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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

- I ..... From the Guest Editor  
*Valerie O. Paton*  
*Texas Tech University*
- 7 ..... The Changing Role of Higher Education:  
Learning to Deal with Wicked Problems  
*Judith A. Ramaley*  
*Portland State University*

The role of higher education is changing in today's world because the world itself is changing, and complex problems confront us daily. This essay will explore the role of an emerging group of individuals who can serve as a bridge between the academic community and the world at large. These administrators, faculty members, staff, students, and community members can help create new opportunities for different disciplines to work together and for all parts of a campus community and members of the broader society to form new working relationships to address the complex problems of today's world. What role will these boundary spanners play in building a culture of engagement? How will their work change our ideas about faculty work, staff work, and the role of students in achieving the goals of the institution and in responding to the changing world around us?

## REFLECTIVE ESSAYS

- 23 ..... Boundary-Spanning; Engagement Across  
Disciplines, Communities, and Geography  
*Valerie O. Paton*  
*Texas Tech University*  
*Charles Reith and Karon Harden*  
*American University of Nigeria*  
*Crystal Tremblay*  
*University of British Columbia*  
*Rogério Abaurre*  
*High School Servicos Educacionais, Brazil*

Narratives from 3 presenters at the closing session of the 2013 Engagement Scholarship Consortium Conference demonstrate that higher education institutions and communities can forge deep and sustainable relationships to address the "wicked problems" in their countries and communities. University leaders in Nigeria described how students and faculty at the American University participate in service-learning courses and programs that have generated important local economic impacts. A community partner described the

impact on educational access and civic leadership for a partnership between a Brazilian high school curriculum provider and a U.S. university, Texas Tech. A young Canadian scholar who works with “marginalized, stigmatized, and excluded communities in the world” described these partners as “environmental heroes” and shared a powerful vision of university and community collaboration across the globe. Together, these narratives weave a vision for global partnerships that have tangible impacts for peace, economic security, educational access, and quality of life.

41 .....Riding the Bus: Symbol and  
Vehicle for Boundary Spanning  
*Deborah Romero*  
*University of Northern Colorado*

This reflective essay examines the activity of a bus tour organized as the result of an ongoing university and city partnership. The author illustrates how riding the bus is not only symbolic for positionality in our society but also how it can be a viable mechanism for initiating boundary spanning and promoting opportunities for place-based learning and future engagement. This essay focuses on the concept of boundary spanning and the roles and domains most often associated with this activity by exploring the language and metaphors invoked in the term. The notion of boundary spanning is framed as an activity system, coupled with consideration of how riding the bus facilitates less traditional participants’ engagement. The author concludes by proposing that the activity of riding the bus can inform the boundary spanning metaphor while also serving as a mechanism to mobilize further engagement efforts.

RESEARCH ARTICLES

57 ..... “A Pesar de las Fronteras”/“In  
Spite of the Boundaries”: Exploring Solidarity in  
the Context of International Immersion  
*Alice B. Gates, C. Vail Fletcher, María Guadalupe Ruíz-Tolento,  
and Tadeu Velloso*  
*University of Portland*  
*Laura Goble*  
*Gannon University*

The move to “internationalize” United States universities has contributed to increased interest in global service-learning. This article presents qualitative data collected by a team of faculty and students during a service immersion in Nicaragua. The solidarity model of service-learning attempts to address shortcomings of earlier approaches and deserves further examination. This study illuminated the dynamics of solidarity from a largely unexplored perspective: host families and community leaders.

The analysis revealed that difference and inequality are salient themes and shape the relationships and possibilities for joint action between U.S. students and their hosts. A typology is suggested that includes symbolic, instrumental, and pragmatic performances of solidarity. By highlighting the perspective of Nicaraguan hosts, this study fills an important gap in the literature on service-learning. It also contributes to the conceptual elaboration of an often heard but rarely defined concept: solidarity.

**83.....Measuring Boundary-Spanning Behaviors in Community Engagement**

*Lorilee R. Sandmann, Jenny W. Jordan, Casey D. Mull,  
and Thomas Valentine  
University of Georgia*

Community engagement professionals and partners serve as, work with, study, and build the capacity of boundary spanners. To augment knowledge about these functions, the Weerts–Sandmann Boundary Spanning Conceptual Framework (2010) has been operationalized through a survey instrument to examine community engagement boundary-spanning behaviors by campus-based actors—leaders, faculty, staff, and students—as well as by community-based spanners in different contexts. This article provides an explication of the underlying theoretical constructs and the development and testing process of the instrument, along with applications for multiple audiences. Implications are presented concerning contextual issues of boundary spanning and generalization of boundary-spanning roles across a variety of potential subjects.

**DISSERTATION OVERVIEWS**

**97.....Boundary-Spanning Actors in Urban 4-H:  
An Action Research Case Study**

*Victoria Dotson David  
University of Georgia*

Today’s Cooperative Extension organization continues to face challenges of providing relevant, quality programming in urban communities. Challenges include the ability to build capacity in Extension’s urban youth educators to assess and interpret the unique, variable needs of urban clients and to communicate effectively the identified needs to the state land-grant institution to leverage resources. To be responsive, intentional change can be informed and initiated by those closest to the challenges of creating thriving 4-H programs in urban environments – the urban Extension youth educator. Guided by open and sociotechnical systems theory, this multiple case action research study used the critical incident methodology to explore boundary-spanning behaviors of urban Extension youth educators. Four conclusions were drawn from an analysis

of the findings including an adaptation of the community-based problem solver quadrant of the Weerts and Sandmann (2010) university–community engagement model. Boundary-spanning behaviors can inform organizational policies related to program development, staff development, hiring procedures, and performance evaluation procedures.

105..... The Engaged Community College: Supporting the Institutionalization of Engagement Through Collaborative Action Inquiry

*Jennifer W. Purcell*

*Kennesaw State University*

The purpose of this action research study was to explore how community colleges increase their capacity for community engagement. Faculty and staff members who were identified as community engagement leaders within a public community college participated in a series of interventions to improve community engagement practices within the college. The study produced 4 significant findings for community engagement practices. First, distributed leadership to advance community engagement is derived from college employees' and community partners' boundary-spanning behaviors. Second, the creation and extension of communication channels among multiple stakeholder groups for community engagement parallels the advancement of an institution's community engagement agenda. Third, authentic engagement exists in various degrees throughout distinct stages of institutionalization, reflecting the unique contexts and stakeholder interests involved. Fourth, collaborative action inquiry as a method of professional and organizational development utilizes existing expertise among college employees, strengthens internal networks, and supports the institutionalization of engagement. These findings substantiate the necessary integration of theory and practice in community engagement in higher education.

113..... The Exploration of Community Boundary Spanners in University–Community Partnerships

*Katherine Rose Adams*

*University of Georgia*

In university–community partnerships, boundary spanners can flexibly traverse historically divided lines to increase access to resources and build upon reciprocal partnerships. Previous research has examined the roles of boundary spanners but only from the perspectives of the institutional partners. The purpose of this dissertation study was to examine the characteristics, roles, and motivations of community boundary spanners in university–community partnerships. A qualitative instrumental multiple case study was conducted with community partners of a university–community partnership. Findings led to a community boundary spanning adaptation of the

Weerts and Sandmann (2010) institutional model. The Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships identifies four distinct roles community boundary spanners may play. This study provides institutional partners with the tools and techniques to better locate and engage community boundary spanners through partner identification and development.

119..... The Tie That Binds: Leadership and Liberal Arts Institutions' Civic Engagement Commitment in Rural Communities

*Hunter Phillips Goodman*  
*University of Central Arkansas*

Community boundary spanners create ties that bind the campus and its surrounding region for reciprocal relationships. Using community boundary spanning literature as a conceptual framework, this study went beyond existing research on public and 4-year comprehensive universities to examine how university leadership at rural, private liberal arts institutions can more deeply integrate civic engagement into institutional priorities and be more responsive to community needs. A qualitative multicase study was conducted to explore how leaders of rural, private liberal arts institutions and their community partners view civic engagement relative to the college's mission. The study examined university leaders' and community stakeholders' perceptions of civic engagement at 5 liberal arts institutions in the Bonner Scholars Program network. The conceptual framework in Weerts (2005) and Weerts and Sandmann (2010) was developed into a foundation for university leaders at liberal arts institutions to embed and develop community engagement into their institutions' culture and ethos.

PRACTICE STORIES

127.....A Tale of Two Countries: Improved Coordination of Health and Social Services

*Susan Malone Back*  
*Texas Tech University*  
*Steven Rogers*  
*Norfolk County Commission, UK*  
*Jiaqi Li*  
*Wichita State University*

A model is presented for coordinated community planning to address multiple service needs in two countries. Two communities, one in western Texas and one in the United Kingdom, found that despite the considerable efforts of multiple organizations, the local social, educational, and health services remained uncoordinated. Furthermore, there was no unified data collection to enable determination of which

efforts or which combination of efforts was successful. In each community concerned individuals concluded that residents would have to take an active role in identifying needs and solutions in order for the community to revitalize itself. Both communities made use of a theoretical model based on community action/participatory research to develop a new structure to implement coordinated programs. The article includes planning templates that provide a structure for communities to develop their own coordinated response to local needs.

## BOOK REVIEWS

141..... Reconstructing Identities in Higher Education:  
The Rise of Third Space Professionals

*C. Whitechurch*

*Review by Jeri L. Childers*

*University of Technology, Sydney*

147.....Boundary-Spanning in Organizations:  
Network, Influence, and Conflict

*J. Lagan Fox and C. Cooper*

*Review by Miles A. McNall*

*University of Technology, Sydney*

## ENGAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP CONSORTIUM POSTER AWARDS

155.....Engaging Local Community Members  
to Improve Residential Storm Water  
Management in Nags Head, North Carolina

*Christine B. Avenarius*

*East Carolina University*

*Jessica R. Handloff*

*North Carolina State University*

159.....Implementing Service Learning:  
Best Practices from Agricultural Leadership Education

*Christine B. Meyer*

*Texas Tech University*

*Laura Lemons and Gaea Hock*

*Mississippi State University*

- 163.....#OKSTATEHASANAPP4THAT:  
Engaging Students, Community and Enterprise  
*Jayne Mayfield, David W. Davis, Penny Thompson, and Yoonjung Cho*  
*Oklahoma State University*  
*Steve Ruby*  
*University of Oklahoma*
- 167..... Documenting Our Neighborhood:  
Paintings/Stories from the Eastside  
*Ed Check and Future Akins-Tillett*  
*Texas Tech University*  
*Shannon Walton*  
*Estacado High School*
- 171 ..... Feasibility and Efficacy of ¡Cuídate!,  
a Sexual Risk Reduction Program with Mexican and Central  
American Youth  
*Kim L. Larson, Sharon M. Ballard, and Brenda J. Nuncio*  
*East Carolina University*
- 173..... University–National Laboratory Service-Learning  
Partnership: Intern Team Saves Energy and Money  
*Paulette R. Hebert*  
*Oklahoma State University*
- 175..... MU’s School and Community Gardening  
Program Within SNAP-Ed and EFNEP  
*Jo Britt-Rankin, Candace Gabel, Larry Roberts, and Becky Mott*  
*University of Missouri*

