

## **Moving From Mavericks at the Margins: Encouraging Progress but “Miles to Go”**

Amy Driscoll and Lorilee R. Sandmann

Fifteen years ago, we explored challenges faculty faced to advance their scholarly engagement. In this update, we will revisit the faculty featured in our 2001 article to see whether they continue to feel like the lonely “mavericks” they once were or have blended comfortably into a “mainstream” community of scholars on their campuses and in national contexts. We contend that the scholarship of community engagement is no longer found on the margins of higher education, but has progressed to being “mainstream” in professional practice, recognition, tenure policies, publications and presentations, and in everyday faculty conversations. Ideally, this contention would be supported by research, and we would quote data on the number of higher education institutions that recognize and honor the scholarship of engagement for promotion and tenure, the percentage of tenured faculty whose scholarship reflects their commitment to community engagement, or the ratio of traditional scholarship to engaged scholarship that institutions use to evaluate faculty. Instead, this work begins with a recommendation for research efforts to probe and examine the status of community-engaged scholarship in our national higher education scene. In lieu of national data, we rely on powerful national indicators of the prominence of community engagement in our institutions and draw connections to the potential for the status of related scholarship. In addition, we describe significant changes in higher education’s response to Boyer’s (1990) urging us to work with external partners in addressing complex issues of society—institutional changes that demand a broad definition of scholarship.

We are certain that some of the “isolation and lack of reward” that we described for Ron Silva, Nancy Longley, and Jeanine Chin in 2001 still remains in some places, but we find an overwhelming number of powerful contrasts in individual institutions such as Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, University of Memphis, Nazareth College, Appalachian State University, Otterbein University, Elon University, Otis College of Art & Design, and Michigan State University; entire higher education systems such as the California State University system; statewide networks

such as the higher education connections in North Carolina; and impressive community colleges like Kapiolani Community College and Miami Dade College, with their evaluation systems that are actively promoting, supporting, and honoring institutional community engagement and related faculty scholarship. These examples begin to represent the diverse national picture of the scholarship of engagement as mainstream. To go beyond individual examples, we have identified three national indicators that undergird the status of the scholarship of engagement.

### **The National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement (2000-2010)**

We begin with the most relevant indicator of the national mainstream status of community-engaged scholarship—the closing of the National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement. This may strike some as a negative indicator, but the board was no longer needed. In 2000, there was a critical need for qualified reviewers who understood the scholarship of engagement and could use appropriate criteria for providing reviews to campuses. For most of its 10 years, the board provided informative reviews and occasionally overturned decisions made without understanding and appropriate criteria for evaluating the new form of scholarship. In 2010, anecdotal data and a lack of requests for review indicated that community-engaged scholars were no longer isolated and had confidence in peers who could judge their community-engaged scholarship. Ron Silva found campus peers who understood the work he did with public schools and no longer faced questions about his methodology or audience for his writing. He collaborated with faculty in other disciplines and on other campuses to achieve his goals for higher education partnerships with schools. He had a strong voice in the discussions at his institution to revise the promotion and tenure policies in support of newly hired faculty who arrived with similar community commitments.

### **The Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement Changes in Requirements**

A second national indicator is found in a recent change in the Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement framework for application. Prior to 2014/15, questions of promotion and tenure based on the scholarship of engagement were optional, and institutions could choose to respond or describe traditional policies with no recognition of engagement scholarship. In the

latest classification application process, institutions were required to respond with accounts of how their reward policies were revised or were in progress to honor the scholarship of engagement. The classification framework probed extensively to determine how institutions were recognizing alternative forms of scholarship, asked for policy examples and definitions, and pressed for descriptions of plans for future change. Jeanine Chin's institution would have submitted a strong application that proudly described its new reward system. From its initiation, the classification framework also probed for examples of engaged scholarship related to curricular engagement and to outreach and scholarship. Jeanine's significant work with the zoo would have been another strong element in her campus application. She would have also found energizing support in the third national indicator.

### **The Engagement Scholarship Consortium**

Not only did Nancy Longley experience isolation working without understanding peers on her campus, but those of us who became national disciples of the scholarship of engagement were consistently barraged with the question "What large research-intensive institutions are doing this? Give us examples." The underlying assumption was that if those institutions were not rewarding the scholarship of engagement, it wasn't legitimate, would disappear, or was less rigorous than other forms. In 2000, Penn State University, The Ohio State University, and the University of Wisconsin–Extension initiated an annual meeting to share knowledge about their community-based programs. The three institutions began formalizing their National Outreach Scholarship relationship and invited other institutions to join. Today, the affiliation that evolved is called the Engagement Scholarship Consortium and is an international organization of 33 state, public, and private institutions; most members are research-intensive institutions. The work of the consortium is to promote and foster strong university–community partnerships anchored in the rigor of scholarship. There is dynamic collaboration in the development and delivery of programs, an annual meeting, and educational resources that support the creation and advancement of knowledge underlying successful engagement scholarship initiatives in higher education. Nancy Longley would have felt "at home" at the consortium and would probably be a major contributor to the collaborative efforts.

Beyond these strong national indicators, there are other significant higher education phenomena that respond to Boyer's prodding. Institutional missions are increasingly clear about

partnering with the community to address society's issues, and strategic plans consistently address specific approaches, resources, and intentions to respond. Even accreditation requirements urge higher education institutions to "contribute to the public good" (WASC, 2013, p. 12). Missions, strategic plans, and accreditation requirements cannot be met without scholarly faculty engagement in the community. Within such strategic directions, faculty like Ron Silva, Nancy Longley, and Jeanine Chin must be supported with colleague recognition and collaboration, tenure and reward policies, and national communities for dissemination.

Rather than list and describe specific institutional examples, disciplinary associations' support, and other networks for the scholarship of engagement, we want to explore the "hot spots" or obstacles to even more intense and complete mainstreaming of the scholarship of engagement. The work of prominent engagement scholars must be acknowledged here for their persistent study and advocacy efforts: Emily Janke, Patti Clayton, Barbara Holland, Tim Eatman, John Saltmarsh, KerryAnn O'Meara, and other scholars whose writing appears in this issue of *JHEOE*. In their insightful resources, they have identified those obstacles:

1. *The issues involved with defining and valuing community engagement and outreach/public service.* Although both kinds of engagement contribute to the community, they are distinct from one another, and both can produce scholarship.
2. *Questions of how to honor the spectrum of scholarship.* To honor both traditional and nontraditional scholarship, we need to expand our meaning of "impact."
3. *A commitment to stewarding the rigor of scholarship.* There is a need to use common standards for all of higher education's scholarship.
4. *Difficulties with the "three-bucket problem."* We must explore how to "separately report and evaluate teaching, research/creative activities, and service in promotion and tenure processes" (Janke, Medlin, & Holland, 2014, pp. 8-14).

The same scholars who contributed to the articulation of these broad obstacles with their long history in higher education have also strengthened the case for engaged scholarship as mainstream. They describe powerful contemporary rationales for higher education's need to change more drastically. Among them, Eatman (2014)

eloquently encouraged a broad vision of scholarship as a way to attract and prepare students from all backgrounds and to “foster an intellectually and culturally diverse faculty” (p. 5) to teach, mentor, and prepare those students.

Most recently, scholars O’Meara, Eatman, and Petersen (2015) discussed the obstacles and provided a road map of recommendations to upgrade the “mainstream” of engaged scholarship. They described the need for alignment between the aspirations of a new and emerging faculty population and a view of the faculty role in which teaching, research, and service are integrated, overlap, and are mutually reinforcing (NERCHE, 2015). Their picture of engaged scholarship will allow institutions of higher education to authentically reflect their priorities in promotion and tenure policies. Ideally, those policies will reflect an enhanced level of “institutional mindfulness” through more “definitional and valuing language” (O’Meara, Eatman, & Peterson, 2015, pp. 53, 56) as demonstrated in examples the authors provide in their text. Finally, there is an urging for reinforced and continued address of issues of peer review, impact, and documentation of community engagement. In other words, we have “miles to go.”

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