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Although growing numbers of graduate students nationwide express interest in developing and documenting boundary-spanning skills in community-engaged research, teaching, and outreach, formal opportunities to do so are often limited, especially at the large research institutions producing most future faculty members. This article focuses on initial steps being taken to provide professional development for graduate students through portfolio and certification programs at two large, public, land-grant, research-intensive, Carnegie-engaged institutions in different parts of the United States: Michigan State University and the University of Georgia. For each university, the authors describe the context and history; the specific steps being taken to support graduate students in community-engaged research, teaching, and practice; and the impacts, outcomes, and lessons learned to date from this work.

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From the Editor…

Addressing Today's "Messes" With Engaged Systemic Approaches

Messy problems, wicked problems, ill-defined problems, complex problems, systemic problems . . . the long-standing call is for higher education to partner with communities to address such problems. But are prevailing forms of engaged scholarship capable of managing "messes," as defined by systems theorist Ackoff *(1999)*: complex, dynamic systems of problems that interact and reinforce each other over time? McNall, Barnes-Najor, Brown, Doberneck, and Fitzgerald, in their essay leading this issue of JHEOE, ask this question and posit that the lack of progress in effectively managing complex problems is due in part to the predominance of an isolated-impact approach *(Kania & Kramer, 2011)*, in which engaged problem-solving addresses a particular problem, often through stand-alone projects, with possible strong outcomes for a target population but in ways that leave the larger system or context unchanged. They discuss and illustrate an alternative approach called systemic engagement in a case example, the Wiba Anung, a now 6-year partnership between Michigan State University, Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Bay Mills Community College, and nine Michigan tribes focused on the complex problem of disparities between minority children and White children in early childhood education outcomes. Without denying that there are no comfortable ways to engage such complexity, the authors propose six key principles for systemic engagement, using the language of principles to provide foundational constructs for practice with a sense of permeability and liquidity.

In addition to messiness, the metaphor of liquidity is also helpful in effectively capturing the complexity of social changes taking place. In developing the metaphor, Nicolaides *(2015)*, another scholar who writes about decision making, problem solving, and organizational transformation under conditions of ambiguity and uncertainty, says:

> Increasingly, social structures widely viewed as solid—education, health, social security, leisure, and family, to name only a few—are more fluid, unable to hold their shape for long. This new liquidity signals constant change, and with it insecurity and uncertainty.… The transformation from solid to liquid modernity has created unprecedented contexts . . . confronting individuals

> with a series of challenges never before encountered. Social forms and institutions no longer have enough time to solidify and therefore cannot serve as frames of reference for human learning, actions, and long-term planning, giving rise to ambiguity. The complexity of these liquid times requires individuals to make sense of their fragmented lives by being flexibly, adaptable and constantly ready and willing to change tactics; to abandon commitments and loyalties without regret; and to act in a moment, as failure to act brings greater insecurity. *(p. 2)*

It is within these liquid, complex contexts that "messes" are being addressed through courageous and innovative studies and programs. Morrell, Sorensen, and Howarth's assessment indicated that the Charlotte Action Research Project model's unique strength was its ability to make space for the exploration of wicked problems that have resulted from that city's structural and sociospatial inequality because tangible issues identified by community partners become action research priorities for the community–university team. In "The Impact of Socially Engaged Theatre Across Communities: A Tale of Two Slave Cabins," Harrison Long presents other fora—theatre and text—as venues for considering tough, messy problems and relates the powerful results.

Actors leading these efforts at bold systemic change are featured in several articles in this issue—as institutional leaders, research scientists, alumni, and graduate students. Liang and Sandmann report patterns of distributed leadership in Carnegie community engagement classified institutions. Amplifying research findings from other sectors, McCann, Cramer, and Taylor report in their study of university research scientists that younger, nontenured researchers tend to be more eager to involve themselves in education and outreach with a nonscientific audience than their older, tenured colleagues. Winston examines the relationship between five curricular and cocurricular undergraduate experiences and 10 types of political engagement after graduating to provide a deeper, more nuanced understanding of what facilitates the attitudinal and identity development that promotes enduring activism. Matthews, Karls, Doberneck, and Springer provide us examples of portfolio and certification programs in community engagement for graduate students. The curricula described and lessons learned from two universities can be helpful to other institutions attempting to start similar graduate-level professional development. In an overview of

his action research dissertation, Dillon serves as a model of a graduate student using his doctoral research to work collaboratively and reciprocally with alumni from a community-based leadership program to facilitate community conversations about their "messes."

The books reviewed in this issue warrant particular attention. Andrew Pearl reviews David Cooper's collection of well-written, provocative essays released over a span of 20 years. A volume that marries the themes discussed above is *Transforming Cities and Minds Through the Scholarship of Engagement*. In his review, Hartley highlights the collaboration of a faculty member, Lorlene Hoyt (editor of the volume), and a group of six graduate students affiliated with M.I.T.'s Community Innovator's Lab (CoLab) who take on formidable urban challenges of economy, equity, and environment in ways that provide exceptional cases of systemic scholarly engagement. The CoLab students' master's theses are included as chapters in the book. In addition to presenting good practice, the cases are well analyzed. I was so taken by Hartley's review and the makeup of the book, I purchased it!

In the review of *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing*, Hustedde, himself a sociologist, introduces Schwartz and Sharpe's work that explores the contemporary balancing of technical or instrumental-driven knowledge against phronesis, the Aristotelian notion of practical wisdom, or values-driven knowledge. The use of practical wisdom in decision making is advocated as a countermeasure to the "psychic numbing and ethical erosion" currently taking place in the professions. Although the book focuses on the professions, Hustedde extends this perspective by raising application questions for other disciplines, for multidisciplinary and postdisciplinary academic coalitions, for higher education outreach and engagement, for cross-cutting initiatives of faculty and students, and, importantly, for exploring the practical wisdom emerging from communities.

We thank the authors, peer reviewers, and associate editors of articles in this issue for framing our thinking about community engagement deep in the exciting, complex liquid "messes" that we must confront in order to realize the full potential of our theories and practices. Their work is an inspiration for all of us who have made a commitment to address real-world problems in engaged systemic ways as scholars, students, practitioners, and community members.

Lorilee R. Sandmann
Editor

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Reflective Essays

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Systemic Engagement: Universities as Partners in Systemic Approaches to Community Change

Miles A. McNall, Jessica V. Barnes-Najor, Robert E. Brown, Diane M. Doberneck, and Hiram E. Fitzgerald

Abstract

The most pressing social problems facing humanity in the 21st century are what systems theorist Russell Ackoff referred to as "messes"—complex dynamic systems of problems that interact and reinforce each other over time. In this article, the authors argue that the lack of progress in managing messes is in part due to the predominance of a university-driven isolated-impact approach to social problem solving. The authors suggest an alternative approach called systemic engagement (SE), which involves universities as partners in systemic approaches to community change. The six principles of SE are presented and illustrated with a case example. Barriers to SE are discussed, and strategies are proposed for increasing faculty use of this methodology. The promises and perils of SE as an alternative community-engaged approach to social problem solving are considered.

Introduction

The most pressing problems facing humanity in the 21st century (e.g., climate change and social inequality) are not isolated problems, but what systems theorist Russell Ackoff *(1999)* referred to as "messes"—complex dynamic systems of problems that interact and reinforce each other over time. The complexity of messes presents daunting challenges to our collective problem-solving capacities, let alone the capacities of any particular engaged scholar. In the context of calls to strengthen the role of universities in addressing social problems (*Boyer, 1990; Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 1999),* it is reasonable to ask whether prevailing forms of engaged scholarship are capable of managing messes. In this article, we argue that the lack of progress in effectively managing complex problems is due in part to the predominance of a particular approach to engagement called the *isolated-impact approach (Kania & Kramer, 2011)*. In the isolated-impact approach, universities and communities collaborate to design and implement interventions that address a particular problem, with limited attention paid to the contextual factors that perpetuate the problem. Such interventions, if designed well and implemented with fidelity, may have strong short-term effects

within a narrow range of outcomes for targeted populations, but the dynamics of the larger system that generated the problem remain unchanged. In addition, isolated-impact efforts are frequently conducted as stand-alone projects that are disconnected from other related efforts, thereby failing to realize the synergies possible with more coordinated strategies. In this article, we propose an alternative to the isolated-impact approach to problem solving called *systemic engagement* (SE). We discuss the six principles of SE and provide a case example to illustrate the principles. We then consider barriers to faculty involvement in SE and how these barriers might be surmounted to allow for the wider use of SE.

Systemic Engagement

Simply put, SE involves universities as partners in systemic approaches to social problem solving. SE has six key principles:

1. Systems thinking
2. Collaborative inquiry
3. Support for ongoing learning
4. Emergent design
5. Multiple strands of inquiry and action
6. Transdisciplinarity

Although SE includes within its scope all community–university partnerships that use systemic approaches to social problem solving, the focus of this article is on SE within the context of place-based initiatives, or what we refer to here as *systemic approaches to community change*.

Systems Thinking

Systems theorists have argued that the foundation of systems thinking is holism *(Midgley, 2007)*, comprehensiveness *(Midgley, 2000)*, or "taking into account the whole" *(Burns, 2007, p. 21)*. In other words, systems thinking involves a widening of the usual scope of inquiry to include a larger share of the contextual factors that contribute to messes. Imam, LaGoy, and Williams *(2007)* argued that three systems concepts are essential for understanding systems-based interventions: *boundaries, perspectives,* and entangled systems (or *relationships*). Because of the inclination toward comprehensiveness in systems thinking and the practical impossibility of considering every influence on a focal problem, *boundaries* help

define what lies inside or outside the scope of a particular inquiry. However, these boundaries must be placed carefully and provisionally, with a clear understanding of the implications of their placement for what or whom is included or excluded from the inquiry space. Systems thinking also involves considering the subject of inquiry from the *perspectives* of a wide range of individuals with a stake in managing the problem or from different perspectives on the possible purposes of the system in question. Finally, systems thinking involves an exploration of the key *relationships* among system elements, between systems and subsystems, and how these relationships contribute to the perpetuation of the problem.

Boundaries. SE expands the boundaries of *inquiry* based on the understanding that complex problems rarely (if ever) arise from the action of a single isolated cause. Rather, complex problems typically result from the interplay of relationships among several factors. In addition, problems rarely exist in isolation. Instead, they are often subcomponents of dynamic systems of problems that interact and reinforce each other over time (i.e., messes). For this reason, Ackoff *(1999)* argued that "a partial solution to a whole system of problems is better than whole solutions of each of its parts taken separately" *(p. 324)*. Based on these insights, SE expands the boundaries of inquiry to bring "whole systems of problems" within the inquiry space of an initiative. For example, a systemic approach to the study of child development, informed by Bronfenbrenner's *(1979)* ecological systems theory, would expand the typical boundaries of inquiry from influences operating within the child's proximate *microsystem* (family, school, neighborhood, and peers) to influences operating in the child's *mesosystem* (connections between elements of the microsystem), *exosystem* (industry, social services, neighbors, and mass media), and *macrosystem* (attitudes and ideologies prevalent in the larger culture).

Perspectives. SE expands the boundaries of inclusion based on the understanding that there is no single correct definition, perspective, or understanding of problems or systems of problems (indeed, whether something is a problem is a matter of perspective), and that those affected by problems should have a voice in how they are addressed. Far too often university-based scholars develop theory-based interventions for testing and dissemination in communities, viewing communities largely as "passive distribution or delivery systems rather than as rich sources of knowledge and skills" *(Miller & Shinn, 2005, p. 169)*. SE pushes the boundaries of inclusion to incorporate the perspectives of a broad range of both community-based and university-based actors with a stake in the

problems, explicitly including both local and indigenous knowledge and generalized university-based knowledge both in understanding problems and in generating solutions to manage them *(Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco & Swanson, 2012)*. SE strives to bring these different sources of knowledge into respectful and appreciative dialogue with one another for the purpose of cocreating new understandings and codesigning new solutions to complex problems.

Relationships. SE explores the relationships between systems and subsystems and among the components of systems to reveal the complex dynamics that perpetuate the problem of concern. Meadows *(2008)* argued that whereas changes in system elements (e.g., changes in the individual members of a social group) typically have little to no effect on the functioning of a system, changes in their interconnections will often have very large effects. Consequently, a clear understanding of the relationships among a system's components is essential to restructuring that system to produce different results. As Meadows *(2008)* has argued, "the results that systems produce will continue until they are restructured" *(p. 4)*. A systemic study of child development would explore the structure of relationships both within and across micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems. For example, within the level of individual children, it would explore the relationships among four brain systems (executive, regulation, sensory, and relevance; *Lillas & Turnbull, 2009)* while also examining the influences of factors operating at the micro-, meso-, and exosystem levels on the functioning of these same brain systems.

Collaborative Inquiry

Collaborative inquiry refers to the use of collaborative and participatory approaches to research and evaluation. SE intentionally solicits multiple perspectives on problems and relevant systems by drawing on both local and indigenous knowledge as well as generalized university-based knowledge to understand problems and to generate strategies for managing them more effectively. The methods of inquiry best suited to fostering deep participation by people with a stake in particular problems and utilizing both university-based and community-based sources of knowledge for understanding and managing them are collaborative approaches to inquiry and action such as community-based participatory research *(Israel et al., 2001, 2008; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008)*, participatory action research *(Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; McTaggart, 1991; Whyte, 1991)*, and collaborative and participatory

approaches to evaluation *(Cousins & Whitmore, 1998)*. In addition, there are explicitly systemic approaches to collaborative inquiry, including systemic action research *(Burns, 2007)*, systemic intervention *(Midgley, 2000)*, and participatory system dynamics modeling *(Hovmand, 2014)*. Despite their differences, these approaches share a commitment to involving community members at some level in all or nearly all phases of inquiry, including identification of the problem or topic of inquiry, selection of research or evaluation questions, choice of research or evaluation methods, collection of data, analysis of data, interpretation of findings, deliberation over the implications of findings for further inquiry or action, and dissemination of findings.

Support for Ongoing Learning

In their review of the successes and failures of comprehensive community initiatives, Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, and Dewar *(2010)* recommended a new approach to the evaluation of community change initiatives that assists in planning, managing, and learning. Instead of midpoint formative and endpoint summative evaluations, community change initiatives require flexible, adaptive approaches to evaluation that produce findings in real time to support ongoing learning and action. Recent frameworks for systemic approaches to community change, including systemic action research *(Burns, 2007)* and the ABLe change framework *(Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2011)*, are consistent with this imperative. Both make use of ongoing cycles of inquiry and action, with evaluators and researchers providing continuous support to learning teams. Another systemic approach to community change, collective impact *(Kania & Kramer, 2011, 2013)*, embraces developmental evaluation, an approach to evaluation that is uniquely suited to complex situations, and uses a flexible and adaptable design to support the emergence of innovations *(Patton, 2011)*. These developments in the evaluation of systemic approaches to community change are consistent with emerging trends in the larger field of evaluation and reflect many of the characteristics of what Gopalakrishnan, Preskill, and Lu *(2013)* referred to as the next generation of evaluation, including (a) a focus on whole systems, (b) shorter cycles and more real-time feedback, (c) shared responsibility for data collection and learning across multiple organizations, and (d) collecting and using data as part of ongoing practice.

Emergent Design

Based on insights from complexity theory, SE recognizes the degree of uncertainty and unpredictability inherent in the kinds of complex dynamic systems that messes are, and therefore the limited utility of predetermined solutions or interventions *(Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton, 2007).* Addressing messes requires a tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict and a willingness to test strategies whose results cannot be known with any degree of certainty in advance. Flood *(1999)* referred to this process as "learning our way into a mysterious future" *(p. 90)*. Borrowing a key principle from systemic action research *(Burns, 2007)*, SE supports the principle of *emergent design*, in which the likely design, methods, and measures are sketched out initially in very broad terms, with the specific elements of the design emerging based on what is being learned.

Multiple Strands of Inquiry and Action

Because messes consist of networks of interacting problems, the effective management of messes depends on the mobilization of multiple strands of inquiry and action, with each strand directed at a particular problem within a larger mess. Any given SE initiative would therefore involve different teams tackling different problems within the same mess. Consistent with this approach, systemic action research *(Burns, 2007),* the ABLe change framework *(Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2011)*, and collective impact *(Kania & Kramer, 2011)* call for the use of multiple strands of inquiry and action to address complex problems.

Transdisciplinarity

Because complex social problems do not respect the boundaries of academic disciplines, SE calls for *transdisciplinarity*, or the participation of multiple disciplines in addressing messes. According to Rosenfield *(1992)*, *multidisciplinary* research involves researchers working in either parallel or sequential fashion on a common problem, each operating from his or her own disciplinary knowledge base. *Interdisciplinary* research involves researchers working jointly on a common problem but with each researcher operating from his or her disciplinary base. In contrast, transdisciplinary research involves researchers working jointly on a common problem using a shared conceptual framework that draws from multiple disciplines. Of these, transdisciplinary research holds the greatest promise for "intellectual integration and the creation of

new knowledge at the intersection of multiple fields" *(Stokols, 2006, p. 67)*. Because complex problems do not respect disciplinary boundaries, we argue that precisely this kind of new transdisciplinary and transsectoral knowledge is needed to effectively address them.

Place-Based Efforts

Why the focus on place? Because place matters a great deal in the life chances of individuals. Place influences the quality of the housing in which we live; the quality of schools that our children attend; the availability of nutritious food; access to safe spaces for recreation; air, water, and soil quality; the availability of jobs; and access to public transportation. Reviewing and synthesizing the research on how the features of neighborhoods affect health and contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in health, Roux and Mair *(2010)* identified a wide range of neighborhood-level factors that influence health, including residential segregation by race/ethnicity and class; features of neighborhood physical environments such as environmental exposures, food and recreational resources, the quality of the built environment, and housing; and features of neighborhood social environments such as level of safety and violence, social connections and cohesion, local institutions, and local norms. Given that place has a profound impact on the health and life chances of people, *working with people to transform the places in which they live for the better is a primary goal of SE.*

In sum, we believe that six key features of SE make it a more promising approach to tackling the complex, dynamic systems of interrelated problems known as messes than the isolated-impact approach. In putting forth these principles, we are not making a claim for their uniqueness. Rather, we are arguing that the act of bringing them together in partnership with communities to address complex community-identified problems is not practiced as widely as we believe it should be for effective community-based management of complex problems. In this article, we focus on SE as applied to place-based efforts, or *systemic approaches to community change*. Below, we provide a case example that illustrates the use of the six principles of SE on a community-driven systemic change effort.

Case Example: Wiba Anung

Wiba Anung is a partnership between Michigan State University, Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Bay Mills Community College, and nine Michigan tribes that began in 2005. The partnership focuses on supporting early childhood education research in

tribal communities and has been described in prior written work *(Fitzgerald et al., 2013)*. Wiba Anung was formed to address the complex problem of disparities between American Indian/Alaska Native children, other minority children, and White children in early childhood education outcomes and the lack of early childhood research in tribal communities.

In this partnership, an organizational design emerged that allows us to move forward in a way that aligns with each of the six SE principles. This design consists of three types of teams: a *partnership* team, a *leadership* team, and *communities of learning.* Our *Partnership Team* consists of community and research partners who have an interest in working to address issues regarding early childhood education in tribal communities. As shown in Figure 1, members of the Partnership Team include community partners, parents and caregivers, university researchers, and program staff. The Partnership Team meets once or twice a year in person and quarterly via phone when the initiative is engaged in ongoing planning and data collection. The *Leadership Team* consists of a small group of researchers and community partners that meets a minimum of monthly (and as frequently as weekly) via conference call to make decisions about the overall direction of the partnership. *Communities of learning* (currently three) consist of smaller teams of researchers and community partners who meet virtually or in person monthly to move forward on a particular strand of inquiry. Each community of learning is led by a research staff member or faculty partner and typically involves meeting via conference call or webinar.

Figure 1. Wiba Anung Partnership Team

Our Leadership Team has documented its progress in our work together both formally and informally. To formally document progress in building a strong partnership, we have conducted focus groups regarding the functioning of our partnership. We are also planning to conduct a social network analysis of the partnership in order to better understand the structure of our partnership network and the strength of the relationships we have forged. Informally, we have ongoing discussions regarding how we are progressing. We include the Partnership Team in discussions regarding how each of our actions might be creating changes in other aspects of our work together. Has our work to include culture in the classroom changed how parents perceive the program? Are parents more likely to be engaged? Do federal program officers perceive the program differently because of the work we are doing together? Finally, we have also been gathering data annually on children's academic school readiness. Data have been collected in the fall and spring of each year since 2008. Analyses are currently in progress, but preliminary evidence suggests that over time, children are making greater gains from fall to spring in numeracy and literacy skill development.

Systems Thinking

Boundaries and perspectives. Following the systems thinking orientation toward holism, the Wiba Anung partnership has explored the problem of disparities in educational outcomes by expanding the boundaries of inquiry to encompass the tribal early childhood context as a whole, acknowledging the importance of the larger tribal community systems, early childhood education systems, and family systems in the genesis of the problem. In our work, we have drawn on the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders in the tribal early childhood context, including parents, teachers, elders, directors of tribal-based early childhood programs, and university-based researchers. Each individual comes to the table with a different perspective on "the whole," making the overwhelming task of examining our small slice of the early childhood context more manageable.

Relationships. Although we recognize it is not possible to truly attend to all components and interactions of the multiple systems that influence child health and well-being, we have established mechanisms to examine the interactions within and across many of these systems in our work. For example, in a PhotoVoice project led by Nicole Thompson, tribal Head Start staff documented many of the challenges and strengths in tribal Head Start programs, one of which was how to support families to be engaged in their young

children's education. Thus, in terms of the relationships dimension of systems thinking, this project involved exploring the relationships between family and tribal early childhood educational systems. In response to this identified challenge, our Leadership Team formed a community of learning to develop an interactive seminar that would support the efforts of home visiting, Head Start, and child care staff to engage families in their young children's education in culturally meaningful ways *(Barnes, Abramson, Burnett, Verdugo, & Fillimore, 2014).*

Collaborative Inquiry and Action

The Wiba Anung partnership has used community-based participatory research *(CBPR; Israel et al., 2008; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2010)* as a guiding framework for collaborative inquiry and action. We have included the larger partnership group in determining what our research questions are, as well as how we go about answering those questions. The Partnership Team has collectively made decisions regarding the methods used and has participated in interpreting the results of all data analyses. For example, when determining how to measure social and emotional competence in young children, our community partners reviewed three commonly used research measures and determined which one of these measures was most appropriate in their communities. Additionally, analyses are always guided by either the larger partnership team's questions or by requests from the leadership team.

Ongoing Learning and Action

SE calls for flexible approaches to research and evaluation that produce findings in a timely fashion to support ongoing learning and action. Consistent with the CBPR approach described above, our partnership is committed to producing findings that support ongoing learning and action. As soon as data are analyzed, the findings are shared with partners for their review and, as described above, their interpretation. These findings always produce more questions. Some require further analysis of existing data; others require the development of a new strand of research. For example, early in our partnership, we conducted focus groups with immediate and extended family members of children who attended Michigan tribal Head Start programs. During these focus groups, a theme was identified that we did not expect: support for teaching tribal language and culture in Head Start classrooms. Because of this finding, our team conducted a focus group with tribal knowledge

holders to identify appropriate ways to incorporate tribal beliefs, values, and customs into classrooms. As a result of this focus group, our research partners obtained a much deeper understanding of the indigenous ways of the participating tribes. For example, one of the elders shared the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers that have been passed down to Anishinaabe people for many generations, guiding the next generation in supporting children's healthy emotional, moral, and spiritual development. The Seven Grandfathers are viewed as a collective grouping of seven interwoven teachings. The English equivalents of these seven teachings are wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth. These teachings directly relate to what adults should be teaching children, how children should be treated, and how adults should treat each other. Thus, it was very important for us to understand these teachings at a deeper level as a collective to guide our knowledge and practice of how teachers/staff and children should be interacting and how we should treat each other in our partnership.

Emergent Design

Because of the degree of uncertainty inherent in tackling complex problems, SE cautions against detailed, upfront planning and predetermined outcome measures. Instead, following the principles of systemic action research *(Burns, 2007)*, SE favors *emergent designs*, in which the likely design, methods, and measures are sketched out initially in very broad terms, with the specific elements of the design developing iteratively based on what is being learned. From the very beginning of the Wiba Anung partnership, we moved forward strategically by developing plans that allowed for emergence. When we wrote our grant application, we identified the general strategies and approaches we would use to engage our partners and jointly identify our research topics, questions, methods, and products, but we did not identify specific topics, questions, methods, and products, although these details are typically the foundation of a well-written research grant proposal. Our proposal, however, was for building the foundation for a Michigan-based tribal early childhood education research partnership. Once we received funding, we set out to build that foundation, establishing a community–university research team that explored new opportunities, both big and small. In the section that follows, we illustrate how the principle of emergent design operated within a particular strand of inquiry and action.

Multiple Strands of Inquiry and Action

In our partnership, we have always maintained three active strands of inquiry within the larger problem space of disparities in early education outcomes. As determined in our early partnership meetings, these strands were (a) inclusion of Native language and culture in the Head Start classroom (described above), (b) examination of children's school readiness, and (c) understanding and supporting effective teacher–child interactions in the classroom. Each of these three strands includes several substrands or smaller projects, allowing us to more fully explore each line of inquiry and create appropriate action. We addressed the incorporation of tribal language, cultural skills, values, beliefs, and life ways into the Head Start classroom through three specific avenues. First, by conducting focus groups with community partners and tribal knowledge holders, we were able to learn about appropriate ways to incorporate tribal language and culture into the classroom. Second, we conducted surveys and observations in the classrooms to identify how tribal classrooms are able to support young children's knowledge of tribal language and culture *(Gerde et al., 2012).* Results from this study indicated that, although programs were offering children opportunities to learn tribal language and culture within the classroom, these opportunities were often disconnected from curricular activities. Additionally, opportunities for learning tribal language were generally limited to learning single words or phrases. Using these findings, we then worked with collaborators from tribal Head Start programs and the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness of the Office of Head Start to develop *Making it Work!*, a framework that supports tribes to create culturally based content for the classroom that connects to the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework domains of early learning (https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/making-it-work).

It is important to note that the main three strands of inquiry and action within the Wiba Anung partnerships are not viewed in isolation. We actively work together to explore how findings from different strands are related. Our team has also implemented the use of mirrored methods across different types of tribal early childhood programs to enable a more comprehensive understanding of these themes from different perspectives. Specifically, the team decided that common measures would be used by our Head Start research team and our Home Visiting research team. By using the same measures, we will be able to combine data across these two research projects. In addition, we have been able to increase the

collaboration between these two programs, which are typically not closely coordinated.

Transdisciplinarity

The Wiba Anung partnership has included university staff and faculty from different disciplines (e.g., psychology, human development and family studies, education, anthropology), parents, teachers, elders, and directors of different tribal-based early childhood programs. In addition, faculty from nursing, kinesiology, human medicine, and engineering have contributed their expertise to the partnership, but not as formal members. To coordinate such a large and disparate group, we formed teams of the three types described above (partnership team, leadership team, and communities of learning). In addition, we conduct consultations in the form of focus groups and key informant interviews with a broader range of community stakeholders and tribal elders to obtain their guidance and advice as we move forward with our work.

In sum, the Wiba Anung case demonstrates in concrete terms the application of the six principles of SE within a successful community–university research partnership that has yielded scholarly products, enhancements to tribal early childhood education systems, and stronger connections between tribal educational and family systems. Preliminary results indicate that this partnership has also produced improvements in early childhood education outcomes among American Indian/Alaska Native children. In light of this successful case, we now turn our attention to some of the barriers university-based faculty, staff, and students are likely to experience in practicing the principles of SE.

Barriers to Implementing Systemic Engagement

Given the apparent promise of SE, it is reasonable to ask why its principles are not more widely deployed in university–community partnerships. To provide a partial answer to this question, we briefly review the literature on the barriers to faculty engagement in general and SE in particular to understand why the principles of SE are not more widely used to address complex problems in partnership with communities.

Barriers to Engagement

Most barriers associated with faculty engagement are located in five domains: personal, professional, communal, institutional

(Demb & Wade, 2012), and logistical *(Demb & Wade, 2012; Hammond, 1994)*.

Personal domain. The personal domain encompasses individual attributes such as race/ethnicity, gender, personal values, motivation, epistemology, and experience *(Demb & Wade, 2012)*. Although the influence of race/ethnicity and gender on faculty engagement is unclear *(O'Meara, Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & Giles, 2011)*, personal values that prioritize the intrinsic rewards of engagement over the extrinsic rewards of professional accomplishment, motivation to accomplish social change versus enhancing one's professional status, and a humanistic rather than an exclusively intellectual orientation are associated with higher levels of faculty engagement *(Demb & Wade, 2012)*. Therefore, recruiting engaged scholars with value stances that are associated with higher levels of engagement and developing a new generation of engaged scholars that possess such value stances will be essential to the widespread use of the principles of SE.

Professional domain. The professional domain includes such elements as a faculty member's tenure status, rank, length of time in academe, and professional orientation *(Demb & Wade, 2012)*. In general, senior faculty discourage junior untenured faculty from participating in engagement activities, counseling them instead to focus their efforts on research activities that will quickly yield publications in top-tier disciplinary journals *(Demb & Wade, 2012; Jaeger & Thornton, 2006; Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O'Meara, 2008; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008)*. Consequently, tenured faculty are more likely to participate in engagement than untenured faculty and if untenured faculty are engaged, they are more likely to be teaching a service-learning course than conducting community-based research *(Jaeger & Thornton, 2006)*. Although an increasing number of journals are devoted to publishing engaged scholarship *(Franz, 2011),* publication in such journals does not garner the same degree of recognition or reward as publication in disciplinary journals *(Sobrero & Jayaratne, 2014)*. Consequently, the challenge for the engaged scholar is to produce scholarly products worthy of publication in both disciplinary and engagement-oriented journals.

Communal domain. The communal domain refers to the degree of support for engagement in graduate socialization, professional communities, academic disciplines, and departments *(Demb & Wade, 2012)*. Much of graduate education "emphasizes competitive individualism, without attention to the consequentiality of research for public purposes" *(O'Meara, 2011, p. 185)*. Graduate socialization also tends to favor traditional forms of scholarship

(Jaeger & Thornton, 2006). As a consequence, new faculty members may arrive on campus lacking the "knowledge, skills, or values orientation needed for engagement" *(Sandmann et al., 2008, p. 50)*. As we will see later, many new faculty will also lack the knowledge, skills, and value orientation necessary for SE.

Faculty engagement varies significantly by discipline. Whereas the most highly engaged faculty are found in the disciplines of social work *(Demb & Wade, 2012)*, education (*Demb & Wade, 2012; Doberneck, Glass, & Schweitzer, 2012; O'Meara et al., 2011)*, human ecology, food sciences *(Demb & Wade , 2012)*, forestry *(O'Meara et al., 2011)*, agriculture *(Demb & Wade, 2012; Doberneck et al., 2012; O'Meara et al., 2011)*, environmental sciences *(Demb & Wade, 2012)*, and health sciences *(Doberneck et al., 2012; O'Meara et al., 2011)*, the least engaged faculty are found in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines *(Demb & Wade, 2012; O'Meara et al., 2011)*; humanities *(Demb & Wade, 2012; O'Meara et al., 2011)*; and English *(O'Meara et al., 2011).* Oddly enough, whereas O'Meara et al. *(2011)* reported that faculty in the social sciences were among the most highly engaged, Demb and Wade *(2012)* found that faculty in the social and behavioral sciences were among the least engaged. These contradictory results may be an artifact of differences between the studies in which disciplines were included in the categories of social and behavioral sciences. Nevertheless, the results overall suggest that additional work must be done to foster engagement in those disciplines in which engagement is less frequently practiced. After all, consistent with the principle of transdisciplinarity, it is desirable to have all disciplines that possess knowledge relevant to the effective management of a complex problem involved in an SE effort.

The reality for most faculty members is that engagement is *not* highly valued in the hiring, retention, promotion, and tenure (HRPT) process, even when policies are in place to reward engagement *(Jaeger & Thornton, 2006; O'Meara, 2011)*. Furthermore, faculty who serve on HRPT committees are often unprepared to assess the quality of engaged scholarship *(Jaeger & Thornton, 2006; Sandmann et al., 2008; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008)* and have limited understanding of standards and metrics appropriate for evaluating engaged scholarship *(Sandmann et al., 2008; Sobrero & Jayaratne, 2014)*. Even where standards and metrics of excellence in engaged scholarship have been established, senior faculty may resist using them during the HRPT process *(Jaeger & Thornton, 2006).*

Institutional domain. The institutional domain includes such elements as institutional mission, institution type, and engage-

ment structures *(Demb & Wade, 2012)*. O'Meara et al. *(2011)* found that faculty perceived institutional commitment to engagement to be higher at 2-year colleges, public 4-year colleges, and Catholic 4-year colleges than at other types of institution. In addition, a comparative study of land-grant and urban research universities found that "land-grant universities struggle more than their urban counterparts to institutionalize engagement language and practices across their campuses" *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2008, p. 86)*. However, this study contained a very small sample of three land-grant institutions, and much has changed in the field of engagement since the study was conducted. The extent to which these findings are true of land-grant institutions today is unclear.

Many institutions of higher education have institutionalized their support for engagement by establishing internal structures with dedicated engagement staff. Some institutions have centralized their engagement structures in institution-level offices, and others have implemented a distributed model of engagement, dispersing engagement functions and staff throughout colleges and departments. There is no consensus on the preferred model; each possesses distinct advantages and disadvantages *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2008)*.

In their study of engagement at six public research universities, Weerts and Sandmann *(2008)* found that "engagement work was typically led by academic staff, not traditional tenure-track faculty. Instead, faculty were more likely to assume the role of content expert or researcher alongside the academic staff who were facilitating the engagement projects" *(Weerts & Sandmann, 2008, p. 91)*. In other words, engagement staff provide a critical bridging or boundary-spanning *(Williams, 2002)* function within university–community engagement efforts. They also lower the costs of engagement to faculty by assuming responsibility for time-consuming efforts to establish and nurture university–community partnerships and coordinate engagement activities, allowing faculty to maintain a focus on the elements of engaged work most relevant to their scholarship.

Logistics. Community engagement faces an additional set of challenges related to the coordination of people and tasks and the additional time this coordination takes *(Demb & Wade, 2012; Hammond, 1994)*. Although one should not underestimate the logistical challenges of operating a busy university-based laboratory, engagement multiplies the logistical challenges by requiring the coordination of people and tasks within universities, within communities, and between universities and communities. Engagement

also often entails protracted negotiations between university faculty and community partners around the focus of a particular project as well as project procedures, personnel, facilities, and resources. Because it often involves multiple strands of linked activities, the logistical demands of SE are even more acute. Consequently, university-based structures and resources, including dedicated engagement staff as well as corresponding engagement structures and resources within communities and between universities and communities, will be critical to making SE a reality, meaning that SE is most likely to succeed where universities have the capacity to provide these structures and resources.

Barriers to Systemic Engagement

The second set of barriers to engagement are those associated with the principles of SE. Challenges related to the first four principles—systems thinking, collaborative inquiry, support for ongoing learning, and emergent design—stem from the lack of knowledge, interest, and skill among faculty, staff, and students in using what may be unfamiliar approaches to research and evaluation. In other words, the challenges associated with the first four principles are in part related to a set of competencies specific to SE that faculty, staff, and students may not possess in full measure. Although the complete specification of these competencies and the kinds of training that would be required to prepare a cadre of "systemic engagers" is beyond the scope of this article, spelling out these competencies more fully will be essential to the implementation of SE.

Challenges related to the last two principles of SE—multiple strands of inquiry and action and transdisciplinarity—are in part logistical, requiring coordination, communication, and research/evaluation support across multiple strands as well as various disciplines and sectors. The collective impact *(Hanleybrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012; Kania & Kramer, 2011)* solution to this logistical challenge is the establishment of an independent community-based backbone organization and cascading levels of linked collaboration. Backbone organizations provide strategic direction; facilitate dialogue between partners; and support data collection and analysis, communications, and community outreach. Cascading levels of linked collaboration involve the establishment of multiple independent working groups formed around different leverage points or strategies. Although these groups work independently, their efforts are coordinated by the backbone organization, allowing several different teams to simultaneously address different dimensions of a complex issue or problem. In the Wiba Anung case,

the collective efforts of a diverse set of community and university partners were coordinated through the organizational structure of a small leadership team, a larger partnership team, and multiple communities of learning. One university-based solution to promoting transdisciplinarity is reflected in the proliferation of transdisciplinary research centers and institutes on campuses *(Cooper, 2011; Etzkowitz, 2008; Hall et al., 2008)* that have been established to promote the growth of new knowledge at the intersections of multiple disciplines.

Another challenge related to collaboration across strands, disciplines, and sectors is related to the difficulty of developing and carrying out coordinated plans of action among a group of actors with varying understandings of a focal problem, different interests, and competing agendas. Wicked problems *(Batie, 2008)* are characterized by high levels of value conflict among stakeholders and high levels of uncertainty about the likely consequences of implementing any particular strategy to manage them. In such circumstances, it is essential to reduce value conflict to allow the emergence of strategies that can be supported by a majority of stakeholders. Consequently, knowledge of and skill in using techniques that enable a diverse set of actors to arrive at a common plan of action, such as strategic assumption surfacing and testing *(Williams & Hummelbrunner, 2009)*, are essential for the success of any SE initiative.

Discussion

In this article, we proposed an alternative to the university-driven isolated impact approach to community change—systemic engagement (SE)—and described its six principles:

1. Systems thinking
2. Collaborative inquiry
3. Support for ongoing learning
4. Emergent design
5. Multiple strands of inquiry and action
6. Transdisciplinarity

Next, we illustrated the application of the six principles of SE with a case example. We then discussed barriers to faculty engagement in general and systemic engagement in particular, briefly remarking on the changes that would be necessary to make the

widespread deployment of SE a reality. We discuss those changes and their implications more fully here.

Overall, the literature on barriers to engagement suggests that SE faces significant headwinds. Beginning in graduate school, future faculty in many disciplines are schooled in a competitive, individualistic model of private scholarship *(O'Meara, 2011)* that favors traditional discovery-oriented scholarship over engaged scholarship and values traditional epistemologies over epistemologies that are open to practice-based or indigenous sources of knowledge. When they arrive on campuses, new faculty members are often discouraged by senior faculty from pursuing community engagement. When their scholarly portfolios are reviewed for reappointment, promotion, or tenure, less value is placed on their engaged work—in spite of university missions and policies that explicitly support engagement. Despite these headwinds, countless engaged faculty have persevered to achieve successful careers. Many of these faculty may have strong personal commitments to engaged scholarship. Some may have been trained in disciplines that value engagement and teach graduate students the knowledge and skills to succeed as engaged scholars. Others are fortunate enough to find supportive mentors among senior engaged faculty. Still others may work at universities that provide structures, resources, and rewards that support engagement. In addition, as O'Meara *(2011)* points out, the community engagement movement has achieved three significant accomplishments during the last two or three decades. First, faculty civic engagement has simply increased. More institutions of higher education have made commitments to engagement, the number of faculty who report engagement has increased, and the number and range of engagement opportunities for students has expanded. Second, faculty civic engagement has made inroads into disciplinary associations and has established a research base. Third, greater attention has been paid to creating the structures and processes necessary to support the engagement of faculty, students, and institutions.

Despite these accomplishments, scaling up SE will require changes at the individual, disciplinary, departmental, and institutional level. At the *individual level*, it will require that faculty achieve a balance between being oriented toward doing good versus doing well, a humanistic versus an exclusively intellectual orientation, and an openness to alternative ways of knowing (including practice-based and community-based/indigenous knowledge) versus a strict adherence to postpositivist epistemology. It will also require increased understanding of, interest in, and skill in using (a) sys-

tems approaches and methods; (b) collaborative and participatory approaches to inquiry and action; and (c) flexible and adaptable approaches to research and evaluation that promote learning and action in real time among faculty, staff, and community members. In addition, it will require increased understanding among faculty, staff, and community members of the realities of operating in complex environments and increased knowledge of effective strategies to mitigate the risks that are entailed. Finally, it will require that faculty have enough experience with SE (or exposure to sufficiently convincing case examples of SE) to appreciate SE's contribution to improved understanding and resolution of complex problems.

At the *disciplinary level*, scaling up SE will require graduate socialization that communicates to students that engagement is a valued part of their discipline, and graduate training in the knowledge and skills required to be successful engaged scholars. At the *departmental level*, scaling up SE will require policies, procedures, metrics, and faculty evaluation systems that recognize and reward quality engaged scholarship; the application of those policies, procedures, and metrics in hiring, reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions; and the mentoring of junior faculty by engaged senior faculty in how to succeed as engaged scholars.

At the *institutional level*, scaling up SE will require missions that support community engagement; policies, practices, and procedures to reward and celebrate engagement; supportive internal structures with dedicated engagement staff to serve in bridging/boundary-spanning roles and to assist faculty in managing the logistical complications of SE; and internal seed funding for engaged scholarship.

The preceding list of requirements for SE is daunting, but as Tainter *(1990)* has demonstrated, the effective management of increasingly complex problems requires increasing resource inputs. As the problems facing communities in the 21st century grow in number and complexity, it will be necessary to make difficult choices about which complex problems to tackle and which to leave for a later day. Such choices must be guided by our best understanding of which problems are most fundamental; which problems are more cause than symptom; and which problems, such as growing inequality in income and wealth *(Wilkinson & Pickett, 2011)*, are at the bottom of many other problems. In addition, we should devote sufficient resources to the efforts to ameliorate such complex problems, including the selection of an approach that is suited to taming them. We believe that SE is one such approach.

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Research Articles

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Leadership for Community Engagement—A Distributed Leadership Perspective

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Abstract

This article presents distributed leadership as a framework for analysis, showing how the phenomenon complements formal higher education structures by mobilizing leadership from various sources, formal and informal. This perspective more accurately portrays the reality of leading engaged institutions. Using the application data from 224 Carnegie-classified community-engaged institutions from the 2008 and 2010 cycles, this study investigated leaders responsible for institutional community engagement; their ways of leading and institutionalizing engagement; and the structural, contextual, and developmental elements in the distribution of leadership for engagement in classified engaged institutions. The findings suggest that the engaged institution as a holistic system locates, aligns, and coordinates tasks, processes, and resources along lines of expertise, and not necessarily in alignment with institutional lines of command. The collectivism involved in community engagement provides space for coexistence of planned and spontaneous performance as well as the alignment of leadership functions across various sources of leadership.

Introduction

America's higher education has a long and distinguished record of addressing public needs. Confronted with a host of unprecedented challenges that will define their future, higher education institutions have been called upon by states and local communities to help advance progress related to public school improvement, economic growth, local and regional planning, and more *(Beere, Votruba, & Wells, 2011)*. Indeed, many higher education institutions have recognized these challenges and are facing them through community engagement, which involves "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" *(New England Resource Center for Higher Education [NERCHE], 2015, "How Is 'Community Engagement' Defined?," para. 1)*. Less widely appreciated, however, is the degree to which these institutional efforts for realizing the public good through community engagement depend on leadership *(Baer,*

Duin, & Ramaley, 2008; Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Holland, 1997; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Descriptive vignettes and prescriptive advice constitute most current writing on the topic. Some examination exists in two areas of the literature: the nature of executive academic engagement leadership and the institutionalization of engagement *(Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, 2000; Holland, 1997, 2009; Sandmann & Plater, 2009, 2013)*.

Discussions of successful community-engaged institutions ascribe a central if not paramount role to administrative leadership, typically that of the president, provost, and/or program director of community engagement, service-learning, or the like *(Sandmann & Plater, 2009)*. Because of their resources, roles, decision-making authority, and imputed trust, institutional leaders in higher education are positioned to have a significant impact on the development of community engagement and service-learning. This is especially true in times of limited resources across the university system. Therefore, research on the characteristics and practices of such leaders at exemplary institutions is important as a source of best practices for community engagement. Studies also suggest that grassroots and collective leadership can complement the work of those in administrative leadership roles to advance community engagement *(Kezar, Gallant, & Lester, 2012; Plater, 2011)*. Research on distribution of leadership throughout an organization in the K-12 context shows positive effects on aspects such as student outcomes and school culture *(Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2007; Spillane, 2006)*. However, less is known about the phenomenon of distributed leadership in higher education, particularly as it pertains to community engagement.

This research investigated leaders (executive and otherwise) of institutional community engagement; their ways of leading and institutionalizing engagement; and the structural, contextual, and developmental elements in the distribution of leadership for community engagement *(Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2008)* in leading engaged institutions. Our initial investigation of executive leaders revealed an intriguing pattern—a more "distributed" process of leading institutional community engagement. Therefore, we framed our study around the functions and conditions for leading community engagement and consequently focused less on the individuals and their positions. This article will speak to those findings and their implications for leading community engagement in later sections.

Using the framework of distributed leadership, our findings suggest that, as a holistic system, the engaged institution locates,

aligns, and coordinates tasks, processes, and resources along the contour of the expertise necessary to advance community engagement. The research thus provides a new way to look at the rhetoric and actions of the executive leadership and the connections between roles and behaviors. In particular, when we examined strategic planning and coordination structures for engagement, two major aspects of leading the institutionalization of engagement, we found strong evidence that context is an integral component in distributed leadership. Not every leadership role or function can be distributed, and leadership is in general subject to contextual constraints. Furthermore, the infrastructure for engagement does not necessarily align with the institutional hierarchy. Nonetheless, the collectivism involved in community engagement provides space for coexistence of planned and spontaneous performance, as well as distribution of leadership functions across various sources of leadership. Distributed leadership, which by definition does not reside in a fixed position on an organizational chart, presents the organic coexistance of positional/formal leadership and emergent/informal leadership. Analyzing through this framework enables us to recognize the complementary association between positional/formal and emergent/informal leadership; further, it highlights the need to move our focus beyond executive leadership to the process of leading through a distributed modality as a more accurate representation of how leadership occurs in leading engaged institutions.

Literature Review

Leadership is a highly valued and complex phenomenon. Gaps and challenges remain in the vast literature on the topic *(Burns, 1978; Grint, 2005; Northouse, 2013)*. In the past 20 years, significant shifts have occurred in the way institutional leadership is conceptualized. The traditional leadership frameworks—including behavioral, power and influence, contingency, cognitive, and cultural/symbolic traits attributed to leaders—have been challenged not only for their leader-centered, individualistic, hierarchic, rigidly structured, and universal assumptions about leadership *(Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006)*, but also because of their emphasis on the leader's power over followers *(Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001a, 2004)* and their value-free conceptualization of leadership *(Sandmann & Plater, 2013)*. The unilateral, vertical representation of leadership no longer reflects the increasingly team-based practice in organizations *(Cummings & Worley, 2004; Pearce, 2004; Thamhain, 2004)*.

More recent theorizing shifts attention from the characteristics of leaders to the processes of leadership *(Barker, 2001; Grint, 2005; Hosking, 1988; Northouse, 2013; Yukl, 2002)*. This process or relational perspective defines leadership as "a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e., evolving social order) and change (i.e. new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, ideologies, etc.) are constructed and produced" *(Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 668)*. This perspective acknowledges and highlights the processes bounded by contexts and the relationship dynamics between various actors *(Bolden et al., 2008)*.

The Conceptualization of Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is one of the most prominent models grounded in this process or relational perspective of leadership. According to Gronn *(2000),* Gibb *(1954)* first explicitly referred to the idea of distributed leadership in the article "Leadership," where he challenged the traditional assumption that leadership should reside in a single individual and argued that such roles should be dispersed across the team. Drawing from organizational theory, complexity science, and high-involvement leadership theory, distributed leadership is concerned with mobilizing leadership at all organizational levels *(Harris, 2009; van Ameijde, Nelson, Billsberry, & van Meurs, 2009)*. It involves multiple and distributed sources of leadership that stretch over complex social and situational contexts. In other words, leadership is considered as shared social influence that leaders and followers intentionally exert over other people *(Wright, 2008)* to arrange group or organizational activities and relationships *(Yukl, 2002)*. This does not suggest that greater organizational effectiveness can be achieved simply by spreading leadership to more people without facilitation, orchestration, and support *(Harris, 2008)*. Rather, distributed leadership stands as a critical "complementary understanding of the subtleties of leadership in real organizational settings"*(van Ameijde et al., 2009, p. 765)*.

A common understanding of distributed leadership has yet to be established *(Bennett, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003; Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004).* Some scholars use the term *shared leadership* (e.g., *Pearce, 2004; Pearce & Sims, 2002)*, some use *distributed leadership* (e.g., *Gronn, 2002)*, and others treat both terms interchangeably (e.g., *Day et al., 2004)*. Additionally, the concept of distributed leadership overlaps with democratic and participative leadership concepts *(Harris, 2008)*. In fact, this accumulation of allied concepts of distributed leadership has resulted in both the misuse of the term to mean any form of team or shared leadership practice and the

misinterpretation of the term to mean that everyone leads *(Harris, 2007).*

Despite these differences, most scholars agree that the concept of distributed leadership entails two fundamental principles: Leadership is a shared influence process involving several individuals, and leadership occurs in the interaction of diverse individuals who share a collective identity as well as essential expertise *(van Ameijde et al., 2009; also see Harris, 2008; Gronn, 2000)*. Distributed leadership supports the idea that people lead when and where they have expertise *(Elmore, 2002)*. As a diagnostic and design tool, a distributed leadership framework helps practitioners explore how leadership is "stretched over" multiple leaders, followers, and the situation—either by design, default, or necessity *(Spillane, 2006, p. 23)*. The situation or context is an integral and constituting component of leadership practice *(Spillane, 2006)*. Aware of the risk of oversimplification of what distributed leadership entails, we provide the following table to summarize the essential characteristics of distributed leadership, laying out the themes that are fundamental for our analysis.

Table 1. Major Characteristics of Distributed Leadership

Distributed Leadership Is and Is Not		
Essential Components	**Is**	**Is Not**
1. Process/Relational (fundamental tenet)	Constructed through social interaction	Attributes of individuals themselves
2. Multiple and Emergent Sources of Leadership	Leadership practice performed and coperformed by formal and emergent leaders	Pinned to a position
3. Expertise	People lead when and where they have expertise	Everyone leads
4. Contexts	Integral to leadership	Immune to contextual constraints and/or emergent opportunities

Distributed Leadership in Practice, With Some Cautions

The literature on distributed leadership reveals that shared leadership practice responds well to the incorporation of different perspectives and interests *(Feyerherm, 1994)*, yields better performance than leader-centric leadership *(Pearce & Sims, 2002)*, and

increases organizational capacity while enabling organizational changes *(Graetz, 2000; Harris, 2008)*. In the field of education, where it has been studied extensively (e.g., *Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001b)*, research has found that distributed leadership is positively related to teacher development and school improvement *(Harris, 2008)*.

The most recent research on distributed leadership highlights the relationship between leadership distribution pattern and organizational outcomes (e.g., *Leithwood et al., 2007; Locke, 2002)*. Harris *(2008)* noted that distributed leadership has a greater impact upon organizational development in the absence of certain structural and cultural barriers. The configuration of leadership distribution is important in that certain patterns of distribution have a more positive effect than others upon organizational development and change *(Leithwood et al., 2007)*. The sources (who) and extent (how many people) of leadership distribution depend at least on which functions are to be performed and the complexity and organizational context of those functions *(Leithwood et al., 2007; Wright, 2008)*.

In terms of the development and continuity of distributed leadership, Pearce *(2004)* found that expertise, allocation of responsibilities, optimal team size, and a clearly defined goal/vision were essential factors. Other studies indicate that adaptability *(Day et al., 2006)*, mutual performance monitoring *(Day et al., 2006)*, empowerment *(Burke et al., 2006)*, and inclusiveness *(van Ameijde et al., 2009)*—similar to Day et al.'s *(2006)* concept of team orientation and Burke et al.'s *(2006)* concept of consideration—are important to distributed leadership. Additionally, engaging in external activities, termed *boundary management*, is necessary for the ongoing success of distributed leadership (e.g., *Burke et al., 2006; Pearce, 2004)*. Boundary management is not only "a means to integrate certain vital expertise not available within the team, [but also] a mechanism for ensuring continuous alignment between a team and the wider organizational context" *(van Ameijde et al., 2009, p. 776)*.

Nonetheless, distributed leadership should not be taken as a panacea for generating positive results under various circumstances *(Harris, 2008)*. Jones *(2014)* cautioned that evidence for an inherent direct causal relationship between distributed leadership and collaboration is inconclusive; a similar situation exists regarding the transferability of functional change—becoming more integrated cross-functional and cross-disciplinary problem solving in specific domains, to other issues and sustainability of such a change. Mehra, Smith, Dixon, and Robertson *(2006)* noted that distributed leadership enhances performance only if different individuals within

a group recognize each other as leaders (distributed-coordinated leadership). The opposite situation (distributed-fragmented leadership) showed no superiority over traditional leader-centric/vertical leadership. Likewise, Hargreaves and Fink *(2006)* pointed out that overall patterns of distributed leadership and its effects in large-scale samples may obscure significant variations and inconsistencies that reflect circumstances where distributed leadership is less useful. Scholars who are more skeptical of distributed leadership, such as Heinicke and Bales *(1953)* and, more recently, Bryk *(1999)*, have argued that the lack of consensus about who are the informal leaders among group members negatively affects team efficiency and may lead to incoherence within an organization.

The ambiguity involved in informal leadership is relevant particularly in partnerships and collaborations, the foundation of community engagement activities. It should also be acknowledged that redundant leadership functions do not necessarily lead to organizational improvement, and all leaders or all people engaged in leadership activities are not necessarily good leaders *(Kellerman, 2004; Timperley, 2005)*. At this point, Pearce *(2004)* contends, distributed leadership should be seen as an important form of leadership that is complementary rather than substitutive to traditional leader-centric leadership because the latter "still plays an important role in team design and boundary management, two factors considered important for the ongoing success of distributed leadership" *(van Ameijde et al., 2009, p. 767)*.

Distributed Leadership and Community Engagement

A great number of studies of distributed leadership have been conducted in the field of education, predominantly in K-12 settings (e.g., *Gronn, 2002, 2003; Harris, 2007, 2008; Leithwood et al., 2009; Spillane et al., 2001a, 2004)*. Few studies look into the notion of distributed leadership in higher education and/or for engagement *(Jones, 2014; Kezar, 2001; Plater, 2011; Sandmann & Plater, 2009)*. In the meantime, leadership in the context of community engagement has been framed from many perspectives, including classic literature and current studies involving theories of leadership (e.g., *Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006; Northouse, 2013; Rost, 1991)*, innovation and change *(Levine, 1980; Pool, Van de Ven, Dooley, & Holmes, 2000; Rogers, 2003)*, and culture and institutionalization *(DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Schein, 2004; Tierney, 1988; Weick, 1976)*. Nevertheless, rarely has this pool of leadership research addressed academic leadership fostering community

engagement. The preponderance of current writing on the topic involves descriptive vignettes and prescriptive advice, and research performed to date has focused primarily on the nature of executive academic engagement and the institutionalization of engagement *(Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, 2000; Holland, 1997, 2009; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008)*. A general definition can help establish the parameters of what is considered leadership of engagement broadly; however, the layered leadership of engagement warrants more sophisticated conceptualizations.

This research posits that distributed leadership warrants consideration and application as a conceptual framework for leadership in decentralized organizations that have a culture of collegiality and professional autonomy, such as higher education institutions *(*e.g., *Bergquist, 1992; Birnbaum, 1991)* and specifically for intra- and interorganizational functions such as community engagement. Distributed leadership is first and foremost about leadership practice. Interactions between leaders and followers are at the center of the analysis *(Spillane, Diamond, Sherer, & Coldren, 2004)*. Distributed leadership's differentiation between numerical and concertive action *(Gronn, 2000)* and its three indicators—the multiplicity of actors, leadership roles, and leadership behaviors *(Robinson, 2009)*—provide a promising tool for understanding interactions, networks, and the nature and patterns of distribution of leadership in community engagement. Distributed leadership highlights context and boundary management for ensuring continuous alignment between units and the wider organization *(van Ameijde et al., 2009)*. The attentiveness of distributed leadership to context is well aligned with the reciprocal and coconstructive nature of community engagement.

Research Purpose and Questions

This research had a twofold purpose. First, it investigated the leadership of the leading institutions in community engagement, here defined as those institutions that received the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) Community Engagement Classification in the 2008 and 2010 cycles. Given the complexity of community engagement itself and the decentralized nature of higher education, it could be hypothesized that, despite current research and literature supporting heroic leadership, a layered leadership or a distribution of leadership among executive and other leaders is taking place in leading community-engaged institutions. Thus, we pose our first research question: (1) How are leaders involved in institutional community engagement (that is, who

performs which engagement leadership functions)? To examine cross-sectionality in leadership, we also inquired into institutional contexts influencing leadership for engagement. Informed by the literature, we understand that distributed leadership's underpinnings of fluidity and contextualization of leadership (which will be discussed in the next section) do not equalize absolute distribution, nor do they void structural confinement; thus, we pose our second research question: (2) What are the institutional structural, contextual, and developmental elements that foster distribution of leadership for community engagement? To be more specific, how does institutional planning and institutional structuring relate to the distribution of leadership for community engagement?

The second purpose of this research focused on theoretical exploration of distributed leadership in community engagement. Building on the results from the examination of leadership practices in leading community-engaged institutions, this work introduces, applies, and critiques distributed leadership literature and theory as a conceptual framework for understanding the leadership practices of community engagement within institutions.

Methodology

Data collection did not involve direct observations and interviews due to physical and time constraints. Nevertheless, we are confident that the narratives drawn from responses to the selected foundational questions in the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification application framework *(NERCHE, 2015)* provided rich and focused information that can serve as a beginning point for examining leadership, organization, and policy that delineated actors, structures, and activities involved in community engagement development within the institution. With institutional permission, we accessed through the New England Resource Center for Higher Education database 224 successful Carnegie applications from the 2008 and 2010 classification application rounds. Three application questions were analyzed:

- IA.5. Does the executive leadership of the institution… explicitly promote community engagement as a priority?
- IB.1. Does the institution have a campus-wide coordinating infrastructure to support and advance community engagement?

- IB.4. Is community engagement defined and planned for in the strategic plans of the institution?

Responses to these questions included explanations and examples. Application question IA.5 solicited information for addressing our first research question, and the remaining two application questions provided answers to our second research question. The distributed leadership literature has suggested that not all leadership can be distributed *(Leithwood et al., 2007; Spillane et al., 2004)*, and the distribution of leadership involves both planned and spontaneous alignment for achieving goals *(van Ameijde et al., 2009)*. Application questions IB.1 and IB.4 allowed us to explore both the stable and the fluid aspects of distributed leadership for engagement.

The responses were coded using in vivo coding. In vivo coding is an analytic process of examining data and generating concepts using the words of the respondents when these words are so descriptive of what is going on that they become the designated concepts *(Corbin, 2004).* In other words, in vivo coding produces indigenous categories. Applying the constant-comparative qualitative method *(Merriam, 1998)* for each question (IA.5, IB.1, and IB.4), we compared not only the responses of and among institutions within the same cycle (2008 and 2010 respectively), but also across the two cycles. As the classification framework did not differentiate among institutional types, comparisons across institutions based on these types were unlikely to yield meaningful association between features of leadership for community engagement and institutional type and therefore were not considered. Major themes were identified that served as the primary basis for responding to the research questions.

The selected questions from the Carnegie Foundation Community Engagement Classification application framework were not designed for our research, and therefore the structure and format of the questions limited the content and the scope of the responses provided. This restricted the range of institutional community engagement available for our analysis. The descriptive and in vivo coding process allowed the researchers to closely adhere to the data where the themes emerged *(Charmaz, 2006)*; nevertheless, readers should be cautious in making broader generalizations from the findings.

Findings

In this section, findings are presented in a sequence corresponding to the research questions: First, how are leaders involved in institutional community engagement and second, what are the institutional structural, contextual, and developmental elements for leadership distribution for community engagement? More specifically, the relationship of institutional planning and structuring, as a snapshot of these three organizational components of the institution, to the leadership for community engagement is addressed. Direct quotes are taken from a variety of representative case applications.

Leaders for Community Engagement in Classified Institutions—The "Who" Question

Though the first application question asked only about the executive leadership, the data suggested that leadership practice was multilayered, involving formal and informal leaders. Formal leaders included the executive leaders (chancellors, presidents, and provosts) and many senior campus leaders (e.g., vice presidents, deans, directors, faculty leaders). Informal leaders included faculty, staff, students, and community members involved in various initiatives and projects.

It is worth noting that in some cases, formal leaders may hold the values of engagement and incorporate them into a personal mission extending beyond their positional responsibilities. Our data indicated that as such leaders advanced in their careers, their personal commitment to community engagement persisted and reinforced the institutional commitment. For instance,

> President [D] holds the rank of Professor… and teaches in the areas of democracy, citizenship and American diversity. As Provost at [X] College (199x–200x), he instituted The [E] Plan. Dr. [D]… has numerous other publications including 3 books, more than 20 articles and more than 50 conference presentations.

For their part, institutions committed to community engagement consciously seek candidates, particularly for executive leadership positions, who can honor the tradition. A representative description reads:

> For years, [Y]'s presidents have played a central role in advancing university engagement. In 1996, President

> [A] (1992–2001) led a series of presidential symposia stressing the importance of outreach scholarship and community partnerships.... [A]'s advocacy substantively advanced the discussion on campus regarding recognition of faculty outreach scholarship. President [B] (2001–2004) actively supported the implementation of the new promotion and tenure guidelines in the Faculty Handbook and revision of other university policies promoting engagement. Current president [C] frequently espouses the importance of engagement. Under his administration, engagement is explicitly emphasized throughout the University strategic plan (2007).

Leadership to Advance Engagement—The "How" Question

When focusing on the executive leadership, strong evidence pointed to the importance of rhetorical practice. Chancellors, presidents, and provosts made regular appearances at various highly visible occasions throughout the year both on and off campus. Whether through speeches or written messages, executive leaders explicitly stressed stewardship to the community and institutions. It was a well-established practice for the executive leaders to serve on and/or lead various boards and committees internally and externally, as well as locally and nationally. Other rhetorical strategies through which the executive leadership supported community engagement included highlighting community engagement in the institutional recruitment and marketing strategies, establishing awards for individuals who are committed to community engagement, and publicly endorsing various center directors for their excellence in serving communities. The executive leadership, via rhetorical efforts, sent a clear message about the importance of community engagement to the institutional and community audiences.

The executive leadership also employed substantive strategies for integrating community engagement into various operational aspects of an institution. The first strategy was prioritizing community engagement in the vision statement, calling for an institution to be "one of the leading comprehensive universities in the nation, distinctive for its contributions to the understanding of learning and for the creation and study of innovative partnerships to promote educational, social, economic, and cultural advancement in

the region"; "a sustainable bridge to the future through leadership, stewardship and service to the world"; and to have a mission of

> bringing together an increasingly diverse and talented student body, faculty, and staff to form a learning community that, along with community partners, involves its members in active learning, scholarly discourse, and reflection. Through engaged excellence [Z] creates opportunities for students to display leadership, civic engagement, social responsibility, and effective citizenship.

It was not unusual to see such statements as:

> Many offices and programs have mission statements that emphasize mutually beneficial relationships between [P] university and diverse communities.… describe a pervasive commitment to engagement activities such as opportunities for life-long learning, meaningful student experiences beyond the campus, partnerships with community organizations, and reciprocal collaborations with public agencies, non-profit associations and commercial endeavors.

The second strategy was to dedicate resources to community engagement: for example, setting aside "more than $1.6 million of internal funding to community engagement activities and infrastructure"; giving "the consistent, fixed-line funding of… centers whose major focus is community engagement"; devoting specific funding for "faculty for the Civic-Engagement and Leadership minor"; channeling "an unrestricted grant to support service-learning on campus providing momentum to increase the number of faculty utilizing community engagement in their courses"; creating "the position… to coordinate institutional outreach initiatives and to foster campus-wide attention to the topic"; and establishing "new, fully-funded offices… and several additional centers to facilitate engagement via communications and partnerships."

The third strategy was formalizing community engagement into capacity building, such that "new faculty are specifically asked about their own personal level of civic commitment as well as the pedagogy of service learning" during the interview process, and service is recognized as "a scholarly area" and taken as "the conceptual framework for… promotion in rank guidelines and for the

annual assessment of faculty work". In some cases, "the executive leadership has approved a civic-engagement matrix generated by a faculty committee [and] departments and colleges use this document in identifying levels of civic engagement and rewarding these activities in merit and tenure/promotion evaluations."

Finally, the executive leadership brought to life the institutional commitment to community engagement by integrating community engagement into academics where "service [is built] into the admissions process and service scholarships are given through the Admissions Office"; "the core values of Service and Learning have been formally integrated into the curriculum… which requires students to engage in purposeful activities outside the classroom"; "each athletic team [is required] to participate in service, to document their reflections, and to record their time spent at an off-campus site"; and "each student will have completed at least one service-learning/civic engagement designated course before approval for graduation."

Strategic Planning and Structuring

As noted in the Research Purpose and Questions section, we asked questions about the roles of strategic planning and structuring in the institutionalization of community engagement. Our data revealed the centrality of strategic planning and structuring in institutionalizing community engagement. The executive leadership in each of the leading institutions used strategic planning processes to set the tone, establish a vision, specify goals, direct resources (space, finance, and human capital), and provide a mechanism for other groups to exert leadership for community engagement. The strategic planning process aligned the purposes and plans of units with those of the institution but also supported autonomy:

> The goals of the institutional plan are implemented at the next levels down in divisional and departmental annual operational plans.… Specific objectives and targets are further detailed in departmental operational plans, but are guided by definitions and expectations of service-learning established at the institutional level.

For some institutions, "guiding documents at the program level reflect the same intent and individual departments outline community engagement needed to fit their priorities." In terms of structuring for community engagement, the data revealed that insti-

tutions varied: Some have a single coordinating unit, and others have multiple coordinating units on campus. In contrast to Welch and Saltmarsh's *(2013)* infrastructure analysis focusing on campus centers of community engagement, our categorization is cast more broadly and attends to the connections between the major entities upon which the infrastructure of supporting, advancing, and executing community engagement is anchored. The typology is heuristic and not intended to eliminate possible overlapping in real situations. The four types of infrastructure are (1) centralized; (2) quasi-centralized; (3) diffused; and (4) a hybrid model of complex, targeted, yet diffused units. In a centralized structure, one predominant entity is responsible for campuswide coordination of community engagement, including but not limited to service-learning or applied research, such as an office or a center (see Figure 1). Two examples are provided here:

> [X] university has created an Office of Regional Stewardship to support and advance community engagement on an institution-wide basis.

> The Community Programs Center (CPC) serves as [Y] University's campus-wide coordinating infrastructure to support and advance community engagement.

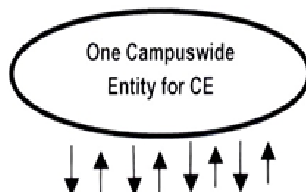

Figure 1. Centralized infrastructure for community engagement (CE).

In a quasi-centralized structure, two or three parallel entities align with the three key organizational divisions: academic affairs, public or government relations, and institutional advancement (see Figure 2). Each entity is a centralized body that coordinates engagement within the respective division. For instance,

> The Office of Government and Community Relations… oversees those aspects of community engagement involving communications and relationships with com-

munity leaders, civic and community associations and organizations… and local, state and federal government officials; the [X] Center supports and advances community engagement in the form of service, service-learning, advocacy and justice education.

Figure 2. Quasi-centralized infrastructure for community engagement (CE). The dotted lines indicate the relative independence among entities as they support and advance CE within each respective domain.

The diffused infrastructure has no central entity for coordinating community engagement. However, the extent to which the infrastructure is diffused varies: (1) A network comprises connected entities that communicate and collaborate closely; (2) a satellite system is an infrastructure embracing a number of offices and/or centers, each coordinating a specific aspect of community engagement and reporting to separate leadership, with no obvious or limited collaboration with each other (see Figure 3). In the following two examples, the first is the network type, and the second is the satellite type.

> The [Y] college has funded a series of offices, centers, and initiatives that act in concert to support its mission of community engagement. Working under the general direction of the President's Cabinet and Council these offices collaboratively engage students, faculty, and staff in specific projects and on-going programs with and for the community.

> There are four major centers and offices on campus coordinating community service. The Office of [X] serves to coordinate all sectors of the university that sustain relationships with the community.… The Center [Y]… oversees the various service-learning activities of the university.… The [Z] office… oversees all the non-academic volunteer opportunities for students to interact with their local community.… The Office [U]… oversees all the global opportunities for the university community to serve their world. [V program of] Work

Study coordinates free tutoring for hundreds of local school children as well as other programs benefiting the community.

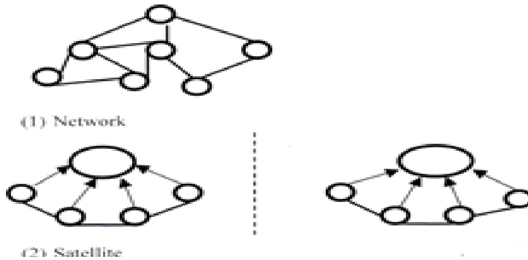

Figure 3. Diffused infrastructure for community engagement (CE).

Last, the hybrid, as the name implies, is an infrastructure combining centralized and diffused characteristics (see Figure 4). For instance,

> [X] University has both a centralized infrastructure to support community engagement and a network of interdisciplinary and/or programmatic frameworks that coordinate specific partnerships and opportunities for community engagement.… Campus-wide infrastructure: Initiated by the Office of the President in 2006, each College has appointed a Community Liaison Officer to advance and report on community engagement. Fifteen Community Liaison Officers are active across campus. The Office of Planning and University Outreach coordinates the University's strategic planning process and develops implementation plans for projects, including community engagement projects.… The Office of University Relations is the central communication point between the University and our community.… Interdisciplinary Infrastructure: The Division of Research has established six interdisciplinary Research Clusters that encourage faculty to collaborate across traditional boundaries to work more effectively with industry, other research organizations and the community addressing issues of intellectual, scientific, social, economic, environmental and cultural importance. One of the clusters is Community Advancement and Education.… Focused Infrastructure: The Office [A] in

> College [B]… manages community partnerships with over 500 human service agencies. The [C] Program coordinates student volunteer opportunities across the University and throughout the [Y] region. . . . The Office [D] in the College [E] has six administrative staff and two faculty who coordinate all community outreach efforts. The [Z] Alliance coordinates the interdisciplinary efforts of more than 20 energy-related institutes and centers on campus with over 150 faculty to serve the needs of the energy industry.

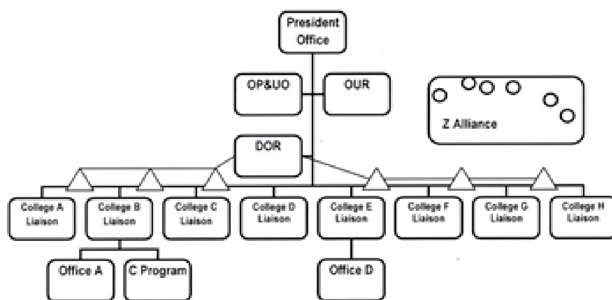

Figure 4. Hybrid infrastructure for community engagement. OP&UO = Office of Planning and University Outreach; OUR = Office of University Relations; DOR = Division of Research. The graph is modified based on the example provided (not all 15 colleges were graphed). The circles represent centers. No lines are drawn from the centers to Z Alliance to represent connections, which are represented by positioning the circles and Z Alliance within the same frame. The six triangles represent the six interdisciplinary Research Clusters, connecting various colleges and being coordinated by DOR.

Generally, the Carnegie-classified institutions enjoyed pervasive engagement efforts but preferred centralized coordination and advancement for reasons of agenda setting, resource efficiency, and unit benefits. Institutions with decentralized infrastructure tended to establish a centralized entity responsible for community engagement indicated in their strategic plan. Comprehensive institutions such as land-grant state universities tended to have a hybrid infrastructure for community engagement coordination. A cross-cycle analysis revealed that, compared to the 2008 cycle, more institutions in the 2010 cycle had their coordinating infrastructure centralized along the key organizational divisions (academic affairs, student affairs, and public or government relations or institutional advancement)—as indicated by a significant increase

in the number of institutions with a quasi-centralized infrastructure (almost triple: from seven to 18).

Discussion

In this section, the major characteristics of distributed leadership (see Table 1 in the Literature Review section) serve as the underlying threads for our discussion on understanding institutional leadership distribution for engagement. In sum, these characteristics include process/relational-focused, multiple-sourced, expertise-oriented, and contextual relevant.

Expertise-Based Leadership

The data revealed primarily rhetorical leadership practices for community engagement at the executive level, such as delivering public speeches and serving on boards and committees. A marriage of personal and institutional commitment for community engagement at the executive level is limited. The possibility exists that leadership suffers dissimulation without attachment and sincere commitment *(Sandmann & Plater, 2009)*. Nonetheless, the prevalence of rhetoric practices in leading community-engaged institutions suggests significance for this aspect. It is not our intention here to dismiss the legitimate concerns over the superficiality of leaders' engagement rhetoric; rather, we suggest that the distributed leadership approach allows us to look at the issue from a different angle—one that is based on expertise and synergy.

Distributed leadership acknowledges that leadership is shared and is grounded on people leading when and where they have expertise *(Spillane, 2006)*. Viewing the institution as a system, we ask ourselves these questions: Who is most likely to have the best knowledge of symbolic practice? Who is most likely to have the highest public credibility to solicit and secure external funding? Who is most likely to be equipped with knowledge, experience, and skills dealing with politics? Who is most likely to be in a position to access resources and information and reach a broad audience? Our findings suggest that the answer is the executive leaders. This is not an attempt to deny or devalue the important contributions that other leaders make to the institutionalization and advancement of community engagement. However, applying the expertise-based premise, we recognize that distributed leadership supports a more manageable and effective practice "stretched over" multiple appointed (i.e., executive) as well as de facto leaders *(Spillane, 2006)*. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that executive leaders,

because of their professional lives and positional powers, are most likely to have the expertise for setting trends, establishing institutional identity, convincing governmental entities, establishing public trustworthiness, and garnering public and private investments. Being public figures, the executive leaders are the public and internal institutional faces, and their voices matter, especially when it comes to the institutionalization of community engagement where the scope is wide (all the constituents on and off the campus) and the scale is large (systemwide).

Leadership for Synergy

The data indicated that those in executive leadership positions employ substantive strategies of financial support, personnel policy, strategic planning, and structural configuration for integrating community engagement into various operational aspects of the institution. Other formal and informal leaders are involved in community engagement through various channels within the institution like "a series of offices, centers, and initiatives acting in concert to support its mission of community engagement" (Case 70, 2008), on various fronts like "a multi-faceted approach to coordinating its multiple engagement endeavors.… Each effort is advanced by a distinct administrative unit; however, each unit works closely with the others and many initiatives are shared" (Case 35, 2010). In terms of infrastructure, Carnegie-classified institutions generally enjoy pervasive engagement efforts *but* prefer centralized coordination for community engagement. Although pervasive engagement and centralized coordination may seem paradoxical, under the tenets of distributed leadership, formal leadership *roles* are designated based on expertise. Gronn's *(2000)* distinction between numerical and concertive action, as well as Robinson's *(2009)* three indications of distributed leadership, shed light on our understanding of the multiplicity of actors, leadership roles, and leadership behaviors involved in community engagement.

In the data, multiple individuals, whether in designated roles (the executive leaders, senior leaders, center directors, etc.) or not (faculty, students, community members, etc.), have enacted similar leadership *behaviors*, such as fund raising, endorsing, and coordinating. These behaviors should not be confused with roles. From a distributive perspective, the redundancy of behaviors shared by multiple individuals does not necessarily lead to organizational improvement or, in our case, community engagement advancement. As the data suggested, "collaborative efforts have been around events, programs, or grants and not necessarily to estab-

lish a University-wide agenda for community engagement" (Case 25, 2008). The institutions that have changed from a diffused to a more centralized infrastructure recognize "the need for a centralized point of entry as well as coordination and tracking of [community engagement] efforts" (Case 25, 2008) and "the need for a governance structure, which enables joint leadership positions and cross fertilization across [X] University.… [so that] enhance[d] campus/community collaboration and information sharing can be regularly assured and maximized" (Case 90, 2008). The leadership for the institutionalization of community engagement requires orchestration *(Harris, 2008)* so that different sources of leadership (informal and formal) are consciously managed and synergistically connected *(Gronn, 2003).*

Contexts

The who and how of leadership distribution varies depending on functions to be performed, their complexity, and their organizational context *(Leithwood et al., 2007)*. As revealed in our data, certain colleges or centers have taken the lead in community engagement whereas the designated office, such as the Office of Community Engagement, appears to be secondary. For example,

> The Office of Community Engagement was created within the Provost's Office.… What has emerged in the last decade is a network of departments and units that are involved in community engagement at multiple levels.… The Service-Learning Center (SLC). . . . The Career Development Office… The [X] Center for Christian Scholarship.

The community engagement projects may require particular types of expertise available in these specific colleges or centers.

A distributed perspective considers leadership a "fluid and emergent, rather than a fixed, phenomenon" *(Gronn, 2000, p. 324)* and recognizes that aspects of a situation "enable and constrain leadership practice" *(Spillane, 2006, p. 4)*. Institutions with multiple campuses and/or extensive community partnerships are less likely to have a centralized infrastructure with a centralized leadership and more likely to develop a diffused infrastructure with more local leadership. For instance,

> [X] University is not only a huge institution [24,000 students and another 13,000 faculty/staff], but it is a

> highly decentralized institution, and as such, the best-fit coordinating infrastructure is a 'Network' of closely connected entities, spanning the campus and involving several departments.

Another example:

> [Y] University has [multiple] campuses.… There is not one central coordinating office at [Y] University.… there are numerous institutional structures which support community engagement. Under the Dean of Students, there is an office of career planning and community engagement. The director of this office deals with purely volunteer, non-credit opportunities which become available to students. Another function under the Dean of Students is coordination of the work of AmeriCorps and Vista workers.… Another aspect of the Dean of Students' area which deals with community engagement is overseeing the Associated Student Body organization, which organizes several community activities during the year.… Under many of the academic departments, there are Advisory Committees representing members of the community.

The infrastructural change in community engagement coordination and advancement reflects a systemic adjustment of the institution under various organizational circumstances.

Conclusions and Implications

By investigating the leaders of the leading institutions in community engagement and their strategies for leading and institutionalizing engagement, this study explored the who and how questions—questions that are fundamental for understanding and in turn informing and advancing practice, research, and policy. Situated in a collegial culture characterized by professional autonomy, community engagement in higher education has to recognize holistic efforts that involve multiple players, aligned goals, and collaborative operations. This study revealed that the rich and complex nature of community engagement entails multiple appointed and de facto leaders. Community engagement cuts across not only the boundaries between institutional divisions (and/or academic departments, and/or offices) but also the boundaries between campuses and communities. Concerted efforts

along the contour of expertise support a more effective practice of boundary management and expansion for community engagement advancement. Strategic planning and infrastructure alignment allow the institutionalization of community engagement to occur systemically. Moreover, the who and how of leadership distribution for community engagement vary depending on the institutional context (such as size, organization, and physical location), the functions to be performed for engagement, and the complexity of those functions.

Distributed leadership, as a conceptual framework focusing on the multiple resources for leadership and the fluidity of leadership boundaries, provides a more comprehensive picture of community engagement leadership in practice. Its foundation—that people lead when and where they have expertise—makes more sense in community-engaged leadership, where the *how* of leadership matters as much as *whether* it takes place. Distributed leadership's inclusion of context supports communality and reciprocity, which are fundamental for community engagement. Nevertheless, distributed leadership may pose challenges to leadership and institutional accountability, which is determined by positions rather than aligned with context and expertise. Also, in reality, people's expertise may not be apparent in ways reflecting theoretical conceptions in distributed leadership.

This study raises additional questions that hold potential for further research. An ethnographic study of formal and informal leaders as they develop activities, interactions, and responsibilities involved in a community-engagement project might yield insights into how those performing distributed but concerted leadership are prepared for this function and progress throughout the process. In other words, thick description *(Geertz, 1973)* helps reveal the "black box" of leadership distribution involved in community engagement. Future inquiry is also needed on the relationships between leaders' morality and positionality, and leadership succession and community engagement's implementation and advancement. Further research might look into the relationships between the characteristics of the community (or communities) the institution serves and the outcomes of distributed leadership in community engagement. What historical, economic, political, and cultural factors of the communities influence the institutionalization and advancement of community engagement in institutions? How are these contextual components interpreted in institutional policies and organization? Furthermore, future research using the distributed leadership framework holds potential for examining

leadership in diversity, innovation and change, and globalization of higher education organizations in which the leadership practices share similar functions and complexity with those of community engagement.

In addition to informing the practice of leaders at engaged institutions and future research for scholars in the field, this study raises questions for policymakers regarding accountability. What mechanisms are available for evaluating leadership for engagement? How do these measurements speak to the reality of leadership practice in community engagement? How do policies affect leadership in theory (structured roles) and leadership in practice? This study also indicates directions for future research in the practice of selection, support, and professional development of engagement leaders. How do individuals and teams understand leadership for community engagement? How do institutions and individuals "learn" to become engaged? How is expertise (of individuals and teams) identified, sustained, and expanded? What are the roles of community (or communities) in leadership development and sustainment? What are the roles of professional organizations in educating, supporting, and facilitating faculty in community engagement for leadership roles?

In sum, a distributed leadership perspective holds potential for better understanding the complexity of the contexts, the fluidity of the boundaries, and the multiplicity and concerted efforts involved in community engagement leadership. A distributed leadership framework also provides a common vocabulary to facilitate an open and continuous dialogue between researchers and practitioners. When that dialogue and shared meaning is found, theory and practice will truly connect, enhancing both. The challenge is to build on and move beyond this work to do so.

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Assessing the Impact of Education and Outreach Activities on Research Scientists

Brian M. McCann, Catherine B. Cramer, and Lisa G. Taylor

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of university-level research scientists toward educational and outreach activities that aim to help the general public understand more about their scientific endeavors. Interviews, observations, and survey results from 12 university research scientists, their colleagues, students, and the individuals they interact with were used to gather data for this study. Results indicate that although some research scientists value their education and outreach activities, many encounter obstacles to such efforts. These obstacles include a lack of support or resources at their home institution, the effort required to balance their research careers and outreach activities, and needing to find ways to connect with a nonscientific audience. A generational gap was also observed, with younger, nontenured research scientists tending to be more eager to involve themselves in such activities than their older, tenured colleagues.

Introduction

Since 2000, funding agencies have begun to request, and in some cases require, that principal investigators address the broader impacts of their research. As a result, many projects have developed with a core directive to find opportunities for research scientists (defined in this article as university faculty whose primary mission is research) to interact with both the public and K-12 educational institutions. However, several questions remain unanswered. Do real benefits accrue to research scientists who participate in education and outreach? Are research scientists truly embracing the idea of the need for public outreach and education? Has true change been occurring, not only in the views of research scientists toward these efforts, but within their institutions as well?

Education and Outreach Activities

When discussing the idea of "broader impacts" or "education and outreach activities," many accept that scientists have knowledge and resources that could benefit the educational community (K-12 teachers and students) and the general public. Indeed, many

people extol the value of outreach in research and education. As Shipman *(2013)* explains,

> The public lectures of Humphry Davy and Michael Faraday are thought of as crucial elements in the popularization of science in the 19th century, and they are as likely to be remembered for those outreach efforts as they are for their scientific contributions (which were considerable). (para. 1)

But as Shipman *(2013)* notes, peer-reviewed research reflecting this conclusion is hard to find, so scientific proof of this benefit is lacking.

Despite this lack of research, government agencies, such as the National Science Foundation (NSF), have begun to encourage meaningful involvement in such education and outreach activities and have even mandated their inclusion in grant proposals. Indeed, in 2000 the NSF revised its *Grant Proposal Guide* to include stipulations that in addition to the intellectual merit of the proposal, the broader impacts of the research effort must be detailed *(NSF, 2010)*. Since its implementation, this directive has often been fulfilled through the use of K-12 teacher training workshops, website resources, public lectures, and cooperative efforts with media outlets *(Moskal et al., 2007)*.

Although research is lacking on the true benefit of education and outreach activities, even while funding agencies begin to mandate their inclusion, the broader question is: If such activities are expected to be beneficial, will the research scientist be willing to participate in these activities? Dolanm, Soots, Lemauz, Rhee, and Reiser *(2004)* noted a number of compelling reasons for university-level research scientists to engage in outreach: increasing the general public's scientific literacy level, improving the teaching skills of K-12 educators, enhancing communication and understanding among a broader audience about the nature and benefits of research, and allowing researchers themselves to learn about educational theory.

One organization that evolved after the implementation of the NSF mandate is the Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence (COSEE). COSEE grew out of a meeting in 2000, during which researchers and educators came together to discuss issues related to science literacy and the most effective ways to embrace science education concerns in the United States, specifically in regard to the ocean sciences. This led to a recommendation to the NSF to

develop a nationally coordinated effort to enhance ocean sciences education. In 2002, this goal was realized with the establishment of the COSEE Network, made up of 12 centers (as of 2012) located across the United States. These centers bring together research scientists, educators, and the general public though public symposia, workshops, online meetings and websites, and broadcast media to help engage and educate *(Keener-Chavis, Rom, & Elthon, 2007)*.

In 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act *(2009)*, the NSF awarded a Grants for Rapid Response Research (RAPID) grant to COSEE Central Gulf of Mexico to create online case studies of research scientists from the currently awarded centers and the National COSEE office in order to investigate how they viewed education and outreach activities, as well as the challenges and benefits they perceived such activities could offer to research scientists. These case studies became known as Scientists Making an Impact in Ocean Sciences Education. As the interviews with research scientists and their colleagues and collaborators progressed, the authors of this article (who conducted the study) noted several themes that might help answer some fundamental questions related to research scientists' engagement in education and outreach activities. This article will focus on three of these themes that were developed into research questions:

1. What value do research scientists place on education and outreach activities?
2. What challenges and/or benefits have research scientists and researchers encountered in education and outreach activities?
3. What kind of support have research scientists received from their colleagues, collaborators, and institutions when they engage in education and outreach activities?

Methodology

As part of the RAPID grant-funded project, the active Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence (COSEE) centers and the National COSEE Office were each asked to select a research scientist with whom they had worked in the past to be portrayed in the Scientists Making an Impact in Ocean Sciences Education project. The authors then used grant funds to travel to interview these COSEE-selected research scientists and produce video-based case studies for an interactive website project. In all, 12 research scientists representing universities from Massachusetts, New Jersey,

Maryland, Rhode Island, North Carolina, Louisiana, Minnesota, California, Washington state, and Alaska were actively interviewed and observed by the authors and were included in this study (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographics of Research Scientists Interviewed

#	Rank	Gender	Discipline	Institution
1	Assistant Prof.	Male	Biology	U. of Minnesota
2	Assistant Prof.	Female	Environmental Science	Louisiana State U.
3	Associate Prof.	Male	Environmental Science	Western Washington U.
4	Associate Prof.	Female	Marine Science	U. of California Santa Cruz
5	Associate Prof.	Female	Marine Science	North Carolina State U.
6	Full Professor	Male	Marine Biology	U. of Alaska Fairbanks
6	Full Professor	Male	Environmental Science	U. of Maryland
7	Full Professor	Male	Atmospheric Science	U. of Rhode Island
8	Full Professor	Male	Environmental Science	U. of Maryland
9	Full Professor	Male	Marine Science	Rutgers U.
10	Full Professor	Male	Oceanography	U. of Washington
11	Full Professor	Male	Environmental Science	U. of Massachusetts Boston
12	Full Professor	Female	Ecology	U. of California Los Angeles

Two researchers were sent to each representative institution to conduct the interviews with the subjects. Over a series of days, each research scientist was interviewed on camera by one researcher about his or her involvement in education and outreach activities, with an emphasis on the three research questions outlined in this study. The second researcher observed the interview and made additional notes on the demeanor of the subject and their overall impressions of what the subject was reporting. Total amounts of video and observations collected for each researcher ranged from 6 to 12 hours over the course of 2 to 3 days. These videos and observational notes were then transcribed for data analysis. Following the on-site visit, a follow-up survey was sent out to each subject asking them to discuss their thoughts on what was recorded during the interview process and to answer each of the research questions in their own words. This was done to ensure that the researcher's views were accurately recorded and observed. Additionally, the researcher's colleagues, graduate and undergraduate students, and collaborators were interviewed in person or on the phone to get an outside perspective on the researcher's views and efforts. These added, on average, an additional 75 transcribed interviews per

interviewed scientist and 12 surveys for qualitative analysis. Finally, visits were coordinated to make direct, on-site observations of six of the 12 research scientists actively participating in education and outreach activities (videotaped and then transcribed along with observer notes). Institutional Review Board approval was secured prior to implementation of the study.

For the purpose of analysis, the data from the 12 research scientists was analyzed using qualitative methods that allow patterns of analysis to emerge from the data *(Patton, 1990)*. The subjects' videotaped transcriptions were compared to the direct observations, interviews from their peers and colleagues, and the written surveys administered after the visits to ensure reliability and validity through data comparison and triangulation. Thus, patterns identified in this way were verified by returning to the data using an iterative process of hypothesis generation and verification. Common themes were identified, and these provide the structure for reporting and discussion of results. These themes, reported below, are based on the converging responses of a number of participants, thus minimizing the effects of personality and other individual differences.

Results

Observations, interviews, and surveys of the research scientists as well as their colleagues, students, and those who have worked with them, all seem to indicate that the researchers personally believe that there is value in their education and outreach efforts. Indeed, many have found their efforts rewarding both professionally and personally. However, some themes appeared repeatedly: a lack of resources and support for outreach and education efforts at many institutions, the amount of time required to implement outreach and education programs, and the toll that outreach and education efforts take on the career track of some individuals. Importantly, there also seemed to be a generational gap in the attitudes of research scientists of varying ages concerning the net worth of outreach and education.

Value of Education and Outreach

Overall, the research scientists in this study placed a high personal value on their education and outreach efforts. Indeed, one research scientist noted:

> The role of a scientist is not only to do research, but also to communicate their research to the general public.

> This includes a population of all ages, from those in kindergarten to my grandmother, regardless of their background. Indeed, that is our job as scientists, because who else can say or explain science better than us? That is why I do my best to act on [education and outreach] and be involved where I can. By doing that, I also impact the quality of my science, because it makes me look and find projects that can have an impact on society. It is important to let [the public] know what scientists do [and why] it is important for the planet.

Several research scientists noted that they learned, from observing K-12 teachers for whom the goal is to have every student pass, to aim for higher pass rates in their own undergraduate classes. "There are undergraduate courses where the passing rate has gone from 50 percent to 90 percent because of the way the course is taught, because of an understanding that people learn in different ways," said one nontenured research scientist.

Working with outreach and education efforts has also allowed researchers to think about science differently, resulting in new and different proposals and new and different collaborations. For example, their research may start to focus more on a core concept or fundamental understanding that has yet to be fully explained, which may have been revealed to them through an outreach effort. In turn, as more faculty begin to be affected by their work in education and outreach, they also begin to shape the values held by the university. One research scientist at a university in New England said:

> Working with the local school district becomes valued; there is an understanding that you are learning from your work with teachers, learning about pedagogy. There are higher expectations for your own teaching, and that you might get some grants that you may not have gotten before, which helps support your lab. Ultimately, as more faculty who have experienced the benefits of working in education and outreach become active members of search committees, the science faculty as a whole begins to reflect these values.

Research scientists who received their doctoral degrees 10 years ago or less (and who are nontenured) generally had the greatest enthusiasm for their efforts in education and outreach and looked

upon these efforts as a way to act as role models. One research scientist, who works with high school students in her lab on the university campus, said:

> I routinely get calls and letters from the grade school teachers of the students I work with. They thank me profusely, saying [they] teach and teach these [science topics] in the classroom, but until they can get into a lab and see how it is applied, and do the hands-on research, it does not mean as much. For me, it makes being a scientist acceptable. I am not this "old professor with the bushy hair," I am a regular person and we do serious science and make it fun.

For another research scientist, the education and outreach efforts he had been involved with gave him a greater appreciation of the values and needs of the native populations in his area. He noted:

> With the native people and students that I work with, the sense of place and the sense of belonging and ownership are important and it is not just what is going on scientifically. This is their land and that is their water, and that needs to be there and be healthy and preserved, because that is what it is to be [Native American]. Indeed, if those are not there, it's not just the food or commodity is gone; it is that the people are gone. So, I am not just doing science on biological processes and impacts, for instance, I might be finding the answers to things that can help preserve not just [the environment], but the culture as well, and that is really important to me.

All the research scientists reported some nontangible benefit to their lives or outlook on K-12 education, and in many cases to how they conduct and report their research. This was especially true for those with children of their own. In many of these cases, the researchers' education and outreach efforts made them think about not only what their children were learning, but the content and quality of the knowledge. "Recent assessments have well-documented how poorly the United States is doing in educating its young students in math and science, compared with other countries," one tenured research scientist from Maryland noted. "The good news is that for many of our active research scientists, this realization of the younger generation's deficiencies in understanding basic science

represents a watershed moment, propelling them into action—and involvement in education and outreach. I know it has been for me." However, nearly all of the research scientists interviewed noted that despite these goals and benefits, there are many challenges to being successful in education and outreach efforts.

The Challenges and/or Benefits of Engaging in Education and Outreach Efforts

When addressing the challenges and/or opportunities facing research scientists who make the effort to be engaged in education and outreach activities, those interviewed had numerous and varied answers depending on their career stage. It was noted that graduate students often have the opportunity to get exposed to educators in action, which may inspire them to become teachers themselves. They may also bring back this inspiration to their professors and in turn influence them to become involved in education and outreach.

Many of those interviewed noted that early career (nontenured) faculty at their respective institutions have had the opportunity, through education and outreach activities, to improve their teaching skills and add presentations and publications to their tenure portfolio. Senior, tenured research scientists have additionally been able to effect a change on a university-wide scale, attract additional funding, and engage other faculty in collaborations that will in turn also affect their careers. One research scientist, who was also a dean at his university, noted:

> It would be irresponsible for me in today's academic world to think that we can pull off academic research, and then say if the public wants to learn about it, they can read about it in my book or journal article. We are getting more and more pressure from the public asking us for help, wanting to know what we are doing, and asking how they can help. That is not solved by me giving a lecture using [scientific jargon]. That is not going to help, and they will lose interest. It is just as important for a sixth grader to be inspired by a scientist who talks directly to them at their level and inspires them. If you believe your job as a scientist is to make sure science continues, and have those young people in your career thirty years from now, then [education and outreach] efforts become a really easy decision.

Another common observation reported by research scientists who were interviewed involved their effort to find the resources they needed to be successful in education and outreach efforts. Although many research scientists are receptive to finding ways to pursue education and outreach, they are unsure what their first steps should be. As one department head noted:

> It can be challenging, especially for older, [tenured] scientists that are used to being in a lab all the time. It used to be that you could just include a website or some sort of online component, and let your grad student do that for you, but things are changing, and the educational and outreach components are becoming more important and need to be more diverse. I often tell scientists that are faced with trying to figure out how to include these efforts in their research to look at centers on campus that specialize in such endeavors. These centers often are already pursing activities that might be able to be included in some form in their research grant ideas, or they may be able to work with their staff to find ways to achieve both the scientist goals and those of the center.

A majority of those interviewed noted that research scientists often have a finite amount of time, and getting involved in education and outreach activities can mean choosing to write one less paper or spend less time in the field. As one research scientist who routinely holds summer workshops and tries to encourage colleagues to participate noted:

> In our area, most of the active research is going on in the summertime, so it is a hard time for them to devote six weeks [to our program], but those that do have told me they get a lot out of it once they have committed the time. It is a challenge. You have to juggle two lives: research and scientific education. They are indeed two separate lives and it is hard to do. It is also two different ways of thinking, that of research and working with the public. It can be mentally challenging.

The overall theme the authors have noted from the observations of the research scientists and their colleagues is that those scientists who have the time and resources to put into education and outreach efforts tend to see the benefits, even if they are per-

sonal and nontangible in nature. The researchers' need to publish and spend time in the lab and in the field as they start the tenure process was reported as the largest challenge when choosing to commit to education and outreach efforts. Thus, institutional support becomes of even greater importance in the decision-making process.

Support for Educational and Outreach Activities

The research scientists who were interviewed for this study had differing views on the support they received from those around them and from their institutions. At some universities and colleges, education and outreach activities are seen as something that all faculty should be engaged in and are highly valued and encouraged. At these institutions, the research scientists and their colleagues had a positive outlook on education and outreach, no matter their age or what point they had reached in their career. One commented:

> When I was first starting out, there were some messages that were being sent raising concern on the amount of time I wanted to devote to education and outreach activities. I was told it was not the best investment of my time for my career goals, but most of that has disappeared over time with changing attitudes. More and more of our faculty have thus come up through a system where these efforts are more of a priority, and it is not a concern for them. So, the classic model of scientific research in a lab has changed here. We are transitioning and our department is actually hiring faculty whose primary goal is outreach and education.

However, research scientists noted that at most institutions, although education and outreach activities are seen as important, they are usually not rewarded, nor are they given much weight in tenure and promotion decisions. Thus, education and outreach often become activities that are seen as "something you do on your own time." As one senior, tenured research scientist and department head noted:

> We all have a finite amount of time. If a person makes this choice to be involved in education and outreach, it usually means they write one less paper or a few less proposals for research. If they are not penalized, then there is no reason not to do it. However, for young sci-

> entists, who do not have tenure, it is great that they want to be involved, but that is no substitute for academic excellence that we expect. They need to be careful. But, I have noted they have more energy to do these [projects] than older scientists, and are often able to do both [research and outreach] and find a balance.

One senior, tenured colleague of a research scientist noted:

> It has been an interesting thing to observe. I think [the scientist] has made a tremendous contribution to science education, but at some sacrifice to his scientific career, because obviously, this takes a lot of time. There is a trade-off there and that is always an issue with this idea of engaging scientists in science education. It is a judgment that each professional researcher has to make.

At institutions where education and outreach was not an emphasis, a diversity of opinion on the importance of education and outreach also emerged, based on what point the interviewee was at in his or her career. Individuals just starting their careers felt that it was something they wanted to do, especially if they were exposed to education and outreach activities as a graduate student or postdoctoral candidate. As one early career, nontenured research scientist put it:

> Our generation is interested in interacting with public venues more often in a way that is acceptable. We can spend our research life behind a desk and in lab, but given the urgency of some of our problems regionally, nationally and globally, and given the interest that our community is putting on increasing science knowledge, it is important for us to get out of the lab and get familiar with public venues. It should be an integral part of our career and should be rewarded.

Research scientists in the middle of their careers (those actively seeking tenure) placed an emphasis on education and outreach, but not at the expense of their research and other scholarly duties. They noted that promotion and tenure required a shift in their priorities, especially given the lack of rewards for such activities. Senior, tenured research faculty were found to often have the most negative views on education and outreach activities. They were most apt to believe that they should be concentrating on pure research and

viewed outreach as an unwelcome distraction that can, in some cases, hinder one's career.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations

Some potential limitations of this study should be noted. The study population consisted of self-selected research scientists from COSEE member institutions with an earth sciences background. This fact limits the generalizability of the results. Extending the population to include scientists from other research areas is recommended to determine if there are different results. In addition, the population of this study was relatively small. Further research involving a larger, more diverse sample is needed to replicate the findings. Furthermore, the sample was skewed toward more senior faculty and researchers. Expanding the sample population to include more early- to mid-career scientists could provide richer data.

These limitations notwithstanding, the findings of this study do indicate that the shift toward integrating education and outreach activities into the academic careers of research scientists is still evolving. At some colleges and universities, an emphasis is placed on education and outreach and is rewarded within the tenure process. Observations seem to indicate that where this occurs, research scientists are the most willing to engage in such activities.

At most institutions, however, the value of education and outreach is often considered to be low. It is something "to do in your spare time" and as such requires that scientists balance their research and academic duties against their outside pursuits. However, given that including education and outreach activities in grant applications is becoming the norm for many governmental institutions, such as the National Science Foundation, it is important to find ways to help research scientists to engage in these activities. It is also important to ensure that all research scientists, academic department heads, and persons in authority at the university level recognize the importance of education and outreach efforts. This can be difficult given the lack of a robust body of data, both quantitative and qualitative, in peer-reviewed publications to support recognizing and defining the benefits of such activities. It is in this regard that centers and groups such as Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence (COSEE), which have the expertise, experience, staff, and funds to help support research scientists as they pursue these activities, can be of most help.

The generational gap that was observed seems to indicate that younger, nontenured research scientists who are moving up the ladder are more interested in pursuing education and outreach activities and are changing the attitudes of their colleagues and the direction of many of their departments. It may be that in the future, all colleges and universities will require some component of education and outreach in their tenure and promotion process, but in the meantime, research scientists must continue seeking a balance to be successful in both their careers and their education and outreach endeavors. One solution may be creating some sort of resource, such as a website, that could help connect research scientists who are interested in pursuing education and outreach activities. This could also allow those who are less experienced to connect with those who have more experience in a more collaborative way. The challenge, however, is that such a site would have to be easy to find and/or marketed, whether by word of mouth, e-mail correspondence, or advertisement at symposia. It would also require a group or agency to acquire the funding to start and maintain such a resource and then maintain it over the long term.

The anecdotal evidence and the results of this study indicate that time devoted to education and outreach activities is well spent. However, there need to be incentives for research scientists to pursue such endeavors. Otherwise, most scientists will (understandably) decide to limit their engagement with outside groups in order to spend more time in the lab or field. Thus, we need to start a dialogue with research scientists, university and administrative officials, funding agencies, and the general public to find out what can work, what won't work, and what we can scientifically prove about the benefits of education and outreach activities.

All of these findings are important in light of recent initiatives announced by Washington and President Obama that call for science research and education that challenge scientists to use their knowledge to think about creative ways to engage people in science and engineering and improve student achievement in math and science. The authors believe that it is important for scientists to address this call to action and do their best to engage students and the general public, but success ultimately will rely on incentives for these researchers to buy into these efforts and additional training for the scientists to participate in education and outreach.

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Reflections Upon Community Engagement: Service-Learning and Its Effect on Political Participation After College

Fletcher Winston

Abstract

This article addresses the gap in our understanding of service-learning and its enduring influence on political engagement by analyzing the results of an alumni survey. Chi-square tests were performed to examine the relationship between 5 curricular and cocurricular undergraduate experiences and 10 types of political engagement after graduating. Analysis demonstrated that organizational involvement, campus leadership, and volunteering had limited influence, whereas service-learning had the greatest impact of the factors studied on political participation after college. Service-learning significantly affected behaviors such as voting and donating money to political candidates as well as forms of political activity that more explicitly reflect social change activism such as social movement organization membership and participation in protests. Notably, classes with merely a service add-on showed no positive effect on any political behaviors under examination. This finding stresses how reflection can heighten awareness and deepen knowledge about community needs and facilitate the attitudinal and identity development that promote lasting activism.

Introduction

Service-learning has developed a strong presence at colleges throughout the United States since the Campus Compact was formed in 1985 by three university presidents to promote this form of pedagogy. As of 2012, the organization's membership numbered 1,120 institutions of higher education, representing about 6 million students. More than 95% of these schools offer service-learning courses (with an average of 66 courses per campus) that require students to address community needs in areas such as poverty, environmental sustainability, education, and health care *(Campus Compact, 2013)*. The increasing popularity of service-learning largely reflects the belief that this teaching strategy provides a transformational learning experience that develops civic engagement among students. However, few studies demonstrate whether this intensive form of pedagogy pays real dividends in regard to long-term engagement with the community *(Finley, 2011;*

National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2005). In particular, we know very little about the enduring impact of service-learning on specific political activities relevant to civic engagement such as voting, signing petitions, and participating in protests or boycotts. The aim of this study was to address this gap in our understanding.

A survey of alumni at a midsized university in the southeastern United States examined this key question, helping us better understand how undergraduate experiences in service-learning courses influence activism after college. Questionnaires were mailed to all College of Liberal Arts graduates who earned a bachelor's degree 2 or 3 years prior. Alumni responses yielded 50 contingency tables for identification of statistically significant associations between the undergraduate activities and political behaviors after graduating college. Chi-square tests were used to measure the influence of service-learning and four additional curricular or cocurricular experiences on 10 political behaviors.

This article first reviews the literature on service-learning and its effects on civic engagement. Next, it discusses the alumni survey methodology and the analytical techniques applied to the data. It then moves to a presentation of the findings and applies social movements theory to help interpret the results. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of the broader implications of service-learning for the political arena and social movement sector.

Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

As service-learning has gained momentum in secondary and postsecondary education over the past couple of decades, scholarship on this subject has increased substantially. Due to the considerable efforts of researchers in various academic domains, we currently have a much better understanding of best practices in the field and evidence suggestive of its ability to provide a meaningful learning experience for students. However, research concerning the question of service-learning and its impact on civic engagement is limited in several ways. First, most research examines the influence of the service-learning experience on students over the course of a semester in a single class *(Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; Huisman, 2010; Kendrick, 1996; Mobley, 2007)*. Although it is important to determine the short-term impact of this form of pedagogy on student development, it is also necessary to investigate its long-term effects. This is particularly relevant given the claims of service-learning practitioners that this teaching strategy provides transformative,

enduring changes among students. Unfortunately, this assertion has largely remained untested.

Some studies, however, have addressed this question and explored the influence of service-learning on civic engagement over longer time periods. For instance, Aberle-Grasse *(2000)* examined the effects of enrollment in the Washington Study-Service Year (WSSY) at Eastern Mennonite University. Students in this program complete two semesters of service while living together in the target community. The author analyzed exit essays completed by every WSSY participant from 1989 to 1998, interviewed 16 alumni at a 1996 reunion, and surveyed 120 of the 230 alumni. Notably, she found short-term and long-term effects of the experience on value development, conceptual understanding, and cognitive and interpersonal skills. However, the conclusions of this study are limited by a focus on only one service-learning course and the lack of a comparison group. Like Aberle-Grasse, Smith-Korfmacher *(1999)* surveyed alumni to determine how enrollment in a service-learning class completed as an undergraduate affected their later decisions concerning their educations, careers, and tendency to continue with community-based work. However, this study's similar focus on just one class, lack of comparison group, and low response rate diminish the strength of its conclusions.

Another limitation of the scholarly research concerning the impacts of service-learning is a focus on attitudinal measures of civic engagement. Although service-learning practitioners suggest that the experience develops the moral capacity and civic behaviors of students, most studies focus exclusively on the former *(Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Eyler et al., 1997; Huisman, 2010; Kendrick, 1996; Mobley, 2007)*. For example, Eyler and her colleagues *(1997)* surveyed a national sample of 1,544 students from 20 different colleges using a strong pre- and posttest design. The authors found that service-learning significantly influenced the outcome measures, but these only captured changes in student attitudes and beliefs such as feelings of connectedness to the community, ability to see the systemic or political nature of social problems, feeling a need to give priority to greater social justice, and increased perspective-taking capacity. Although important, these findings do not tell us if this progression in attitudes related to civic engagement is accompanied by actual changes in civic behavior among students.

The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) spearheaded a large study to address some of the methodological issues previously discussed *(Vogelgesang & Astin, 2005)*. The national survey

of 19,394 former undergraduates from the 1994 freshman cohort examined the influence of service-learning on political participation 6 years after graduation. After controlling for several other factors, the study determined that service-learning has a significant effect on political engagement. Although this research represents an important advancement in our understanding of the connections between service-learning and actual political participation, it has two major limitations.

First, the measure of service-learning in the HERI study consists of a single question on the Cooperative Institutional Research Program College Student Survey (renamed the College Senior Survey in 2006): "Since entering college, indicate how often you performed community service as part of a class." This question presents a serious validity concern since it fails to fully capture the meaning of the pedagogy, that is, the reflection component integral to service-learning. Unfortunately, this question does not differentiate between service-*learning* classes and their less academically rigorous cousin, the service add-on. Although it is an important option within an educator's toolkit, the service add-on asks only that students complete a certain number of volunteer hours for a course—there is little expectation regarding the integration of the service experience with academic content. Due to a lack of specificity in the HERI survey question, we do not know whether respondents have actually taken a service-learning course.

The second drawback of the HERI study concerns its lack of development of the theoretical connections between service-learning and enduring political activism. The researchers explained the enduring influence of service-learning using a theoretical framework that largely draws from political philosophy and developmental psychology. Although instructive, this approach neglects the substantial insight gained over the past few decades within the field of social movements. An understanding of political participation is at the heart of this subdiscipline, but service-learning studies such as the HERI analysis have not taken advantage of the vast body of social movements research. However, incorporating the knowledge gained within the field of social movements is crucial to understanding the impact of service-learning. Social movement studies that examine political awareness and experience as well as efficacy and identity are particularly enlightening, as these are precursors to activism that we can expect to develop through service-learning classes.

The question of political participation is central to an understanding of social movements and therefore has attracted a great

deal of attention as the field has developed over the past few decades. Mass society *(Kornhauser, 1959)* and collective behavior *(Turner & Killian, 1957)* approaches, which view participation in relation to disconnected or psychologically troubled individuals, were largely discounted and gave way in the 1970s to more empirically grounded structural explanations, such as resource mobilization and political opportunity, which recognize a rational decision-making process *(McAdam, 1982; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Oberschall, 1973)*. For instance, the resource mobilization model demonstrates the relevance of political knowledge to engagement in social change causes *(McAdam, 1988; Van Dyke & Dixon, 2013; Van Dyke, Dixon, & Carlon, 2007; Voss & Sherman, 2000).* Familiarity with movement strategies, tactics, and navigation in the political domain allows one to feel less intimidated by the political process and more comfortable using various methods to achieve claims. The strong association between political knowledge and participation helps to explain why prior political engagement is one of the strongest predictors of later activism *(McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1988)*.

Social movements research also has found that experience in the political arena influences decisions to engage in politics later on due to feelings of efficacy that develop through participation *(Carmin & Balser, 2002; Diani 1995; McAdam, 1988; Rochon & Meyer, 1997)*. Political experience acts as a cognitive filter that shapes an understanding of how actions will be effective, and this interpreted sense that one can make a difference facilitates an increase in activism *(Carmin & Balser, 2002).* For instance, McAdam *(1988)* found that White students from northern colleges volunteering for the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project in 1964 achieved social change goals through their participation, and their increased feelings of efficacy led to decisions to join political groups related to the women's, student, and peace movements after the project ended. This study clearly demonstrates how an understanding of accomplishment within the political domain results in further engagement in the legislative and electoral arena.

In response to the resource mobilization perspective and its emphasis on structural processes, other social movement researchers shifted to the new social movements framework that emphasizes cultural processes. These studies examined new movements, such as those aiming for women's rights, peace, and an ecologically sound environment, that stress postmaterialist values of quality of life and self-realization and not just Marxist considerations of structural position *(Buechler, 1995; Johnston, Larana, & Gusfield, 1994; Melucci, 1989; Morris & Mueller, 1992)*. This model con-

tributes substantially to our understanding of political participation by demonstrating the significance of grievances, ideology, and identity.

With regard to grievances and ideology, new social movements research demonstrates that unease with the status quo and the ability to make sense of a problem's source provide bystanders with considerable motivation to become more active and participate in the political arena *(Krauss, 1988; Opp & Gern, 1993; Schussman & Soule, 2005; Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986; Szasz, 1994)*. For instance, Walsh and Warland's *(1983)* study of activism after the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island emphasized how development of a critical awareness of the situation and discontent linked to government inadequacies led to greater political engagement by residents in the affected area.

Research within the area of new social movements also highlights the processes of socialization that create an identity conducive to political involvement *(Crossley, 2002; Diani, 1995; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Melucci, 1989)*. For example, the self-concept of "activist" that develops through interaction with others in the political arena establishes a commitment to this identity that encourages enduring political engagement. Regarding the significance of identity, an in-depth investigation of the women's movement shows that activists within lesbian feminist communities developed boundaries establishing differences between dominant and challenging groups, consciousness affecting interpretation of the situation, and negotiation of social definitions that shaped their political identity *(Taylor & Whittier, 1992)*. This self-understanding subsequently influenced their commitment to further participation in social change activism.

A complete understanding of service-learning and its influence on enduring political participation necessitates the application of social movements theory. The present study helps to remedy this gap in prior research. In addition to addressing this theoretical concern of service-learning scholarship, this study also tackled methodological issues mentioned in this review of the service-learning literature, in large part by using a valid measure of service-learning. In the following section, I discuss in more detail the alumni survey and analytical techniques that incorporate these methodological improvements.

Data and Methods

In Fall 2012, a questionnaire was mailed to alumni of Herndon University (a pseudonym), a midsized institution in the southeastern United States. Herndon, like many colleges, has made an effort in recent years to promote service-learning. This includes establishing an office staffed by administrators to develop and oversee service-learning. Efforts to advance service-learning by this office include a high-profile program to sponsor Herndon student community service in developing countries and an honors curriculum with a focus on service-learning.

Herndon University is committed to service-learning, but the school is hardly a hotbed of student activism. According to the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey of freshmen entering Herndon in 2005 (roughly the cohort of this study's alumni survey), only 39% considered it "essential" or "very important" to keep up to date with political affairs, and 20% felt this way about influencing the political structure *(Pryor et al., 2005)*. Comparatively, 73% reported it "essential" or "very important" to be very well off financially, and 62% thought in this manner about "becoming an authority in my field." Overall, 19% of the freshmen considered themselves liberal (and less than 2% far left), 37% conservative, and 3% far right. Moreover, political protest is a rare occurrence at the university. From 2005 to 2010, there were only two actions organized by Herndon students: a rally for gay rights and a vigil to raise awareness of sexual violence.

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) is the core of the university's undergraduate program. Reflecting national trends in higher education, CLA emphasizes its ability to prepare students for professions, but holds to its mission of developing critical thinking and character. Reflecting these aims, faculty are encouraged to incorporate service into their classes. This study's alumni survey is limited to this college since it allows for some control over third variables such as age, major, and college mission while supplying enough variation in service-learning experiences. (For instance, all students in some schools within the university must complete a service-learning experience to receive their degree.) Moreover, focusing on this particular college within the university enabled the study to take advantage of a CLA faculty survey completed by this investigator in the year prior. The faculty survey provided important contextual information through analysis of its qualitative data and informed the design of the alumni survey.

The survey was distributed to the 386 CLA students who graduated with a bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree between May 2009 and December 2010. Although a survey of alumni further removed from college would also help our understanding of the long-term influence of service-learning, the shorter time frame of this study is valuable for several reasons. First, a survey that compares political engagement of alumni 2 or 3 years after graduating provides important information about the impact of service-learning experiences over time and captures the time period covering a significant transition into adulthood *(Hyde & Jaffee, 2000; Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977; Sherkat & Blocker, 1994).* This offers a meaningful contrast to studies that measure changes in student levels of civic engagement over the course of a single semester. Second, a review of student records shows that many of the respondents completed their service-learning classes as freshmen or sophomores, so more than 2 or 3 years had passed since their last service-learning experience (this information was triangulated by the CLA faculty survey). Third, a shorter time frame since graduation controls for other factors of adulthood that could affect the data, while directing us toward the enduring impact of service-learning *(Mortimer & Simmons, 1978)*. Finally, Herndon, like many schools, does not maintain accurate records of service-learning classes, so it was necessary to survey recent alumni in order to mitigate recall issues. Although the accuracy of alumni recall leaves room for concern, it is reasonable to assume that these graduates would remember these fairly recent service-learning classes, which reflect a distinctive experience in the curriculum. Memory issues were also limited by designing the questionnaire to include estimation strategies and cognitive recall sets before the service-learning questions *(Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000).*

This study used several strategies to obtain a high response rate, including prenotices, several reminders, emphasis on university administration endorsement, and multiple forms of communication *(Dillman, 2007)*. After securing IRB approval, 386 surveys were mailed to alumni; however, 19 questionnaires remained undeliverable despite several attempts to obtain accurate contact information. Alumni completed and returned 150 questionnaires, a 41% response rate. Although this level of response is consistent with other mail surveys, a higher rate was expected due to alumni connectedness to the university and the design strategies employed. Some of the lack of response can be attributed to insufficient records kept by the university regarding alumni contact

information. It became evident that the announcements, surveys, and reminders were mailed to parent or local apartment addresses reflecting undergraduate residence, and the materials were not forwarded to the alumni's new residences. Follow-up phone calls and e-mails to respondents helped somewhat to determine current addresses, but telephone numbers and e-mails were also unreliable. Importantly, however, the data reflect few systematic differences between respondents and nonrespondents.

The questionnaire constructed for this research asked respondents to indicate whether they have engaged (or not) in 10 different political behaviors since graduating from Herndon. These reflect a wide spectrum of activities, from more institutional forms such as voting and donating money to political candidates to involvement more indicative of social change activism such as signing petitions, joining a social movement organization, and participating in boycotts or protests.

In addition to several demographic questions, the survey instrument asked alumni to indicate their participation in a number of curricular and cocurricular activities as college students. In particular, the questionnaire determined the influence of five curricular and cocurricular experiences: (1) service-learning, (2) service add-ons, (3) volunteering, (4) organizational involvement, and (5) campus leadership. Service-learning is the most difficult of these experiences to measure, so careful attention was paid to helping respondents distinguish between service-learning, service add-ons, and volunteering. In order to address potential validity and reliability concerns, cognitive design techniques were applied to the construction of the questionnaire *(Dillman & Tarnai, 1991; Jobe & Mingay, 1989)*. In questions that directly preceded the service-learning item, definitions were provided for volunteering and the service add-on, which asks students to volunteer for a class with no graded reflection requirement. By contrast, the service-learning question included a definition emphasizing the obligation to complete service and graded reflection. In addition, thorough pretesting of the questionnaire was conducted to address potential validity or reliability concerns *(Dillman, 2007).* Interviews with analysts and a sample of alumni were used to improve the cognitive aspects of the questions, and a small pilot study confirmed the validity of the service-learning questions.

Chi-square tests were performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the five curricular and cocurricular undergraduate experiences and the 10 forms of political engagement practiced after graduating. This procedure

tested the null hypothesis that there is no association between each pair of row and column variables in the 50 two-by-two tables analyzed in this study. Larger values of $\chi 2$ provide more evidence against the null hypothesis that service-learning has no enduring influence on activism. Although $\chi 2$ is the appropriate test of the relationships between the variables, it becomes more accurate as the expected cell counts increase. Due to cell counts less than five accompanying the sample size, it was not possible to reliably introduce control variables into the tests. However, the analytical strategy comparing independent variables in the 50 tables acts to control for additional explanatory variables *(Nardi, 2006)*.

Findings

Institutional data showed that whites, females, and students of traditional age represent majorities in the College of Liberal Arts at Herndon. Slightly more than 60% of the undergraduates were female during the 2004 to 2010 time frame of the alumni respondents' enrollment, while nearly all students were younger than 25. The population data also reflected a race distribution of approximately 60% non-Hispanic White, 20% Black, and 5% Asian, with even smaller percentages of Hispanic and other races. In comparison to the sample for this study, the alumni respondents somewhat overrepresented females (71% of the respondents) and were slightly older, which likely reflects the increased ability to contact those with a more stable residential pattern (see Table 1). The distribution of alumni race in the sample also included a higher percentage of Whites (85% of respondents) and a lower percentage of Blacks (10%) and races/ethnicities other than Asian.

The distributions of income and education are not too surprising given the aspirations of alumni and how recently they completed their undergraduate degree. Respondents are low earners (41% had an income less than $20,000 in 2011), but we can expect these individuals to achieve significant monetary gains as they build careers. Nearly one third are enrolled in graduate school, 26% have already earned a master's degree, and 4% earned a more advanced degree.

Table 1. Alumni Demographics (*n*=150)

Gender	*Female*	71%
	Male	29%
Race	*White*	85%
	Black	10%
	Asian	5%
Age	*24*	26%
	25	42%
	26	24%
Income 2011	*Less than $20,000*	41%
	$20,000-$39,999	37%
	$40,000-$59,999	14%
	$60,000-99,999	6%
	$100,000 or more	2%
Education	*Master's or higher*	30%
	Currently enrolled in graduate school	

Herndon alumni, although not yet experiencing high incomes, were mostly raised in middle- and upper-middle-class families that tended to encourage political participation. Consequently, they are likely to display greater political participation than similarly aged peers who were not raised in their class position or who have not obtained their level of education *(Paulsen, 1991; Snow & Soule, 2010; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995)*. Since graduating from Herndon, over two thirds of alumni have voted in a national, state, or local election (see Table 2); in contrast, analysis of census data indicates that about 25% of young adults voted during the time period covered in the survey *(Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2011)*. Notably, 23% of Herndon alumni contributed to a political campaign, and slightly more than one fourth contacted or visited a government official. A further indication of their elevated levels of political engagement is reflected in the 35% of respondents who attended a political meeting since graduating, markedly higher than the 2% of non–college graduates of similar age who attended any type of public meeting *(Godsay, Kawashima-Ginsberg, Kiesa, & Levin, 2012)*. Even higher rates of participation were observed in lower cost activities such as signing a petition, completed by nearly two thirds of respondents. Participation in the three activities that reflect a more explicit social change agenda was also relatively high among Herndon alumni. Slightly more than a quarter of Herndon alumni claimed membership in a social

movement organization, and 14% participated in a protest, march, demonstration, or rally since graduating from Herndon. Further indicating pronounced engagement in social movements, half of the respondents boycotted a product due to the social or political values of the company.

Table 2. Political Participation After Graduation

Voted in a national or state election	70.1%
Voted in a local election	68.2%
Donated money to a political candidate	23.1%
Became a member of a social movement organization	26.4%
Expressed opinion on a community or political issue *by signing a petition*	60.5%
Expressed opinion on a community or political issue *by contacting a newspaper or magazine* (e.g., writing an op-ed article or a letter to the editor)	12.4%
Expressed opinion on a community or political issue *by contacting or visiting a public official*	26.5%
Attended a political meeting (e.g., town hall or city council meeting)	35.2%
Not bought something or boycotted it because of the social or political values	50.7%
Participated in a protest, march, demonstration, or rally	14.4%

Note. Percentage indicates engagement in the activity since graduating.

Herndon alumni not only have been politically active since graduating, they recall being very involved in the curricular and cocurricular aspects of college while undergraduates (see Table 3). An overwhelming majority (80%) volunteered in the community, independent of class requirements, while attending Herndon. Alumni were very involved in campus organizations; nearly all respondents (96%) had been a member of at least one organization, club, or sports team, with 40% reporting that they participated in "several" or "many." These figures include the 41% of alumni who indicated they were members of a social fraternity or sorority as Herndon students (not displayed in the table). Remarkably, nearly three fourths of respondents held a leadership position in an organization.

Regarding the key variable of interest, two thirds of alumni reported that they had a service-learning experience as an undergraduate, and nearly three quarters of the alumni in this category completed two or more service-learning courses. Moreover, the hours of service that alumni fulfilled in this type of class added up. Of these respondents, 44% completed between 10 and 29 hours of

community service for these classes over the course of their undergraduate career, and more than one third completed 30 or more hours.

Table 3. Curricular and Cocurricular Experiences as an Undergraduate

Service-learning	*yes*	66.7%
Number of service-learning courses	*one*	28.6%
	two or three	51%
	four or more	20.4%
Total hours of s-l service component	*1-9 hours*	21%
	10-29 hours	44%
	30 or more hours	35%
Service add-on	*yes*	48.3%
Volunteering (not for a class)	*yes*	80.3%
Organizational involvement	*none*	4.1%
	just a few	55.8%
	several	19.7%
	many	20.4%
Organization leadership position	*yes*	72.8%
Student government leadership	*yes*	12.2%

The extensive campus and community involvement could help explain an association with relatively high levels of political participation among alumni. However, it remains to be seen how each of these undergraduate activities is related to the different forms of political engagement. The chi-square results in Table 4 respond to this central question of the study. Some general findings from the analysis deserve mention. First, there is no political behavior upon which all five undergraduate experiences had a significant effect. Donating money to a political candidate and becoming a member of a social movement organization (SMO), such as the NAACP, Amnesty International, or PETA, shared the most, with each of these political behaviors being associated with three undergraduate experiences. Second, none of the curricular or cocurricular activities had an impact on expressing opinions through print media or by contacting government officials or boycotting products. Interestingly, campus leadership and taking a class with a service add-on had a negative association with the latter political activity.

Comparing the five undergraduate experiences tells us more about their relative importance. Of primary interest for this study was the influence of service-learning. Service-learning had an impact on more of the examined political behaviors (six) than any

other undergraduate experience. Service-learning had a significant effect on donating money to a political candidate and attending a political meeting. Notably, it is the only undergraduate experience that had a significant effect on voting. It also had an influence on two forms of political engagement connected to social movement activity: SMO membership and protest participation. It was the only undergraduate experience to affect the latter. This is especially noteworthy given that protest is the most radical form of political participation identified in the survey. Regarding the more conventional social movement activity of joining an SMO, we found that the political behavior upon which service-learning had the most significant effect was membership in these activist groups.

Table 4. Influence of Undergraduate Experiences on Political Participation Among Alumni (Chi-Square Test)+

	Organizational Involvement	Campus Leader	Volunteer	Service Add-on	Service Learning
Voted in a national or state election	.942	---	1.252	---	*4.917
Voted in a local election	.525	---	.087	---	*4.165
Donated money to a political candidate	**8.084	2.114	**10.265	.597	*6.478
Became a member of a social movement organization	*5.432	*5.467	2.768	---	**9.456
Expressed opinion on a community or political issue *by signing a petition*	**8.086	.218	**7.356	---	2.136
Expressed opinion on a community or political issue *by contacting a newspaper or magazine*	.129	.791	.166	.004	2.507
Expressed opinion on a community or political issue *by contacting or visiting a public official*	2.340	.397	1.306	.039	2.214
Attended a political meeting	.992	---	*4.681	.017	*4.727
Not bought something or boycotted it because of the social or political values of the company	1.242	---	.441	---	2.327
Participated in a protest, march, demonstrated, or rally	1.890	2.787	3.310	---	*3.842

Note. +Chi-square values are reported only for those variables that showed a positive effect on the measure of political engagement.

*Significant at the $p<.05$ level, **significant at the $p<.01$ level.

The service add-on did not have an effect on any of the 10 political behaviors, which is interesting since this is the undergraduate experience most similar to service-learning. In fact, it had a negative association with voting, signing a petition, and all three of the more direct forms of social movement activism. Although the

service add-on and service-learning both require student service to the community, the reflection component essential to service-learning apparently results in a high-impact experience with regard to enduring political behavior.

Organizational involvement and volunteering (not for a class) were the other two undergraduate experiences that had a significant effect on more than one political behavior. Both influenced financial contributions to political candidates and petition signing, but they diverged on SMO membership and attendance at political meetings. Organizational involvement, but not volunteering, had an influence on membership in activist groups. Notably, SMO membership was the only political behavior for which campus leadership had an effect.

To summarize the main findings, of the five undergraduate activities, a service-learning experience had the broadest impact on political participation among alumni and also the most influence on the behaviors more directly associated with social change activism. A service add-on experience did not have an influence on any of the 10 political behaviors, which clearly suggests the importance of fully integrating service with class material through reflection if the pedagogical aim is long-term political engagement.

Discussion

There is a strong tendency by researchers in the field of service-learning to interpret its relevance to political engagement through frameworks central to education, developmental psychology, and political philosophy. Although these approaches are instructive, here we developed a more complete understanding of service-learning and its influence on activism by applying social movements theory. This explanatory direction is exceedingly useful given the depth of scholarship in this field showing how engagement with political causes facilitates greater political participation *(Diani, 1995; McAdam, 1988; McAdam et al., 1988; Snow & Soule, 2010; Taylor, 1989; Van Dyke et al., 2007; Wiltfang & McAdam, 1991)*.

Of striking relevance to service-learning, social movements research tells us how the awareness of community needs and increased familiarity with methods for addressing these concerns, in addition to the feelings of efficacy and political identity that develop from encounters within the political arena, increase the likelihood of future involvement. Accordingly, we can expect the experience of working to address community needs through direct service, community-based research, and advocacy in service-

learning classes to provide the context for political socialization that heightens student engagement in politics after the classes end. Herndon courses that ask students to tutor underprivileged schoolchildren or help feed the homeless, study the effects of pollution in less-developed countries and educate those affected regarding the associated health and environmental concerns, or research a social problem and choose social movement tactics to address it as a group provide fertile ground for the cultivation of long-term political engagement. When properly executed, the coursework and related service of this pedagogy have the potential to develop the following attributes that result in enduring political behaviors among students: (a) an awareness of community issues, (b) knowledge of various forms of political engagement, (c) a belief in their ability to accomplish positive change, and (d) a moral-political identity.

First, service-learning raises student awareness of needs within the community *(Aberle-Grasse, 2000; Huisman, 2010; Myers-Lipton, 1998).* This is accomplished when community concerns are identified in concert among the instructor, students, and community partner, as best practices dictate *(Gelman, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001)*. Although the instructor often strongly guides the process, students should at the very least be required to read background material regarding the community issues they will tackle, a review that increases their knowledge of social concerns. Students also become aware of community needs as they participate in the service activity, an understanding that intensifies when the service is accompanied by interaction with those being helped *(Youniss & Yates, 1997)*. Immersion of students in the community they serve facilitates even greater awareness and sensitivity to the problems at hand, which further develops thinking that challenges the status quo *(Aberle-Grasse, 2000)*. As social movements research demonstrates, this critical awareness of pressing social issues provides a favorable disposition for political involvement later on *(Krauss, 1988; Opp & Gern, 1993; Schussman & Soule, 2005; Snow et al., 1986; Szasz, 1994; Taylor & Whittier, 1992; Walsh & Warland, 1983).*

Accompanying the greater awareness of community needs provided by service-learning is the opportunity for students to become familiar with methods of community engagement *(Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; Smith-Korfmacher, 1999; Stokamer, 2013).* When students engage in community-based research to advocate for a women's shelter and set up a booth outside a Wal-Mart to distribute the informational materials they produced *(Bach & Weinzimmer, 2011)*; organize a supermarket fair to promote a food stamp enrollment

campaign and enroll the poor in a food stamp program *(Porter, Summers, Toton, & Aisenstein, 2008)*; or work together as a team to create newsletters, brochures, and websites for nonprofit community organizations such as a youth support center *(Dubinsky, 2002)*, they gain practical skills that provide experience with the methods of political engagement. As prior research convincingly has shown, the development of civic skills, including the communication, organizational, and tactical capabilities garnered through service-learning experiences mentioned in the previous examples, helps individuals feel more comfortable with engagement in the political arena, less intimidated with the methods, and more knowledgeable about how to actually employ them *(Beeghley, 1986; Hillygus, 2005; Niemi & Sobieszek, 1977; Verba et al., 1995.)*

Experience with political engagement through their service-learning courses also breeds confidence and an understanding among students that they can accomplish positive change *(Aberle-Grasse, 2000; Eyler et al., 1997; Kendrick, 1996; Mobley, 2007; Myers-Lipton, 1998)*. For instance, Mobley *(2007)* found that students who organized events for a homelessness awareness week, including a local restaurant fund raiser, distribution of materials about homelessness at the student unions on campus, and a petition campaign directed at the governor of South Carolina, had significant gains in believing that they can make a difference advocating for social change. As several studies indicate, these feelings of efficacy are key to further political activity *(Biggs, 2006; Carmin & Balser, 2002; Corrigall-Brown, Snow, Smith, & Quist, 2009; Ennis & Schreuer, 1987; Hirsch, 1990; Opp & Gern, 1993; Passy & Giugni, 2001; Paulsen, 1991; Verba et al., 1995; Winston, 2013)*.

Finally, service-learning has the ability to facilitate enduring political participation by developing a moral-political identity of compassion, justice, and activism among students *(Youniss, 2009; Youniss & Yates, 1997)*. In their study of Black parochial high school students, Youniss and Yates *(1997)* discussed the process by which this form of pedagogy helps construct a moral-political identity. Through working in a soup kitchen serving the homeless, the privileged students in the course developed compassion and drew connections to the poor living conditions and treatment of other disadvantaged groups. Youniss and Yates referred to the importance of transcendence and how situating oneself in the larger sociohistorical context facilitates the maturation of moral-political identity. They noted, "Transcendence involves recognition that aspects of one's life are shared with the lives of others so that meaning depends on the self's relationship with others, as individuals and

as members of society" *(p. 61)*. Importantly, the transcendence realized through service-learning develops a moral-political identity, which provides a solid foundation for political participation *(Buechler, 2000; Johnston et al., 1994; Klandermans, 1994; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; McAdam et al., 2001; Polletta & Jasper, 2001).*

Admittedly, other college experiences such as volunteering, community service, and organizational leadership could also help students become aware of community issues and knowledgeable about the various types of political participation. Moreover, through these activities, undergraduates might develop feelings of efficacy and moral-political identity. However, the data of this study show that service-learning is unique in its ability to significantly influence the various forms of political engagement among alumni. To reiterate, service-learning not only had a significant effect on six of the 10 political engagement variables, with the next-closest college experience only having an effect on just three, but it was also the sole undergraduate activity to influence voting and protest, a much more radical form of political participation. What explains the increased capacity of service-learning to promote enduring political engagement?

The answer to this question surfaces when we examine the negligible effects on political development of the community service add-on in contrast to the significant influence of service-learning. This comparison highlights the critical difference between these two pedagogical strategies, which is the addition of a reflection component integral to service-learning. In their reflection through journals, class discussion, essays, and other techniques, students carefully consider their service experience and draw connections to the course material. This thoughtful, intellectual engagement with the service heightens awareness, deepens knowledge, and facilitates attitudinal and identity development *(Astin & Vogelgesang, 2006; Youniss & Yates, 1997)*. When reflection requires higher order critical thinking skills that push students to more fully analyze, question, and evaluate their service in relation to community needs, we can expect even greater gains in these areas *(Myers-Lipton, 1998)*. Service-learning, with its requisite consideration of community service with respect to course material, is uniquely positioned as a college experience to develop a long lasting commitment to political activity.

Conclusion

This study presses service-learning scholarship further by using insight gained from social movements research to help us better understand the influence of this form of experiential learning on political participation. Of interest to both service-learning and social movements scholars, the findings point toward a potential shift in political engagement as scores of college students with service-learning credits graduate each year. As these more politically active alumni continue to gain in numbers, decision makers in government will need to take notice. In addition to representing a potential source of resources to tap while campaigning, these experienced and motivated alumni will require that politicians acknowledge their support for social change goals. In a similar vein, social movements can expect the pool of potential activists to expand as students complete even more service-learning classes, especially those with a more explicit social justice agenda. These graduates possess civic and organizing skills useful to social movements as well as a burgeoning moral-political identity that encourages activism. The infusion of support from this group of service-learning students (former and current) with elevated levels of commitment and social capital would increase the potential of social movements to achieve their goals *(Amenta, Caren, & Olasky, 2005; Andrews, Ganz, Baggetta, Han, & Lim, 2010; Delgado, 1986; Ganz, 2000).* Moreover, we can expect many of these effects to be amplified as service-learning programs take hold more firmly in primary and secondary education *(Kielsmeier, Scales, Roehlkepartain, & Neal, 2004; Richards et al., 2013)*.

A more thorough understanding of the enduring effects of service-learning on political participation would require a much larger sample of college students representative of the various types of higher education institutions. This larger sample will allow for generalization beyond the confines of elite universities such as Herndon and the inclusion of control variables in more sophisticated analyses (see, for example, *McAdam & Brandt, 2009*). A better understanding of the long-term impact of service-learning also necessitates measurement of political participation among alumni with larger and more varied gaps in years since graduation, but as mentioned earlier, this results in complications with the data that would need to be addressed. In addition, future research should account for the number and content of service-learning classes completed by students. This information can determine the increasing gains bestowed by additional hours of service-learning as well as differentiate between the impact of service-learning classes based

on the charity model and those with social justice aims *(Lewis, 2004; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Marullo, Moayedi, & Cooke, 2009).* With the increasing institutionalization of service-learning as a form of pedagogy and an accompanying development in record-keeping, these research goals can more readily be achieved *(Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008)*. Indeed, comprehensive records maintained by colleges and universities would address the recall issues that inevitably occur when alumni are asked to remember courses as they are even further removed from their years in college. By analyzing institutional data, researchers will have greater confidence in the accuracy of information regarding enrollment in service-learning classes as well as the amount and type of service.

Admittedly, the research protocol suggested above is quite ambitious given the relatively early stage of service-learning institutionalization. Even arriving at an agreed-upon definition of service-learning among seasoned practitioners of this pedagogy can be a challenge, but a consistent classification is necessary for precise measurement. Research that takes advantage of this type of quality data will have greater capacity to determine the long-term impact of service-learning on political participation. Although this study provides an important step in this direction by utilizing a much more valid measurement of service-learning than previous alumni surveys, considerably more research will be required to fully understand how this curricular experience influences lasting engagement in the political arena.

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The Charlotte Action Research Project: A Model for Direct and Mutually Beneficial Community–University Engagement

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Abstract

This article describes the evolution of the Charlotte Action Research Project (CHARP), a community–university partnership founded in 2008 at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and focuses particularly on the program's unique organizational structure. Research findings of a project evaluation suggest that the CHARP model's unique strength lies in its ability to allow for the exploration of "wicked" problems that have resulted from structural and sociospatial inequality in cities because tangible issues identified by community partners become action research priorities for the CHARP team. Additionally, CHARP allows for the transcendence of the practical, logistical barriers often associated with community–university partnerships by employing graduate students as staff. It is suggested that the CHARP model provides a starting point for a unique model of engagement infrastructure at universities that goes beyond service provision and volunteerism to include community-based participatory and action-based research within a critical theory paradigm.

Introduction

The Kellogg Commission's landmark 1999 report calling for increased engagement on the part of universities has catalyzed a variety of community–university partnerships at American universities. Ideally, such partnerships integrate teaching, service, and research in ways that address tangible problems experienced by community members living in geographic proximity to universities and, in so doing, break down problematic "town–gown" barriers that arise when universities are perceived to be out of touch with "real-world," grounded issues facing non-university community stakeholders *(Fasenfest & Grant, 2005)*. The Kellogg *(1999)* report identified a variety of potential areas for partnership, among which was listed "urban revitalization and community renewal" *(p. 33)*. This recommendation presumably addresses a growing concern with what is perceived to be extensive urban

blight and decay in low-income, often minority-dominated neighborhoods in American cities. The role of the university in such neighborhoods has been conceptualized as an intermediary *(Fehren, 2010)* or intervening institution *(Cohen, 2001)*. However, university faculty attempting to implement service-learning and other types of engagement initiatives in challenged communities often struggle with how to negotiate large, structural problems that are embedded in historical, geographic, political, and economic contexts and, because of this, require extensive research that goes beyond traditional technical assistance. Such situations often lead to projects in which community partners become the *objects of* rather than *partners in* study. Outcomes of such projects have no immediate benefit to residents, and worse, their neighborhoods may become a temporary "laboratory" for the academic exploration of causes of poverty and decline. Such "band-aid" or one-off projects are often featured as part of undergraduate service-learning models or even in long-term partnerships between university stakeholders and local agencies. Furthermore, even these small-scale projects based on "loosely coupled" *(Gass, 2005; Hyde, Hopkins, & Meyer, 2012)* relationships with community partners often lack the necessary institutional support from universities to ensure success *(Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, Mackeigan, & Farrar, 2011; Fear et al., 2004; Franz, Childers, & Sanderlin, 2012; Ghannam, 2007; Jackson & Meyers, 2000; Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012)*.

The Charlotte Action Research Project (CHARP), based in the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, addresses what the Kellogg *(1999)* report referred to as "urban revitalization and community renewal" *(p. 33)* in a manner that is unique among community–university partnerships. Not only is the project grounded and grassroots in its focus, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of structural inequality in cities as experienced in the individual "life-world" of community residents *(Fasenfest & Grant, 2005; Fehren, 2010)*, it offers a unique solution to the problems and pitfalls often associated with community–university partnerships such as time commitment, lack of resources, and incompatibility with academic culture. Because the project employs graduate students as staff and partners directly with residents of challenged neighborhoods in Charlotte, North Carolina, its outcomes have become increasingly significant for both graduate students and community members.

The purpose of this article is to describe the history of the Charlotte Action Research Project as well as to provide an assessment of the project's effectiveness in addressing the "wicked"

problems facing today's urban neighborhoods. We begin with a description of research design and methodology for the study. We then provide the reader with context by recounting the history of CHARP through three major eras: beginnings, benchmarks, and building. Next, we share the findings of our study regarding the impact CHARP has had, both on graduate student employees across a spectrum of research approaches and on residents, who also emphasized the benefits of CHARP's direct engagement model. We find that the CHARP model has proven effective with regard to four of the specific challenges that often hamper the effectiveness of community–university partnerships: the problem of time, resource availability and funding streams, incompatibility with academic culture, and lack of mutual respect and collaboration. Furthermore, it holds great promise as a mechanism by which to conduct research to address structural issues of socioeconomic inequality. We conclude with a reflection on the limitations and implications of our study for universities wishing to engage with the mandate set forth by the Kellogg report *(1999)*—to become more "sympathetically and productively" *(p. 9)* involved with their surrounding communities.

Research Design and Methodology

This study was funded by the Chancellor's Diversity Challenge Fund at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC). The purpose of this fund is to "support faculty, staff, and student initiatives promoting the daily value of diversity in the intellectual life of the campus" *(CDCF, 2014, para. 1)*. Evaluation of CHARP's community engagement initiative was within the bounds of the types of projects supported by the fund because of the partnerships that had been and had the potential to be established between campus and community representatives.

Funding from the grant covered a variety of project-related expenses including participant compensation for this study. Additionally, the funding was applied to conference travel to present study findings, hiring graduate students to transcribe interviews, and the organization of several community partner summits throughout the course of the funding period. (More information on these summits can be found in the section Building: Coalition Building and Research.)

Study participants agreed to take part in a one-on-one semistructured interview of approximately 1 hour regarding their experiences with the Charlotte Action Research Project. Participants

included 20 community partners, four graduate student staff, and 10 employees with the City of Charlotte's Neighborhood and Business Services division (CHARP's partnership with this group is described in the Benchmarks section). Sampling for the study was both purposive, in that we wished to interview individuals who had worked extensively with the program, and exhaustive, as we invited all of our partners to participate. Our response rate was high—the only participants we were unable to recruit for an interview were five graduate students who had formerly worked on the program but had since relocated and were therefore unavailable to participate. Participant recruitment occurred via e-mail and phone and followed a loose script explaining the purpose of the study and the participant's desired role in the research. Community partners were compensated with a $30 gift card for completing the interview. Graduate students and city staff were not compensated for their time.

The interview questionnaires varied depending on the participant. Separate questionnaires, which were all approved by the Institutional Review Board at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, were constructed for graduate students, city staff, and community partners and varied in length from 10 to 70 questions. Interviews were semistructured in that the questionnaires served as a loose guide to ensure that participants addressed particular themes regarding the efficacy and impact of CHARP. The three authors of this article conducted interviews either individually or in pairs during the summers of 2012 and 2013. Two authors were also interviewed for the project due to their roles as graduate student staff, as described in the Study Limitations and Conclusions section. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed by either the authors or one of four UNCC students hired with grant funding to transcribe.

Each of the three study authors participated in the organization, coding, and analysis of the interview data for the study. Our coding strategy included the use of NVivo qualitative software to identify the existence of the following themes, all of which are discussed in our findings: project development, the "problem of time," resource availability and funding streams, (in)compatibility with academic culture, and existence of mutual respect and collaborative behaviors. With the exception of "project development," these themes were identified during the literature review portion of this research project as the major challenges that hamper the effectiveness of many community–university partnerships. Each of these thematic categories was entered as a "node" in NVivo,

and text from interview transcriptions was manually coded into these nodes. During the coding process, we followed the strategy outlined by Wiles, Rosenberg, and Kearns *(2005)*—rather than narrowly code by specific utterances, we instead chose to code in context by considering the "embedded meaning" of statements and how they informed the research project's goals. Chenail *(2012)* described this process as coding by qualitative unit rather than strictly line by line. Once coded, interview data were analyzed and used to inform study findings.

It is important to situate this evaluation within the larger framework of an action research project. Action research is conceptualized as cyclical with a starting point of establishing a research question that addresses a pressing need affecting the lived experiences of participants. This is followed by a planning and exploratory phase that leads to implementing a solution. During this action phase, which is often described as *learning by doing* or *learning in action*, participants reflect on what works and what must be improved, both in terms of the action itself and the process of implementation. This reflection leads to a new cycle, beginning with refining the research question to reflect the solutions the original action produced and the remaining questions to be addressed *(Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Maguire, 1987; Sorensen & Lawson, 2011)*. The research presented in this article fits into the action research cycle at the point of participants reflecting on project outcomes so that CHARP team members might refine the model in order to become even better campus partners for local communities.

Context: The CHARP Story

Beginnings: Learning the Lay of the Land (2008–2009)

When Dr. Janni Sorensen was hired as an assistant professor in the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences at UNCC in 2008, she immediately began to work toward implementing a model of direct engagement with communities for research and teaching. This model was based on the work she had completed at the University of Illinois as part of the East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP), which engaged low-income neighborhoods in East St. Louis in organizational capacity-building as part of a participatory research agenda *(Reardon, 2006; Sorensen & Lawson, 2011)*. Her attendance at a variety of community meetings in various neighborhoods in Charlotte provided her with opportunities to

partner with local community members through service-learning. Dr. Sorensen adhered to the recommendation of Stoecker *(1999)* in his assertion that academics must take on flexible roles in working in a participatory fashion with communities. Although she lacked any reliable funding source, Dr. Sorensen started CHARP in 2008 with the following mission statement:

> CHARP consistently and proactively seeks to integrate teaching, research, and action to work towards a larger agenda of social justice, enable neighborhoods to advocate for themselves, and create sustainable neighborhood coalitions to implement structural change. (Internal CHARP memo)

With the creation of CHARP as a model of direct engagement for universities in partnership with challenged local neighborhoods, Dr. Sorensen identified a graduate student, Elizabeth Morrell, to work with her as a teaching assistant (TA). Morrell would work in a double capacity as a TA—in addition to assistance with classroom management tasks, she would work as a community liaison to forge and strengthen partnerships with Charlotte-area communities interested in partnering with the university. Dr. Sorensen's involvement of paid graduate liaisons in the project was strategic and based in literature about barriers to community–university partnerships, as students are often hesitant to become involved in service-learning, participatory research, or other types of engaged research activities due to the perception that this type of work might involve unrealistic time commitments and might not prove to be professionally beneficial in the end *(Ghannam, 2007; Sherman & MacDonald, 2009; Wallace, 2000).* Dr. Sorensen addressed this issue early on by involving graduate students who were both paid for their time and given the opportunity to conduct grounded research projects in collaboration with local residents. The nature of the work involved with the project was also compatible with the graduate student lifestyle, as recounted here:

> With grad students, most of us are young and have a lot of energy and a lot of passion to work with people and improve society. And we work non-traditional hours so it's easier for us to go out and just hang out with residents if we want to.

The important work that was going on during this time was, more than anything, relationship- and trust-building with local

neighborhood residents. Spending time with people and listening to their experiences was critical in order for CHARP to challenge popular perceptions that "universities never stick around." Dr. Sorensen was able to establish relationships with four local neighborhoods during these early years of the project and, in so doing, began to establish a research agenda for working in partnership with residents.

At its outset, the project intentionally lacked a formalized structure to avoid imposing a research and teaching agenda on the community partners without critical reflection on and understanding of the community priorities for a partnership. This open and flexible model had benefits in that it allowed for experimentation on the part of both students and residents; however, it was not without its challenges, particularly for students accustomed to working within the constraints of a traditional academic institutional structure. One graduate student who initially worked on the project in an unpaid capacity and later was brought on as staff remarked on her experiences at the beginning:

> I remember we were just constantly saying, "What are we supposed to do? What are we doing?" Because at that point there wasn't any real guidance. Which I kind of think, the CHARP model is so contextual and [Dr. Sorensen] is just so open to whatever. Whatever you do, it's not gonna be wrong, you just have to get in there and figure it out and go with the flow to some extent.

In response to this perceived lack of structure, graduate students involved with CHARP at its beginning often focused on small-scale relationship- and trust-building projects in communities, rather than on tackling the "wicked" problems that were also present, such as residential segregation and disparities in quality of life between CHARP partner communities and other, more affluent, Charlotte neighborhoods:

> [At the beginning] we had an emphasis on doing clean-ups and beautification projects. Those are tangible and those are pretty easy to accomplish. It was something that the neighborhood could work with the liaison on and produce a really visible outcome.

Because of her involvement with ESLARP at the University of Illinois, Dr. Sorensen intended CHARP to be, conceptually and the-

oretically, very similar to ESLARP. Both programs were grounded in the idea that neighborhood residents must engage on a level playing field with university representatives and that action-based research projects should be undertaken as mutually beneficial endeavors for both "town" and "gown" *(Reardon, 2006; Sorensen & Lawson, 2011)*. Ken Reardon *(2000)*, the project director for ESLARP for a decade starting in 1990, remarked that from an organizational standpoint, that particular project was reinvented and reframed on several occasions due to "critical incidents" involving staffing and funding that necessitated its reconceptualization. Similarly, since its inception, CHARP has undergone two episodes of reorganization in response to external factors, both of which were concerned with funding. The first of these occurred in 2009, when Dr. Sorensen partnered with the City of Charlotte's Neighborhood and Business Services Division to hire additional graduate student liaisons to work in several specific neighborhoods.

Benchmarks: Partnership with the City of Charlotte (2009–2012)

In 2009, the City of Charlotte's Neighborhood and Business Services Division (NBS) received funding as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's Neighborhood Stabilization Program to address issues with crime, blight, and deterioration in neighborhoods that had suffered under the recent foreclosure crisis. Part of this funding was allocated to CHARP with the condition that graduate student liaisons be assigned to work in specific neighborhoods that had been impacted by the foreclosure crisis of 2007–2008. With this, a tripartite community–university partnership was born between the university, the city, and the neighborhoods in question. NBS began by assigning CHARP to work in two challenged neighborhoods during the 2009–2010 academic school year and each year expanded the scope of the project, eventually shifting the focus beyond neighborhoods that had been challenged due to excessive foreclosure to a variety of neighborhoods across the Charlotte metropolitan area. At its maximum size, five graduate student liaisons were employed in five different "challenged" Charlotte neighborhoods, as defined by the 2010 City of Charlotte Quality of Life Study *(Metropolitan Studies Group, 2010).*

At this point, working as part of the partnership proved challenging for graduate students because it required them to work for both neighborhood residents and the city simultaneously, while still maintaining their identity as university employees. Students found that residents were primarily interested in undertaking ini-

tiatives that would immediately improve tangible quality of life in their communities. In one neighborhood, a suburbanized community of homes constructed in 2003 and occupied mostly by renters, the homeowner's association was identified by residents as the most pressing problem around which they would like to partner with the CHARP liaison. According to that liaison's written account of her first experiences in this community,

> At this point, the NUMBER ONE concern [resident] expressed to me was that the homeowner's association is very elusive. . . . From what I gathered speaking with the residents, the majority of the issues at [community] have trickled down from the HOA. . . . These include foreclosed homes that are now vacant, major structural problems with drainage . . . some homes are in desperate need of resodding … a recreation area for kids is a big need.

City priorities, however, often differed from those of residents, as city staff were focused on and wished for liaisons to assist in the establishment of organized neighborhood associations, an activity which some, but not all, residents were interested in pursuing. City staff's rationale for working to establish community-based organizations is demonstrated by this quote:

> Generally speaking, to really be able to take advantage of the services the city has available, a neighborhood has to have an organized neighborhood-based organization. It will be really difficult if not impossible or they would be ineligible to access many of the city's resources if they're not well organized.

Therefore, CHARP liaisons from the outset were responsible for recording the amount of time spent and resources leveraged in helping neighborhood residents reach this goal—of creating a neighborhood association able to access city resources, which include neighborhood matching grants and leadership training opportunities. According to a liaison's reflection after meeting with NBS representatives for the first time:

> A few key things I took away from this meeting—1) Accountability will be necessary in the form of a weekly status update or conference call, 2) I need to develop a few instruments to measure success at [community].

In addition to these disparate priorities held by city and neighborhood representatives, university priorities were also often misaligned. Echoing the sentiments expressed by Wiewel, Gaffikin, and Morrissey *(2000)* about the need for transformative rather than growth-machine-oriented *(Molotch, 1976)* public–private partnerships and by Fasenfest and Grant *(2005)* regarding the need for community–university partnerships to address structural issues of sociospatial inequality, Dr. Sorensen and the graduate students at times saw their goals for the partnership diverge from those of the staff at NBS. CHARP's approach to partnership with neighborhoods was to engage residents in action research as well as community organizing, which is often a time-consuming process. The city's model, on the other hand, was for CHARP students to work for a duration of 1 to 2 years in a particular neighborhood and then "graduate" that neighborhood. The city's time-sensitive approach to neighborhood partnership is understandable and can be ascribed to funding and other practical limitations. However, research demonstrates that partnerships with communities should be long-term, rather than "loosely coupled" *(Hyde et al., 2012),* incidental, or short-lived.

The time limit for working with communities that city funding imposed was frustrating for CHARP student employees:

> I hate to say it, but it comes down to money and up until now the city has really been able to set that agenda because they're ones funding the thing.… In this type of society we live in, money talks, and money sets the agenda. So I think when you're doing a project it's just really important to keep in mind who's paying and where it's coming from, and what does that mean.… Being funded by the city had a huge impact on the project, more than I think anyone ever anticipated to start with.

Another student immediately pinpointed the city funding structure when asked to reflect on weaknesses of the CHARP project:

> I think there were some [weaknesses] early on. I think a lot of that's changed with funding, city imperative, things like that. That's the issue, you kind of had to do what they were asking you to do, and that can be complicated.

Receiving funding from the city nonetheless allowed CHARP liaisons entry into a variety of neighborhoods and provided an informal training mechanism for student liaisons about the workings of local government and community partnerships. However, city funding for CHARP was cut in the summer of 2012. The project evaluation suggests that a combination of budget restructuring and a lack of communicated expectations were primarily to blame, and this is consistent with literature about the need for transparency and communication between all stakeholders in a community–university partnership *(Gass, 2008; Polanyi and Cockburn, 2003).* During our evaluation, several city employees expressed their confusion regarding the purpose and expected process of the partnership:

> I think part of the problem could have been maybe how the city and Dr. Sorensen set this up—this is what the city staff will do, and this is what students will do, and this is how we can integrate. That really wasn't discussed clearly, cause I know that some of the neighborhood specialists felt that the CHARP students were doing their job or interfering with what they regularly do.

> The first half of the year we weren't really sure how to use the CHARP student and we weren't sure how the reporting worked out. Does that person report to the UNCC program, or they're looking to the city for directives? Do they need to check in with us or are we supposed to have a work plan for them? It was a little unclear to me, to be honest.

Ultimately, it appears that the goal of the partnership to work in a two-way, iterative, and transformative process as recommended for community–university partnerships *(Brown et al,, 2006; Weerts, 2005)* was not fulfilled:

> One of the goals I had expressed initially of learning between the University and us, I don't think we ever really had that occur. I don't know what I would do exactly to change it . . . but I don't think there was a lot of transferral of information.

Divergent expectations and misalignment of goals for all three parties in the partnership at this stage led to what Baum *(2000)* described as "fantasy" in partnership: "Fantasy brings the risk that

partners agree on purposes that cannot be accomplished under any conditions" *(p. 242)*. This fantasy and the resulting ineffectiveness of partnership is, according to Baum, a key reason why community–university partnerships often fail. The city staff appeared to have expectations that CHARP students would assist in more effective delivery of city services to the neighborhoods, whereas CHARP leadership saw community residents as its core partners who should set the agenda for partnership activities to include action research and pushing for justice-focused work, leaving students caught in the middle to negotiate these competing priorities. In this sense, the severance of funding from the City of Charlotte was not entirely problematic, as it allowed CHARP students and neighborhood residents to pursue an independent agenda for community organizing and action research.

Building: Coalition Building and Research (2012–present)

UNCC's Metropolitan Studies program, housed in its Urban Institute, provided additional funding for CHARP beginning in the summer of 2012 after city funding was cut, demonstrating UNCC's commitment to supporting faculty and student community engagement. The associate provost for Metropolitan Studies and Extended Academic Programs at UNCC describes the university's attitude toward community engagement as having evolved over time, beginning in 1969 with the establishment of the Urban Institute as an on-the-ground, engaged version of the traditional university extension model. The Metropolitan Studies division of the institute was formed in 2001 as a way for campus groups interested in community engagement to coordinate activities. Throughout the following decade, the university's commitment to engagement was strengthened by the arrival in 2003 of the current provost, Dr. Joan Lorden, who has displayed a strong commitment to engagement by supporting CHARP and similar programs *(O. Furuseth, personal communication, April 29, 2014)*. The provost has taken unprecedented steps to rework the faculty tenure and promotion process to acknowledge community-engaged research and professional service *(Basu, 2012)*. The provision of funding for CHARP in 2012 reflected UNCC's identity as "North Carolina's urban research university" and a Carnegie-classified "engaged" institution and was an indication to the CHARP team that they had the institutional support and "readiness" necessary to implement an effective community–university partnership *(Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Curwood et al., 2011)*.

Since receiving funding from the university, CHARP staff have worked with residents to build a sustainable coalition of engaged resident partners from a variety of neighborhoods across the Charlotte metropolitan area. Coalition building took place beginning in the summer of 2012 with a project evaluation and into 2013 with a series of community forums, two of which were exclusively for residents and CHARP students and faculty and one of which was open to all UNCC faculty. The latter forum was intended to offer faculty with expertise in a diversity of disciplinary backgrounds opportunities for partnerships with residents who had already built trust with university representatives through CHARP. Coalition building has continued and has evolved into action research projects in several neighborhoods (see Figure 1).

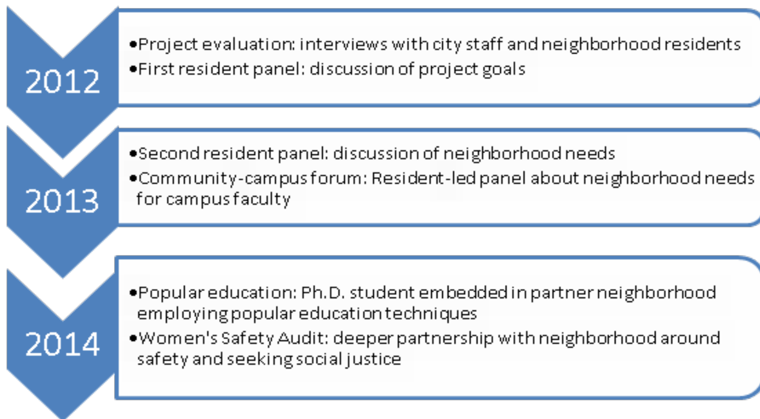

Figure 1. CHARP coalition-building timeline.

CHARP student staff have indicated that they are satisfied with the program as it currently stands for its sustainability and ability to remain in partnerships with neighborhoods for extended periods of time, rather than the one-off, "loosely coupled" *(Hyde et al., 2012)* projects that often accompany traditional community–university partnerships:

> The impact of CHARP is really good because we're always there in some type of capacity. Some groups go in for three weeks and they're done. Knowing that we're there indefinitely—I think that's a bigger piece that builds more trustworthiness.

> I think that a traditional challenge with trust building is that people aren't there for long. So, since we've had this longer contact period with these people and we've demonstrated that we're not going away? I think that's probably the biggest thing right there.

Furthermore, students are satisfied with the impact of CHARP from a structural perspective—they believe it has the potential to enact change and that this is unique among institutions of higher education:

> From an academic perspective, I'm able to turn a small, tangible resident concern into a bigger issue—why is there crime? Why are these houses abandoned? We can look deeper into these issues . . . as far as the department and the university as a whole, I think there are very few programs that do what we do as far as working with people at the neighborhood level in a number of ways.

Findings: Impact on Graduate Students and Community Partners

The results of our evaluative study indicate that both resident partners and graduate students appreciated the impact of CHARP with respect to its ability to address "wicked" problems and issues of structural inequality as well as several of the common pitfalls associated with community–university partnerships. These include issues of time, resources and funding, academic culture and expectations, and mutual respect and collaboration.

"Wicked" Problems

"Wicked" problems in planning and other social science and policy-based arenas are defined as those issues that lack a precise and easily identifiable solution. Examples of such problems include poverty, affordable housing and homelessness, and crime. Academics find wicked problems perplexing because positivist methods are often insufficient to create solutions *(Rittel & Webber, 1973).* The CHARP model offers an alternative to traditional research methods for wicked problems in the social sciences in that graduate student liaisons and community members work together to identify contributing factors to these problems in their neighborhoods and to propose potential solutions, as expressed by this resident:

> I do know that more than just me wants change. If other people in the area want change and some else like [community liaison] want change—and he may see something that we don't see.

Furthermore, the CHARP model's prioritization of direct engagement for students and resident-partners has proven to be transformative for both parties, as the iterative nature of idea sharing and research is mutually inspirational *(Brown et al., 2006; Fear et al., 2004)*. One resident who lived in a neighborhood of increasingly internationalized demographics shared the following:

> There are some Russians in this community, and one day I got home from work, and I was getting out of my car and I saw an elderly man out here sitting on the picnic tables…. And he has broken English, and he explains to me that he comes down here to write poems in Russian. So, [community liaison] kinda helped me not feel bad because a person is different. She showed me her way.

Other resident-partners stated that CHARP liaisons had helped them address issues related to community cohesion:

> What CHARP has with all the resources you brought? It has actually opened our eyes to even more than just the youth. Just moving our focus to adults and community. We aren't just one race or body of people here; it's everyone. What the [community liaison] brought, it was honestly priceless helping us bring the community together.

Another wicked problem that residents reflected on was fear of gentrification and neighborhood change:

> Well, I would describe our relationship with the City before CHARP came, that it was really, to be honest, a kind of scary thing because we live close to downtown and this is prime property. . . . I think now it's eased a little bit because people see [community liaison] as wanting to help us rather than hurt us.

And finally, CHARP's involvement can bring attention to inequities of resource distribution, as shown in one resident's reflections

on a student project that documented police service distribution across the city neighborhoods:

> [Community liaison]'s research was awesome. I wanted to cry because I'm like, "Wow, if all the people could really see the research . . . they have a huge area over here and not enough [police] officers to cover it." I think [community liaison] pegged it out—I don't see racial [sic] and I don't try to put things that way, but then I saw the research and started to wonder if that's the case.

Inherent in the CHARP model is the tenet that student liaisons will approach issues in communities from both an action- and research-oriented standpoint. Although not every student who has worked on the CHARP project has fully engaged with the tripartite model of participatory action research, popular education, and direct action organizing as defined by Reardon *(2000)*, each of the students interviewed for this project stated that their work with CHARP influenced and, in some cases, completely transformed their research approach with regard to wicked problems:

> You actually get to see in [community] a homeowner's association that doesn't work. Dealing with abandoned properties, vandalism, break-ins, things like that. That happens in [community] and [community] all the time. In forming my research interests, I know that it's out there, not just something I invented—that rhetoric around renters is something I hear just about every time I talk to a resident. The rhetoric around homeownership. CHARP has been integral and pretty much totally responsible for those types of ideas.
>
> Interviewer: Would your research agenda look different if you hadn't been involved with CHARP?
>
> Student: Gosh, I think it would look completely different.… It had an early influence in my research, that the human elements actually start to come out as subjects, and not objects, of research.

More traditional community–university partnerships that are based solely on technical assistance or beautification initiatives

limit the ability of either party to critically reflect upon or address the types of wicked problems mentioned above. Because CHARP liaisons are embedded in communities in partnership with residents and because the issues that they coidentify become the topics of research initiatives, CHARP overcomes the tendency of community–university partnerships to ignore or even contribute to issues of structural inequality in low-income communities *(Fasenfest & Grant, 2005)*.

The "Problem of Time"

Wallace *(2000)* identified temporal incompatibility as one of the biggest barriers to successful community–university partnerships. Academic calendars at most universities are structured around events such as graduation and academic terms, and partnerships with communities often suffer when students or faculty end or reduce the extent to which they work with community agencies in response to such events *(Sandmann & Kliewer, 2012)*. The CHARP model overcomes this "problem of time" by forming long-term and sustainable partnerships with resident-partners that are able to withstand the potentially negative effects of student liaison graduation or the end of a course that had been engaged with a community in a service-learning capacity.

An example of this long-term commitment to individual neighborhoods is CHARP's relationship with a historically African American community on the city's near west side. Students in a community planning workshop (taught by the second author) first became involved with this neighborhood in the fall of 2009 by working with residents to coconstruct a neighborhood plan. The minimal resident participation on this particular project was likely attributable to CHARP's having worked with residents there for only a matter of months. This is an insufficient period of time for building the level of trust between parties required for a successful partnership *(Gass, 2005, 2008)*. However, over the past several years, three different CHARP liaisons and approximately 30 students from two graduate-level workshops and three undergraduate-level service-learning courses have worked with community members to implement a variety of projects—from tangible clean-up events and the construction of a new playground to research projects about the neighborhood's history. Additionally, three graduate students have completed master's thesis research in collaboration with community residents, and one student is currently working on her action research-based doctoral dissertation in partnership with the neighborhood. This long-term investment in the commu-

nity is beginning to pay off, as evidenced by residents' increasing willingness to engage in participatory research and direct action organizing. In response to this sustained commitment from the university and the resultant increase in resident participation, one community leader stated:

> Don't give up. Stick with us. We know that we don't always have a lot of people that wanna get involved, but without you guys I don't think nothing would be done.

This sustained commitment is in contrast to "loosely coupled" collaborations with neighborhood organizations that are limited in time, impact, and scope *(Gass, 2005; Hyde et al., 2012)*. CHARP's resident-partners are both familiar with and disdainful of this one-off approach to community–university partnerships, as expressed here:

> I told [community liaison] right off—I said, "Guess what. More than likely, you're gonna be here a minute and then something gonna happen and you're gonna stop."

> In [community], we have had several groups or organizations say, "We are here to come help," all this kind of stuff… we have been burned by that. But [CHARP]—I saw that it was a win-win on both sides, I could see that.

Despite the CHARP model's emphasis on sustained commitment in order to avoid the issues mentioned above, student and resident schedules are still occasionally incompatible:

> The only thing that I wish was that, well, there's certain meetings [community liaison] can't come to. And I know he has a schedule, but recently I was telling him that maybe the Board needs to change its meeting time, because he needs to be there.

The issue of student succession due to graduation was also mentioned by several residents as a challenge:

> There was a problem that I saw when [community liaison 1] handed off to [community liaison 2]. That was troublesome because the two of them work differently.

> I wish that when they have this program, the students could go all the way through, but I realize sometimes they can't because they're graduating.

> One problem I saw was when we switched from [community liaison 1] to [community liaison 2]. That was not a good move because it set us back. [Community liaison 2] had to come in and learn [community liaison 1]'s job and everything instead of building on those things that were in place. That was not a real good thing for momentum.

One way in which the CHARP team has adjusted its model in response to this feedback is to attempt to pair students with neighborhoods in a longer-term capacity, as in the case of the current liaison, who is completing her doctoral dissertation project in partnership with a neighborhood. Such strategies do not completely solve the "problem of time." However, this sustainability in conjunction with flexible student work hours has resulted in mostly positive outcomes with regard to time.

Resources and Funding

Another way in which the CHARP model may overcome some of the traditional barriers to successful community–university partnerships is its funding structure. University funding has provided a solid foundation from which to engage with community partners, as recognized by a resident here:

> Resident: I thought [the city] created you.

> Interviewer: No. We're not really affiliated with them anymore.

> Resident: OK, right. So will you stay around?

> Interviewer: We're staying around. We're looking to get some funding from the university.

> Resident: OK, that will help. I think if you're going to exist, you need some kind of foundation or base, something concrete.

As with the "problem of time," availability of resources is an ongoing challenge for CHARP. Recurring funding from the provost's office via Metropolitan Studies and Extended Academic Programs is currently provided on an annual basis for three graduate student liaisons to work 20 hours per week. The recurring funding is an expression of the university support that is so critical for engagement initiatives in higher education *(Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Franz et al., 2012; Jackson & Meyers, 2000; Weerts, 2005).* Additional graduate student staff is provided by the Department of Geography and Earth Sciences in the form of a teaching assistantship of 20 hours per week tied to the project director (the second author), who teaches all of her courses with a service-learning approach directly tied to CHARP's partner neighborhoods. This approach involves approximately 30 additional students each semester in CHARP's partner neighborhoods. Finally, several smaller foundation grants and internal university grants have been supporting the work, allowing for additional staff hires as well as community event funding.

Finding the right graduate students has been critical. Because CHARP is focused on neighborhood planning and community development, the skills of geography students have been well suited for work on the project. Passion for social justice work and previous experience working with low-income communities have numbered among selection criteria. Additionally, future graduate students have been identified among the most engaged undergraduates in the second author's service-learning classes. The approach of looking at not just the graduate students' academic records but their broader life experiences and their expressed passion for justice work has proven very effective in hiring students for the project. Several students have worked with CHARP from the start of their master's programs and well into their Ph.D. programs, illustrating the match between the students and the work they do in the neighborhoods.

Academic Culture

Another common criticism of community–university partnerships is that they are incompatible with traditional academic culture that is dominated by a positivist perspective, which often calls for research to be value-neutral and removed from direct contact

with research subjects, with emphasis on tangible, peer-reviewed outcomes *(Curwood et al., 2011; Polanyi & Cockburn, 2003; Sorensen & Lawson, 2011)*. As with the other barriers mentioned here, CHARP has been able to address this mismatch in culture between community engagement and tangible professional benefits to students and faculty by employing graduate students to work in partnership with neighborhoods as research assistants or teaching assistants. Graduate students' tenure as community liaisons provides them not only with a source of income, but also with valuable experience that, as they share below, has helped to prepare them for the job market:

> It's skill building, constantly. And, yeah, I feel like I'm very marketable in the public or private arena.

> CHARP has definitely prepared me from a project management standpoint, for sure. Working with neighborhoods, it's a production, so I mean that has given me so much experience.

> I think CHARP was a big part of my growing as a graduate student, professionally. Cause [resident involvement] is an important piece within municipal planning that often gets overlooked.

Students also emphasized that employment with CHARP has helped to facilitate their personal research as a major logistical benefit. This connection between research and work is a foundation of the CHARP model:

> I think it definitely makes it easier for students when they're involved with the project. The first year of graduate school, I could basically start my thesis, so that made things much easier as far as data collection and stuff.

> I think one thing that has really helped me is that a lot of the work I do for school really dovetails with what I do for CHARP. My thesis, a lot of papers, projects, et cetera, a lot of experiences in the classroom go right along with work for CHARP and vice versa. As a TA, my work is

> not divorced from my classwork. They're really symbiotic and there's a lot of overlap, so that helps.

Mutual Respect and Collaboration

Well-intentioned as they may be, many community–university partnerships do not result in equally beneficial outcomes for each side *(Winkler, 2013).* If university stakeholders enter a community with a preset research agenda, residents may feel apathetic about or even exploited by the partnership *(Dorgan, 2008)*. The CHARP model is based on both collaboration and respect, and residents reported that they felt respected by community liaisons:

> Well, I think [community liaison] cares. You know, like one day he's in a big hurry and my neighbor had a squirrel in her backyard. She couldn't pick it up, she asked [community liaison], and so he ran over there and got the squirrel out of her backyard.

> Interviewer: Do you think the residents of [neighborhood] trust the city? Do they trust [community liaison]?

> Resident: I think they probably trust [community liaison] more because he has more personal contact. With the police or code [sic], we only see those officers at the meeting, and it's hard to get them to come to that. We have [community liaison]'s cell phone number and we can call or email and he responds, so that's a good thing. I don't think the two are on the same level.

Additionally, residents indicated that projects initiated as an outcome of the partnership were collaborative, rather than one-sided, endeavors:

> I think we grew together. We just talked about ideas. We said, "Yeah, let's try this," or "That will work."

> It was a combination of things. Some were [community liaison]'s ideas. Some were our ideas. Some were the kids' ideas in the neighborhood.

> I would say that most of the projects were collaborations. We would sit down, have a meeting, talk about, like for instance with back-to-school, what can we do for the kids? We would come up with creative ways to address the needs, and [community liaison] was very instrumental with suggestions, ideas. Very good collaboration, actually.

Study Limitations and Conclusions: Implications for Community–University Partnerships

In this article, we have described the evolution of a 5-year-old community–university partnership and specifically detailed the way our funding stream influenced the effectiveness of the partnership. The shift from external funding to internal, university-sponsored funding has been critical in allowing CHARP team members to create long-term, sustainable, transformative, and mutually beneficial partnerships with residents of challenged Charlotte communities. Because CHARP is a community–university partnership intentionally developed around the principles of action research, with this article we have also contributed to defining the role of academics in action research and have pointed to the conditions needed to create partnerships that push for action to solve real problems in marginalized neighborhoods while at the same time contributing to research agendas that address policy about social justice and quality of life at the neighborhood scale.

In addition to the critical role of institutional support mentioned above, a key lesson learned about the practice of action research from within academia is the importance of negotiating projects that are meaningful on both sides of the partnership, allowing academics and community partners to work as coresearchers. Recognizing action research as a model for university–community partnership challenges researchers to find ways to meet the needs of all partners, both campus- and community-based. One effective way to achieve this has been to merge students' research thesis or dissertation requirements with their assistantship work. The time spent together while students work as organizers and support staff for neighborhood organizations creates a strong bond that is not typical between graduate students and the communities they research, thus facilitating the research process. Often neighborhood residents refer to CHARP students as neighborhood "insiders," seeing them as "one of us." This suggests that community–university partnerships can be a good setting for action

research when enough time is spent on relationship building. It also suggests that the action research ideal of doing "better research" might be achieved when partners have the opportunity to build the trust needed for sharing different kinds of knowledge.

CHARP continues to initiate action research projects that follow this model. We have recently initiated a women's safety audit process *(Whitzman, Shaw, Andrew, & Travers, 2009)* with one neighborhood partner as well as a study of the impact of Habitat for Humanity building activity in several partner neighborhoods. It is our experience that community partners are increasingly becoming familiar with the process of engaging in research, in contrast to earlier stages of the partnership, where community members were better defined as service recipients. With the stability of internal funding and following the cyclical model of action research, CHARP works in a long-term capacity with the same set of neighborhood partners, thereby creating opportunities for developing strong action research partnerships.

Our study is limited by the fact that the project is only 5 years old; therefore, a follow-up study of its continued evolution is recommended and planned several years down the road. Another potential limitation of the study is researcher positionality. Because the authors include two graduate students who have worked extensively on the project as well as the project director, our study is an example of research in which insiders collaborate to perform a study. As reflective practitioners, we set twofold goals for our study. In addition to adding to the literature on best practices for effective community–university partnerships, we also used our findings to inform our professional development. Our positionalities as researchers, practitioners, and study participants were thus multiple and often intersecting. As Herr and Anderson *(2005)* point out, this is common when conducting action-based or participatory research. To decrease the likelihood of bias in our study, we included the perspectives of our resident and city partners as well.

The Kellogg Commission's *(1999)* report on the need for engaged universities outlined three requirements for universities if they are to respond effectively to the call for better interaction with their surrounding communities. According to the commission, they must provide *practical opportunities* that include *tangible, grounded projects* that are both appealing and useful for *today's student*. The CHARP model addresses each of these three axes. The practical opportunities it provides students include funding to support their graduate studies, exposure to potential data sources for research projects, and the opportunity to hone job skills. The projects are

also tangible and grounded in that they occur in local neighborhoods and often produce outcomes with immediate benefits for both neighborhood residents and students. Today's graduate student, bound by resource constraints and faced with a formidable job market, stands to benefit enormously by becoming involved with a program like the Charlotte Action Research Project. Resident-partners, as well, recognize the enormous benefits of direct engagement between "town" and "gown." We will close with two quotes, one from a student and one from a resident, each of which demonstrates the mutually beneficial potential of community–university partnerships based on the CHARP model.

> In summary, overall it has been very personally transformative. I still don't know exactly what I'm going to do with my life, but it will be very similar to what I'm doing now.

> [Community liaison], he bridging the gap, OK? Even when you have different students come out—you know, normally you don't see someone out in the neighborhood that's a Caucasian person . . . I met a student the other day and said, "You stay here?" And they was like, "No, I'm just from school," and whatnot. And I was like, "Wow, you're interested." You see what I'm saying?

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Practice Stories

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The Impact of Socially Engaged Theatre Across Communities: A Tale of Two Slave Cabins

Harrison Long

Abstract

What happens when one controversial text meets another in performance? How do diverse audiences from rural and metropolitan areas respond to powerful yet provocative material? The Kennesaw State University Department of Theatre and Performance Studies sought to answer these questions with *Splittin' the Raft*, a dramatic adaptation of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as interpreted by ex-slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the ensemble toured seven North Georgia communities, ranging from inner-city schools to rural mountain towns. The struggles faced and the conversations encountered prove the lasting legacy of American slavery. Socially engaged theatre can create a unique forum for constructive dialogue within communities. This article highlights the healing conversations inspired by this student production and explores some widely contrasting responses to renovated slave dwellings in two Georgia communities, Oxford and Sautee Nacoochee.

Figure 1. John Stewart plays Frederick Douglass/Jim. Photo by Robert Pack.

Introduction

What happens when one controversial text meets another in performance? How do diverse audiences from rural and metropolitan areas respond to powerful yet provocative material? The

Department of Theatre and Performance Studies within Kennesaw State University (KSU) set out to explore just that with its Frederick Douglass/Huck Finn Arts Education Initiative. The project was called *Splittin' the Raft*. It was a dramatic adaptation of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as interpreted by ex-slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. This ambitious production, adapted by Scott Kaiser, received an Arts Education in American Communities Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This grant funded a tour of seven North Georgia communities, ranging from inner-city Atlanta schools to rural mountain arts centers. *Splittin' the Raft* employed "epic theatre" strategies, techniques associated with Bertolt Brecht's theatre of social commentary, to inspire a new understanding of the present through an examination of the past *(Mumford, 2009).* The production featured African American spirituals, songs by Stephen Foster, and original compositions for fiddle and banjo. Audiences included high school students, educators, community leaders, and people of all ages. After every performance, the company led a postshow discussion highlighting current social issues and the dramatic techniques used to create social awareness. As the project director, I taught free performance workshops to help local students explore the performance techniques featured in the production. The production website for students and educators featured historical research, a study guide, class activities, production photos, director's notes, and a documentary film about the creative process. *Splittin' the Raft* reached over 3,000 people from across the southeastern United States. What follows is an examination of our experiences in two Georgia communities, Oxford in Newton County and Sautee Nacoochee in White County.

Courageous Partners Wanted

Ours was the first production of *Splittin' the Raft* to be staged in the Deep South. Months of struggling to arrange tour dates taught me why. Several of the community organizations I initially contacted signed on immediately. Over the next few months, however, most of those who had eagerly agreed to host the production withdrew, fearing the same kind of backlash Twain's novel has provoked since its initial publication in 1885. A number of school districts across the country ban *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* because it uses the "N-word" well over two hundred times *(Schneider, 2011)*. I realized, of course, that the novel was controversial. Still, I was surprised by the level of apprehension we encountered from those who claimed they agreed with what we were "trying to do" but who

feared political backlash. One school administrator put it this way: "We're just not ready for Huck Finn."

Despite opposition, we believed our production could be meaningful. *Splittin' the Raft* would examine the atrocities of the past and, in the process, uncover some valuable insights about the current age. Given the volatility of the subject matter, we understood how important it would be to prepare audiences for the complex questions the production would raise. To that end, we created a project website, held postshow discussions ("talkbacks") after every performance, and offered free performance workshops to all our host organizations. The months to come taught us a great deal about the value and challenges associated with socially engaged theatre.

The "Good Old Boy Network"

My family has lived in North Georgia for several generations. My father, both of my grandfathers, and my uncles were all United Methodist ministers, which meant they frequently moved around the North Georgia area and were considered prominent members of the communities they served. In short, my family has "connections" in this part of the state.

Like many ministers' kids, I rebelled. As a young adult, I had no intention of using family ties to further my career as a theatre artist. But now my neck was on the line. I had spent a good deal of political capital drumming up support for *Splittin' the Raft* within the university. If the project failed, my professional credibility would suffer. As desperation set in, I began to see the "good old boy network" as my best strategy for saving face and in the process, delivering some valuable art to the communities where I was raised. Right or wrong, this is often how things get done in the South. Once I made the decision to reach out to family friends, it didn't take long to make contact with someone willing to sign on without fretting about the play's content or the political fallout it might cause. When one local arts organization was courageous enough to give us a chance, it made other connections a little easier, but we still weren't out of the woods.

Over the summer, I mentioned my struggle to arrange tour dates to a friend who had played the role of Huck in Kaiser's original workshop of the play. She suggested I contact Kathy Blandin, executive director of the Sautee Nacoochee Center (SNC), an arts center in White County, Georgia. The idea of performing in the rural mountains of Northeast Georgia was especially appealing

because of the region's reputation for racial tension. The local school bus system, for example, wasn't integrated until 1989, 35 years after the Supreme Court's ruling on *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which dismantled segregation in the schools. As more than one White County resident put it, "The name of our county speaks for itself." For obvious reasons, I was skeptical about landing a tour date in Sautee Nacoochee.

Under Blandin's leadership, however, the SNC had recently begun a courageous initiative to build bridges between its two very separate local communities, one White and one Black. Today much of Sautee Nacoochee is still owned by the descendants of the slave-owning Williams family. Only a few miles down the road stands Bean Creek, a community largely inhabited by the descendants of slaves *(C. Crittenden, personal communication, May 11, 2012)*. Coincidentally, our proposed tour dates corresponded with the opening of a newly renovated slave cabin on the Center's premises. The African American Heritage Site, as it was dubbed, was established to interpret the history of slavery in Nacoochee Valley, to heal a divided community, and to educate residents about their community's past. Bean Creek resident Lena Belle Dorsey put it this way: "If we don't keep this history alive and save what's left, our children and grandchildren will never know the history and hardship of our ancestors" *(African American Heritage Site, 2014)*.

With the help of Andy Allen, another Bean Creek resident, Caroline Crittenden worked for over a decade to restore and relocate the only remaining slave cabin in Northeast Georgia. "My husband is a direct descendant of E. P. Williams, the slave owner who owned much of the land around here," said Crittenden. "Andy is a direct descendant of the slaves owned by the Williams family." When I asked what had inspired their Herculean efforts, Crittenden replied: "The black community has been deeply disappointed, disenfranchised, exploited, and betrayed. There's a long and painful history of discrimination and disappointment, some of which is relatively recent" *(C. Crittenden, personal communication, May 11, 2012).*

Kathy Blandin, who had been supportive of the project, thought our production might be a good way to celebrate the opening of the restored cabin and to initiate some constructive dialogue. (Some members of the Bean Creek community hadn't set foot in the Center for years.) Given the volatile local history, Blandin knew that every constituency had to take part in the decision to invite us. According to Andy Allen, "It takes years to build relationships of

trust, and that's what we have done here. But it only takes a minute to tear them down" *(personal communication, May 11, 2012)*.

Blandin was also aware of the serious problems the production could cause if people misunderstood its intent. In the past, the Center had hosted a few well-intentioned artists whose work had actually stifled communication, causing further damage between the White and Black communities. "There is this feeling that, as an artist I am going to do this *to* you rather than *with* you," Blandin explained. "Come with me. It's a very different perspective" *(personal communication, May 11, 2012)*. On the morning of August 24, Kathy e-mailed me:

> Harrison,
> Sorry for the delay, I met with the group yesterday afternoon and they are slightly concerned about the strong racial language even though it is historically accurate and appropriate within the context of the play. There was one more person they wanted to have read the play last night and I am waiting on word from her this morning… One way or the other I will let you know before COB today.
> Thank you for your patience.
> Kathy *(personal communication, August 24, 2011)*

I braced myself for another disappointment. Later I found out that Andy Allen had cast the deciding vote of support, saying: "It will be a learning experience" *(A. Allen, personal communication, May 11, 2012)*. My shoulders dropped inches as I breathed a sigh of relief. At long last, our tour dates were set! The hard part was over! Now all I had to do was find the right actors and pull the production together. The easy part had begun, right?

The cast of four was balanced evenly between men and women, with two Caucasian actors and two African Americans. Annie Power, who played Huck, was the youngest. A waifish, girly sophomore with a background in musical theatre, Annie drew on her extensive dance training to believably create the comportment of an 11-year-old boy. John Stewart doubled as Frederick Douglass and the escaped slave Jim. Like me, John was the son of a preacher, an upbringing that helped him approach Douglass's lofty rhetoric. John transferred to KSU after taking time off from college when a loved one unexpectedly died. Like many who experience tragedy early in life, John possessed special empathy and insight. These qualities infused his work with a power seldom seen in young actors. In fact, in 2012, he was one of only four college actors in

the nation recognized at the Kennedy Center for his "outstanding performance" in our production of *Splittin' the Raft*.

Rob Hadaway and Shannon Sparks played the other 28 roles. In some ways, their job was the most challenging because it required them to shift seamlessly between characters of different ages, classes, races, and even genders! Rob is a seasoned theatre performer in his early 50s who returned to college after touring with Ringling Brothers and a stint as a rodeo clown. Rob's maturity, professionalism, and good humor would prove invaluable in the challenging months that lay ahead. Shannon, a talented and intelligent 30-something with a glorious voice, had never performed in a play. Despite her great natural gifts, there was a lot to learn. But Shannon worked tirelessly and ultimately turned in an outstanding performance.

In all honesty, the rehearsal process was the most challenging any of us had ever encountered. There was no way to explore the material without bumping into our own finely tuned prejudices. I'm proud that we supported each other through all the embarrassment, anger, and shame. We also found moments of great humor and joy. After an intensely emotional and rewarding creative process, our campus performances were a resounding success.

It's one thing to perform controversial material within the cocoon of a campus black box theatre. People *expect* to find challenging art on a college campus. It's quite another to invade schools and communities, where we would expose high school students and other unlikely theatregoers to socially critical work. The previous months had taught me to expect powder keg reactions.

Across Communities

In every school or community we visited, at least one local issue emerged whose origins were connected to the consequences of slavery. For example, as a Georgia native, I was surprised to learn that Douglas County had originally been named for Frederick Douglass. During the Jim Crow era, however, local officials defiantly renamed the county for Stephen Douglas (one s), who had opposed Lincoln on emancipation *(Douglas County, Georgia, 2014).* After our Chattahoochee Hills performance, a local minister spoke eloquently about the Christian church's history of alternately opposing and contributing to discriminatory practices. He reminded us that even the most virtuous human institutions are subject to human failing. We were also reminded throughout the process how individuals and communities can have very dif-

ferent responses to similar events. Our first and final community residencies in Newton County and White County vividly illustrate this disparity.

Figure 2. Kitty's cottage. Photo by Melanie Martin Long.

Newton County/Oxford

"For us in Oxford, the subject matter of the play was especially timely, as we were engaged in re-examining the myth of 'Miss Kitty,' a Bishop's slave-woman over whom the Methodist Episcopal Church split in 1844."

- Hoyt P. Oliver, member emeritus, Oxford City Council
Professor emeritus of religion, Oxford College, Emory University
(H. Oliver, personal communication, February 9, 2012)

Newton County, just outside metropolitan Atlanta, is only a few miles away from my hometown of Conyers, Georgia. In October 2011, the very month we arrived for our first tour performance, the community was embroiled in debate over the release of *The Accidental Slaveowner* by former Oxford College anthropology professor Mark Auslander. The book became a major topic of our postshow discussion.

On December 4, 1841, an enslaved woman known as Miss Kitty, owned by the Methodist bishop James Osgood Andrew, was offered her freedom or the option to remain Andrew's slave "as free as the laws of the state would permit" *(Auslander, 2011, para. 2)*. When Kitty chose to remain, Bishop Andrew built a small house for her where she lived in comparative freedom. Three years later, Bishop Andrew's ownership of slaves caused a split between Northern and Southern factions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which lasted

until 1939. In the 1930s, Miss Kitty's Cottage was moved from Emory University's original campus at Oxford College to Salem Campground, a few miles away. There it remained until 1994, when the cottage was returned to Oxford *(Auslander, 2011)*.

The Salem Camp Meeting at Salem Campground was founded in 1828 and is one of the oldest annual religious revivals in the United States *(Salem Camp Meeting, 2014)*. As a youth, I camped at "Salem" for one week every summer, attending services twice a day and eating fried chicken in between. The tent where I slept each night was 50 yards from Miss Kitty's Cottage. I had grown up hearing the story of the benevolent bishop and his loyal slave. Time and time again, I had been reminded that Bishop Andrew was not a proponent of slavery, nor was he responsible for the divided church. I can't remember who told me the story, but it's been carved into my memory with the kind of reverence reserved only for sacred history. Even then, I sensed the story's tragic, romantic undertones. As children, we told each other tales about the ghost of Miss Kitty. Some of us even swore we had seen her pining in the cottage window late at night.

When the cottage was returned to Oxford and restored as a small heritage museum, however, many African Americans refused to visit the site. The quaint story from my childhood about love between master and slave was under dispute by Oxford's African American residents. As Professor Auslander explains:

> Many of them had heard from their elders that Miss Kitty had been the coerced mistress of Bishop Andrew and had been afforded few options of actual freedom. As one elderly African American woman rhetorically asked my class, "Why do you think Bishop Andrew built that little house for Miss Kitty just behind the big house, away from the other slaves? Just so she could be comfortable?" *(Auslander, 2011, para. 4)*

Further questions are raised by the fact that Miss Kitty was buried in the Andrew family plot, the only African American interred within the white section of the old city cemetery. In contrast to the African American supporters of the slave cabin in Sautee Nacoochee, one Oxford resident stated: "For us, this building is a place of violation, not of love" *(Auslander, 2011, para. 6).*

Having worried for some time about the show's response off campus, I was relieved when Newton County audiences filled the cavernous high school auditorium with enthusiastic applause. That

night, during the talkback, I saw people I had known for more than 30 years—friends, family members, members of the church my father had pastored a few miles away. Also present were two of my uncles, both stalwart members of the Newton County community. It was interesting to see them argue opposite sides of the controversial issue. Many in the audience felt it was important to debunk the ridiculous fairy tale of the virtuous Bishop Andrew and his loyal Miss Kitty. Why not examine history more realistically, just as scholars have examined the relationship between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings? Others viewed Auslander as an academic rabble-rouser needlessly stirring up conflict in a community he no longer inhabited in order to achieve professional notoriety. I wondered if the latter sentiment had been delivered as a subtle admonishment to me, the rebellious preacher's kid returned home.

Unsurprisingly, our passionate discussion didn't bring forth any new evidence regarding the relationship between Bishop Andrew and Miss Kitty, whose real name was Catherine Boyd *(Auslander, 2011)*. It did, however, reveal the degree to which each of us can become attached to our preferred versions of history. As the discussion's moderator, I tried to remain neutral. But internally, like many who participated in the discussion, I wanted to defend the bishop. What made this story important enough to repeat generation after generation, important enough to preserve an old slave cabin as a sacred monument to the "good" slaveholder? Why was *I* so attached to the story of the benevolent master?

As someone with strong ties to the area, to United Methodism, and to Salem Campground, I felt that questioning this story called my identity into question. My birthright as a White, straight, Christian, Southern man is directly related to a narrative of entitlement. I want to believe that the traditions on which my social position rests are noble ones. Without that, my conscience cannot escape the responsibility of working for social change. This realization is not a remarkable one. I understood all of this before returning to Newton County. But for the first time, I felt *personally* implicated as the beneficiary of an unjust system.

Several people in the audience that night had a similar experience. Former Rockdale County commissioner Hank Wise responded: "Through Huck we were forced to look inward again at the role racism may still play in our relationships" *(personal communication, February 10, 2012)*. Shelly Yeatman, a Newton County elementary school teacher, wrote: "This subject is too important to be swept under the rug of a 'time heals all' concept" *(personal communication, February 11, 2012).*

Another point of interest for the Newton County crowd was our depiction of the church. Most of the people who stayed for the talkback knew my father. Some were also aware that I remained active in the United Methodist Church. Yet in *Splittin' the Raft*, all the preachers are portrayed as hypocrites and purveyors of bigotry. One audience member asked actor Rob Hadaway what it was like to play the White preacher who gently explains to a slave girl: "God designed us to be His thinkers, and you to be the workers!" *(Kaiser, 2007, p. 31)*.

Rob confessed how challenging the role had been for him. The difficulty stemmed from the preacher's use of the Bible to justify slavery. In order to play the role effectively, Rob had to find a way to empathize with a character whose feelings about race conflicted with his own. Rob explained: "I had to figure out a way that good people, God-fearing people, believed slavery was okay." Then he continued: "As a gay Christian . . ." (*R. Hadaway, personal communication, June 15, 2012).*

My heart stopped. Inside me something screamed: "*Stop*! You can't go there! I've known these people for over 30 years, trust me… they are *not* ready to hear this!" Fortunately, I restrained myself, took a deep breath, and slowly sat on the edge of the stage.

Rob went on to explain that what helped him empathize with the bigoted preacher was the compassion he had developed for fellow Christians who consider his sexual orientation an abomination. "In my parents' generation, people used the Bible to discredit interracial marriages," Rob said, "and they're doing the same thing with our community today" *(R. Hadaway, personal communication, June 15, 2012).*

When I looked out at the audience, I could see people, many of whom I have loved for decades, take a breath of recognition. I don't have any illusions that these folks became gay rights advocates instantaneously, but I am certain that some who were in the audience that night moved an inch closer to tolerance and understanding. Theatre can teach because it entertains. As Mary Poppins used to say: "A spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down" *(Walsh, 1964).*

Months later, I asked Rob about that night. He thought for a moment, then interpreted the experience as a biblical parable, saying: "We were just planting seeds. Either they take it and grow something better, or the crows are going to eat it and take it away" *(personal communication, June 15, 2012).*

Figure 3. Re-enactor Joseph McGill performs in front of the African American Heritage Site, Sautee Nachoochee. Photo by David Greear.

Sautee Nacoochee

"The play made the audience think about the realities of slavery and what it meant to those who were slaves."

- Billy Chism, editor, *White County News* *(personal communication, May 11, 2012)*

On November 11, after a morning show at Lumpkin County High School, we loaded up the truck and drove northeast over 33 miles of winding, rural mountain roads to our final stop. The Sautee Nacoochee Center is an Appalachian cultural oasis, known for its excellent arts programming and its superior folk pottery museum. The Center is housed in a beautifully renovated "old White school" where many of the local Whites attended grade school before the days of integration. Understandably, the structure continues to evoke strong feelings from both White and Black residents. As Caroline Crittenden points out: "There are many people in Bean Creek who will not walk into that building" *(personal communication, May 11, 2012).*

Across the road stands a little white church (in both senses of the word), as well as a large farm still owned by a descendant of the slave-owning Williams family. A mile or so north is the bed and breakfast where our ensemble was to stay the night. The original owner of the old house was one Moses Harshaw, known as "the meanest man who ever lived" because of his brutal treatment of slaves. Locals claim his tombstone bears the inscription "Died and Gone to Hell" *(Stovall House, 2013).* The surrounding countryside is breathtakingly beautiful.

The SNC theatre is a lovely but tiny 80-seat proscenium with a performance area one eighth the size of what we were accustomed to; our set simply wouldn't fit on the stage. We had to cut some of the scenic elements and alter the staging, but by then we were used to last-minute adjustments. Despite the grueling schedule, the strenuous move from one venue to another, and the severe space limitations, there was electricity in the room. When curtain time finally arrived, the company was primed for a big event.

People poured into the theatre. With them came the kind of festival atmosphere seldom experienced at more cosmopolitan venues. I was pleased to see a wide cross-section of locals represented. Some of the old landed White families were there, along with those who had bought vacation homes in the area. There were people from various socioeconomic backgrounds. In attendance was Billy Chism, the dedicated and folksy editor of *The White County News* who had helped get the word out about the performance. Most of all, it was exciting to see members of the Bean Creek community, some of whom hadn't set foot in the building for a long time. The performance that night was among our most powerful. After the applause died down, only a few people left the room. The audience *needed* to talk.

Living With Santa Claus

The vigorous postshow discussion went on for more than an hour and a half and covered the history of racial tension in the area. White and Black people, rich and poor, male and female dared to share their personal stories. The student actors were practically delirious from exhaustion, but they invested themselves in the discussion; it was clear we had the opportunity to do something good. People who wouldn't typically find themselves in the same room with one another were having a serious discussion about race, class, and gender.

At one point, a local White woman became agitated. She couldn't understand why we were going on and on about slavery, something that had happened so long ago. "Sure. Slavery was bad and all, but we fixed all that years ago, right?" Strangely, she kept using the phrase "Am I living with Santa Claus or . . ." before each of her pointed questions. For example (and I paraphrase): "*Am I living with Santa Claus* or hasn't that all been dealt with? *Am I living with Santa Claus* or are *those people* just avoiding responsibility? *Am I living with Santa Claus* or are they simply trying to live off the tax payers rather than pay their *own* way?"

The air went out of the room. We were stunned into silence. Even the eloquent Billy Chism, who had taken the woman on, was suddenly at a loss for words. I was embarrassed for the woman and for all of us. Most of all, I was ashamed that members of the Bean Creek community had to hear such insensitivity and ignorance after reaching out in good faith. How could someone hear so many graphic stories of discrimination *from her own neighbors* and still miss the fact that everything hadn't been made right? Then, when several of us were on the verge of exploding or shutting down, something changed: Bean Creek resident Sabrina Dorsey smiled at the woman. With humor and with gentleness, she spoke: "Ma'am, with all due respect… *you're living with Santa Claus*" *(S. Dorsey, personal communication, November 11, 2011).*

The room erupted with good-natured laughter and suddenly the woman began to relax and really *listen*. I'm not suggesting "Mrs. Santa Claus" underwent a full conversion that night, but just as we had experienced in Newton County, there had been a clear turning point. By the end of the conversation, she understood something about the experience of her Black neighbors that she hadn't considered before.

Conversations in a Slave Cabin

The Sautee Nacoochee experience was so powerful that I returned 6 months later for a follow-up interview. Participants included Caroline Crittenden, Andy Allen, Sabrina Dorsey, Lawrence Dorsey, and Leona Dorsey. (The Dorsey family has lived in Bean Creek for five generations or more.) Also present were Todd and Kathy Blandin, who had left the SNC for a position at nearby Piedmont College; Denise Hartzell and Hill Jordan, a couple who had moved from metro Atlanta to Sautee Nacoochee; Billy Chism, editor of *The White County News*; and Candice Dyer, freelance journalist and childhood friend of Sabrina Dorsey. Candice and Sabrina were a rarity in the area because their lasting friendship had transcended racial barriers. As Chism put it: "There are really two distinct communities.… There are not many people having the kind of conversation we're having right now" *(B. Chism, personal communication, May 11, 2012).*

Given the controversy in Newton County, I was eager to hear how the African American Heritage Site had been received in the community. Caroline Crittenden suggested that we actually hold our discussion inside the renovated slave cabin just a hundred yards from the building where we had performed. Soon after we all

settled in, Caroline built a fire in the fireplace, causing our shadows to dance on the rough-hewn walls. We began by discussing some of the interesting things that had gone on in the previous months.

In contrast to Miss Kitty's Cottage, the cabin in Sautee Nacoochee had become a semisacred space, set aside for important conversations. "This and the church," Andy Allen told me *(personal communication, May 11, 2012)*. As a preacher's son and theatre actor, I knew precisely what she meant. We go to church or enter the theatre in order to have heightened experiences. Such rituals give us permission to examine life more deeply than we might in other locations. In these sacred spaces, there is an increased responsibility to tell the truth and *hear* the truth.

The weekend before my return, they had invited Joe McGill to bring his "Slave Dwelling Project" to the site. McGill, a program officer of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a descendant of slaves, sleeps in slave dwellings across the country promoting the preservation of these important historical structures. "We have preserved the mansions, but there has been very little attention paid to the people who lived in the little houses—their sweat and toil made the big houses possible" *(Chism, 2012, p. C1)*.

Dressed as members of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, an all-Black Union army regiment formed during the Civil War, McGill and storyteller James Brown recounted the battle of Morris Island for 130 locals gathered on the lawn of the newly renovated dwelling. Bean Creek residents Lawrence Dorsey and Stacey Allen took an active part in the event, donning slave clothing and spending the night in the cabin. The reenactors applauded community members for their restoration efforts: "If the place is not there, you can easily deny the history," McGill said. "And a place is a lot better than a sign that reads: 'Here once stood…'" *(Chism, 2012, p. C1)*. It was thrilling to realize how many important conversations the cabin had already made possible.

Then I asked them to recall our discussion with "Mrs. Santa Claus":

> Caroline Crittenden: I recall Billy rising to his feet, literally jumping from his seat! I thought he was going to accost the poor woman.
>
> Billy Chism: I wasn't offended as much as I was astounded by it.… There's nothing more powerful than seeing an actor under lights. And seeing that gal on the

> auction block, you can see it on television or watch a movie but it's not the same as seeing it live. You can almost reach out and touch these people. And then to have someone say: "it wasn't so bad."
>
> Candice Dyer: I heard someone say that in the beauty shop two days ago. *(B. Chism and C. Dyer, personal communication, May 11, 2012)*

I asked Sabrina Dorsey what she had been thinking during the "Mrs. Santa Claus" debate:

> I think everybody was going around the issue. Nobody wanted to tell her, "Wake *up*! They were selling 13-year-old kids away from their mamma and daddy! Wake up! They were beating the breath out of a living being. Wake *up*! … To her it wasn't real. But to us it is very real. Thank God times have changed and we don't have to go through that same kind of racism. It's a different kind of racism. *(S. Dorsey, personal communication, May 11, 2012)*

We began discussing the different "versions" of history each of us had been taught:

> We were taught the Civil War ad nauseam. It was instilled that we White southerners were the victims of tyranny.… My first week of college my political science professor showed us the footage from Alabama with the fire hoses and the dogs. And I cried for hours. And I thought: If I don't know something as important as this, what *else* don't I know? *(C. Dyer, personal communication, May 11, 2012)*

I was aware that several of the people with whom I was talking had been a part of the decision to invite us to perform. Over the past months, I had often wondered how those conversations had unfolded. It took far more courage for the SNC to welcome us than one of the more timorous suburban venues. Why did they do it? Denise Hartzell, who ultimately became an enthusiastic supporter of the production, had initially been concerned about the reactions the play might provoke.

> Denise Hartzell: I was worried that it was going to offend people. I was definitely apprehensive about the language used in the play. I was more concerned about the play's use of the infamous "N-word"… more than anything else. My experiences in DeKalb and Gwinnett counties, teaching primarily minority students, left me hypersensitive to their reactions. Happily, Kathy was right, and I was wrong. The scene with the auction was one of the most worrisome pieces.
>
> Billy Chism: Who were you afraid of offending? Why would it offend White people, except for the fact that we did it? *(B. Chism and D. Hartzell, personal communication, May 11, 2012)*

That moment, something occurred to me. The decision to block us from performing had always been made by *White* people. Usually, the implied rationale had been to avoid offending African Americans. Like Denise Hartzell, I worried about this myself. But Chism's question helped me to understand why we White folks are so uncomfortable at times: We are afraid to examine what our own people have done. Sometimes we hide this fear behind our attempts to "protect" African Americans. Although contemporary people don't often admit it, we are threatened as easily by the writings of Frederick Douglass as we are by those of Mark Twain. If we truthfully examine where we've come from, we can't avoid looking at the truth of where we are today. And if we do that, there's no way to avoid seeing our responsibility for the future.

> Sabrina Dorsey: I know some [African American] people. Racism hurts them so bad they think this cabin is a really bad thing. We get into arguments. I have to explain that this isn't so much about the cabin. We want people to understand that we are all equal and to remind them that this really happened. We want people to wake up. We're just human beings. We're all the same.
>
> Author: Is it good to tell the truth, even when it's ugly?
>
> Sabrina: I think it's good. I think it's really good. Our children, some of them now think everything is okay. And it's not. [They think] everything is going to be all

> right. Everything is eventually just going to work itself out. Some things in life… we've got to face them. We've got to make them be all right. It doesn't just work out on its own. We have to make it. We have to face it. *(S. Dorsey, personal communication, May 11, 2012)*

On May 21, 2012, only 10 days after our conversation in the slave cabin, one of the local chapters of the Ku Klux Klan made national news by applying to adopt a highway only a few miles away in neighboring Union County *(Abbey & Castillo, 2012)*.

Figure 4. The full company of *Splittin' the Raft* conducts a post-show discussion. From left to right: Shannon Sparks, John Stewart, Rob Hadaway, Annie Power. Photo by Raven DeGarmo.

Lessons Learned and Lessons Remembered

Splittin' the Raft provided many practical examples of the theories we often discuss in the rehearsal hall or in our university classrooms. For the first time, most of the student company members *experienced* theatre as an effective tool for social change. Rarely do artists witness such positive, tangible, and immediate results from their work. But our discoveries weren't merely artistic. Each of us emerged with a deeper understanding of the roles we play on the academic stage and in the larger communities we inhabit.

Socially engaged theatre creates a unique forum for constructive dialogue across communities between students and teachers, between performers and audiences. Wherever we went, *Splittin' the Raft* prompted productive discussions about race, gender, economic equity, theatre, literature, music, and the social circumstances that inspire socially-engaged works. To my knowledge, none of our host organizations received negative feedback after we performed. On the contrary, we received a flood of positive comments from students, educators, community leaders, theatre professionals, and residents of the communities we visited. But our experiment in

creative public engagement required a great deal of courage from everyone involved.

Sometimes in order to overcome our prejudices, we have to let the ugly stuff come out into the open. We have to acknowledge what we *really* think and feel. Before that can happen, we have to be relaxed enough and *trust* enough to let down our defenses. Only then can we risk being influenced by "others." That's what theatre *can* do but often *doesn't* do.

As Berthold Brecht came to realize, we must entertain *before* we teach. When audiences engage in the act of play, they are free to examine social issues on a more objective level. But play also helps us experience on a more *human* level. That's when we can apply what we observe on the stage to our own social contexts.

At first, my having used personal connections as a way into these communities felt like an unfair advantage. But later I realized it was precisely my status as an insider that opened the door to constructive social commentary. The fact that these were "my people" meant that whatever social problems we uncovered were also my own. Audiences relaxed when they understood we were not there to judge them any more than we were there to judge ourselves. From the very beginning, this project was an exercise in self-inquiry. Audiences influenced our thoughts about the work as much as (or possibly more than) we influenced theirs. Ensemble members provided incredible support to one another, making it possible to confront our own contributions to the web of social injustice.

Finally, these experiences remind us about the importance of place. Critical public discourse often requires physical delineation. Crossing the threshold of a church, a theatre, a courthouse, or a renovated slave cabin prepares us for a heightened experience, the kind of experience we can't receive in the ordinary places of life, the kind of experience necessary to bring about incremental social change. Questioning our views about the past is a difficult, often painful process, but an essential one. It isn't enough to know the facts. Sometimes it becomes necessary to construct physical reminders that help us *reexperience* them. The slave cabins in Oxford and Sautee Nacoochee elicited widely different responses, but both have inspired important public discussions.

Frederick Douglass's words are no less inspiring today than they were over a hundred years ago. Likewise, Twain's masterpiece is more than well-crafted literature; it is an entertaining reflection of the American conscience. *Huck Finn* is provocative because it

reminds us where we have fallen short of the American promise of freedom. "Liberty and justice for all" is not something we achieved long ago. It is a *living* principle and must be nurtured like any living organism. Therefore it is necessary, and occasionally uncomfortable, to examine our actions in light of all we claim to believe. Thankfully, our greatest artists and orators make it possible, even entertaining, to remember who we are.

Note. The author has received express written permission to use all quotes. This study was IRB approved.

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Programs With Promise

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Portfolio and Certification Programs in Community Engagement as Professional Development for Graduate Students: Lessons Learned From Two Land-Grant Universities

Paul H. Matthews, Anna C. Karls, Diane M. Doberneck, and Nicole C. Springer

Abstract

Although growing numbers of graduate students nationwide express interest in developing and documenting boundary-spanning skills in community-engaged research, teaching, and outreach, formal opportunities to do so are often limited, especially at the large research institutions producing most future faculty members. This article focuses on initial steps being taken to provide professional development for graduate students through portfolio and certification programs at two large, public, land-grant, research-intensive, Carnegie-engaged institutions in different parts of the United States: Michigan State University and the University of Georgia. For each university, the authors describe the context and history; the specific steps being taken to support graduate students in community-engaged research, teaching, and practice; and the impacts, outcomes, and lessons learned to date from this work.

> (If) graduate students do not have an apprenticeship of sorts in engagement *(Golde, 2008)* and if they do not develop professional identity as engaged scholars *(Colbeck, 2008),* they will not develop the knowledge, skills, and professional orientation *(Austin & McDaniels, 2006)* to truly become engaged scholars *(O'Meara, 2008)*. What is needed are specific opportunities or "critical experiences" in masters and doctoral programs for graduate students to develop the knowledge, skills, and orientations most relevant to their future engaged work. *(O'Meara, 2011, p. 186)*

Graduate education continues to be characterized by narrowly focused training in a specific disciplinary area, with special emphasis on scholarship operationalized as research productivity. Although this may be effective in producing subject-area experts, it is not necessarily a model conducive to integrating engaged scholarship during graduate studies nor to

preparing graduate students for roles as engaged faculty members. In the past decade, over 70% of all doctoral degrees granted in the United States were from universities with the Carnegie classification "very high research activity, research university" *(National Science Foundation, 2012)*. Although a small percentage of these doctoral graduates typically end up in faculty roles at these same high-intensity research universities, much of the preparation and socialization that they experience during their graduate programs has been called "out of tune with the values and real work" of the higher education institutions that do employ most of these graduates—for example, a primary focus on teaching undergraduate coursework *(Gaff & Lambert, 1996, p. 38)*. Indeed, "limited national attention has been given to preparing and socializing graduate students and thereby new faculty to their public service role" *(O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006, p. 4).* Issues relating to graduate students and community engagement, especially in the large research universities that produce the lion's share of future university faculty members, have been salient for the past several decades.

Boyer noted this lack of opportunity for such future faculty members to develop expertise in engaging with public issues in his calls for reconsidering how scholars are developed; he asserted in 1990, "The real danger is that graduate students will become specialists without perspective, that they will have technical competence but lack larger insights" *(p. 68).* A decade later, Checkoway *(2001)* addressed the same concern and its continued impact on the professoriate:

> Most faculty are trained in graduate schools whose required courses ignore civic content, and they enter academic careers whose gatekeepers dissuade them from spending much time in the community. They are socialized into a culture—beginning with their first days in graduate school and continuing into their academic careers—whose institutional structures shape their beliefs and cause behaviors that are consistent with their conditioning. They perceive that public engagement is not central to their role, that there are few rewards for this work, and that it may even jeopardize their careers in the university. *(p. 135)*

Likewise, even more recently, O'Meara and Jaeger *(2006)* have highlighted several barriers to expanding community engagement's role in graduate education, including that "graduate students do

not learn to 'see' community engagement as a way of being a scholar," such that "history continues to repeat itself as graduate students become specialized, narrowly focused researchers and are not aware of knowledge as having a public purpose" *(p. 14)*. Students interested in pursuing scholarships of engagement or of application, then, are often left feeling isolated and may find themselves marginalized by their faculty mentors and committees who do not value such work *(Franz, 2013).* Clearly, as Boyer *(1990)* himself stated, "if scholarship is to be redefined, graduate study must be broadened, encompassing not only research, but integration, application, and teaching, too" *(p. 74)*.

Admittedly, not all graduate students intend to enter a higher education career. However, there is still an important role for the scholarship of engagement. According to Bloomfield *(2005)*, a recent survey of thousands of graduate students in six disciplines identified a desire for learning more about public issues addressed by their discipline as the third most highly ranked concern (out of 21). As O'Meara and Jaeger *(2006)* noted, engagement adds value to multiple facets of graduate education:

> Integrating community engagement into doctoral programs across every discipline offers opportunities for students to more effectively acquire research and teaching skills, to learn the knowledge of their disciplines in ways that promote deeper understanding and greater complexity, and to make connections with public agencies and groups that enrich the quality of their education. *(p. 4)*

Although it is clear that calls for the graduate experience to "prepare future faculty for the classrooms and campuses of tomorrow" *(Gaff & Lambert, 1996, p. 43)* have not yet been fully realized, efforts such as the decade-long Preparing Future Faculty initiative (http://aacu.org/pff), sponsored by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools, have helped, as has recent interest in community engagement among research universities *(e.g., Adams, 2002; The Research University Civic Engagement Network [TRUCEN]; Curley & Stanton, 2012)*, including greater emphasis on graduate education.

However, there is clearly still a need for additional research and description of university efforts to incorporate the scholarship of engagement into graduate education in more systematized ways: "Limited research has been done in every discipline, but most pub-

lished accounts reflect a lone professor integrating service-learning and community-based research into a graduate program" *(O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006, p. 5)*. Following Butin's *(2012)* assertion that a key next step for "institutionalization of community engagement in higher education [is] within academic certificates, minors, and majors" *(p. 7),* we focus especially on initial steps being taken in that direction for graduate students at two land-grant institutions in different parts of the United States: the University of Georgia (UGA) and Michigan State University (MSU). At each university, we describe the context; specific steps taken to support graduate students in community-engaged research, teaching, and practice; and impacts, outcomes, and lessons learned to date from this work. Through these examples, we hope to spark continued conversation about professional development for community-engaged scholarship *(Childers, Doberneck, Velde, & Woodell, 2011; Doberneck, Brown, & Allen, 2010; Doberneck, Brown, & Bargerstock, 2010; Doberneck, Brown, Van Egeren, & McNall, 2011; Doberneck, Williams, Childers, & Blanchard, 2010; Matthews, 2012; Matthews, Karls, Doberneck, & Springer, 2013).*

The University of Georgia

The University of Georgia (UGA) is a land- and sea-grant large public Research University/Very High Research Activity institution enrolling about 26,000 undergraduates and 8,000 graduate/professional students in 17 schools and colleges. UGA is located in Athens, a small city about 60 miles northeast of Atlanta, the state's largest metropolitan area and capital; Athens-Clarke County has one of the highest poverty rates of any county its size in the United States (http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/13059.html). UGA received the 2010 Carnegie Foundation classification as a community-engaged institution and is a member of a number of national and international organizations focused on work for the public good, including TRUCEN, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and the Engagement Scholarship Consortium.

The university boasts a historically strong public service mission, with a vice president for public service and outreach, eight stand-alone units reporting to the vice president, and over 450 public service-track faculty on campus and statewide (http://www.outreach.uga.edu for additional information). Part of the institution's stated mission is "a commitment to excellence in public service, economic development, and technical assistance activities designed to address the strategic needs of the state" *(University of Georgia, 2014, para. 2)*. Service-learning courses are available through

every school/college at UGA, with over 300 course sections offered annually at undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels (http://servicelearning.uga.edu/service-learning-by-the-numbers/).

Program History/Milestones

In 2010, the UGA Office of Service-Learning (OSL) expanded, adding a full-time assistant director, which allowed for enhanced capacity for additional professional development programs on campus, including periodic workshops focusing on service-learning course design, critical reflection strategies, and partnering with the community. Although these workshops were originally intended for faculty members, over the ensuing semesters the number of graduate students in attendance increased substantially so that in many cases, graduate students outnumbered faculty participants. After attending a presentation describing Michigan State University's graduate certificate program, OSL faculty began brainstorming with the UGA Graduate School and the UGA Center for Teaching and Learning to consider ways to provide a more formal support structure for graduate students, akin to the MSU program and/or the UGA teaching certificate and portfolio administered by the Center for Teaching and Learning. Over the following year, with additional input from a faculty member in the Department of Microbiology undertaking a semester-long Public Service and Outreach Fellowship, three steps were taken to begin formal support of graduate students: the development of two new courses and the launch of a noncredit portfolio program.

Graduate Coursework

Two graduate courses, focusing respectively on service-learning course design and on approaches to community engagement, were developed and offered for the first time during the 2012-2013 academic year. These courses were intended to allow a multidisciplinary group of graduate students to learn theory, history, and effective practices in designing and carrying out course-based service-learning as well as engaged research, outreach, and other partnerships with community organizations at any level. Additionally, course participants were included in informational sessions about the portfolio program, and in the Approaches to Community Engagement course, they were encouraged to conceptualize components of the portfolio as part of their class requirements.

UGA's Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement

The Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement was officially launched during fall semester 2012. Initial discussions had centered on a certificate, but investigation into UGA's guidelines revealed that certificate programs are operationalized as course-based, credit-bearing programs typically requiring at least 9 hours of coursework selected from a range of possibilities. In the absence of sufficient relevant coursework to meet these university guidelines for academic certificates, beginning with a noncredit portfolio program that did not require additional curriculum committee or university council approval was determined to be the best first step, with the intent of establishing a track record of graduate student interest. The portfolio, informed by UGA's long-standing teaching portfolio, is administered by the OSL and the Graduate School.

Program Components

The Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement was construed as an opportunity for graduate students in any discipline to document and develop skills and experience in community engagement, operationalized into three potential "pathways": community-engaged teaching (service-learning), engaged research, and/or public service and outreach efforts. The program is publicized through online information on the OSL website (http://servicelearning.uga.edu/graduate-portfolio-in-community-engagement/), through flyers in the new graduate student orientation sessions each fall, and through e-mails to graduate students and to faculty and departments; each semester, OSL also hosts a 2-hour workshop session for interested students and meets with students upon request. The workshop includes an overview of community engagement tenets and in-depth characterization of community-engaged research, service-learning, and engaged public service and outreach, as well as specific guidance on the portfolio requirements. Examples of successful portfolios are also provided, and individual and small-group brainstorming, work time, and question/answer opportunities are incorporated.

Once students have attended the overview session, they are encouraged to submit a formal indication of interest (a PDF form including their contact information and likely engagement pathway) and to confirm (with help from OSL as requested) a faculty mentor who can help guide their work. They are encouraged to enroll in either or both of the graduate courses, to consult with OSL

faculty, and to take advantage of OSL workshops as appropriate for their area of interest. In addition, a rubric for evaluation is provided to guide preparation of the portfolio. Once they have developed, implemented, and documented their community-engaged project or activity, students submit a PDF portfolio to the OSL for review and feedback, and portfolios meeting or exceeding stated requirements are recognized each semester.

The portfolio guidelines for submission request a relatively concise portfolio of 15 pages in an assembled PDF, along with any appropriate appendices supporting the project. The required components include a standard cover sheet; a personal engagement philosophy statement (two pages); the description and self-assessment of the particular community engagement project/activity, including a narrative overview/description of project (one page), consideration of actual or anticipated project impact (one to two pages), and a reflective assessment of the project, linked back to the stated tenets of engagement in the student's philosophy statement (two pages). (This section is intended to mirror the frequently described "What? So what? Now what?" heuristic of service-learning reflection.) Next, students include a short curriculum vitae (two to four pages), which should also highlight any additional community-engaged work not focused on for the portfolio project and a letter of support from their faculty mentor confirming the work that was done, contextualizing its significance, and commenting on the processes and outcomes of the work. Finally, students include in the appendix a letter or other feedback from the project's community partner as well as any supporting material documenting the activity and its outcomes or impacts. Students are also given the opportunity to indicate whether their submissions may be shared with others as example portfolios. See Projects 1, 2, and 3 for examples of successful portfolio projects at UGA.

> **Project 1: Creating a Public Art Inventory**
> In collaboration with the Cultural Affairs Commission, a public administration student created a comprehensive inventory of local public art through research, interviews, database design, and data entry. Database entries included a photo of each work; its known or estimated creation date; artist information; location; and additional information on value, ownership, and/or history. This public service and outreach project was based on a request from the city's mayor and commis-

sion and is expected to be used by government offices for economic development, and for future scholarship.

Project 2: Documenting a University Partnership Startup Process

In collaboration with UGA's Archway Partnership—a Public Service and Outreach unit that establishes intensive, multiyear partnerships with particular communities across the state to bring university resources to bear on identified community priorities—a public administration student created a decision chart and step-by-step process summary for establishing a new Archway Partnership community site. As current communities "graduate" from the program, new communities are identified, and partnerships are created. The materials produced through this portfolio project are intended to help standardize, streamline, and support the process of establishing these future partnerships.

Project 3: Refining and Extending a Service-Learning Course

A doctoral student taught, reflected on, and refined a service-learning course in the Counseling & Human Development department for four semesters. In this course (Supporting Children & Families in Vulnerable Situations), she developed partnerships to involve students in camps for people from diverse settings (e.g., teens with cancer, refugees). Undergraduate students developed professional skills and gained a better understanding of adolescent development in specific populations; in turn, these adolescents benefited from student involvement in program development and implementation.

Outcomes

During the program's first year of existence (fall semester 2012 through fall semester 2013), some 38 graduate students attended information sessions (either individually or the once-per-semester workshop). Five students submitted portfolios, all during spring semester 2013; of these, three were approved, and two were not approved and were returned to the students with feedback. Four

other students submitted their official declaration of intent to participate. See Table 1 for information on these submissions.

Table 1. UGA's Descriptive Information on Portfolio Submissions

Degree objective	Major	Engagement pathway	Status
M.P.A.	Public administration	Engaged public service & outreach	Submitted and awarded
M.P.A.	Public administration	Engaged public service & outreach	Submitted and awarded
Ph.D.	Recreation & leisure studies	Engaged teaching	Submitted and awarded
M.S.	Marine science	Engaged research	Submitted, but not awarded
Ph.D.	Adult education	Engaged research	Submitted, but not awarded
M.A.L.	Agricultural leadership	Engaged research	Declared intent to submit
Ph.D.	Geography	Engaged public service & outreach	Declared intent to submit
Ph.D.	Microbiology	Engaged public service & outreach	Declared intent to submit
Ph.D.	Mathematics	Engaged public service & outreach	Declared intent to submit

Early Lessons Learned

Based on the first year of implementation, several elements of the portfolio program changed, in some cases due to particular policies of the university, and in other cases in order to address aspects of the submission requirements that were not clearly communicated to students. For instance, the original intent had been to include portfolio recipients in the graduate commencement program bulletin; however, this was not approved by the university administration. This change then allowed a change in stated submission dates for the portfolios from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester.

As shown in Table 1, the two portfolio submissions that were not approved were both posited by the students as community-engaged research; however, in each case, the submissions instead seemed to be traditional research studying a community organization or partnership that did not involve the community in ways typifying engaged research. In order to help clarify the tenets of

engaged research, additional details and examples were added to the orientation workshop.

The first year of submissions also showed that establishing actual impact from recently completed projects was difficult, as in many cases the project deliverables had not been placed in use by the community partners; therefore, the impact component was changed to allow anticipated impacts as well as actual impacts, and additional ideas for documenting this were added to the informational workshop. A requirement to include a letter from the community partner was added with specific guidance on speaking to impact. Finally, emphasis was added to more closely linking the student's stated engagement philosophy to their discipline as well as to the write-up of their project activities to show that the student's understanding of what community-engaged practice should entail was being incorporated in their actual work.

Next Steps

As it moves into Year 2 and beyond, UGA's Community Engagement Portfolio continues to attract student interest. Although the initial submissions were primarily from graduate students at the end of their degree programs, a positive step has been the noticeable uptick in the number of students who have just started their degree programs and are interested in considering what sorts of portfolio projects they can incorporate into their programs. We anticipate that this change will continue to enhance the quality and depth of the projects submitted and will also allow the graduate students more opportunities to intentionally link their course of study to community-engaged practice. As additional graduate coursework in service-learning and community engagement is offered on UGA's campus, one eventual goal is to transition from the non-credit-based portfolio to a more rigorous, course-based certificate model—a transformation that has already happened with UGA's teaching certificate and portfolio. Campuswide, our hope is that the portfolio and certificate will be joined by other institutional supports for graduate students, including an enhanced set of courses (such as a possible new course in community-engaged research); potential additional recognitions for graduate student engaged work (e.g., a dissertation award); and continued growth in collaborations between graduate programs and other Public Service and Outreach units through graduate fellowships, internships, and other opportunities.

Michigan State University

Known as "the nation's pioneer land-grant university" *(Beekman, 2005, p. 21)* Michigan State University (MSU) has a strong commitment to community engagement. This large public Research University/Very High Research Activity institution is home to approximately 36,700 undergraduate and 10,250 graduate students, as well as 5,000 faculty and academic staff. In 2005, MSU became one of the first institutions to receive the Carnegie Foundation classification as a community-engaged institution, and it continues to collaborate with a number of organizations that focus on engaged scholarship as central to their mission: Campus Compact, TRUCEN, APLU, and the Engagement Scholarship Consortium.

President Lou Anna K. Simon continues to call for excellence in community-engaged scholarship at research-intensive land-grant universities. They "collaborate with their partners to play critical roles in empowering individuals and the communities in which they live and work" *(Simon, 2010, p. 99).* She also noted that the main challenge for higher education today is to improve quality of life "for all people through clean and sustainable energy, access to quality education, safe and plentiful food, affordable health care, an enduring sense of humanity, and undaunted hope" *(p. 99)*. At MSU, the reciprocal goal of using cutting-edge knowledge to power and empower communities and to engage with and be empowered by the ideas, energy, and support of communities is at the heart of partnership development and community engagement.

Program History/Milestones

MSU's Office of University Outreach and Engagement (UOE) fosters the land-grant mission by connecting university knowledge with community knowledge in mutually beneficial ways. UOE provides resources to assist academic departments, centers, and institutes, as well as MSU Extension, on priority issues of concern to society by encouraging, supporting, and collaborating with MSU faculty and academic staff to generate, apply, transmit, and preserve knowledge. UOE advocates for a model of outreach and engagement that fosters a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship between the university and the public and promotes the scholarly aspect of community engagement by emphasizing both the scholarly foundations that inform community engagement and the scholarly and public products that are generated as a result of community-engaged work.

The history of the creation and implementation of the Graduate Certification in Community Engagement begins with UOE's creation in 2006 of an undergraduate curriculum for community engagement called Tools of Engagement (ToE). This curriculum outlined five key components of MSU's view of community engagement by addressing the history and importance of community engagement at MSU, issues of power and privilege, methods of quality collaboration, successful negotiation, and introduction of the concept of capacity building. During the final months of collaboration, the creators of ToE began to think of creating an advanced set of tools for juniors/seniors, and this idea led to discussion of a graduate program, which in turn led to collaboration with the Graduate School and a proposal patterned after the existing Graduate Certification in College Teaching. In 2008, the Graduate Certification in Community Engagement was approved by Academic Governance as a transcriptable, not-for-credit certification program. Since it is not-for-credit, no tuition fees are charged for the program.

MSU's Graduate Certification in Community Engagement

Michigan State University's Graduate Certification in Community Engagement is an initiative of University Outreach and Engagement and the Graduate School; it is based on decades of practical experience working with community partners and is aligned with nationally recognized core engagement competencies. UOE faculty and staff have developed the certification to strengthen and enhance the multidisciplinary skills needed for exemplary community-engaged scholarship and practice.

The certification is designed to help graduate and professional students develop systemic, scholarly, and respectful approaches to their community-engaged work. With approval from their guidance committee chairperson and University Outreach and Engagement, students tailor their program of study to strengthen their scholarly and practical skills in community-engaged research and creative activities, community-engaged teaching and learning, community-engaged service, and/or community-engaged commercialization activities. To complete the certification, students must show mastery of core engagement competencies, complete a 60-hour mentored community engagement experience, and write and present an engagement portfolio. Students who fulfill all requirements receive a letter of congratulations from the associate provost for university outreach and engagement, an official nota-

tion on their academic transcript, and a certificate of completion from MSU's Office of the Registrar.

Program Components

Core competency seminars. The first requirement is mastery of the core engagement competencies. In Years 1, 2, and 3 of the program, the six required core competencies were based on the wisdom of UOE faculty and staff with years of practical experience as community-engaged scholars and on evaluation data and feedback from students in the program. Between Years 3 and 4 of the program, the core competencies were brought into alignment with core engagement competencies described in the professional development literature for community engagement *(Blanchard et al., 2009; Blanchard, Strauss, & Web, 2012; Jameson, Clayton, Jaeger, & Bringle, 2012)*. The number of required core competencies expanded from the original six to 14. The two cross-cutting themes—ethics and diversity—are addressed in multiple seminars and are required in students' portfolios. Table 2 summarizes these changes over time.

Table 2. MSU's Changes in Core Engagement Competencies Over Time

Core competency by year	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Foundations of community-engaged scholarship	●	●	●	●	●
Variations in community-engaged scholarship				●	●
Initiating community-engaged partnerships	●	●	●	●	●
Sustaining community-engaged partnerships	●		●		●
Techniques for community engagement				●	●
Community-engaged research and creative activity	●	●	●	●	●
Community-engaged teaching and learning					●
Capacity building for sustained change	●	●	●	●	●
Systems approaches to community change				●	●
Evaluation of community partnerships	●	●	●	●	●
Critical reflections on identity and culture				●	●
Communicating with public audiences				●	●
Scholarly skills—grant-writing and publishing				●	●

Ethics and community engagement		•	•	cross	cross
Working with diverse communities		•	•	cross	cross

Students usually fulfill the core competency requirement by attending 2-hour workshops coordinated by UOE. The workshops are offered on an annual basis, Friday afternoons during fall and spring semesters. Students who have completed coursework that addresses a particular core engagement competency may ask to have the syllabi, reading lists, and assignments evaluated as potential alternatives to the required seminars.

Mentored community engagement experience. The second requirement is the mentored community engagement experience. This experience is an opportunity to collaborate with a community partner and a faculty mentor on a community engagement project. The goal is to implement core engagement concepts and practices introduced in the core competency seminars and to gain practical experience collaborating with community partners. Students may use any form of community-engaged scholarship including community-engaged research and creative activities, community-engaged teaching and learning, community-engaged service, and/or community-engaged commercialization activities. To receive approval for the Graduate Certification in Community Engagement requirement, the proposed experience must

- meet MSU's definition of community-engaged scholarship;
- be based on a body of scholarship and generate academic and public products;
- be collaboratively undertaken with community partner(s) and a faculty mentor;
- involve significant, direct interaction between the student and community partner;
- include reflection on communication, collaboration, and partnering skills with a faculty mentor or member of UOE faculty and staff;
- include critical feedback from the community partner about the collaboration;
- be 60 hours at the minimum; and
- be approved in advance by the program coordinator.

For the majority of students, the mentored community engagement experience is associated with their graduate degree program and may be a practicum, internship, thesis or dissertation research, graduate assistantship, teaching responsibilities, or work experience—as long as it meets MSU's definition of community-engaged scholarship. The mentored community engagement experience may be, but does not have to be, a new or additional community-based project.

Students are expected to keep an activity log of hours and tasks they complete as part of their mentored community engagement experience. This log is included in their written engagement portfolios. In addition, students are expected to reflect critically on their experience with their community partners and faculty mentor and gather feedback from them. This critical feedback may take different forms depending on the circumstances (e.g., dialogue, letter, e-mail) and is included in the written engagement portfolio.

Written engagement portfolio and presentation. The third requirement is the written engagement portfolio and presentation. In Years 1, 2, and 3 of the program, guidelines for the written portfolio and the presentation were the same and were based on the scholarship on outreach portfolios for faculty and administrators *(Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Johnson, Sabrina Mims-Cox, & Doyle-Nichols, 2009; Jordan, 1997; Michigan State University, 1996; Seldin & Higgerson, 2002; Seldin & Miller, 2008)*. In essence, the portfolio and presentation were intended as opportunities for students to

- reflect on the scholarship and practice of community engagement;
- document their community-engaged scholarship methodically, including processes, outcomes, and evidence related to their collaboration with community partners;
- solicit critical feedback from community partners and faculty mentors on their perspectives about their community collaboration;
- gather new and supporting materials to present for peer review;
- generate new insights through reflective writing; and
- practice talking about their community-engaged scholarship or practice.

Between Years 3 and 4, the UOE faculty committee and project coordinator decided to make an explicit distinction between expectations for written portfolios and portfolio presentations. As a result, portfolio guidelines were changed, and a core competency seminar about critical reflection was added to the list of required core competency seminars. In the critical reflection seminar, students are asked to relate to concepts and ideas in their fields/disciplines and to reflect upon how they view themselves as part of a larger community and tackle issues such as power and privilege. Engaging in reflective practice is important as a process by which students can learn through and from experience and move toward gaining new insights into themselves and their practice *(Boud & Fales, 1983; Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Jarvis, 1992; Mezirow, 1981).*

Since Year 4, the engagement portfolio has been composed of two parts: written portfolio and portfolio presentation. For the written portfolio, students are expected to demonstrate mastery of all core engagement competencies, document their mentored community engagement experience (including feedback from their community partners and faculty mentor), critically reflect on their experience, and support their reflections with additional materials and evidence as appendices. For the portfolio presentation, students are expected to tell their personal engagement story, discuss two core competencies that were particularly meaningful, document their mentored community engagement experience, critically reflect on their experience, and discuss future directions for their community-engaged scholarship or practice. The autobiographical approach embodied in the portfolio presentations is guided by the scholarship on professional identity formation in graduate education *(Applegate, 2002; Austin & McDaniels, 2006; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; O'Meara, 2011).*

Portfolio presentations take place at the end of each semester, during the summer, or at ad hoc times throughout the year. Written portfolios are due to the program coordinator and UOE committee one week before the presentation date. The program coordinator works with students to schedule portfolio presentations when UOE faculty, staff, and students are available to listen to the students' presentations and reflect with them on their experiences. See Projects 4, 5, and 6 for descriptions of successfully completed portfolios at MSU.

Project 4: Central Michigan Restorative Justice Project
Focusing on community-engaged service, a master's degree candidate in community services from the Department of Family and Child Ecology (now the Department of Human Development and Family Studies) collaborated with eight local school districts to offer a restorative justice program. This program is a facilitated intervention process designed to help students, parents, teachers, and others resolve conflicts and develop a sense of community. This graduate student then conducted an evaluation of the program's success and because of this work is now working with the local Department of Education to rewrite the State Board of Education's school discipline policy and model code of student conduct.

Project 5: Improving Girls' Sports Programming With Detroit Police Athletic League
Responding to a community partner need and request, a Ph.D. candidate in kinesiology used the tenets of community-engaged research to partner with the Detroit Police Athletic League and the Institute for Youth Sports. She conducted four focus groups with girls to explore why they were not participating in the sports programming as much as boys. She shared these findings in briefings and newsletters for coaches to change the messages that girls received to encourage participation. This collaboration resulted in the year 2013 becoming the "Year of the Girl."

Project 6: Service-Learning With the Capital Area Community Media Center
Teaching an undergraduate service-learning course, a Ph.D. candidate in writing, rhetoric, and American studies implemented core concepts of community-engaged teaching and learning. He partnered with the Capital Area Community Media Center, where his students investigated and analyzed the place of community media in American culture as well as making media projects to serve local community organizations. Their team projects included a website redesign plan, a video about a community garden, short video clips with

garden tips, advertising materials, and a Powerpoint presentation with briefing materials.

Outcomes

During the MSU program's first 5 years, over 100 graduate and professional students and other approved learners applied for admission to the program. In Year 1, 18 learners were admitted into the program through an application process with a strict September deadline. In Year 5, 39 learners were admitted into the program through a fall application process coupled with a rolling admissions basis for learners who heard about the program after the September deadline. Annual enrollment has more than doubled in 5 years. Table 3 summarizes each cohort by degree, college, engagement pathway, and portfolio status. The few students who submitted portfolios but were not awarded the certification were invited to revise and resubmit their portfolios.

Table 3. MSU's Descriptive Information on Cohort and Portfolio Submissions

Year	Degree	*n*	College	*n*	Engagement Pathway	*n*	Status	*n*
2009- 2010 *n* = 17	Master's Ph.D. Other	8 9 1	Ag. & Nat.Res. Arts & Letters Education Social Science Other	5 2 3 6 1	Engaged research Engaged creative activity Engaged teaching and learning Engaged service Engaged commercialized activity	5 0 5 3 0	Did not complete program Declared intent to submit Submitted, not awarded Submitted, awarded	3 0 1 13
2010- 2011 *n* = 18	Master's Ph.D. Other	11 6 1	Ag. & Nat Res. Arts & Letters Com. Arts & Sci. Education Nursing Social Science Other	5 3 1 3 1 4 1	Engaged research Engaged creative activity Engaged teaching and learning Engaged service Engaged comercialized activity	3 0 1 3 0	Did not complete program Declared intent to submit Submitted, not awarded Submitted, awarded	11 0 0 7
2011- 2012 *n* = 16	Master's Ph.D. Other	10 6 0	Ag. & Nat. Res. Education Social Science	4 3 9	Engaged research Engaged creative activity Engaged teaching and learning Engaged service Engaged commercialized activity	1 0 2 1 0	Did not complete program Declared intent to submit Submitted, not awarded Submitted, awarded	7 5 0 4

2012- 2013 *n* = 26	Master's Ph.D. Other	12 8 6	Ag. & Nat. Res. Arts & Letters Education Human Medicine Music Social Science Other	7 1 2 1 1 8 6	Engaged research Engaged creative activity Engaged teaching and learning Engaged service Engaged commercialized activity	1 0 2 3 0	Did not complete program Declared intent to submit Submitted, not awarded Submitted, awarded	7 13 0 6
2013- 2014 *n* = 38	Master's Ph.D. Other	15 17 6	Ag. & Nat. Res. Arts & Letters Education Engineering Music	8 2 10 1 1	Engaged research Engaged creative activity Engaged teaching and learning Engaged service Engaged commercialized activity	0 0 1 3 0	Did not complete program Declared intent to submit Submitted, not awarded Submitted, awarded	0 34 0 4

Early Lessons Learned

When the Graduate Certification in Community Engagement was originally designed, the faculty committee and program coordinator expected that the majority of our learners would be Ph.D. students aspiring to tenure-track faculty positions. In Year 1, readings, examples, and seminars focused on community-engaged research, particularly in the social sciences. However, it became clear almost immediately that our expectations did not match the learners attracted to the program. Since Year 1, the program coordinator has worked to broaden the perspectives and examples to better reflect the career aspirations and disciplinary backgrounds of our learners. For example, seminars now include presentations by MSU Extension faculty, service-learning professionals, and community partners from nongovernmental organizations. The curriculum incorporates examples of community-engaged creative activities to accommodate our community-engaged artists, musicians, and writers. Examples of international community engagement have been expanded to address cross-cultural and ethical issues raised by domestic students who aspire to work overseas and by the international students studying at MSU. At the beginning of Year 5, the program coordinator instituted a preprogram survey for incoming learners to better understand their interests and aspirations. The results of this survey are shared with seminar teams so that they may modify their presentations to accommodate the learners.

Over time, the faculty committee and program coordinator have improved the approach to teaching and learning. In Years 1

and 2, the curriculum relied heavily on assigned readings, stand-and-deliver lectures during the seminars, and postseminar assignments as ways of stimulating learning about community-engaged scholarship. By Year 5, the seminars have transitioned to more active learning strategies, with the Friday sessions seeming more like workshops than traditional graduate student seminars. The seminars continue to have assigned readings, but they have been refocused to ensure that connections between theory and practice are clearer. As a result, the core competency seminars include active learning strategies such as think-pair-share, small group activities, scenarios or case studies, and dialogue circles. The program has discontinued postseminar assignments and now relies on students to provide their own evidence of learning core competencies in their portfolios.

Next Steps

As MSU's Graduate Certification in Community Engagement moves into Year 6 and beyond, the faculty committee and the program coordinator have identified three main areas for continued attention and improvement. First, the faculty committee and program coordinator are committed to developing authentic and constructive ways for community partners to provide critical feedback on the students' mentored community engagement experiences and their portfolio presentations. Parallel to the national conversation about how to incorporate community partner perspectives into peer review processes in publishing and promotion and tenure, the program organizers believe that community partners' views are crucial in determining quality, excellence, and impact of community-engaged scholarship in our graduate certification program. Our current process is loosely organized and generates supportive but vague feedback. If the program is serious about authentically partnering with community members, a more purposeful community partner feedback process will need to attend to power differences and be sensitive to time commitments. Second, almost from the beginning of the program, the program was in demand from non-campus-based learners. Some requests come from MSU students at other campuses in Michigan and beyond; other requests come from community partners who are interested in earning a credential in community engagement. The faculty committee and program coordinator will need to consider how to accommodate these learning requests in ways that do not compromise the important learning that comes from in-person dialogue about experiences, situations, and contexts that shape authentic and respectful

community-engaged scholarship. Finally, as the program continues to recruit and certify graduate students, an intentional strategy will be needed for keeping alumni connected to the program and to one another and to support them as they transition from engaged scholars or practitioners to positions of influence and leadership within their organizations and institutions.

Considerations for Your Institution

Through conversations between UGA and MSU, the authors have come to realize that professional development in community-engaged scholarship for graduate students may take many forms and may emphasize different aspects of partnership, collaboration, and scholarship. The authors offer the following reflections and questions for you to consider at your own institution.

- **Build upon what already works at your institution.** At UGA, the Office of Service-Learning took the lead in developing for-credit courses coupled with a written portfolio modeled after a teaching portfolio. In contrast, at MSU, the certification was modeled after an existing not-for-credit certification program for college teaching, approved by Academic Governance. Consider: What is the appropriate format, given your institution's organizational structure and culture? What office(s) might be the best place to house your professional development program?

- **Start small and grow the program over time.** At both UGA and MSU, a small number of learners entered during the first few years, followed by increasing enrollment from many departments across campus. This gradual program launch permitted program leaders to focus on formative evaluation and responsive curricular improvements. Consider: What is an acceptable number of learners to start with? How fast do you want to grow your program? Is there a limit on enrollment in the program, especially to maintain excellence and quality? What is your plan to collect feedback and make necessary changes?

- **Identify and involve key supporters from the start.** At UGA, a faculty member from a STEM discipline was involved from the beginning. At MSU, University Outreach and Engagement partnered with the graduate school to ensure the program's success. Consider:

Who are key collaborating units on campus? Who are your champions within the faculty and staff?

- **Connect with other program leaders and with the scholarship.** At both UGA and MSU, program leaders benefited from conversations with others who lead professional development programs in community engagement. UGA's program leaders held multiple conversations with MSU colleagues to learn what was working and to vet ideas. At MSU, significant revisions in the core competencies helped to align with best practices in the scholarship. Consider: With whom can you compare notes? Who has set up a similar program? What unanticipated issues did they deal with? How might you avoid them at your institution? What are currently published best practices? Do they make sense at your institution, with your learners?
- **Clarify your expectations of the students.** At UGA, the development of a portfolio rubric helped to clarify the differences between failing and exceeding the requirements. At MSU, important distinctions between the written portfolio and the presentation were clarified. MSU added a seminar on critical reflection to reinforce the importance of critical reflection in the portfolios. Consider: What do quality, excellence, and impact look like in your program? How will you know it when you see it? How can you make those expectations explicit to your learners? How will you resolve disagreements?
- **Build in flexibility.** Graduate students' learning journeys are not linear or lockstep. At both UGA and MSU, the program coordinators had to build in flexibility regarding length of time in the program, type of engagement project, and opportunities to revise submitted portfolios. Consider: Can your record-keeping system accommodate students who participate some of the time and then return to complete the program? How are you balancing high standards of excellence with opportunities to learn and grow through your program, especially if a portfolio is required?
- **Employ principles of engagement.** At both UGA and MSU, program coordinators gathered input from

various faculty and potential students during the design phase. Continuous constructive feedback has improved both programs, especially during the first few years. Consider: How might you involve potential learners, community partners, and organizational champions in the design and implementation of your program? Once your program is launched, how might you continue to involve them in evaluation and ongoing learning?

- **Celebrate graduate student success.** At both UGA and MSU, graduate students who complete the respective professional development programs in community engagement receive recognition for their achievements. Consider: How might you formally recognize successful students' excellence in community engagement? Does your institution permit notations in the graduation program or on the transcript? What kind of letter of congratulations is possible?

O'Meara and Jaeger *(2006)* asserted that "[e]ach department and discipline must ascertain what integrating engagement into their doctoral programs should look like and find critical experiences and windows that make the most sense for the content and framework of that discipline" *(p. 5)*; by the same token, no "one size fits all" solution for graduate student professional development programs is appropriate across all institutional contexts. Nonetheless, we, the authors, hope that descriptions of our two professional development programs for graduate students spark your thinking and help you envision what might be possible at your institution.

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Dissertation Overviews

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An Action Research Dissertation as a Means of Engaging a Community Leadership Alumni Association

Michael Dillon

Abstract

This dissertation overview details an action research (AR) project with a purpose of investigating how a grassroots neighborhood leadership alumni association in the southeastern United States learned to plan and take action on community problems. Qualitative research methods included semistructured interviews and observations. The findings indicated strong elements of experiential learning, formal training, past experience, and social learning. The alumni showed moderate indications of behaving as a community of practice (CoP). The four conclusions of the study were: (1) Learning takes place as a rhizomatic *(Kang, 2007)* network of learning types including but not limited to experiential learning, formal training, past experience, and social learning; (2) Through community leadership, adults learn functional skills, relationship skills, and gain personal insights; (3) Disruptive change can impact a CoP's definition of community, purview, and organizational practices; and (4) The entwined relationship between actions and power defined the AR process.

Introduction

Community engagement can be defined as "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" *(Driscoll, 2008, p. 39)*. Such collaboration can take many forms. This article is an overview of community engagement as documented in an action research (AR) dissertation titled *Grassroots Community Leaders as a Community of Practice: Utilizing Learning and Enduring Disruptive Change (Dillon, 2013)*. The theoretical significance of this study pertains to adult learning theory and community of practice (CoP) framework. Its practical significance concerns the engagement between a university representative (the author) and a community group, in the form of AR.

The aforementioned dissertation involved South County Alumni Association (SCAA), a grassroots neighborhood leadership alumni association in the southeastern United States. Members

of this group are graduates of South County Neighborhood Leadership Institute (SCNLI), which offers citizens opportunities to increase their awareness of community issues and to improve their leadership skills through leadership training and hands-on experience.

Citizens can attempt to prompt community change within a variety of structures, such as informal temporary initiatives, or through formal organizations with longstanding change efforts driven by a specific mission. However, their efforts may be hindered in the absence of prior training to support their goals of prompting community change. Community leadership institutes offer training and hands-on experience in leadership topics with a goal of equipping citizens to be more effectively involved in a variety of community change initiatives. These initiatives may include addressing hunger, affordable housing, neighborhood crime, or political action.

Unexpected changes from within or outside an organization can hinder a community group's ability to have an impact. Disruptive change *(Louis & Sutton, 1991; Morgeson, 2005)* impacted SCAA and the study when SCNLI disassociated itself from the group and formed a new alumni association. This unexpected change was addressed in the AR interventions, specifically regarding how the group would train new members who had not received the structured training from SCNLI.

Research Purpose

The purpose of the dissertation was to investigate how a community leadership group learned to plan and take action on community problems. The extent to which alumni of leadership institutes manage the learning that takes place individually and collectively may impact their effectiveness in the community *(Kearney & Zuber-Skerritt, 2012)*. The study was guided by four research questions: (1) What types of learning are taking place with the alumni as they make efforts to solve problems in the community?, (2) What are the alumni learning through their leadership efforts in the community?, (3) To what extent are the alumni operating as a community of practice (CoP)?, and (4) In what ways did the relative power of the researcher and the community stakeholders influence this AR project? The study spanned a period of 17 months.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Literature reviewed for the dissertation included prevalent adult learning theories, community of practice *(Lave & Wenger, 1991)* framework, and Foucault's *(1982/2000)* views of power relations. The adult learning theories reviewed were andragogy *(Knowles, 1968)*, self-directed learning *(Knowles, 1968),* Kolb's *(1984)* and Taylor's *(1987)* learning cycles, Illeris's *(2002)* three dimensions of learning, transformative learning *(Mezirow, 1991)*, the role of emotions *(Dirkx, 2001),* the body and learning *(Amann, 2003)*, the spirit and learning *(Tisdell, 2003)*, informal and incidental learning *(Marsick & Watkins, 2003),* experiential learning *(Dewey, 1938)*, and social and situated learning *(Lave & Wenger, 1991)*. These were selected because of their dominance in the literature and potential connections to the study.

CoP framework was used to address the third research question. Lave and Wenger (1991) defined a CoP as "a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" *(p. 98).* Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder *(2002)* would later detail the three basic parts of a CoP as "a domain of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a community of people who care about this domain; and a shared practice that they are developing to be effective in their domain" *(p. 27)*.

In order to answer the fourth research question pertaining to the role of power in AR, Foucault's *(1982/2000)* views of power relations were reviewed. For Foucault, power is a type of relation between individuals. Power is not thought of as some external autonomous force; rather, it exists only when acting upon another person and not necessarily in an adversarial fashion. This perspective helped to reveal the role of power relations in the study *(Dillon, 2014)*.

Research Methods and Data Sources

The dissertation employed action research methodology, which Reason and Bradbury *(2008)* defined as a "participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview" *(p. 1)*. AR can prompt learning for the researcher, stakeholders, and community of scholars. This study provided an opportunity for me to learn how to conduct AR and gave SCAA an opportunity to learn how to improve its effectiveness in the community. Finally, it gave the wider community of scholars and practitioners the opportunity to learn from the research process and

outcomes. Although it is outside the scope of this dissertation overview, it should be noted that AR may offer the field of community engagement a valuable model for participatory problem solving.

Qualitative research methods were employed over a period of 17 months in the form of 13 semistructured interviews with SCAA members and four observations of SCNLI leadership training sessions. Since we were seeking to understand the connections between the alumni's community activity and their learning, as well as the extent to which they are a CoP, this study was best suited for qualitative methods. The stakeholders, which included the SCAA president, the five person SCAA executive committee, and myself, collaborated with respect to methods, data collection, analysis, and organizational interventions.

Findings and Conclusions

In order to answer the first research question regarding the types of learning that took place with the alumni, transcripts from the 13 interviews of SCAA members were analyzed with consideration of the adult learning theory previously mentioned. Observation journals of SCNLI leadership training sessions also served as a source of data. Data analysis revealed four themes: (a) experiential learning, (b) formal training, (c) past experience, and (d) social learning. In exploring the second research question regarding what the alumni were learning through their leadership efforts in the community, the interviews were analyzed, and the observation journals were reviewed. The three themes that emerged from this question were (a) functional skills, (b) relationship skills, and (c) self.

In order to answer the third research question regarding to what extent the alumni were operating as a CoP, interviews were analyzed with respect to the three key CoP features of community, domain, and practice. The interviews revealed both strengths and weaknesses with respect to community with predominant themes of (a) communication and (b) group interaction. The domain aspect included themes that represented the common interests of the group. Although a wide variety of domain themes were uncovered through the interviews, these themes had commonality. The predominant domain themes included (a) diversity in the community, (b) economic issues, (c) financing of initiatives, (d) organizing and facilitating events, and (e) politics. This wide variety in the domain revealed the assortment of issues the alumni took on, which may present challenges regarding rallying a large team of alumni for a specific cause. The themes that fall into the prac-

tice category were the alumni's ways of doing things and their way of being in the community. As Wenger *(1998)* explained, "Practice entails the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context" *(p. 149).* Although the analysis separated ways of doing and ways of being, the two are inseparable according to CoP framework. The themes that emerged as ways of doing were fund raising, organizing and facilitating events, and resource awareness and information distribution. The themes that emerged as ways of being were approach preference and networking and relationship skills.

A Foucauldian perspective was utilized to answer the fourth research question regarding the ways in which the relative power of the researcher and the community stakeholders influenced the AR dissertation. Foucault raised the question of how relations of power are rationalized, and this fourth research question was a step toward understanding the rationalization of power relations, in particular the researcher–stakeholder power relations in AR. The data sources for this analysis were my researcher reflection journal and a concluding interview with the alumni president. The analysis entailed consideration of five key aspects of power relations *(Foucault, 1982/2000)*: the system of differentiations, types of objectives, instrumental modes, forms of institutionalization, and degrees of rationalization. The analysis revealed that the researcher–stakeholder interactions that took place in an AR project can be viewed as relations of power *(Dillon, 2014)*.

There were four conclusions of the study. First, learning takes place as a rhizomatic *(Kang, 2007)* network of learning types, including but not limited to experiential learning, formal training, past experience, and social learning. Second, through community leadership, adults learn functional skills, relationship skills, and gain personal insights. Third, disruptive change can impact a CoP's definition of community, purview, and organizational practices. Finally, the entwined relationship between actions and power defined the AR process.

Significance of the Research

The theoretical significance of this study pertains to adult learning theory and CoP framework. One type of practical significance concerns the engagement between a university representative (the author) and a community group, in the form of AR. Additionally, the role of power in AR was examined in the dissertation. Probing power relations within the study added to the knowledge base of practicing AR. Specifically, power relations between

the researcher and the stakeholders were shown to be present in the AR process and influential in the direction of the research.

The research findings of the dissertation contributed to adult learning theory. The research findings of this dissertation contributed to adult learning theory by identifying types of learning that grassroots community leaders experience, as well as organizational learning in the form of CoP framework. The research contributed to CoP literature with respect to diagnosing the extent to which the alumni association is a CoP and the interventions that may stimulate the group to become a stronger CoP. The research documented in the dissertation offered grassroots community groups an illustration of data-informed collaboration leading toward organizational interventions. In particular, the interventions promoted organizational learning through CoP framework. Engaging with skilled action researchers can strengthen organizational learning in community groups, thereby increasing their potential to implement community change.

Conclusion

The dissertation research reviewed in this overview entailed employing AR methodology to engage a neighborhood leadership association in order to prompt better utilization of learning, with an overarching goal of helping this group become more proficient at problem solving. Grassroots community leaders can solve an array of problems when all stakeholders are included and have input. Engaging with skilled action researchers may give grassroots community leaders the framework to become more adept at community change.

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Book Reviews

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Hoyt, L. (Ed.). (2013). *Transforming cities and minds through the scholarship of engagement: Economy, equity, and environment.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press. 264 pp.

Review by Matthew Hartley

On the one hand, *Transforming Cities and Minds Through the Scholarship of Engagement* is a thoughtful series of inquiries into some of the challenges facing our urban areas, especially the "forgotten cities" that emerged and flourished in times of industrial growth and whose fortunes waned as the economy changed, bringing unemployment, crime, and an attenuation of the social fabric. On the other hand, the book also describes a remarkable collaboration that emerged between a faculty member (and editor of the volume), Lorlene Hoyt, and a group of six graduate students affiliated with M.I.T.'s Community Innovator's Lab (CoLab). Hoyt's idea was to establish an inquiry community that would provide ongoing support for students as they completed their studies in urban planning so that they could not only satisfy their master's thesis requirements but also produce scholarship that would serve the community partners with whom they worked. The results of these efforts are striking. *Transforming Cities and Minds Through the Scholarship of Engagement* demonstrates the kind of academic work that is possible when students engage in collaborative, community-based research that aims not just to diagnose problems (which universities excel at) but to suggest productive ways forward.

In the introductory chapter, Hoyt describes the context from which the project grew. Given the prodigious and complex challenges facing American cities, she argues that producing meaningful change requires the expertise of both city planners and the people who live and work in our urban neighborhoods. Such reciprocal partnering allows for a deeply contextual and nuanced examination of urban life and is the best means of arriving at workable solutions. As Hoyt puts it, "The guiding principles of democratic engagement are created, tested, and recalibrated locally in response to ever-changing conditions" *(p. 2).*

Hoyt also offers a thoughtful reflection on her own experience taking on this work as an untenured faculty member at a research university. Despite M.I.T.'s storied history, including Kurt Lewin's pathbreaking work on action research in the 1940s and Don Schön's influential vision of a "new epistemology" that would move beyond the limits of experimental design and embrace forms of research that grapple with the complexities and uncertainties

of the real world, Hoyt found an environment ambivalent toward (and at times opposed to) her and her students' efforts. Hoyt succeeded, however, in drawing six graduate students into a collaborative project whose goal was to reimagine the master's thesis. Hoyt writes, "Once I lured them into taking part, these students approached an old problem—how to write a thesis that won't end up ignored and forgotten—through what we came to call the scholarship of engagement" *(p. 6)*.

Hoyt explores the idea that effecting change requires cultivating deep, sustained civic cooperation and collaboration involving local government, nonprofit organizations, big and small businesses, and the citizenry. A particularly intriguing concept Hoyt introduces is the notion of "rooted institutions," organizations that provide jobs, make investments in the community, and understand the local ecology. As the other chapters in the book illustrate (though the other authors do not reference the term), rooted institutions—whether they are large or small—have the capacity to serve as centers of gravity in communities caught in the centrifugal force of economic change. That these institutions can play such a role is an insightful and useful concept alongside the notion of "eds and meds" serving as "anchor institutions." Indeed, for some of our forgotten cities, smaller rooted institutions may be promising partners in change where no large anchor institutions exist.

Hoyt argues that urban planners must address three key issues in order to produce meaningful change: the economy, equity, and the environment. This concept provides an effective organizing framework for the book. In Part 1, "Engaging Economy," the chapter authors examine the role of small businesses in the economic development of Camden, New Jersey and efforts to apply ideas from the economic development model of Mondragon, Spain to Cleveland, Ohio, especially the notion of reinvesting local dollars. Part 2, "Engaging Equity," explores the histories of racial discrimination and systematic disinvestment in communities in Kansas City, Missouri, and Lawrence, Massachusetts and how these legacies continue today. Part 3, "Engaging Environment," explores efforts to create sustainable cities.

In the final chapter, Hoyt reflects on her experience as the leader of this inquiry community and on her work with these students. Hoyt argues that a "new epistemology" is needed to produce knowledge that leads to change in the world as well as changes in how we conduct graduate education. She describes with courage and honesty the challenges of the collaboration. For example, when Hoyt first met with students to propose the idea of producing an

edited volume, "[t]he response was lukewarm" *(p. 215).* The projects themselves were challenging. Committing to address pressing problems meant ceding some control over the topics the students took on. The time needed to accomplish the project was substantial and required numerous meetings, including "miniretreats" that gave the participants the opportunity to share their analyses with one another and to identify emerging themes across their work. One limitation of the chapter is that it provides few insights into the perspectives from the other group members, beyond brief quotes. This is Hoyt's story. She lays out with candor her unsuccessful effort to convince colleagues in her department that her tenure case was "an opportunity to reignite a productive conversation, among faculty both inside and outside of our department, about the promise and consequences of introducing an epistemology of reciprocal knowledge into a renowned research university like M.I.T." *(p. 229)*. The department voted not to seek external review of her scholarship, thereby ending her tenure process.

However, Hoyt's vision of the kind of graduate work and scholarship that might be possible is embodied in this volume. The chapters offer careful and nuanced discussions of the challenges facing these urban communities. In some instances, the recommendations offered by the chapter authors are perhaps a bit general. For example, one advocates the establishment of a network so organizations can discuss issues of mutual interest and to help create a more forceful voice within the city. But how this is to be accomplished remains unspecified. However, this reader had to continually remind himself that these chapters are revised master's theses—overall, the quality of the analysis and the writing are impressive. They reveal the relationships that these authors were able to develop with people in the community during the course of conducting their work. As a whole, the volume offers an impressive contribution to the literature on the scholarship of engagement and a powerful vindication of Hoyt's dream of remaking graduate education.

About the Reviewer

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Cooper, D. D. (2014). *Learning in the plural: Essays on the humanities and public life.* East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press. 194 pp.

Review by Andrew J. Pearl

In *Learning in the Plural: Essays on the Humanities and Public Life*, David Cooper makes the latest contribution to the Michigan State University Press Transformation in Higher Education: Scholarship of Engagement series with a collection of essays written over a span of 20 years. Although these essays have previously been published, they remain relevant. Cooper explores the interaction between the humanities in higher education and public engagement. With these essays, Cooper claims that "the questions I raise in this book are uncomfortable and, in my view, necessary for reflection, renewal, and reform" *(p. xx)*. Readers will be grateful that Cooper is willing to ask these difficult questions to stimulate critical reflection and discussion.

Cooper begins with a work written more than 20 years ago, "*Believing* in Difference: The Ethics of Civic Literacy" *(1993),* which opens with the statement, "I can think of no more urgent moment than now for undergraduate educators to be asking ethical questions about the content and context of a liberal arts education" *(p. 1)*. To address this need, Cooper seeks to "explore a moral self-enclosure I see among my students that leaves them indifferent to the obsessions over 'difference' and 'the other' that dominated—and continue to dominate—humanities curricula, pedagogy, theory, and scholarship" *(p. xxi)*. Two decades later, this concern remains relevant in today's academic climate, and perhaps the need is even greater.

Much of this chapter is focused on "ethical idealism," which Cooper calls "a critical ingredient in the democratic humanism that makes civil society more than an entry in a dictionary of cultural literacy" *(p. 3)*. In essence, ethical idealism is the idea that both the common and the individual good can be simultaneously achieved. Serving the common good and serving the needs of the individual are equally important and inexorably tied together. Students become increasingly disillusioned by defining motives, goals, and success when individual goals and success overwhelm ethical idealism. Cooper concludes the chapter by offering an interesting criticism of the American Dream as at least partially responsible for this shift.

The next chapter is "Moral Literacy" *(1994),* a term Cooper considers "slippery and risky" because of its dangerous potential

to reinforce repressive social structures, with students becoming indoctrinated to the prevailing moral and social wisdom. Cooper claims that one of his "principal concerns as a writing teacher is my students' moral literacy and, in particular, the critical nexus formed in the writing classroom by language, moral sensibility, cultural values, identity development, and ethical behavior" *(p. 17)*. He is hopeful for the power of language, which

> is capable of embracing the most important dimensions of our moral situations as individuals and, in this way, may guide us to react to our social conditions with empathy and critical insight instead of a cynicism and distrust that strike me as inevitable by-products of the strict social constructionist view of moral literacy. *(p. 23)*

This view may be challenged by "hardliners" or other cynics, but it demonstrates Cooper's faith in the potential power of literacy. It is the choices that we make with regard to that power that determine whether or not it is used to reinforce social structures. For Cooper, the key to his students' education is asking questions that drive them toward self-discovery.

Those who are engaged in service-learning pedagogy will be particularly interested in "Reading, Writing, and Reflection" *(1998),* through which Cooper discusses the importance of providing students with opportunities for critical reflection. Cooper begins with a vignette from a student's reflective journal that relayed his experience working with a community partner with whom he did not see eye-to-eye. Cooper then follows as the student learns more about himself and notes the role that critical reflection through writing plays in that process. Cooper stresses the importance of the instructor's role in reflection. It is not about guiding the student to a way of thinking; rather, it is about guiding the students to think in new ways on their own. Reflection in service-learning gives students the platform to ask themselves difficult questions and to learn more about themselves in how they answer those questions. As students connect their academic material to their service experiences, it becomes apparent that the quality of the reflection is only as good as the guidance provided by the instructor. Cooper clearly delineates between cursory reflection and the in-depth critical reflection that is required for students to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences.

To begin the essay "The Changing Seasons of Liberal Learning" *(1998)*, Cooper recalls events surrounding the building of protest

and counterprotest shanties on Michigan State's campus in 1990. From this example, he goes on to explore the ebbs and flows of liberal thought among America's youth and the subsequent conservative reactions as each generation struggles to distinguish itself from the shadow cast by the previous generation. In Cooper's words,

> historical pessimism is especially heightened . . . as the current generation views the past from the vantage point of a present where debate rages over the deterioration of values, the loss of ethical standards in business, and the general decline of civility in America. *(p. 53-54)*

For many, higher education is seen as a process of matriculating into a career and a way to signal qualifications, à la the "sheepskin effect" *(Hungerford & Solon, 1987),* rather than a place where the new generation builds an identity. As the discussion surrounding the recent documentary *Ivory Tower (Rossi, 2014)* suggests, this trend continues to be an important issue for many who represent post-secondary education as a costly private good and credentialing service. Worse yet, this credentialing process does not appear to be properly preparing students to enter the workforce *(Hart Research Associates, 2015).* For Cooper, the solution includes a liberal education, which can

> cultivate the capacity, desire, and drive for independent learning. A liberal education teaches us how to dig out what we need to know, and how to assess what's worth knowing.… A liberal education teaches us to think for ourselves, independent of the opinions of others, yet at the same time squaring our needs and aims in the world with the aspirations of others. *(p. 66)*

Arguably, this type of thinking is sorely needed today. Imagine how teaching students to think independently and respectfully through the liberal arts and a liberal education can foster intellectual, emotional, and civic growth as it encourages reflective thinking and broad learning.

In his next essay, "Academic Professionalism and the Betrayal of the Land-Grant Tradition" *(1999),* Cooper contributes to the conversation about what it means to be a land-grant institution in the current context of American higher education. Along the same lines, many readers will be familiar with the Kellogg Commission's reports *Returning to Our Roots (2001)* and *Renewing the Covenant*

(2000). Cooper, the Kellogg Commission, and others have been working toward articulating a current understanding of and role for the land-grant institutions, and this conversation has continued to evolve. At Cooper's own institution, Michigan State University, the world-grant ideal has been conceptualized as a paradigm for adapting land-grant values to the 21st century *(Fitzgerald & Simon, 2012; Simon, 2009)*.

Cooper focuses his discussion on professionalism, along with "an entire cultural complex evoked by the mystique of professionalism" *(p. 69)*. This has replaced, even betrayed, what he sees as the original ideas of democracy and access espoused by the land-grant tradition. There has been a shift from the promotion of democratic ideals to self-promotion among students. Optimistically, Cooper does not see the separation between academic expertise and civic culture as permanent, but rather as a relatively recent aberration. However, those of us working at higher education institutions need to continue asking whether we have made progress committing ourselves to the original ideals of the land-grant tradition.

In the foreword to *Learning in the Plural*, Julie Ellison advises that readers may want to begin reading this volume with the essay "Bus Rides and Forks in the Road: The Making of a Public Scholar" *(2002)*, referring to it as the "true beginning" of the collection *(p. xi)*. I was unable to break away from the chronological sequence, but Ellison's suggestion is worth considering.

The essay begins by following Cooper through a "day in the life" of his early academic career, which highlights the speed bumps that one can encounter on the road to becoming an academic professional. Cooper talks about the "challenges and opportunities" of that year and how he found them "morally bracing" *(p. 84)*. The lessons from this chapter should help anyone considering a career in the academy. Along the way, scholars will likely face opportunities for distraction and temptations to stray from what drives them to pursue scholarship in the first place, including pressures to bend to the academic professionalism discussed in the previous chapter. Cooper describes how events and circumstances shaped his thinking and identifies many of the critical moments of his career. Readers will note how Cooper is always prepared to take advantage of and learn from his experiences, reminding us that we can always learn, even if those lessons are not always readily apparent. As an aspiring scholar, I find this chapter particularly instructive and hopeful. Cooper shows that, while by no means guaranteed, it is possible for one to pursue a fulfilling career in

which vocation and avocation align. It is possible to find a harmonious resolution of professional dissonance.

"Education for Democracy: A Conversation in Two Keys" *(2004)* was first delivered as a keynote address in which Cooper's own words are interspersed with quotes taken from *The New Student Politics: The Wingspread Statement on Student Civic Engagement*. When first delivered, I imagine this was particularly compelling and in print, the effect is largely the same (although perhaps less striking than it was in person). The two voices and what they are saying show in sharp relief the communication problems that occur between generations and why students often feel that they are not truly being heard. It is interesting to hear the assumptions that are made about students and how genuinely listening to the students is often difficult to achieve. One of the driving questions throughout this essay is what it means to be civically engaged. Students are frustrated by the fact that they view their civic engagement in their own terms—represented by what Cooper calls an "interesting and insightful paradox" … that students "hate the idea of civic engagement but they welcome opportunities to become civically engaged" *(p. 109)*.

Cooper begins "Is Civic Discourse Still Alive?" *(2007)* by giving readers a clear understanding of what the phrase "civic discourse" means and differentiating it from other related concepts like "civil behavior." He discusses the discourse that is often seen on news programs as anything but civil and research suggesting that Americans are frustrated with the extreme polarity in the national debates. Cooper suggests that although national debates are watched on television, local dialogue is a more valued currency. He leaves us with nine factors from the Harwood Group and Kettering Foundation that help us understand how well we are engaging in civic discourse. In light of these factors, readers should consider how the landscape of civic discourse has changed since this essay was first published 8 years ago. As Cooper asks, how can we find opportunities to engage in civic discourse, and how can our anchor institutions facilitate this discourse?

In the essay "Four Seasons of Deliberative Learning" *(2008)*, Cooper describes how he developed a new sequence of rhetoric and American Studies courses that purposefully incorporated deliberative democracy and deliberative learning. In doing so, he hopes that his experience shows "that the synergy between deliberation and active learning can energize the undergraduate humanities classroom at all levels, even the senior capstone" *(p. 123)*. Democracy is fundamentally a rhetorical art, and deliberation, "the discursive

engine of democracy," can challenge and transform students. For his students, the journey began with the Service Learning Writing Project, which included "rigorous classroom instruction, critical readings in American civic culture, and real-world writing projects in the community" *(p. 124)*, and was followed by a second course offered in the Professional Writing major. The third course was an elective seminar, and the fourth was a senior capstone experience. Teaching these courses led Cooper to ask questions of his students in different ways and through the experience, he became more adept at helping students become better interpreters of their own lives, society, and culture. In his words:

> The civic engagement and public work movement in the academy has allowed me to reimagine my role in the classroom and the working relationships I have with students, colleagues, and community partners.... Above all, it has renewed my hope that universities can play a dynamic role in fulfilling Jefferson's legacy and educating citizens to perform the difficult, necessary, and rewarding work demanded by a strong democracy. *(p. 148)*

In the final essay, Cooper's driving question is explicitly stated in the title: "Can Civic Engagement Save the Humanities?" *(2013)*. Cooper believes the answer is a certain yes. Using the genre of romantic comedy films as a metaphor, Cooper states that "the civic engagement movement needs the humanities, and the humanities need civic engagement" *(p. 151),* but a large number of plot twists have kept the two apart thus far. By the end of the essay, Cooper appears hopeful, sensing

> an awakening, maybe even a genuine soul-searching, in the academy and especially among humanists spurred by our loss of public purpose and relevance and the recognition that the vast majority of hyper-specialized humanities scholarship is completely unintelligible to a literate public. *(p. 161)*

He notes that while some, like the association Imagining America (IA), have been pushing an agenda of civic engagement for years, even organizations that have traditionally resisted civic engagement are beginning to recognize that connecting civically is an imperative for keeping the humanities relevant in higher education and society. Cooper fears that this contribution is a "polemic

that will win me few friends" *(p. xxii),* but I hope it is not. If the reader has an initial negative reaction to the essay, it is important to step back and question why Cooper's conclusions inspire discomfort. As he stresses throughout this collection, one must constantly engage in a critical examination of one's work, and perspective is necessary.

In addition to Cooper's essays, the book includes a foreword and an afterword fittingly provided by leaders from Imagining America. Julie Ellison (founding director of IA) writes the foreword "On the Bus" and, as mentioned above, recommends readers begin with "Bus Rides and Forks in the Road." Whether or not readers follow Ellison's suggestion, I would recommend at least rereading Ellison's foreword immediately after reading "Bus Rides"—her keen insight lends depth to the essay and will be useful to readers looking to apply lessons from Cooper's experience to their own careers. The afterword, "Speaking and Working in Critically Hopeful Terms," is written by Scott Peters and Timothy Eatman, currently the codirectors of IA. Their response to the book comes in the form of an answer to the question, "What can and should those of us who wish to advance public scholarship and engagement in the humanities and other fields do?" *(p. 171)*. The first part of the answer is to reclaim and reconstruct a democratic, civic professionalism and how scholars form their professional identities. Second, Peters and Eatman recommend teaching and practicing a different kind of politics, one that is different from how politics is traditionally defined in the humanities and higher education in general. Finally, an agenda should be set that intentionally sharpens and sustains a critical discourse in higher education.

We often speak of the need to communicate clearly and honestly with our community partners in the spirit of mutual benefit and respect. This is how effective partnerships are built and sustained. However, Cooper's *Learning in the Plural* identifies the need for better understanding between and among groups on campus. It is far more effective to communicate a unified voice from the university to the community partner, and this cannot happen until institutional stakeholders are on the same page. A recurring theme in several of Cooper's essays is the disconnect between generations of students or between faculty members and students. This disconnect is portrayed as a sharp contrast in "Education for Democracy," in which there are literally two different voices speaking. If one of our stated goals is to prepare students as engaged citizens, we need to have a common understanding of what it means to be an engaged citizen. In addition to boundary spanners who can facili-

tate communication between institutions and communities, perhaps we also need boundary spanners who are fluent in the language of multiple generations.

In summary, *Learning in the Plural* is a valuable collection of essays that guides readers to reflect on what the humanities mean in higher education, and indeed in a modern society. It should be no surprise that Cooper is an excellent writer, but it is worth noting how well each essay is crafted. He never fails to provide the reader with a clear path to his central theme. To me, it is interesting to imagine a reader coming to this book unaware that these essays are previously published, the earliest having appeared more than 20 years ago. Only the dates and some of the references to popular culture make these essays dated; the themes discussed are just as relevant and pressing as when they were first authored. The argument can be made that the issues are, in fact, even more urgent today. In this way, *Learning in the Plural* is both timely and timeless.

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Schwartz, B., & Sharpe, K. (2011). *Practical wisdom: The right way to do the right thing.* New York, NY: Riverhead Books. 324 pp.

Review by Ronald J. Hustedde

The hegemony of technical or instrumental-driven knowledge in university education and the professions is coming under increasing attack. Critics argue that something is missing. The focus on rules and procedures minimizes opportunities for moral-driven reasoning and action. It is compounded by the market-driven emphasis on results and production that has diminished the time and need for reflection about the values of what the professions should or should not do on a day-to-day basis. As a result, many of those in the time-honored professions such as law, medicine, and teaching face days with big checklists that don't address the more complex questions about the uncertainties and the messiness of practice. Where is meaning or balance?

Barry Schwartz, a psychologist, and Kenneth Sharpe, a political scientist, have addressed this gap in their book, *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing.* They have joined other contemporary authors who are updating and reexamining Artistotle's phronesis as a reply to this gap.

They draw upon Aristotle's *(1999)* classic book, *Nicomachean Ethics,* along with observations about contemporary institutions to argue that excessive management practices, rules, and incentives for accountability, efficiency, and good performance cannot replace *phronesis.* They call it "practical wisdom."

Practical wisdom involves an understanding about the aims of activities in which one is engaged. It's about improvising and balancing conflicting aims and interpreting rules and procedures in a particular context. It's about taking on the perspective of others and learning how the other person feels. Practical wisdom is about blending emotions and values with reason to do the right thing. The authors suggest practical wisdom is learned through experiences; it is not taught in a conventional way.

The authors use case studies to explore the hostile climate that hinders practical wisdom and professional judgment. They cite the standardization of teaching that makes it difficult for a teacher to adequately respond with professionalism to the shifting learning needs of her students from various cultures and circumstances.

The authors investigated another case about how a judge's practical wisdom was hindered by the 1987 Federal Sentencing Reform

Act. The authors contend the Act prioritized uniformity and retribution over the balance for rehabilitation and deterrence. Judges left the bench or retired early because there wasn't much freedom to use practical wisdom when making decisions. The authors build a persuasive argument that the professions are being demoralized in ways that limit and discourage practitioners from using practical wisdom. They cite research that indicates psychic numbing and ethical erosion is taking place. In essence, rules and procedures can maintain high standards, but they can also be too strict, too detailed, and even destructive. Similar arguments were developed by Max Weber *(2002)* in his classic *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Although Weber noted there were positive effects of bureaucracies, he argued that increased rationalization, control, and efficiency was dehumanizing and would create an "iron cage" in which individual freedom and decision making would be limited in a technically ordered and rigid society.

The last two chapters of the book provide sources of hope for counterattacking the detailed rules and procedures that block practical wisdom. There are more stories about teachers, judges, medical providers, and others who have challenged the system or built new structures and institutions to reintegrate *phronesis* into professional life. Drug courts and veterans' courts have emerged that balance justice with practical wisdom. Medical schools are no longer focusing exclusively on technical knowledge but are exposing medical students to empathetic experiences and listening skills associated with practical wisdom. Post-law training programs have emerged to help lawyers balance the tensions associated with corporate practice and social justice.

The authors assert that contemporary psychology links the exercise of practical wisdom with long-term happiness. Discretion, variety in work, belief in the purpose of the enterprise, and meaning are the keys. The authors tend to focus more on individuals and their power to influence systems, but they don't explore collective practical wisdom. Was the dismantlement of the highly rational Soviet bloc system a form of collective *phronesis*? The authors don't discuss the limitations of practical wisdom for the collective. What determines whether a collective is wise or unwise?

Aristotle wrote for the elites of his day, in which there were sharp divisions between men and women and slaves and free men. The book is couched in a similar vein with an almost exclusive focus on professions. It doesn't explore how *phronesis* is applied to more pressing contemporary issues such as racism, class consciousness, or sexism. One could argue that feminist theories incorporate

phronesis because they tend to highlight the emotions, value-laden questions, and experiences of women to understand and address public issues. In essence, we could draw upon feminist approaches towards the social sciences as a link that could further the integration of practical wisdom into higher education and engagement.

There is ample room for further research in this area. The authors don't cite examples from innovative firms, groups, and communities that appear to be integrating practical wisdom into day-to-day practices. Is it easier for practical wisdom to emerge in counter-culture movements? What can be learned from these sectors? Is practical wisdom illusory? How is manifested? Are there skills and knowledge associated with practical wisdom? How is it acquired? Special attention should be directed towards higher education outreach and engagement. It isn't clear what is the cutting edge of practical wisdom in university settings and how faculty and students may or may not be incorporating it into learning patterns. Do multidisciplinary or post-disciplinary academic coalitions with more fluid boundaries provide more opportunities for practical wisdom to emerge?

For the most part, the book focuses on the professions with relatively little exploration of how practical wisdom emerges from communities. Are there grassroots groups that are more prone to nurture practical wisdom in their leaders? What distinguishes them from other groups? What insights can be learned from them?

Practical Wisdom should be a welcome perspective to those engaged in higher education and outreach because it challenges the domination of instrumental knowledge against values-driven knowledge. It raises uncomfortable questions about our practices of *phronesis* in our disciplines and academic homes.

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