seminal publication, many advances have been made to create networks, provide resources, and build capacity for CES. Two organizations lead the national CES movement; Campus Compact and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health. Campus Compact was founded in 1985 to support colleges and universities in creating support structures for student civic engagement. Today it is a coalition of almost 1,200 colleges and universities in the United States that promote "public and community service that develops students' citizenship skills, helps campuses forge effective community partnerships, and provides resources and training for faculty seeking to integrate civic and community-based learning into the curriculum" *(Campus Compact, n.d.)*.

In addition to supporting student civic engagement through learning and service, Campus Compact takes on initiatives related to faculty development for CES. It serves as a clearinghouse for information on topics such as rationales for giving CES standing in research universities; policies for encouraging and assessing CES in review, promotion, and tenure processes; evaluation criteria for assessing CES in faculty review; and how to demonstrate quality and impacts of CES.

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) was founded in 1996. Like Campus Compact, it has developed a network of over 1,200 communities and campuses across North America. It serves as a resource for universities and communities alike seeking to build capacity for CES. In 2008, a team of high-level university administrators, faculty, and community partners from UCM was selected by CCPH to participate in the Community-Engaged Scholarship Faculty Development Charrette at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill organized by CCPH and sponsored by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), an office of the United States Department of Education. Through this event we interacted with a network of national leaders who shared lessons learned and provided templates for decision

making, policies, and practices that can facilitate the implementation of CES across campus and in communities.

Over the past 7 years, efforts to implement CES at UCM have benefited from the support of the chancellor and senior faculty and administrators. In 2009 the Chancellor's Task Force on Community Engaged Scholarship was established. The task force undertook the following activities: identify who is engaged in CES at UCM as well as other UCs; establish opportunities for learning about CES for UCM faculty and people from the community; disseminate knowledge about CES to UCM faculty; establish a liaison for interactions between community and faculty to develop research opportunities; identify funding opportunities to support CES; and develop a community advisory board to help facilitate CES at UCM. This work was greatly enhanced in 2011 when the task force was awarded a 2-year grant from The California Endowment. Geneva Skram was hired as a liaison between campus and community and to help build an infrastructure for CES. Building trusting relationships with community partners continues to be fundamental to the process.

As anticipated, many faculty and community stakeholders who wish to participate in CES require professional development to do so. We designed a series of workshops with community members, faculty, and students to build familiarity with CES and reinforce best practices. We introduced the community to the faculty roles and responsibilities at a research intensive university to underscore how mutual benefit is necessary for faculty participation; that is, faculty need to generate scholarship. Simultaneously, the community was introduced to examples of CES projects. Another workshop involved UCM faculty who worked with community members to translate community topics into research questions. The workshops that took place on campus presented principles of CES, including best practices, finding funding for CES, and incorporating CES into course syllabi. We also engaged in intense outreach efforts to identify research projects and then match them with relevant research partners. After our first year, we created nearly two dozen CES projects that engage UCM faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, and community organizations both large and small.

Working with university researchers and community members to forge new CES collaborations, it became increasingly clear that our efforts had to extend beyond the matchmaking that resulted in new research partnerships toward institutionalizing faculty development for CES. Supporting faculty CES includes building the

capacity of faculty to develop mutually beneficial research projects with community partners. It also involves establishing institutional mechanisms that recognize and reward CES. If faculty CES is not recognized through the review, promotion, and tenure process, or through other types of support, many faculty will be reluctant to conduct this type of research. We decided that assessing the current policies, programs, and practices that support or hinder faculty CES would provide valuable information that could assist in creating a strategy for faculty professional development related to CES. In 2013, the University of California Office of the President provided a grant to develop this project for UCM and the other nine campuses of the UC System. A survey is currently being conducted that will help identify faculty and other UC researchers performing community-based research. It will also attempt to gauge barriers and opportunities for growing CES within the UC system. By fall 2013, we will prepare a report summarizing our findings, circulate it on all 10 campuses, and initiate conversations with interested faculty to establish a UC systemwide network. At the time of the grant award, the Chancellor's Task Force on Community Engaged Scholarship transitioned into the Resource Center for Community Engaged Scholarship (ReCCES), a major step toward institutionalizing CES at UCM.

An Extended Model for Participation in CES

We continue to enlist more faculty, students, and community partners for CES, and to explore how to develop the competencies required to practice it. In doing so, we frequently draw upon the recommendations and lessons learned from others throughout the UC System and across the nation *(Blanchard, Strauss, & Webb, 2012; Bringle, Hatcher, & Holland, 2007; Gelmon, Blanchard, Ryan, & Seifer, 2012; Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O'Meara, 2008; Seifer, Blanchard, Jordan, Gelmon, & McGinley, 2012).* One particularly valuable resource is the faculty development plan offered by Blanchard et al. *(2009)* outlining faculty competencies for successful CES. The plan lists novice, intermediate, and advanced levels of CES, with advanced levels focused primarily on the institutionalization of CES on the campus. Drawing on our 7-year effort to promote CES at a new research university, we decided to extend Blanchard et al.'s *(2009)* useful guide for faculty development in CES. We maintain the novice, intermediate, and advanced competency levels and expand that guide with two fundamental types of addition: (1) competencies for community participation in and support of CES and (2) questions for academic and community partners that point

to the work required for achieving the appropriate competency. This expanded guide encompasses both academic and community interests and highlights best practices necessary for supporting CES in our universities and communities. In this regard, we feel we are attentive to the reciprocal process between community and campus that is essential for successful collaboration in CES.

Table 1. Extending a Model for CES Faculty Development to Guide Academic and Community Participation in CES

	Competencies required for successful practice of community-engaged scholarship	Questions required of both academic and community partners
Novice	1. Understanding of the concepts of community engagement and community-engaged scholarship (CES), and familiarity with basic literature and history of CES (i.e., Boyer, Glassick, etc.) including the research process.	• How is the project mutually beneficial to both the academic partner and community partner? • How do community partners understand the purpose and process of research at a university? • How do academic partners understand the purpose and process of community-based organizations?
Novice	2. Understanding of the various contributors to community issues (economic, social, behavioral, political, environmental); developing skills and commitment for fostering community and social change.	• How can community and academic partners collaborate to identify their purpose, goals, and priorities for their project? • How does this project advance knowledge or contribute to the academic discipline? • How is the project relevant to local community needs and concerns? • How does this project develop skills and commitment for fostering community and social change?

Novice to Intermediate	3. Knowledge of and skills in applying the principles of CES in theory and practice, including
	  a. Principles
	  b. Theoretical frameworks
	  c. Models and methods of planning
	  d. Implementation and evaluation
	(For example: community governance, equitable participation at all levels, local relevance of public health problems, dissemination of findings, trust building, benefits to community-involved community partnerships, service & learning objectives, fostering critical reflection, meaningful community service activities in response to community-identified concerns)
		• How does the work plan describe the agreement (memorandum of understanding) between the partners, including roles, responsibilities, and timelines?
		
		• Does the work plan distribute responsibilities, risks, and rewards in a way that will best meet the objectives of the project (time spent; costs; liabilities, etc.)?
		
		• How does the work plan include measurable milestones that contribute to the progress of the academic partner (publications; timelines; review, promotion, and tenure schedule/criteria; etc.)?
		
		• How does the work plan include measureable milestones that contribute to the progress of the community partner (fulfillment of mission; service to clients; funding, etc.)? What is the plan for dissemination of results? Does the work plan describe how data will be accurately and appropriately shared with both academic and community audiences?

Novice	Identify how to keep community members and researchers safe from harm during the project.	• How have the community and academic partners discussed potential difficulties or conflicts related to the stages of planning, implementing, and disseminating? Is there a plan in place to resolve these issues?
Intermediate	4. Ability to work effectively in and with diverse communities.	• How does the project involve and/or serve diverse populations in the community?
		• How are academic partners engaging the community in a way that appropriately represents its diversity? For example, has diversity been considered in terms of the population's cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, and community sectors (governmental, public, private, faith based)?
		• How are community partners engaging the campus in a way that appropriately represents its diversity? For example, has diversity been considered in terms of campus population's culture, racial, ethnic, religious, and areas of study (social sciences, arts, humanities, engineering, natural sciences)?
Intermediate	5. Ability to negotiate across community-academic groups	• Have the community and academic partners discussed potential conflicts related to planning, implementing, and disseminating their work? Does the project have a plan for finding consensus and compromising when issues arise?
		• Does the work plan include a formal process to review and revise as necessary the following:
		• Responsibilities, risks, and rewards
		• Measurable milestones that contribute to the progress of the academic partner
		• Measurable milestones that contribute to the progress of the community partner
Intermediate	6. Ability to write grants expressing CED principles and approaches.	• What process exists to support academic and community partner's capacity to fund CES work (e.g., in-kind, donations, and grants received)?
		• Training to identify, write and manage grants expressing CES principles and approaches
		• Networking and building relationships with funders and investors interested in CES
		• How are academic and community partners distributing funds in a way that truly values the contributions of all participants?
		• How is the management of funds decided in a way that ensures people and organizations are reimbursed in a legal and timely fashion?

Intermediate	7. Ability to write articles based on CES processes and outcomes for peer-reviewed publications.	• What process exists to support the capacity of academic and community partners to disseminate the lessons and results of CES work (for example: peer reviewed, professional, and lay sources)? • Training to identify appropriate dissemination sources and to write, publish, and present work expressing CES principles and approaches • Networking and building relationships with editors, publishers, press/media, and other stakeholders in the dissemination process • How are decisions made and resources distributed to ensure that written materials, including results, reports, articles, and web information, are produced? • How will the lessons and results be disseminated (examples: white papers, radio, articles in mass media and academic journals) and to which audiences? • How will community and academic partners collaborate to help each other present lessons and results in a way that each of their stakeholders can understand (e.g., peer review vs. low literacy clients)?
Intermediate to Advanced	8. Ability to transfer skills to the community, thereby enhancing community capacity, and ability to share skills with other faculty. Recognition by the community.	• What infrastructure and capacity exists on campus and in the community to build the skills and raise awareness for CES within community organizations and academic units? (For example faculty and student training; workshops for community organizers and other professionals with ties to CES; support for research-based service-learning; inclusion of community members in relevant courses on-campus.)/
Intermediate to Advanced	9. Knowledge and successful application of definition of CES, CES benchmarks, scholarly products, outcomes, and measures of quality.	• What infrastructure and capacity exists on campus and in the community to support and promote CES within community organizations and academic units. (For example,:objectives within strategic plans to promote CES and forums to present research results).
Advanced	10. Understanding of the policy implications of CES and ability to work with communities in translating the process and findings of CES into policy.	• Can the academic partner's project serve as an example in institutionalizing CES on campus and in promotion and tenure policy? • Can the community member/organization's project translate into promoting and/or supporting a formal organizational policy in engaging researchers and the university in work?
Advanced	11. Ability to balance tasks in academia (i.e., research, teaching, service) posing special challenges to those engaged in CES in order to thrive in an academic environment.	• Does the academic partner understand and have sensitivity to the guiding principles, realities, conditions, mission, goals, etc. of the community member/organization? • Does the community partner have a sensitivity to the guiding principles, realities, conditions, academic requirements and responsibilities, etc. of the academic partner?
Advanced	12. Ability to effectively describe the scholarly components of the work in a portfolio for review, promotion, and/or tenure.	• Can the academic partner describe the project's relationship with the community member/organization's mission, goals, target population, etc.? • Can the community partner describe the relationship of the project to academic requirements (publishing, tenure, etc.)?

Advanced	13. Knowledge of RPT process and its relationship with CES, ability to serve on RPT committee.	• How does the academic partner use existing models for incorporating CES into the RPT process?
		• How capable is the academic partner in making the case for CES to count in the RPT process?
		• How well do community partners understand the RPT process and how to arrange their work with the academic partner to fit the RPT process and expectations?
		• How capable is the community partner in advocating for the academic partner's CES to count for RPT?
		• How knowledgeable is the academic partner of processes similar to RPT that promote and support the professional development of the community partner?
Advanced	14. Ability to mentor student and junior faculty in establishing and builiding CES-based portfolio.	• Can the faculty member mentor others in CES, including students, staff, other faculty, and community members/organizations?
		• Can the community members/organizations mentor others in CES, including university students, staff, faculty, in addition to other community members of organizations?

Note: Based on the original faculty development plan by L. Blanchard et al,, 2009, Models for faculty development: What does it take to be a community-engaged scholar? *Metropolitan Universities, 20*(2), pp. 47-65.

We see our expansion of the Blanchard et al. *(2009)* framework foremost as a contribution to the dynamic and ever-evolving conversation about how to increase usage of and support for CES. Consequently, we hope the modified framework will generate discussion and critique. We are very familiar with CES literature, discussions, and debates and recognize the importance of the Blanchard framework; however, we also wanted to address the community side of successful CES collaborations. One common thread in the literature and within our own work is the focus on changes within the university, including changes of approach for supporting communities. However, less emphasis in the literature is seen on how to help communities understand and undertake responsibility for their role in CES. We spent a semester analyzing the Blanchard framework to consider how to transform it into a more useful tool, not only by addressing community roles and responsibilities, but also by identifying key questions that can guide the necessary competencies. It is worth noting that we approached the framework after having completed a year of designing and offering a series of CES capacity-building workshops for academic and community partners, and that experience informed our discussions and analysis. Using the Blanchard framework to critically reflect on our work, we examined the roles and responsibilities, of the community as part of this expanded framework.

The original framework addresses competencies for academic research partners as well as that of the institution; however, the

expanded framework makes explicit the community-level competencies. We realize that all partners in CES ought to have an understanding of what programs, policies, and resources can enhance CES, but we acknowledge that sections of the matrix will be relevant to some decision-makers more than others. To gauge the strengths and limitations of the modified framework, we piloted it with our faculty, graduate students, and community partners currently involved in CES. Faculty and community partners who have extensive CES experience indicated it was of value, with one faculty member describing it as

> a very useful tool for university researchers and community partners engaging in CES . . . (and) . . . as useful in priming discussions of various issues that lead to richer, more high-quality projects as well as productive, efficient, and smooth interactions over the course of the project. *(L. Cameron, personal communication, March 29, 2013)*

This person would not necessarily use the framework as a checklist to be completed at the outset of the research partnership, but would instead incorporate it into the research journey. She acknowledged that certain items may be relevant to some projects over others, but that there is nothing that she would delete from the matrix.

One community partner responded that "community participants need a good understanding of the prerequisites of participation" *(D. Lockridge, personal communication, March 13, 2013)* and that the matrix is well written and comprehensive. He specifically suggested adding a reference to informing the community participants that the IRB process can take some time, lest they become impatient. A doctoral student challenged us as to whether the first novice-level expectation of familiarity with basic CES history and literature is mostly relevant to the academic versus the community partner. He also suggested modifications such as having the second competency emphasize the importance of "sustainable" community and social change for CES projects. This thoughtful student sees the novice to intermediate knowledge and skills referenced in Item 3 as extremely valuable: "These are all important. I wish I had learned some of them right away. Year one, first semester. Not necessarily everything, but a crash course. I still don't know most of this" *(P. Carroll, personal communication, March 10, 2013).* Responding to the items on the matrix, he stated that he would like more help in

identifying appropriate dissemination sources. He concludes that CES training workshops that can reinforce the specifics addressed in the framework are needed for both academic and community partners.

These results indicate that the expanded framework will have useful applications for improving the quality of CES by clarifying the competencies that are unique to and shared by academic and community stakeholders. The clarification of these competencies allows us to accomplish an important goal for our campus that may have value for others to follow. This goal is providing tools and methods that our research partners, campus, and community decision-makers can use to conduct CES by incorporating elements of the framework into CES training materials. For example, the competencies that connect to research design will be incorporated into CES workshops and made available via our website, whereas information on the institutional competencies will be directed to those who are involved with strategic planning, programs and policies, and resources. We consider this a work in progress, and we hope it will stimulate discussion and benefit the efforts of others promoting and supporting CES on their campuses and in their communities.

Acknowledgment

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