PROJECTS WITH PROMISE

Evolution of a Social Media–Driven Campus–Community Partnership: Collaborative Learning at The Knowledge Café

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Abstract

This article describes an early-stage collaborative partnership between a local community foundation and a regional campus of a major university to increase dialogue on the strategic importance and practical execution of advanced social media best practices for small- to medium-sized businesses. Started through a grant won by the author, an interactive program was established as The Knowledge Café. This program includes a series of participative lectures and discussions on advanced social media applications, guest speakers addressing relevant topics, and a community-driven wiki where participants can share their expertise. The origination of the partnership and the evolutionary pathway traveled to date are described, along with data and key learnings generated during the first 2 years of operation. Possibilities for future changes in structure and activities to expand the offerings of The Knowledge Café provide an indication of how the campus–community partnership should continue to grow with time.

Keywords: social media, community partnership, interactive learning

Introduction

*L*ike other states in the "rust belt," Ohio has lost a large number of manufacturing jobs over the past 20 years. Community-based nonprofits, either with or without assistance from local government, are working to help residents reestablish gainful employment in fields not associated with traditional heavy industry. Numerous new business incubators are offering basic workshops and skill-based training on financing, managing a workforce, marketing products and/or services, and similar contemporary business topics. Participation by local residents tends to be robust. In addition to those who have lost manufacturing jobs, attendees include local residents who may be underemployed or are otherwise seeking to improve their job skills. Programming is advertised in a variety of ways, including via social media channels, with sessions typically held at local community centers and other public venues. Basic social media techniques appropriate for

business are covered to complement fundamental business skills, but advanced social media training for business owners has been unavailable. Topics that could be added to drive increased business success include constructing a content-driven social media site, strategically scheduling timely updates and other communications, and applying web analytics and other advanced processes that help business owners understand user demographics.

Concurrently, the regional campuses of Miami University (Hamilton and Middletown) are seeking new ways to engage the communities that they serve, either through programs between the university as a whole and the communities or through the individual efforts of faculty members who seek to establish and champion mutually beneficial partnerships as part of their community service efforts. Applying the assessment rubric for institutionalizing community engagement in higher education developed by Furco, Weerts, Burton, and Kent *(2009)*, the institution as a whole is probably best described as on the cusp of transitioning from the critical mass building category to the quality building category of the rubric for each of Furco et al.'s five dimensions. Although much work remains to achieve true institutionalization of community engagement, there are strong examples of success on an individual project level and good general awareness of the benefits that can be realized from true collaborative partnerships.

The regional campuses have a long tradition of serving the educational needs of their local communities and offer a broad range of 2-year and 4-year degree plans that are rigorous in their design but also tailored to the local and regional job markets. University involvement in the types of workshops described above is, however, without precedent. The student population at the regional campuses includes traditional students who enter the institution right out of high school, older adult students who are returning to school to broaden their skill base and/or advance their careers, and part-time students who may not be interested in a degree but would like to master a specific new area of special interest to them. Faculty undertake a combination of teaching, service, and scholarly research activities with strong encouragement to develop their engagement within the local community, where collaborative projects are acknowledged and supported.

The purpose of this article is to describe the design, implementation, and first 2 years of execution of a campus–community partnership to provide training to current and prospective small business owners on the theory and practice of business-focused social media technologies. These are technologies that could help drive

business growth beyond what is possible through more traditional business practices, such as those described in the aforementioned preexisting community workshops. Specific social media–driven examples include building loyal user groups for the products and/ or services of the business, joining and maintaining a presence in thought-leader panels, appropriately handling customer service issues online, effectively blending original content and curated content from other authors to form a cohesive website, linking multiple social media platforms together to deliver a consistent message in a timely manner, and so on. Mastering these types of activities moves business practitioners from casual social media use to a more professional skill set that can augment their competitiveness in the online business community.

The partnership described throughout the text is a dynamic one that started very simply between one business faculty member with a strong interest in social media theory and application and the executive director of a local community foundation seeking new programs to help stimulate economic growth within a business environment under transition. As will be noted throughout, the nature of the partnership, along with the actual participants within the partnership, went through several noticeable transitions before achieving the stable format that will drive sustainability through time. To place the partnership into perspective, discussions of the initial learnings from the partnership and plans for maintaining program momentum in subsequent years are included.

Background

Campus–Community Partnerships

Campus–community partnerships come in a variety of shapes and forms that serve to link organizations in pursuit of common learning and mutual benefit. As noted by Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, Mackeigan, and Farrar *(2011)*, partnerships of this kind tend to be hard work and also tend to involve blending together different personal styles, cultures, locations, and other parameters that can result in complex working relationships. To the degree that a partnership can be carefully defined ahead of time, with a detailed understanding of what will be achieved, the probability of success is enhanced for those who will participate and contribute on an ongoing basis *(p. 16)*.

In general terms, campus–community partnerships are often classified as community service-learning (CSL) or community-

based research *(CBR; Curwood et al., 2011; Gray & MacRae, 2012; Hoyt, 2010)*. Where the CSL model is followed, "an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning activities" *(Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning, 2006, p. 1; Curwood et al., 2011, p. 15)* frequently results in a mixture of roles with some participants driving the programming and other participants limiting their involvement to absorbing the knowledge offered. The CBR model represents a generally more straightforward partnership situation where "knowledge production" occurs by all involved parties *(Nyden, 2009, pp. 9–10)*. This collaborative effort results in all participants both generating and receiving new knowledge. At Miami University, the CSL model is the most logical and popular approach taken when instructors of undergraduate coursework seek to add service-learning projects or activities to the curriculum. Faculty teaching graduate-level courses are more likely to follow the CBR model, thereby incorporating a two-way sharing of knowledge between students and participants from the greater community.

Outside the university curriculum, faculty are strongly encouraged to interact with community members, organizations, or other institutions to provide service or scholarly research programming for the betterment of both parties. However, in actuality, such interactions are far less common than the curriculum-driven CSL and CBR interactions. The rarity of such extracurricular interactions reflects a number of factors, chief of which is the absence of mechanisms for the university to appropriately acknowledge and reward time devoted to community partnerships.

Where community interactions and partnerships tend to flourish, success occurs in a win-win format that recognizes how each side can add value and how each side has new knowledge to gain. Hoyt *(2010)* referred to the resulting partnerships as achieving a state of "sustained engagement" where "people inside and outside the university engage in an evolutionary continuum between the ever present themes of practice and knowledge; they seek to overcome, rather than reinforce, the false dichotomy between the two" *(p. 82)*. Although both parties readily see the advantages of blending the latest academic theories with practical, real-world relevance, it is most often up to individual faculty members or small groups of like-minded faculty to initiate community contacts off campus. Community members can find it difficult, if not impossible, to navigate the hierarchy of the university well enough to reach individuals with the time, interest, and expertise that they seek. Where faculty are able to recognize the opportunities within

the community and initiate the engagement, the pathway forward often can be clearer, although still not always straightforward.

Clifford and Petrescu *(2012)* profess that making community partnerships sustainable and beneficial in the long run involves the concepts of trust and authenticity on the part of both parties. These concepts cannot be fulfilled instantaneously, but can be built up over time through internal efforts (relationships, organizational dynamics, and culture within the university), external efforts (relationships and dynamics of the community, power and resource imbalances, and community identity), and personal efforts (psychology, competencies, and career issues of the faculty). Moreover, the parties must subscribe to the belief that engaging the community, maintaining a core commitment to learning, and carefully articulating these beliefs across organizational lines will lead to maximum improvements for the community as a whole.

Understanding the Community in Context

Arguably, communities will be more willing to look at opportunities to partner with local universities if the communities lack sufficient resources to execute growth and improvement projects on their own. Universities, however, often struggle to find the resources for financial participation in community projects. Thus, the expertise of individual faculty members, departments, or even multidisciplinary teams can be vital for communities seeking new ways to approach civic needs. Researchers Lambert-Pennington, Reardon, and Robinson *(2011)* describe in detail one successful example of a campus–community partnership based on a university contributing no financial resources, but offering the expertise of a number of faculty to the City of Memphis, Tennessee. The partnership, involving both students and faculty from multiple departments at the University of Memphis, provided technical expertise, strategic planning, project management, and executional support for a major revitalization of a South Memphis neighborhood. Numerous issues relevant to the "urban core" of a large city were collaboratively addressed in an interdisciplinary approach that, while layered in complexity, ultimately was more successful than what a partnership with a single faculty member or even a single department could provide *(pp. 62–63)*.

Public communications—speeches, newsletters, press releases, and so on—by university faculty and administrators involved in campus–community partnerships constitute another essential determinant in whether or not such partnerships are viewed posi-

tively. It is intriguing to note that this is often independent of the degree of success achieved through the partnership. Community partners, the public at large, and faculty within the university seek these outward and visible signs that the university places a high value on the process of community engagement. Arrazattee, Lima, and Lundy *(2013)* noted that one of the most frequent concerns centers on whether or not the community partners are cast in a light that may make them seem "needy" or indicate that they are being "helped" by the university *(p. 47)*. Where the goal is to establish effective two-way, mutually collaborative partnerships, this connotation is counterproductive and should be addressed through properly structured communications. Unfortunately, unless carefully controlled, the varying communications styles of different departments in a given university can lead to one partnership being viewed very positively while another struggles to gain traction. Community engagement offices, with staff who are carefully trained to handle primary public communications regarding partnerships, can be an effective aid to individual faculty and/or departments in minimizing the chance of upsetting community partners through improper or unintentionally offensive language *(p. 48)*.

As a faculty member at Miami University, this author has firsthand experience in working within a university system that places a high value on engaging the surrounding communities in true collaborative partnerships that involve combinations of service and scholarship. On the regional campuses of Hamilton and Middletown where my primary activities are centered, the annual faculty evaluation criteria have been restructured to place service ahead of scholarship/research (although still behind teaching) in terms of importance. Support from the administration is readily available to help facilitate community engagement. This support includes not only tangible resources and the commitment of time to conduct partnership-based work, but also the specific language used to communicate, internally, with faculty regarding these project efforts. O'Meara, Lounder, and Hodges *(2013)* examined a theory on power and agency in organizations reported earlier by Lawrence *(2008)*, finding that it provided a good explanation for how faculty react to administration communications regarding partnerships with the community. The authors use the term "episodic power" to classify targeted communications encouraging community engagement by members of the faculty. Such communications, especially when coupled with recognition of significant community partnerships and the individuals driving them, were

recognized as a key driving force to increase participation by faculty. The effect was pronounced for tenure-track faculty, who often need to make difficult choices about the projects and activities that will be most worthwhile in an already crowded pretenure agenda *(O'Meara et al., 2013)*.

Establishing a New Campus–Community Partnership

Identifying and Addressing an Opportunity

For the past several years, I have been conducting research in the field of professional social media communications. My goals in this effort are twofold. First, I am studying the communications processes that successful online businesses use as part of their efforts to turn occasional website visitors into loyal customers. Second, I am working to identify specific social media technology skills and applications that can be effectively incorporated into business technology courses to substantially boost students' job skills for a market that relies heavily on electronic communications. This research frequently put me in contact with local and regional business owners—individuals that I looked to as sources of knowledge for dissemination in the classroom. Instead, I found a number of business owners who were eager to learn more about this research topic. Some had failed in their attempts to incorporate advanced social media work into their marketing or customer service plans; even more were unsure how to enter this arena at all.

My frequent and lengthy interactions with members of the local business community thus formed the seed of the campus–community partnership discussed in this article. The need for action was immediately clear, due to factors that included a limited local market that small- to medium-sized businesses would have to move beyond in order to grow and the lack of any available training programs covering advanced social media skills and best practices. From my conversations and an informal gap analysis of typical social media skills, it appeared that a combination of general training on how to use social media to increase market penetration, plus directed one-to-one coaching on business-specific applications, could make a difference in the marketplace success of small- to medium-sized businesses in the area served by the Miami University Middletown, Ohio, regional campus.

Catching Up on Professional Social Media Use

Although it is probably not possible to formulate a universal definition for *professional social media use*, characteristics of professionalism online include communicating fact-based information for the benefit of a business or its constituents, handling transactions in an accurate and appropriate manner, dealing quickly with customer service issues, participating in thought-leader panels, offering products and services that are readily available to purchase, and writing op-ed pieces that clearly indicate the source of the writer's knowledge and opinion. The term *professional* is an essential differentiator when describing a business-appropriate social media presence since more casual use of the relevant technologies does not automatically yield professional conduct (*Cleary, Ferguson, Jackson, & Watson, 2013*). When executed well, however, professional social media applications follow many of the same fundamental best practices of business communications, management and leadership, and marketing found in general business guidelines (*Kadam & Ayarekar, 2014; Schaupp & Belanger, 2014*). For a business owner attempting to establish a viable online presence, navigating the published literature or the plethora of self-help books available can be unnecessarily complex or even self-defeating. Working to master the concepts in a partnership setting that allows experimentation and feedback reduces the barrier to entry (*Kadam & Ayarekar, 2014*).

Establishing and supporting a professional online presence is an endeavor that crosses industry lines. Coppock and Davis *(2013)* noted that scientists are relying on social media applications to share data and work on projects between laboratories. Social media influence extends to how papers are peer-reviewed and published as well. Cleary et al. *(2013)* observed a broad spectrum of applications relevant to the health care industry. Physicians use social media to share recent developments in treatment options. For patients, health care guidelines, tips for optimizing the use of medical services, and direct electronic communications with doctors all represent contemporary applications of social media. Mergel *(2012)* found that public agencies made frequent use of social media sites to disseminate information and/or provide access to government programs but that two-way communications between agencies and their constituents were lacking. According to Zorn, Grant, and Henderson *(2013)*, not-for-profit agencies have many of the same challenges as agencies in the public sector, with resource mobilization to help achieve results being a key concern.

Originating the Campus–Community Partnership

On June 1, 2014, I applied for a grant from the Middletown [Ohio] Community Foundation (MCF) under the heading of support for Quality Education and Human Needs, with the goal of initiating the partnership that would evolve into The Knowledge Café. MCF grants are highly competitive due to limited available funds and a variety of critical social needs affecting Middletown area residents. The application was therefore kept simple and straightforward, focusing on the delivery of a series of monthly lunch and learn activities, including presentations, book reviews, guest speakers, and panel discussions *(Baim, 2016)*.

MCF funded the grant application, with funds set aside to cover a series of nine seminars to be delivered within the Miami University academic year of September 1, 2014, through June 1, 2015. At the outset, this potential partnership was in a highly formative stage and was driven by direct interactions of the faculty member (me) and the MCF executive director, who acted as both a customer for the proposed program offerings on behalf of the community at large and as a mentor and guide to what was a complex grant-writing and program execution process. It was, at this stage, definitely a partnership envisioned to perform service work for the community—a status that would change and evolve quickly with time.

The total amount received from the MCF represented a substantial fraction of the funds requested but was less than optimum for delivering the initial described programming. Observing the support from the MCF, the university administration stepped in to augment the funding received and support the full programming described in the grant application. The injection of university funding was highly welcome, but it complicated the fledgling partnership by adding another seat at the decision-making table. University administrators took an active interest in the program for its potential to evolve into new collaborative partnership opportunities over time. This potential future connection seemed entirely reasonable to me, and the increased interest from administrators was welcomed, given that this was my first foray into grant-funded community partnerships.

Discussions with the MCF and the administrators at Miami University Middletown revealed a dichotomy of thought regarding the best time of day to hold the seminars. Some preferred the original concept of lunchtime/early afternoon, and others favored

early evening sessions that could be attended after normal business hours. As a result, I volunteered to offer a total of 18 sessions, half scheduled at noon and half scheduled at 5:00 p.m. At the outset, it was not known which time would be preferable, and the option was left open to reduce the total number of sessions if one timeslot proved to be significantly more popular than the other. Note that at this point, the partnership was evolving, but it still consisted of a limited number of individuals (the Middletown Community Foundation, the Miami University administration, and the author) deciding what was to be offered to community members.

Budget

The MCF funded the campus–community partnership at $3,750 for the original nine sessions. This was 50% of my initial request of $7,500, leaving a shortfall that presented some challenges for delivering not only the original nine sessions, but also nine additional sessions in a quality manner. To help reduce overall costs, the Miami University Middletown administration permitted the use of university meeting space for the sessions, a considerable savings to the partnership versus renting other suitable locations. I was also able to raise an additional $500 in grant support from the Middletown Campus Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to assist in covering miscellaneous expenses. Additional cost savings were achieved through reducing the scope of the refreshments offered and also through handling much of the advertising for the sessions personally. A copy of the finalized budget is included in Table 1.

Table 1. Sessions Budget

Item	Budget
Books	$ 500
Advertising and speaker honoraria	$1,000
Facility charges and a/v equipment	$1,800
Supplies	$ 450
Food	$1,800
MCF total	$3,750
Additional funds from CTL	$ 500
Additional funds from University	$1,800
Operating total	$6,050

Final Preparations—and a Change in Name

With a budget in place and deliverables clearly articulated between the executive director of the MCF, the Miami University Middletown administration, and me as the principal investigator/partner in the grant, final preparations turned to operational issues involving guest speaker commitments, reserving rooms, scheduling catering, and preparing advertising. At this point, it was decided to change the name of the partnership to better capture the interest of potential participants through the planned advertising campaign. The campus–community partnership was renamed "The Knowledge Café," a name borrowed from the work of David Gurteen, a UK-based knowledge management consultant *(Gurteen, 2002)*.

Although initial sessions of The Knowledge Café were constructed largely as lectures and presentations with relatively modest opportunities for participants to interact, it was also envisioned that sessions would evolve toward a conversation-based collaborative knowledge-sharing format that would encourage participants to become more engaged and, once optimized, result in participants generating and delivering substantial portions of the session content. This approach is consistent with research by Gasik *(2011)* on project knowledge management.

Understanding Potential Participants' Interests

Prior to the first session of The Knowledge Café on October 1, 2014, a brief survey was distributed to local business owners via chambers of commerce, local business incubators, and so on, asking for their suggestions on topics to cover, preferred time of day for sessions, and other logistical parameters. Multiple business-focused organizations were contacted, representing the City of Middletown and immediate or "first tier" suburbs surrounding the city. The survey was preapproved by the Miami University IRB as exempt from human subjects research review and other requirements due to the general, nonidentifying nature of the data collected. The collective mailing lists of all organizations that helped with the survey contained nearly 1,000 names, although there were numerous duplications. Unique names accounted for just over 600 individuals, 55 of whom returned completed surveys. The results obtained were used to guide the sessions. Note that engaging individuals from the community to provide input on content prior to holding any program sessions represents the first time that the community at large was engaged in the partnership. Although at

this point the true decision-making partners remained the author, the MCF, and the Miami University administration, and the programming did not originate with the community, administration of this survey signaled the first meaningful step in transitioning to a more collaborative partnership with the community at large.

"Presession" results indicated that approximately two thirds of community members responding to the survey (67%) would prefer the evening timeslot, with 22% favoring the afternoon timeslot and 11% stating that the topic of the session would drive their choice to attend. Community members cited a variety of reasons for wanting to attend The Knowledge Café, as illustrated in Figure 1.
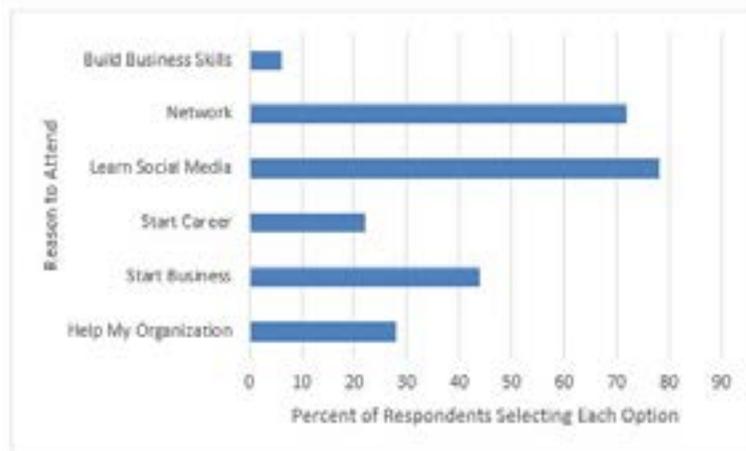

Figure 1. Interest in The Knowledge Café

Advertising

Advertising for individual sessions of The Knowledge Café was produced by the author and consisted of a two-panel flyer that could be easily transmitted by e-mail or incorporated into websites or social media sites *(Baim, 2016)*. The university provided supplemental advertising by including sessions of The Knowledge Café on electronic calendars and video monitors, as well as providing session details on the regional campus Facebook site. The MCF also ran copies of the flyers on its Facebook site. In the 2nd year of operation, additional paid advertising was included through actual Facebook ads; however, no supplemental increase in attendance could be attributed to these additional efforts. Across all advertising conducted, the Miami University event calendars and the MCF Facebook page were most frequently cited by participants as where they heard about The Knowledge Café.
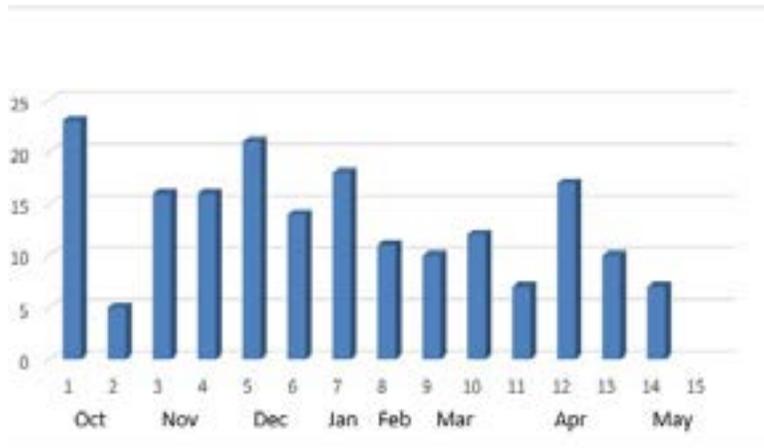
Operating The Knowledge Café

Typical Session Schedule

A typical session schedule for The Knowledge Café included "opening the doors" 30 minutes before the scheduled start time so that participants could mingle and enjoy light refreshments. Sessions started with brief announcements about upcoming events, followed by an approximately 45-minute working session. After a short break to allow participants a chance to network with others, a second 45-minute working session was held, ending with time for a question-and-answer session and an open discussion. One feature especially appreciated by participants was the use of a "hard stop" at 2 hours so that they could schedule time out of the office or away from other responsibilities. In the majority of cases, session presenters furnished handouts or links to electronic materials so that attendees could actively participate in discussions without worrying about taking copious notes. Many sessions also involved "live" interactions on the Internet so that participants could view technologies operating in real time. In one instance of unforeseen community involvement, a presenter hosted a compare-and-contrast session on the live-streaming technologies Meerkat and Periscope only to have a number of uninvited internet guests crash the demonstration—it had not been set up in password-protected mode. Some of these "interlopers" actually ended up participating in the session and adding unexpected value.

Results

Participant Demographics and Related Parameters

The Knowledge Café has received an enthusiastic response from the Miami community and surrounding areas, with virtually 100% of attendees indicating that they believed the sessions to be of value when polled on exit. Polls were conducted informally during the 1st and 2nd years of operation via a brief feedback form in session handout packets. Sessions varied in attendance based on a number of factors that included the time of day, the weather, other events scheduled the same day, and the topic selected. Attendance has averaged about 15 people per session. A graph of the attendance across the first 2 years of operation is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Attendance at The Knowledge Café

The "kickoff" session materials, consisting of an introduction to the programming and a basic overview of social media technologies, were presented twice—on October 1, 2014, and October 15, 2014—to supply the same information at an evening session (October 1) and an afternoon session (October 15). The unusually low attendance at the October 15 session was not unexpected. During the first year of operation, attendance at evening sessions generally exceeded that of afternoon sessions, although afternoon attendance was actually more robust than initially expected, with many participants stating that taking an occasional "long lunch" for a session did not pose difficulties. Because of various scheduling constraints, sessions conducted after May 2015 and ongoing into the 2nd year of operation were all held during afternoon hours. Limiting sessions to this timeslot had no appreciable effect on attendance. A breakdown of the attendance from the initial sessions in October 2014 through May 2015 is provided in Figure 3.

Participants at The Knowledge Café represent a variety of perspectives. They range from small business owners and entrepreneurs (including retired businesspeople who have become entrepreneurs) to individuals from nonprofit agencies such as community foundations, churches, and educational institutions, as well as from governmental bodies. University students and faculty members round out a typical session. The relative percentages of these groupings of participants are shown in Figure 4.

During the first 2 years of operation, more than 80% of participants came from the greater Middletown area served by the MCF
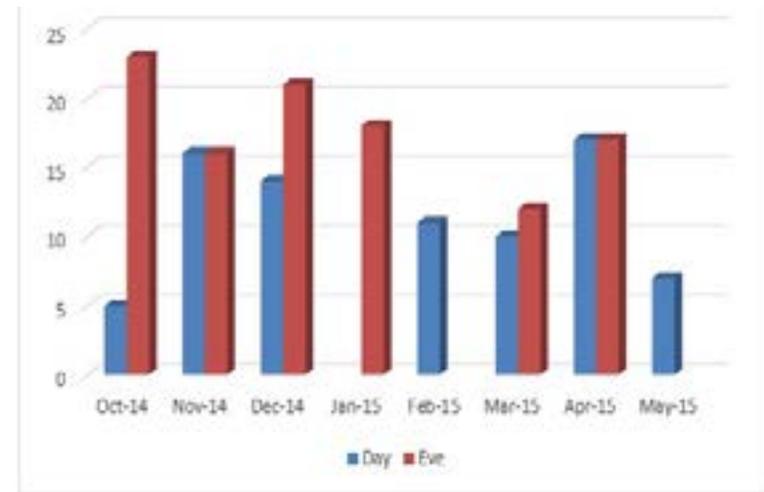
Figure 3. Attendance by Timeslot—Day Versus Evening
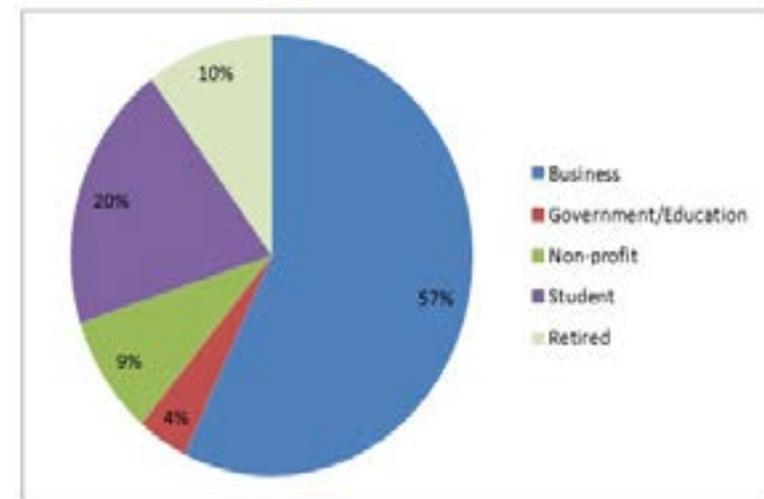
Figure 4. Breakdown of Attendees by Occupation

and Miami University Middletown. There was a near 50:50 ratio of male:female participation. Many of those in attendance tended to be frequent attendees, and they aligned very well with the target market segment described in the grant application for The Knowledge Café. Other individuals came when they saw a specific topic advertised that was of professional and/or personal interest. Some of these latter individuals, liking what they experienced, became regular or frequent attendees.

Congruence of Final Program With Original Plan

Throughout the 2 years that The Knowledge Café has been in session, the subject matter of the presentations has remained true to the original intent of delivering materials of interest to new and prospective business owners on topics related to business innovation and the application of social media technologies. All sessions have taken the form of casual, interactive presentations that encourage audience participation not only through questions and answers, but also through contributing items of interest to the discussions. A complete listing of session dates, topics, and locations is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Session Topic by Date

Date	Session Title	Location[1]
10/1/14	Social Media 101 -- Beginning topic	Campus Community Center 142
10/15/14	Scheduled twice as the "starter" sessions for the program	Verity Lodge
11/5/14	LinkedIn for Career Development and Business Applications	CCC142
11/19/14	Building Your Business Through eBay	Verity
12/3/14	Driving Social Media Success Through Engaging Content	CCC142
12/17/14	Driving Social Media Success Through Engaging Content	Verity
1/21/15	Social Media Mini-Sessions: Tools to Enhance Social Media Sites	CCC142
2/5/215	Unravel the Mystery of Twitter Theory and Practice	Verity
3/5/15	*The 2020 Workplace* by Jeanne Meister and Karie Willyerd	Verity
3/19/15	The Basics of Facebook	Verity
4/2/15	The Basics of Professional Blogging	Verity
4/16/15	Facebook Panel Discussion	Verity
4/30/15	Creating Video—The Art and the Science	Verity
5/14/15	Website Design for Business	Verity
5/28/15	The Basics of Professional Blogging Part Two: The Blogging Competition	Verity
6/11/15	*Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell	Verity
6/25/15	Getting Started With Pinterest	Verity
9/10/15	Marketing 101: The Bare Essentials	Verity
9/22/15	Studio Workshop #1: Getting Creative	Verity

Date	Session Title	Location[1]
10/8/15	Automating for Productivity	Verity
10/29/15	Holiday Content for Social Media	Verity
11/12/15	AGILE Software and Project Management	Verity
11/17/15	Social and Personal Branding	Verity
12/1/15	Social Media Trends for 2016	Verity
12/15/15	Competitive Intelligence in Social Media	Verity
1/7/16	Facebook for Business	Verity
1/12/16	Make the Move to Live Streaming	Verity
2/18/16	Content Marketing Update	Verity
3/1/16	3D Printing for Small Businesses	Verity
3/22/16	Content Marketing Update Part B	Verity
3/29/16	LEAN Six Sigma for Small Businesses	Verity
4/7/16	Getting a Message Out to Your Community	Verity
4/21/16	Tips on Content Curation	Verity
5/5/16	Inspiring Creativity and Innovation	Verity
5/19/16	The Theoretical Basics of Analytics	Verity
6/21/16	Inspiring Creativity and Innovation	Verity

Note: Both locations listed are on the same campus, approximately 200 yards apart.

I delivered most of these sessions, although a variety of excellent guest speakers have contributed their expertise on specific subjects, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Guest Speakers

Speaker	Topic and Session Date
Christian Sheehy, Xavier University	LinkedIn for business (11/5/14)
Heidi Beam, eBay Entrepreneur	Starting an eBay business (11/19/14)
Christian Sheehy, Lane Public Libraries	Facebook for business (3/19/15)
Ruth Orth, Miami University; Nancy Griffith, Mockingbird's Café; Duane Gordon, MCF; Christian Sheehy, Lane Public Libraries	Facebook experienced user panel (4/16/15)
Tom Mays, Business Technology (now Commerce) Department Assistant Professor	Creating Video—The Art and the Science (4/30/15)
Mark Lankford, Butler County Small Business Development Center	Website Design for Business (5/14/15)
Mary Kovach, Business Technology (now Commerce) Department Assistant Professor	AGILE Software and Project Management (11/12/15)
Lucinda Parmer, Business Technology (now Commerce) Department Assistant Professor	Facebook for Business (1/7/16)
Duane Gordon, Executive Director MCF and Jeff Kuznekoff, Communication Assistant Professor	Getting a Message Out to Your Community (4/7/16)
Andrew Wendt, Vice President CFR, Inc.	Tips on Content Curation (4/21/16)

Discussion

During these first 2 years, operation of The Knowledge Café as a campus–community partnership has been a challenging but rewarding process as the partnership has grown and initial results have been generated. Originating The Knowledge Café; setting up all logistics such as advertising, facility readiness, and refreshments; and delivering the majority of the first program sessions largely fell to me as the grant recipient and key driver of the program. Thus one could logically argue that, at least at first, The Knowledge Café consisted predominantly of a program for the community rather than a partnership with the community. The growing popularity of The Knowledge Café, however, led to greater community engagement: Community members began to take on roles as guest speakers, expert panel participants, and so on.

This increased level of collaboration and engagement represents an important evolution of The Knowledge Café from a program that was initially driven, or "seeded," by the efforts of a small

group of individuals to a program that is predominantly driven by the collective thoughts, ideas, and desires of the participants as a cohesive group. Plans for continued refinement of The Knowledge Café concept and program in succeeding years consistent with a fully developed community partnership are covered under "Future Work," below. Even within the 1st year, when many aspects of the program were experimental, the value obtained by each party is worthy of note.

Value to Participants and the Community

Throughout the first 2 years of The Knowledge Café, and increasingly as each year of operation drew to a close, comments were solicited from participants regarding their impressions of the program. As the partnership became more and more collaborative over time, recommendations for future sessions also increased, indicating a higher level of ownership and participation by attendees. Participants had opportunities to provide written feedback or sit down informally for one-to-one oral commenting. All comments received during the 1st year of operation were not solicited via a formal survey.

With over 200 participants involved during the 1st year alone, comments were overwhelmingly positive. Many remarks noted the value of the sessions for more than their technical content, as stated by Kay Y.:

> I am a small business owner and have been a member of the [Business Technology] Advisory Council since 2012. The idea of using social networks for business was a new concept for me, but seemed very much in tune with what is happening in today's business environment. I am attending her classes and am working on utilizing the ideas put forth so very well in class to broaden my business connections in LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram. The results have been amazing!

Others offered comments on the fostering of valuable networking opportunities between business individuals, university personnel, and not-for-profit agency members, such as remarks made by Jay S.:

> There are two main reasons I have decided to avail myself of the opportunity to attend these sessions. The first is that I am the president of a small non-profit orga-

nization and I am looking at ways to use social media to enhance our organizations effectiveness, including the opportunity to do some networking with kindred spirits. The second reason is that I am a life-long learner and saw this as a way to continue my quest for mental growth. Dr. Baim has made me feel welcome and included in every session, from the initial greeting upon arrival, to asking pointed input during discussions, linking with others at breaks and invitations to stay after the formal activities to chat with the presenters or fellow attendees. I certainly hope these types of sessions can continue, especially using local presenters with real life experience.

Becoming fully engaged in the process of guiding, running, and learning from the sessions of The Knowledge Café led to interaction with others in the business community on other topics as well. In addition, participants frequently cited as positive aspects the casual but informative format of the sessions, the ability to interact on topic choices, and the knowledge contributed by local guest speakers. For example, Andy W. summarized:

> Each session was a chance to learn from someone like yourself, and your guest speakers, who brought experience and insight to the topics presented. Like I explained to all of my co-workers who had the chance to attend a session, even if they only heard one tip, if they just learned one way to improve our social media or marketing efforts, the time spent would be more than worth it.

Regarding areas for improvement, participants indicated that they would like more opportunities to try out new technologies with expert guidance available to help put new knowledge into practice. Although the topic of bringing personal laptops to sessions was not broached during the inaugural year, doing so for hands-on sessions would add value for participants. Participants would also like to see more advanced topics introduced. Because they greatly valued the fundamentals explored within the 1st year, many participants hoped to be able to continue growing their knowledge through additional sessions in the future. Recording sessions for later playback has been discussed and is under consideration as well.

Value to the Campus

In keeping with the goals of establishing a true two-way collaborative partnership between the campus and the community, Miami University Middletown has also benefited from The Knowledge Café. The campus has received a large amount of positive publicity from the program, including articles in the local press. The program has also brought numerous people to the campus who had not been there before, and many commented positively on the facilities and the other program opportunities that they learned about while on campus. The type of partnership described here broke new ground in terms of how it was established (through a community grant, but with high university involvement) and is already in discussion as a model for future projects. The key to getting the overall process started was tapping into prior relationships with local business owners and entrepreneurs, listening to their concerns, and seeking opportunities that, even if unidirectional at first, had the potential to quickly build into collaborative partnerships.

Through regularly interacting with a broad cross-section of industry, government, and not-for-profit agency individuals, I have gained insights on problems and challenges facing small- to medium-sized business owners that far exceed my original expectations. This firsthand knowledge is directly influencing lecture materials and assignments that I am using in my senior-level leadership and social media courses. In particular, the clear focus on issues related to contemporary workforces and improving the external marketing of businesses is helping me better prepare my students for their chosen career paths.

Conformity to Best Practices

Returning briefly to the work of Arrazattee et al. *(2013)*, it is helpful to assess how well the first 2 years of The Knowledge Café exemplified best practices for campus–community partnerships. Objective assessments using five interrelated parameters show strong initial success but also indicate that there is more work to be done.

Community partner access. As Arrazattee et al. *(2013)* described, there should be standardized access whereby community partners can make use of university resources and provide feedback. For The Knowledge Café, a collaborative wiki for knowledge sharing among all partners was set up and is presently in use. This type of platform was chosen because it allowed all participants to sign on and work together to iteratively develop the body of

knowledge stored for all to use. Website setup and access work is in process, but will need to be prioritized and completed to provide the level of integration required to fully meet best practice guidelines.

Community partner identities. Arrazattee et al. *(2013)* stress the importance of acknowledging partners and their contributions, as well as devoting equal priority to each partner's needs. The Knowledge Café has done an excellent job in this regard, with highly positive feedback received from all parties on the frequency and quality of such communications.

Mutually beneficial exchange. As noted by Arrazattee et al. *(2013)*, reciprocity and mutual benefits are key to sustainability of campus–community partnerships. All partners to The Knowledge Café readily agree that benefits achieved during the 1st year of operation have been substantial and relevant to all parties involved in the partnership. That said, more emphasis has been placed to date on communicating the benefits to the community. This has been accomplished through articles for the press, additional advertising via handouts and flyers posted at businesses, and more frequent postings to both university and MCF social media pages. Although it could be argued that this was initially appropriate due to the heavier financial commitment of the community through the grant received, as the program continues it will be important to provide more information on how and what the campus is learning from the partnership.

Description of transformational relationships. Within this parameter, the greatest evidence regarding the program is in the subcategory of collaborative decision-making or planning as described by Arrazattee et al. *(2013)*. From the first meetings with the Middletown Community Foundation, substantial collaborative planning has occurred to optimize the content and logistics of The Knowledge Café. The product offered to Middletown-area business individuals during the 1st year was initially a carefully crafted blend of ideas that had originated from both sides of the partnership table—including the Middletown Community Foundation, the Miami University administration, and the author. As has been discussed, however, the evolution of the partnership to one of true collaboration among all participants in The Knowledge Café has resulted in a transformation from working *for* or *in* the community to one of partnering *with* the community to achieve mutually agreed-upon benefits. It is clear that this level of collaboration will be necessary to sustain the partnership in subsequent years.

Use of collaborative language. Arrazattee et al. *(2013)* noted the importance of avoiding language that would represent one partner as in any way subservient to the other. In this area, The Knowledge Café has excelled and has drawn strong praise from both the campus and the community partners. Advertising and other communications have been formulated consistently to take an approach based on "let's learn together and share our experiences to drive growth in our community." The praise from community partners reflects their continuous involvement in all aspects of The Knowledge Café. The university's positive reaction is at this point primarily based on the communications regarding the program sessions. As greater hands-on university involvement is anticipated for Year 3 through more faculty speaker participation, it will be important to track how perceptions may change.

The Need for Longer Term Assessment

Moving forward from the 1st year of operations, there is a need to formalize assessment of the longer term performance of The Knowledge Café in meeting the expectations of all parties involved. The assessments previously described by Arrazattee et al. *(2013)* will remain an important part of the process, but more extensive assessment will also be critical. Fortunately, the expectations of the community at large and of the primary funding partner, the Middletown Community Foundation, are congruent—both expect a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge on professional social media and business innovation topics that will assist local/regional business owners with the growth of their business enterprises. Such growth needs to be assessed in both quantitative terms (market penetration, new business achieved through web-based technologies, enhanced customer service and satisfaction, acceleration in hiring new staff, etc.) and in qualitative terms (receptivity to the format of the sessions, willingness to engage as an active participant, candid feedback on likes/dislikes, etc.) through a combination of research questionnaires and personal interviews.

From the points of view of the author as a faculty member and of the Miami University administration, a rigorous application of Furco's assessment rubric will be appropriate *(Furco et al., 2009)*. As the growth in The Knowledge Café is occurring concurrently with the university's efforts to substantially increase community engagement, assessments conducted will most likely require a careful analysis of each of the five dimensions cited in the rubric. As noted in other work performed by Furco and Miller *(2009),* institutions may place varying degrees of emphasis on each of the five dimen-

sions. Understanding the current levels of emphasis and optimizing the community engagement process for future projects is likely to draw heavily from learnings at The Knowledge Café.

Guidelines for Launching Similar Efforts

In my case, as champion, facilitator, and grant recipient of The Knowledge Café, I found that having an extensive background in working within the community at a variety of levels greatly assisted me in recognizing the opportunity to propose a collaborative partnership such as the one described here. As a business professor with a specialization in organization and leadership, I had often sought service-learning project opportunities for my students and had collaborated with local and regional governmental agencies on research studies involving customer satisfaction, identifying community needs and wants, and so on. Thus, I knew a lot of people in the area and was highly familiar with general community issues and concerns.

This prior knowledge was of great help in the ideation stages of the project, but the ultimate success of the effort reflects a willingness to meet with people, to negotiate across a spectrum of program possibilities, and to iterate the final product to one that all stakeholders can fully support. To that end, I found it extremely helpful to capture my own learnings and develop a set of guidelines to follow when future opportunities to collaborate with the community present themselves *(Baim, 2016)*. For those who may seek to replicate this work or extend it in new directions, but who do not have an extensive community network in place, my advice would be to spend some time establishing a baseline understanding of the "pulse" of the community and, if possible, consider partnering with someone who can help with basic introductions and access to thought leaders on the engagement topic of interest.

Future Work

The Knowledge Café generated strong excitement on both sides of the campus–community partnership with innovative programming, close attention to detail, and a willingness to listen to the needs and wants of participants in the 1st year of operation. As a result, the MCF renewed funding for a 2nd year, as did the Miami University Middletown administration. This ongoing support permitted The Knowledge Café to offer more advanced session topics, bring in more guest speakers, and encourage even greater collaborative interaction by participants in Year 2. That said, there

are numerous opportunities to increase the quality and relevance of sessions to participants now that a level of true collaborative learning has been achieved.

Moving Toward Year 3

Continuing to increase participant engagement at all sessions will remain essential as The Knowledge Café programming moves forward. The intent is to move to a format that captures more of the operational spirit of a knowledge café as described by Gurteen (2002). These sessions will be called *studio workshops*, and they will afford participants the opportunity to work together to share knowledge, investigate technologies, and solve business problems of mutual interest. These efforts will be augmented by brief presentations on business-focused creative tools, including Edward deBono's *Six Thinking Hats (1985)*, and mapping tools such as process mapping, mind mapping, and customer-journey mapping. Given these tools, participants will explore a process known as *adaptive expertise* to reach their business goals *(Hatano & Ouro, 2003; Schwartz, Bransford, & Sears, 2005)*. Adaptive expertise is best practiced by individuals who can apply personal experiences to invent or adapt strategies for solving problems within a specific knowledge domain and then, ideally, transfer higher level learning from one domain to another.

Efforts will also be undertaken to enhance The Knowledge Café by incorporating broader participation by members of the university community through more traditional course-based community service-learning. Details are not yet established, but it is hoped that a campus-based partnership between two or more instructors in the fields of business, communications, and/or computer science could be created to bring additional value to The Knowledge Café. These instructors could engage their students as guest speakers on relevant technical and business topics, act as service-learning mentors or partners for the business participants in attendance, or even offer consulting to the studio workshop sessions proposed in Year 3. This type of effort has limitless potential for all parties involved.

It will be essential for individuals involved in The Knowledge Café campus–community partnership to identify and secure ongoing funding to support future years of operation. The MCF is extremely pleased with the success of the partnership and wants to stay involved as a key strategic partner, but MCF funding opportunities last no more than 2 to 3 years. This seed money is intended to help launch worthwhile programs within the community that will

then become established and either self-funding or funded with a permanent budget by another organization—such as the university in the case of The Knowledge Café. Due to the initial success of The Knowledge Café, coupled with the willingness of the participants to help the underlying campus–community partnership evolve over time, it is likely that ongoing funding will be obtained. To the extent that all partners can keep a strong focus on maintaining mutual benefits, the success of The Knowledge Café is likely to increase in the years to come.

Acknowledgment

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Evaluating Reactions to Community Bridge Initiative Pilot Classes

Julie Koldewyn, Roslynn Brain, Kate Stephens

Abstract

Does participating in an integrated service-learning project aimed at improving local sustainability issues result in significant professional real-world application for students? This study aimed to answer that question by evaluating student reactions to pilot classes featuring a sustainability-based service-learning program, Community Bridge Initiative (CBI), in comparison to traditional university courses. A survey (response rate = 86%) was administered to students enrolled in four different CBI pilot classes (*n* = 109) within two different disciplines, natural resources and sociology. Results revealed that of all students responding, 92% reported a positive impact from the CBI class, 88% would take a CBI course again, and 73% felt that the CBI course was more effective in communicating course content in comparison to traditional Utah State University courses. This article reveals additional student perspectives and potential benefits from implementing the CBI program in a university setting.
Keywords: sustainability, service-learning, university

Introduction

T hough there are many interpretations of the term *service-learning*, Jacoby's *(1996) Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices* provides one concise but thorough definition. This author conceives service-learning as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" *(p. 5)*. Service-learning connects theory and practice within a course to solve actual real-world problems, thus creating an environment where both the student and the community benefit. These experiences can be individual experiences or campuswide initiatives that can range from short-term, one-time occurrences to semester-long, year-long, or even longer commitments. Although one could compare internships and fieldwork to service-learning, it is argued that service-learning differs in that through it, learning and service are equal to, and promote, each other *(Sigmon, 1994)*. Each side must be equally represented and mutually beneficial to the other. Butin *(2010)* echoes this definition

of service-learning as a "type of engaged learning that embraces the possibilities of conjoint civic renewal and academic betterment" *(p. xiv)*. Clearly, service-learning must address the needs of both the community and the student in order to be successfully implemented. Although community gains are important, specific benefits of service-learning to students include opportunities to "practice critical thinking skills and apply learning in real-world settings" as well as being challenged "to work collegially, communicate successfully, and acquire and exercise new skills" *(Jenkins & Sheehey, 2011, p. 52)*.

Godfrey, Illes, and Berry *(2005)* describe the "4 Rs" *(p. 309)* of service-learning that are essential to a successful service-learning experience as reality, reflection, reciprocity, and responsibility. *Reality* involves working on real-life problems rather than theoretical ones where the student can gain actual knowledge. *Reflection* is an especially important part as the student determines what he or she learned from their service-learning experience and how their life has changed because of it, whether positively or negatively. *Reciprocity* is involved in making sure that both the student and the recipient gained something from their experience. If the experience is one-sided, the service-learning aspect has been marginalized. The final R, *Responsibility*, is needed to ensure that because the student was given the opportunity to be a part of a service-learning experience, much will be expected in return. This is a reminder for the student to continue to be a valuable addition to their community. Although there are certainly more aspects related to service-learning, these "4 Rs" provide a useful framework for enabling the student to maximize the experience. Service-learning can adequately be summarized with the following statement: "Service, combined with learning, adds value to each and transforms both" *(Honnet & Poulsen, 1989, p. 1)*. Although service-learning programs can be incorporated into all levels of education, for the purposes of this study, a successful model for service-learning found at the college and university level will be the focus, as some of the biggest changes can be accomplished with the resources that higher education can afford. As Derek Bok *(2009)* stated, "There is no reason for universities to feel uncomfortable in taking account of society's needs; in fact, they have a clear obligation to do so" *(p. 301)*.

In addition to service-learning, sustainability has become a defining factor in education, and students are demanding more sustainability-related programs and courses. In a Princeton Review *(2015)* study of 10,000 college applicants, 61% of respondents stated that "a college's commitment to environmental issues would impact

their decision to apply or attend a school" *(para, 5)*. Clearly, from an economic point of view, it is worthwhile to include as many sustainability-related programs at universities as possible to attract and retain students. This demand has created a surge of environmental degrees and programs. Over 100 majors, minors, and certificates in energy and sustainability-related programs were created in 2009, compared to three in 2005 *(Schmidt, 2009)*. This was succinctly summarized in the statement, "As colleges add green majors and minors, classes fill up" *(Schmidt, 2009, p. 1)*.

In relation to sustainability, the city of Logan, Utah, where Utah State University is located, faces its own environmental issues. With a population of almost 49,000 and a projected increase of 33,000 by 2040 *(Logan Library, n.d.)*, as well as the city's concave valley and surrounding mountains, Logan often faces some of the worst air in the nation *(Malek, Davis, Martin, & Silva, 2006)*. With this population growth, the city also faces issues relating to land use, traffic, waste disposal, and water pollution *(Hunter & Toney, 2005)*. To combat these environmental issues, Utah State University became a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in 2012 as a means of promoting sustainability in all areas of the university. AASHE's program is unique in that it "involves publicly reporting comprehensive information related to a college or university's sustainability performance. Participants report achievements in three overall areas: 1) education & research, 2) operations, and 3) planning, administration & engagement" *(Utah State University, 2012, para. 4)*. This allows universities to check their progress in comparison to other universities, and in so doing, it works to motivate universities to incorporate more sustainable practices.

To further promote sustainability and service-learning, the Community Bridge Initiative (CBI) at Utah State University was incorporated to create a program that allows students to gain real-world experience while simultaneously addressing the needs of their community. The CBI is based on a similar program at the University of Oregon, called the Sustainable Cities Initiative *(http://sci.uoregon.edu)*, which pairs with a different city each year to tackle various issues related to sustainability. This program has been replicated in 10 other institutions of higher education—the University of Minnesota, University of Iowa, San Diego State University, Penn State University, Earlham College, University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M, University of Tennessee, University of Maryland, and Augustana College—with more to come *(Koldewyn, 2016)*. To gain more information about this program, a team from Utah

State University, including the author, the USU Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning (CCESL) program coordinator, a USU faculty member, and a Logan City employee traveled to Eugene, Oregon to attend the Sustainable City Year Program Conference put on by the University of Oregon in spring 2014.

After learning more about how this program works and how it could be applied to USU, the USU program coordinator for CCESL, Kate Stephens, met with the Logan City mayor, Craig Peterson, and the USU provost, Noelle Cockett, to discuss how this program could be implemented through a partnership between the city and the university. As a result of this meeting, Cockett agreed to the partnership once projects had been identified and prioritized through Logan City. In fall 2014, Cockett and Peterson presented the CBI program to the Logan City Council, which resulted in the signing of an official letter of agreement between USU's CCESL and Logan City, with Mayor Craig Peterson agreeing to fund up to $4,860 to support CBI projects and an intern to compile a final report *(K. Stephens, personal communication, 2015).*

Consequently, the CBI pilot program was initiated in spring 2015, following the kickoff project with the city of Logan. Prior to this event, Logan City employees submitted proposals to the mayor's office for approval. Afterward, the approved projects were discussed at the kickoff event that took place at Logan's city hall, where city representatives and university instructors met to converse on various community needs and how university courses could address them. Subsequently, four projects were chosen and paired with different university courses: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (College of Humanities and Social Sciences) and GIS Research Projects, Living With Wildlife, and Communicating Sustainability (College of Natural Resources).

Although CBI involved a new type of service-learning program, service-learning has been established at Utah State University since 2008. Students in the Service-Learning Scholars program should be "making a difference in their community, combining service with academic course work, enhancing learning through experience, and creating sustainable change in the form of a capstone project" *(Utah State University, 2015).* From 2005 to 2012, enrollment in service-learning courses saw student numbers almost triple, from less than 400 students to over 1,100 students per semester *(R. Schmidt, personal communication, 2015).* In 2013, CCESL adopted USU's service-learning program, which allowed it to be "the campus hub for community engagement, providing greater institutional vision and direction" *(Utah State University, 2015).* In addition, compared to

other Utah universities, USU has the highest number of students involved in the service-oriented Americorps program *(K. Stephens, personal communication, 2015).*

Service-learning is already well-established and will continue to operate as it had at USU within its Center for Civic Engagement and Service-Learning; however, the Community Bridge Initiative was established as a more formal service-learning program that brings classes together to work on a designated need within the community. Its purpose was not to replace the preexisting service-learning program but to offer more opportunities *(K. Stephens, personal communication, 2015).* In an article for Logan's newspaper, the *Herald Journal*, Kate Stephens, the assistant director for CCESL, stated:

> Up until now, there hasn't been a program that worked with the community in a multidisciplinary and intentional way. It isn't as though professors have not assigned students to work on local issues. USU has service-learning courses that already integrate community service with classroom instruction. The difference with the Community Bridge Initiative is the formal connection between the city and the university to work on targeted issues. *(Stewart, 2014, para. 10)*

In one of the first courses identified to partner with CBI, Human Behavior in the Social Environment, students teamed up with Logan City Community Development on a project to gather over 200 surveys in a specific neighborhood to determine the unique assets of the area and where improvements could be made. Students were responsible for designing the survey, administering it to respondents, and inputting and analyzing responses. They then reported their major findings to the neighborhood planning committee. According to the instructor, "students gained greater competency in research, but they also were able to apply human behavior theory in the context of community" *(J. Lucero, personal communication, 2015).*

In the next class, GIS Research Projects, two students created GIS (geographic information system) story maps for different projects provided by Logan City. For example, one student created a GIS map of recreation trails in Logan, and the other student created a GIS map showing where parks were located within the city and how they correlated with different socioeconomic groups. Though this class duration was only 5 weeks, students were able to use prac-

tical skills to provide a real benefit to the city. One student was even offered a job as a result of his work on this project, showing that life-skill development was a real outcome of this experience.

In Living With Wildlife, students partnered with the city forestry team to trim city trees in order to "improve air quality, enhance urban wildlife habitat, reduce infrastructure costs, and beautify the city" *(K. Stephens, personal communication, 2015)*. After an in-class presentation on how to trim trees by the city forester, Joe Archer, students were split into groups and assigned to a forestry crew member under whose supervision they spent 6 hours each trimming city trees. Students were taught how to make correct cuts and then applied their new skills with limited supervision. Students discovered how city trees are managed, learned how to properly trim trees, and were exposed to urban-wildlife issues and settings.

In Communicating Sustainability, students chose their own individual community partner to tackle a project relating to air quality. For example, one student worked with a local coffee shop to install a bike rack to encourage patrons to ride their bikes instead of driving. Another worked with the neighboring city government to post "Turn Your Key" signs to remind drivers to not let their cars idle and contribute to air pollution. Students in Communicating Sustainability also worked with the local high school to mentor high school students and to foster involvement in a clean air poster contest. The goals of the contest were to increase community awareness about air quality in the community and to develop posters into community signage and air fresheners reminding locals to engage in behaviors that enhance local air quality. Students worked collaboratively with Logan City, Logan High School, and a local business to gain a better understanding of community issues and the best ways in which to tackle and implement projects addressing them.

This study investigated the reactions of university students enrolled in these pilot classes in comparison to traditional USU courses. Students were asked to share their perspectives about how the classes worked and suggestions for future classes. Course instructor responses were also solicited to show how teachers felt the project worked in their class and whether it benefited their students. Obtaining feedback on CBI during the pilot phase will allow CCESL to better implement the program once it leaves the pilot stage, giving students and teachers the best opportunities to learn and teach while also constructing the best environment to create real change within the community. Results should prove beneficial to readers wishing to implement a similar program, as this study will provide specific recommendations on how to do so. Results

will also benefit those looking to evaluate student reactions to a program or class.

Methods

The research participants included all students enrolled in the four pilot CBI courses spanning the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Natural Resources. The course titles included Human Behavior in the Social Environment (13 students), GIS Research Projects (two students), Communicating Sustainability (10 students), and Living With Wildlife (84 students).

This study was exploratory in nature, using inductive analysis to assess student reactions and advice. Consequently, no hypothesis was formed *(Hatch, 2002)*. After IRB approval was obtained, a mixed-methods descriptive survey with quantitative and qualitative questions was designed through inputs by the author, CCESL, and professors from the Department of Environment and Society in the College of Natural Resources. The survey included a 5-point Likert agreement scale measuring 11 self-assessed skills before and as a result of the class, five binary response options, and two open-ended statements to gain further insight. This assessment was based on a similar survey provided by an instructor in the College of Natural Resources used in her Communicating Sustainability course. Skills specific to this project were added or amended as seemed necessary by the researcher and the program director for CCESL. The survey was designed to determine what skills students gained from a CBI course, how students enjoyed the CBI program, how their class compared to traditional USU courses, and specific improvement opportunities for the CBI program.

An introductory PowerPoint presentation was shown by the author at the conclusion of the class for three of the four courses; the fourth course had only two participants, and the instructor gave the researcher their e-mail addresses instead. The purpose of the presentation was to explain to students what CBI is, how their class was involved in the program, and how student participation in the survey was helpful for the future of CBI. This was done at the end of the semester when all the projects were completed and students were fully prepared to take the survey. After the presentation, the survey was either hand-delivered by the author in class, sent via e-mail link, or delivered through a Qualtrics survey software link, depending on the preference of the instructor. Likewise, the results were either picked up in person, received via e-mail, or retrieved

via Qualtrics. Of the 109 participants selected, 94 responded and returned their surveys, resulting in an 86% response rate.

Results were analyzed by the author using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software and open and axial coding. The open-ended questions were transcribed verbatim. Following procedures outlined by Hatch *(2002)*, open coding was performed by first reading through each survey to gain a general sense of the data included. Each survey was read within the context of the class it came from to find specific patterns for that exact group, and the patterns found in each class were then compared to the survey respondents as a whole. After open codes were found for each group, axial coding was performed by examining the open codes within each group and then comparing them to the codes as a whole for the entire survey population to determine relationships and general patterns. Although using surveys in grounded research isn't common, it has been shown "to be a practical and effective aid to theoretical sampling," and having this information will be useful for future analysis of the CBI program *(Currie, 2009, p. 31)*. An analysis report was then written summarizing the interpretations that were found.

Results

Of the 109 participants selected, 94 responded, resulting in a response rate of 86%. Each class received a 100% response rate except for the Living with Wildlife class, which had a response rate of 82%. This may have been due to the large class size and the fact that their survey was sent via an e-mail link instead of in person, so students may have had less motivation to respond. The other classes (Communicating Sustainability, Human Behavior in the Social Environment, and GIS Research Projects) were also major-specific; Living with Wildlife, in contrast, was a depth class (an upper level class with more in-depth knowledge) with students of many different majors. This could also have had an impact on student willingness to respond.

The 5-point Likert agreement "before" and "now" scales were analyzed using a paired-samples *t*-test in SPSS. Eleven skills were measured: (1) working in groups, (2) working with various stakeholders in the community, (3) implementing lasting change, (4) creative thinking, (5) promoting individual environmental behaviors, (6) fostering community-scale environmental behaviors, (7) applying university research to foster community change, (8) networking with professional contacts, (9) applying hands-on,

real-world experience, (10) fostering a personal sense of community issues, and (11) cultivating a sense of your role as an active citizen. There were five response options: (1) not at all confident, (2) slightly confident, (3) neutral, (4) very confident, and (5) completely confident. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 show the results of the four classes analyzed separately and then all classes analyzed together. Results from Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects were combined in the same analysis, given that they both came from the same Qualtrics survey method and were impossible to separate.

Table 1. Skills measured before and after CBI project in Human Behavior in the Social Environment

Human Behavior in the Social Environment Skills	Score Before	Score After	*n*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Working in groups	3.92	4.69	13	.011
Working with various stakeholders in the community	2.77	4.08	13	<.001
Implementing lasting change	2.77	4.15	13	<.001
Creative thinking	3.54	4.54	13	<.001
Promoting individual environmental behaviors	2.46	3.62	13	.003
Fostering community-scale environmental behaviors	2.08	3.77	13	<.001
Applying university research to foster community change	2.15	4.15	13	<.001
Networking with professional contacts	3.00	4.00	13	.001
Applying hands-on, real-world experience	3.23	4.46	13	<.001
Fostering a personal sense of community issues	2.46	4.31	13	<.001
Cultivating a sense of your role as an active citizen	2.15	4.54	13	<.001

Table 2. Skills measured before and after CBI project in Living With Wildlife

Living With Wildlife Skills	Score Before	Score After	*n*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Working in groups	3.97	4.26	68	<.001
Working with various stakeholders in the community	2.82	3.85	67	<.001
Implementing lasting change	3.15	3.83	65	<.001
Creative thinking	3.61	3.91	66	<.001
Promoting individual environmental behaviors	3.12	4.06	69	<.001
Fostering community-scale environmental behaviors	2.54	3.67	67	<.001
Applying university research to foster community change	2.57	3.59	68	<.001
Networking with professional contacts	2.90	3.60	68	<.001
Applying hands-on, real-world experience	3.57	4.34	68	.002
Fostering a personal sense of community issues	3.06	4.00	68	<.001
Cultivating a sense of your role as an active citizen	2.96	4.07	68	<.001

Table 3. Skills measured before and after CBI project in Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects

Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects Skills	Score Before	Score After	n	Sig. (2-tailed)
Working in groups	3.75	3.92	12	.504
Working with various stakeholders in the community	2.67	3.75	12	.002
Implementing lasting change	2.58	3.50	12	.020
Creative thinking	3.75	3.83	12	.723
Promoting individual environmental behaviors	3.25	4.08	12	.005
Fostering community-scale environmental behaviors	2.92	3.83	12	.034
Applying university research to foster community change	2.42	3.75	12	.001
Networking with professional contacts	3.00	3.75	12	.012
Applying hands-on, real-world experience	3.50	4.08	12	.111
Fostering a personal sense of community issues	3.42	3.92	12	.053
Cultivating a sense of your role as an active citizen	3.25	4.08	12	.002

Table 4. Skills measured before and after CBI projects in all courses

All Courses Skills	Score Before	Score After	n	Sig. (2-tailed)
Working in groups	3.94	4.28	93	<.001
Working with various stakeholders in the community	2.79	3.87	92	<.001
Implementing lasting change	3.02	3.83	90	<.001
Creative thinking	3.62	3.99	91	<.001
Promoting individual environmental behaviors	3.04	4.00	94	<.001
Fostering community-scale environmental behaviors	2.52	3.71	92	<.001
Applying university research to foster community change	2.49	3.69	93	<.001
Networking with professional contacts	2.92	3.68	93	<.001
Applying hands-on, real-world experience	3.52	4.32	93	<.001
Fostering a personal sense of community issues	3.02	4.03	93	<.001
Cultivating a sense of your role as an active citizen	2.88	4.14	93	<.001

Individually, each class was statistically significant in all skills except that in Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects, Skills 1, 4, 9, and 10 were not statistically significant. This could be attributable to the small sample size of these two classes (only 12 students). In addition, Skill 1 (working in groups) may have not been significant because both GIS Research Projects students and some Communicating Sustainability students worked alone, possibly lowering the score for the skill. When analyzed together, all classes showed a statistically significant difference in all 11 before and now skill scores. Although the results are subjective in this self-assessment, students ranked themselves better after

taking a CBI course, suggesting that these classes are effective in improving desired skills.

For the binary response questions, results were also positive. The following five questions were asked:

1. Did this class positively impact you?

2. Would you take a Community Bridge Initiative (CBI) class again?

3. Would you list this experience on your resume for future employment?

4. Are you male or female?

5. Do you feel that this class was more effective in communicating course content in comparison to traditional USU classes?

Of the 13 students in Human Behavior in the Social Environment (three males and 10 females), 100% stated that the class positively impacted them, they would take a CBI course again, they would list this experience on their resume, and they felt that the class was more effective in communicating course content in comparison to traditional USU courses. Students were taking this class specifically for their major, which may have influenced the high result percentages. Students felt very positively about this class and the relevance of the project.

In Living With Wildlife, of the 69 students who responded (34 males and 35 females), 91% stated that the class positively impacted them, 88% would take a CBI course again, 55% stated that they would list this experience on their resume, and 69% felt that the class was more effective in communicating course content in comparison to traditional USU courses. Again, the different results here may have been influenced by the fact that this class was a depth class with students of many different majors. For example, in regard to the third question, trimming trees would not likely be a useful skill to put on your resume if you were an accounting major. The fifth question also had lower percentage results, likely because some students felt that trimming trees had little to do with wildlife. However, despite this fact, most students still responded favorably to the CBI project within the class.

For the Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects courses, 92% of the 12 students (9 males and 3 females) stated that they felt that the class positively impacted them, 75% would take a CBI course again, 67% would list the experience

on their resume, and 67% felt that the class was more effective in communicating course content in comparison to traditional USU courses.

When analyzing all courses together, 92% of the students reported that the class positively impacted them, 88% would take a CBI course again, 63% would list the experience on their resume, and 73% felt that the class was more effective in communicating course content in comparison to traditional USU courses. Though the Living With Wildlife course had a significantly larger class size than the other classes and therefore may have skewed these results, the outcomes here are still overwhelmingly positive and suggest that most students were satisfied with these CBI courses and would like to see more of them in the future.

For the final two open-ended statements on the survey, open codes revealed some differences and similarities in student reactions. Students were asked, "Do you feel that this class was more effective in communicating course content in comparison to traditional USU classes? If so, please explain." The open codes from each class are shown in Table 5.

In analyzing each class, it was found that students in the course Human Behavior in the Social Environment were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences with the CBI project. They appreciated the hands-on work, real-world application (especially when it came to their future careers), and the opportunity to use their work to improve the community.

The students in Living With Wildlife were similarly excited about experiencing course content through firsthand experiences and using that knowledge to effect community change. They also appreciated the practical skills gained through this experience, though most of these skills were not necessarily for their future careers but applicable in their personal lives. Dissimilar to the sociology course, students in Living With Wildlife didn't find as much application of the project to their course learning, though some found an expanded perspective when it came to urban-wildlife settings.

For the courses Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects, students were also happy with the hands-on experiences and real-world application, expressing themes similar to those found in the other pilot classes. And as in Living With Wildlife, there was also an element of uncertainty in these classes as to whether this type of class was more effective in teaching course content. Many students didn't realize that they were in a CBI

Table 5. Open codes and respondent quotes comparing CBI courses to traditional university courses.

Class	Open Code	Select Respondent Quotes
Human Behavior in the Social Environment	Hands-on work	"It wasn't just talk. There was actual hands on experience that pushed each of us to develop more competence and confidence in our abilities."
		"It allowed for hands on, immediate feedback instead of theoretical classwork with variable amounts of feedback."
		"How better to learn than by participating hands-on on projects. I have learned a lot."
	Real-life experience	"I felt that this class allowed me to connect the dots on our reserach course material and helped me to see how I can implement research in the real world."
		"I feel like I'm leaving this class with more knowledge adn experience than I gained in my other classes. I feel like I will be able to better apply class experiences to my future career.
		"It really helped us apply what we learn to a real-life context."
	Community change	"It is one thing to sit and listen to a lecture on neighborhood improvement, but entirely another to be on the front line, working to make those changes. Loved this project!"
		"It made me feel like a researcher because the work we did will have a direct effect on the community."
		"The city was extremely interested in the data we collected and wanted to implement changes."
Living With Wildlife	Learning by doing	"The best way to learn anything is by getting your hands dirty and experiencing it firsthand."
		"I think people learn better being involved in something rather than just sitting in a classroom and just learning about it."
		"I am a firm believer that the best way to learn is by experiencing it in real life."
		"The other classes I have taken teach me the content, but not the application. This class taught both."
	Expanding perspective	"Trimming trees allowed me to interact with wildlife in a place that we do not normally think about."

	Practical skills	"Most of the time when I think of human interaction with wildlife it is negative. In this case it was something very positive." "It helped me realize how I don't have to go into the mountains to hunt or hike to be interacting with wildlife." "I can now say that I know how to trim a tree, which is pretty cool." "It gave students a marketable and beneficial skill they may have otherwise never attempted to learn." "This project was especially useful in the sense that it taught me valuable skills for when I have property of my own."
	Community involvement	"The project expressed the importance of volunteering in helping maintain healthy ecosystems." "The project was a great way to feel a part of the community and apply content learned from class." "I was able to participate in the community and I feel that I got to know more about how I feel about the community through this activity."
	Irrelevance	"I did not feel that this service project had anything to do with the course content." "I really don't feel that this experience helped me much in learning course material." "I don't feel it did so better nor worse than other classes."
Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects	Hands-on experience	"Great experience to work on a hands-on project." "This class provided real, current hands-on examples."
	Real-world application	"Given me a greater understanding what I could be doing in the future." "This class enabled me to apply concepts learned in class immediately to real world situations."
	Uncertainty	"I think both are effective. I don't want to sway the scale just yet." "The comparison is not applicable. The course is not for everyone." "I wasn't aware I was involved in [the CBI project]."

course, so greater attention to the CBI incorporation could address this issue.

When addressing the next open-ended statement, "Please provide any feedback about the Community Bridge Initiative to help us improve the program in future years," open codes were relatively similar across classes, with a few extra codes showing up in Living With Wildlife. Table 6 describes these codes.

Table 6. Open codes and respondent quotes about feedback from CBI courses

Class	Open Code	Select Respondent Quotes
Human Behavior in the Social Environment	Expansion	"Use it with more classes." "Perhaps collaborating with other classes." "It would be awasome if more classes could be set up like this. Expand the program and make more like it."
Living With Wildlife	Better Application To Wildlife	"Information on what wildlife uses those trees would have been interesting." "I would have enjoyed having someone come in from the Forest Service to go into more detail about the habitat for trees." "The main object of the course is to learn how wild animals and humans coexist, and I was unable to see that object present during my service."
	Expansion	"It should be implemented in several courses at USU…I would like to see this project as more of a big deal in the future." "I would have loved doing more projects for the community." "Find a way to get involved wiht more courses… this has been the only class so far that I have experienced anything like this."
	Increased Flexibility	"Have it occur earlier in the semester. Taking several hours out of the last few weeks before finals has made it a bit more difficult to prepare for upcoming test." "I do wish that the hours could have been more flexible." "I have a full-time job and classes to plan around, so it was rather hard to find the extra time to be there for 3 hours out of my day."
Communicating Sustainability and GIS Research Projects	Expansion	"Offer more courses like this." "Bigger. More. New areas."

Comments from all classes demonstrated a desire to see the CBI program expand into more university courses and have it be a bigger program for USU in the future. Most students enjoyed the pilot classes and wanted more opportunities to take classes like these within their academic programs. Students also wanted to see more projects implemented in the community, as many loved the community aspect and wanted more volunteer opportunities. In Living With Wildlife, students wanted more flexibility of service hours, and some showed higher dissatisfaction regarding the service hours required. Again, this could be because this class was not a major-specific course for many of the enrolled students, so the application might not have been as valuable to these students as to those in the other pilot classes. As mentioned above, Living With Wildlife students wanted better application from the project to the course material, and this has already been brought to the attention of the instructor, who plans on making a stronger connection for future classes.

In regard to the axial codes formed from these open codes, there were common themes that arose from the courses. For the first open-ended statement comparing CBI courses to traditional USU courses, students were most impressed with the hands-on work, real-world application, and the contribution to the community. For the second statement asking for suggestions for CBI, students were overwhelmingly interested in expanding the CBI program into more university courses and community needs.

After the projects were finished, instructor feedback for the CBI courses was also solicited. For those who responded, instructors were impressed with the application and potential of CBI projects. One instructor stated,

> I am very enthusiastic about the CBI. There have been a multitude of benefits for my students, our community, and me. This type of partnership has made an impact on my teaching. Students have been more responsive to difficult topics because they're having an opportunity to actually do the work (research in most cases). I'm more confident than before that my students are leaving my classroom with the skills I intended them to develop. I have also had a chance to network with and collaborate with city officials that I may not have without the CBI. Finally, I'm seeing community impacts. For the [information withheld] neighborhood survey, we gathered data that the city did not have the resources to gather,

> and their neighborhood plan is more robust with the inputs from my students. On the whole, I am happy to see my students are thinking more deeply about their place in their community, and what that might look like in their future careers in social work.

Another instructor stated,

> The CBI program was a great way to connect students in my class to a larger community issue. Working with local high school students and the City of Logan gave the undergraduates a further sense of meaning as they worked to raise community awareness and change behavior regarding idling and air pollution.

Following these instructor and student reactions, it could be said that the first four CBI pilot classes were a success. However, with such a small sample size in its pilot semester, it is hard to judge what the criteria are for success and failure in this study. For now, classes should be examined on a case-by-case basis in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Doing so will allow the program to be modified as necessary for the best implementation possible of CBI.

Applications and Recommendations for Future CBI Courses

With full implementation of the CBI program, students have the potential to learn course content while engaging in real-world projects that contribute to the community they live in, bridging the gap between the "university on the hill" and the city. As one student stated, "It made me feel like a researcher because the work we did will have a direct effect on the community." This could also help permanent residents better appreciate Logan's status as a college town. As one student wrote on her survey, "I think future projects will help city residents see students as an asset, versus a nuisance in Logan." With greater expansion, CBI could potentially assign thousands of USU students to various community projects that would have a broad-reaching positive impact on the town they live in. Likewise, this program has the potential to set up students with the skills needed to be better prepared for their intended careers, giving students exactly what they want out of their university experience. As quoted earlier, "how better to learn than by participating

hands-on on projects." Students are willing and the university has a responsibility to provide these experiences for them.

In regard to CBI, generating awareness is the first step in the successful implementation of this program. With these pilot courses, many students didn't realize that they were a part of CBI until the author explained it to them in the PowerPoint presentation. With greater attention to this program, students will likely be more motivated once they understand what they are involved in and could be more intentional in their efforts if they understand the class intent. Second, as students suggested, the CBI program should be expanded and more courses should be offered to accommodate student interest. Once more awareness is made about the CBI program, it is likely that more students and faculty members will want to be involved. Finally, it will be important to make sure that community partners are getting as much out of this partnership as the students are, and future research should gauge whether this is the case. Meetings should be held beforehand to clarify expectations, and exit interviews should be held to ensure that everyone in the partnership is satisfied. Thus, future research on this initiative could focus on community partner reactions to working with university students to determine that they are benefiting equally.

For those wishing to implement a project like CBI into their classroom, below is a list of recommendations based on this study:

1. To prepare faculty to teach this type of course, it would be useful to present different examples of service-learning and then have instructors determine how their course content could best be applied with this method.

2. In choosing a project, deliberation should be taken to confirm that the project and course content match as closely as possible so that students are sure to see relevance and gain the professional skills needed.

3. Once the project and partner are chosen, a meeting should be arranged between faculty and the community partner to ensure that expectations are understood from both sides regarding what would be required for a mutually successful partnership.

4. When the course begins, care should be taken to make sure students know what they are a part of. Greater awareness of the program will motivate students to become more involved once they understand the potential their skills will have on the community and what benefits they can gain individually. This could be done through in-class presentations and/or direct interactions with the community partner.

5. After the project is completed, assessments from both students/faculty and community partners should be performed to determine what worked and what didn't. This will help future projects and interactions be more successful within the program.

For additional applications, this type of research could be used by universities wishing to determine student responses to a service-learning course, organizations looking to improve the experiences of their volunteers, businesses interested in improving employee retention, or any other entity needing a method to determine user reactions. Analyzing individual feedback is vital in the implementation of any program to determine strengths and weaknesses and where organizations need to emphasize or improve. This will allow organizations the best possibility to foster the desired student learning outcome and partnered community engagement.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Gasman, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Academics going public: How to write and speak beyond academe*. New York, NY: Routledge. 144 pp.

Review by Kristina Killgrove

At a time when government funding for academic research is quickly eroding, and while more funding organizations are asking applicants for their broader impacts and importance to the general public, professors are increasingly becoming interested in outreach. It is into this milieu that *Academics Going Public*, edited by Marybeth Gasman, delves in order to help scholars find their voice and speak out about myriad issues.

In her introduction, Gasman asserts that public outreach is a "social justice issue" *(p. 2)*. By this, she means that everyone needs to engage the public more fully in their scholarship and that there is a timely need for increased diversity, as the majority of well-known public intellectuals have been White men. In particular, Gasman sees the shifting sands of new media on the internet as a place where scholars with an interest in outreach can make a difference without significant barriers. With the introduction serving as a north star, Gasman has lined up a series of short, practical, and easily digested chapters that provide basic guidance to the scholar who wants to talk to a reporter, write an op-ed or a press release, deliver a public talk, or engage on social media.

Four of the chapters constitute advice about more traditional approaches to communicating with the public through media. In Chapter 2, Scott Jaschik ably answers the question of why academics should speak to the press: "Interaction with the media can create regular evidence of the benefits of higher education" *(p. 11)*. To successfully interact, Jaschik recommends that scholars try to think like journalists in writing their websites or blogs, and to figure out the potential angle of a story. Kat Stein, in Chapter 8, provides similar suggestions for writing an influential press release, including minimizing jargon, being responsive, and building and working a network. Chapter 3, by Donald Heller, covers op-ed writing, and he focuses on relevance and timing in pitching a piece to a publisher. And in Chapter 4, Terrell Strayhorn provides advice for anyone who wants to write and deliver a short, impactful public speech such as a TED talk. As a group, these four articles convey important points for any academic to keep in mind when aiming for

more traditional media: less jargon, more discussion of the impacts of scholarship. These chapters also offer suggestions for both the introverted and extroverted among us. Jaschik's and Heller's articles focus on writing, which may appeal to those who don't want to put themselves too far out in the public eye; Strayhorn's advice may ring truer for academics who like being in front of an audience.

Another set of four chapters deals with outreach and engagement on social media. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart provides useful help in crafting one's online scholarly identity in Chapter 6, because "people won't learn from scholars they don't know" *(p. 74)*. Impostor syndrome is one barrier that many academics need to overcome before launching their brand online, but Stewart also suggests building a network of both professional colleagues and the general public through Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. In Chapter 7, a series of authors discuss how to use social media to further a research goal, such as distributing surveys to, in particular, underrepresented populations. Although this chapter seems a suboptimal fit in a volume devoted primarily to communicating ideas, rather than engaging in research, Johnson and colleagues do emphasize the importance of having a personal-professional network, which can aid in distribution of a survey but which is also a key to outreach in general. In Chapter 5, Richard Reddick tackles ways that scholars can use social media to promote their research, because he believes that "social media presence is a 21st century literacy" *(p. 56)*. Although many scholars are uncomfortable with the "blurring of public and private" *(p. 59)*, Reddick encourages them to use social media to magnify their latest publications, amplify their work outside academia, and clarify topics that might have lost their nuance. This chapter will be particularly useful for early-career academics who want to justify their outreach or use of social media in their bid for tenure and promotion. Marybeth Gasman, in Chapter 9, addresses ways that scholars engaged in outreach can deal with hecklers, controversy, and backlash. "Don't feed the trolls" is always good advice, but Gasman argues that "their issue is with your willingness to speak out in general" *(p. 124)* and that the benefits of this far outweigh such potential drawbacks. Scholars, she notes, need to make their voices heard but should also recognize when they are out of their depth.

In her conclusion, Gasman expands further on some of these ideas and places the onus of acceptance of outreach back on scholars themselves. "Many academics fear they will be penalized for having a national voice and publishing in popular media outlets" *(p. 127)*, she writes, but the ability to change that lies with us. "Faculty

members should also be rewarded in the tenure process for invited talks, keynotes, TED talks, and other public presentations of their work, as these venues take scholarship to new levels" *(p. 128)*, she argues. Within a system of shared governance, such as academia, faculty can choose to change tenure and promotion guidelines and to better reward those willing to do both peer-reviewed work and public outreach.

Whether a reader is more comfortable with traditional media or with reaching out through social media, this compilation has something for everyone. My one criticism of the volume is that the arrangement of the chapters could have been better considered. For example, the chapter on writing press releases is stuck between chapters on social media and dealing with trolls, when it more logically fits nearer the chapter about writing op-eds. As a whole, however, this series of brief case studies written in the first person makes for an approachable book, and each chapter ends with "quick tips" that scholars interested in public outreach, even those who already have experience in the field, would do well to consult regularly. This book was written primarily by and aimed at scholars in the field of higher education, but the lessons contained in it are applicable across all disciplines.

About the Reviewer

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Keith, N. Z. (2015). *Engaging in social partnerships: Democratic practices for campus–community partnerships.* New York, NY: Routledge. 274 pp.

Review by Frank A. Fear

*T*he title of this book seemed unremarkable at first. With a sea of books about campus–community partnerships, I was not excited about reading another. And what does Keith mean by the term *partnerships*? Partnerships with whom? For what purpose?

Relief came quickly. *Engaging in Social Partnerships* is not *just another* book about partnerships. It is a book about higher education engagement with a defining theme of d*emocratic practices that advance the public good*. Keith elaborates:

> With this book I wanted to promote a vision of . . . the good society. It is a society with more equity and justice, a deep sort of democracy, one in which we are able to work together—to struggle together—and build a common future out of a fractured, oppression-driven, and very imperfect past and present. *(p. 229)*

With that intent in mind, Keith is specific about her use of the word *partnerships*. She views it as border-crossing with special attention given "to the dynamics of power, culture and difference" *(p. xiv)*.

She sees two challenges associated with framing partnerships that way. The first "involves stepping out of established roles, power structures, and organizational-professional cultures and entering a world that is about enabling power of mutual relationships and shared observations, interests, and purposes." And second (relevant especially for higher education partners) is "becoming aware of how our organizational structures and our normal ways of communicating, sharing, and engaging diverse others *unwittingly create and sustain borders and hinder social justice agendas*" *(p. xiv, italics added)*.

Be still, my heart! This way of thinking drew me to engagement over 25 years ago. But, as we know, engagement has evolved to mean many things—both in and outside the academy. The quest for social justice using the approach Keith describes is but one.

Keith acknowledges engagement's variants gently and not judgmentally, including the delivery of expert knowledge (a.k.a. outreach). Rather than conclude "outreach isn't engagement," Keith recognizes the important contributions made by that work. Take, for example, Marc Edwards's work in Flint, Michigan, where he and his research team confirmed the presence of lead in the city's water system *(Itkowitz, 2016)*. What Keith does not do gently or nonjudgmentally is take on the 800-pound gorilla in higher education: the commercialization and marketization of colleges and universities. The business culture, so pervasive in higher education these days, is perhaps the biggest change the academy has experienced in the past half-century.

But does this orientation—what some scholars call "academic capitalism" *(Slaughter & Rhoades, 2009)*—serve democratic practices? "No!" Keith answers. Through the influence of modernity, and now neoliberalism, the development of "enterprising and competitive entrepreneur[s]" *(p. 66)* is the predominant emphasis at America's colleges and universities, not the development of "social trustees with moral, ethical, and collective responsibilities" *(p. 65)*. There certainly does not need to be a choice between the two but, time and time again in higher education, there is.

Why is that? Keith argues that neoliberalism has become the taken for granted, "normalized," way of the academy. That normalization has come at a cost, she asserts, because it is "a major obstacle to the desired transformation of the university-based expert into a civic professional able to promote democratic engagement" *(p. 68)*. Donald Schön recognized that obstacle over 20 years ago when he issued a warning: "The New Scholarship Requires a New Epistemology" *(1995)*. The movement will have limited reach, he speculated, unless a different epistemology (other than what he called "Technical Rationality") becomes the academy's dominant epistemology.

Keith's entire book is about a different epistemology, an epistemology associated with being a *democratic civic professional*. But "getting there," she asserts, comes neither naturally nor easily. It is a product of struggle and change instead. Why? Most academics are trained to work in a normalized manner. Technical rationality expressed through engagement as outreach is an example. Movement away from that norm, Keith continues, requires "disturbing and interrupting the normal" *(e.g., pp. 14–15)*. That means *unlearning* the foundation of one's work and migrating to a new space, which Keith labels "*The Third Space*" *(see pp. 93–94)*. The Third Space involves "moving from the familiar, to an 'empty space,'

and then to a new space where we build new meanings, norms, and a new cultural order" *(p. 93)*.

For academics, the migration includes fieldwork; reflecting on experience; allowing oneself to be vulnerable; writing about experience; and creating new language, frameworks, and propositions. Embedded in all of that is being open and inviting to nonacademics. Big leaps come when nonacademic partners influence how scholars think and practice their work. The outcome? The "what and how" of work changes . . . and so do the scholars involved. Not surprising, then, are Keith's parting words: "The process of thinking about the subject of this book and about practical wisdom has changed me" *(p. 229)*.

Therein lies what could be an inherent limitation of this book. What about those who do not come to this book with significant experience or background? For those readers the value of *Engaging in Social Partnerships* may be as a "come back to" book—revisited as a frame of reference for discussing and interpreting field experience. In the meantime, Keith includes multiple case studies to give new readers a taste of the experience (e.g., Chapters 6–8). Those with experience may prefer jumping around in their reading. I found these chapters to be especially relevant (and I read them in this order): "Social Partnerships Across Social Divides" (Chapter 1), "Going Forward" (Chapter 9), "Democratic Engagement in Higher Education: Between Modernity and Neoliberalism" (Chapter 3), and "Toward Wise Practice for University–Community Collaborations" (Chapter 5).

Although there is plenty of substance in this book, Keith does not address a major subject by choice: "The Engaged Institution," which she expressly leaves to others. Despite her caveat, I believe the book has great value for those responsible for, and interested in, the evolution of the engaged institution. Why? It's a portrait of work that *should* be getting more attention as institutions define, and set priorities for, engagement work.

There's a reason I say that. When the engagement movement was being framed and gained traction, there weren't many scholars, like Keith, writing about this work. Instead, much of the nodal and influential writing of the day was done by administrators and other executives (e.g., university presidents, foundation officials, public officeholders), not scholars. The common plea of that writing collective was for universities and colleges to become "more engaged institutions"—an anthem that was expressed commonly through speeches and other declarative-like renditions loaded with sound

bites (e.g., "the New American College," "higher education has a covenant with society").

Now, 25 years later, it is possible to speculate about what change has occurred and how much change has taken place. For the most part, change has come in terms of widespread acceptance of "engaged scholarship." That work is viewed broadly as legitimate academic work, organized and evaluated similarly to other academic pursuits. And that is progress, too. Heretofore the work had occupied the institutional margins, neither generally understood nor academically valued. Today, faculty can make a career of the work. Much good scholarship is being produced, too.

What about higher educational institutions? For the most part, our colleges and universities are not much different from what they were years ago. And while it's wishful thinking to contemplate what might have happened if the work of scholars, like Keith, had influenced directions from the start, it is never too late to ask: What if senior executives were to draw on Keith's work (and similar scholarship) to strategize about engagement's future directions?

That would be a good move for a good reason. It's not that engagement, alone, is between modernity and neoliberalism (per Keith, Chapter 3). Higher education, writ large, occupies that space as well. Although a considerable amount of work taking place in higher education today is progressive, *higher education as an institution is neoliberal.*

Engagement will flourish if that changes. *Engaging in Social Partnerships* offers good ideas about how.

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About the Reviewer

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Kreber, C. (2016). *Educating for civic-mindedness: Nurturing authentic professional identities through transformative higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge. 190 pp.

Review by Novella Zett Keith

*T*his is a complex, carefully crafted book that makes an important contribution to the civic and community engagement literature. In line with much of the field, Kreber wants higher education to create democratic professionals who are committed to making the world a "fairer place to live" *(p. 12)* and work *with* their clients rather than make expert decisions for them. Her special contribution is to deepen our understanding of civic-mindedness in ways that make it an essential aspect of all education. Although her particular interest and focus are on professional education, some of her arguments provide supports for notions of the ideal graduate (or *graduateness*) that stretch and challenge common ways of thinking about the topic.

Kreber's past writings have delved into authenticity, the scholarship of teaching, transformative professional education, democratic professionalism, and the like. She is particularly well versed in the pertinent philosophical and theoretical discourses, though not a stranger to research and practice (currently, she is dean of the School of Professional Studies in Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia). The book considers these themes as they relate to civic-mindedness, with the explicit goal of providing it with more robust theoretical foundations and rationales than are currently available (e.g., the more empirically grounded college outcomes). To do so, Kreber draws on the work of well-known philosophers and theorists (among the more prominent are Hannah Arendt, Ron Barnett, Albert Dzur, Jürgen Habermas, Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Nussbaum, William Sullivan, and Charles Taylor), recent writings on critical and applied phronesis (e.g., Bent Flyvbjerg, Stephen Kemmis), as well as the literature on engagement and transformative learning. If I were to take issue with the book, it would be mainly with the theoretical abundance packed in its 159 pages. The mix is interesting and relevant, but readers might have been better served by some careful pruning of theories, leaving sharper theoretical syntheses. The book will be especially challenging to

those in the field who are more empirically and less theoretically grounded. On the whole, however, they too will be richly rewarded.

With so much packed into the book, my review is necessarily selective. For a more complete account, I refer readers to the significant help Kreber provides by mapping, in various chapters, the terrain traversed thus far *(see especially Table 3.1, p. 42; Table 4.1, p. 59; and Figure 8.1, p. 107)*. I start with Kreber's definition of civic-mindedness, which announces her theoretical framework and themes developed throughout the book, and proceed to discuss some of its components and their connections. Civic-mindedness will lead us to capabilities, authenticity, and self-cultivation as the inner aspect of civic-mindedness. I will end with some comments directed at educating the authentic civic-minded professional and the scholarship of collaboration.

Civic-mindedness is "an overarching professional capability that is grounded in an identity that is authentic" *(p. 8)*. The first theme pertains to capabilities, which are different from skill-based or knowledge-based capacities. Developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, the capabilities approach is grounded in social justice and centers on fostering whatever allows people to access and make use of enabling structures, resources, or social services, so as to reach toward well-being and freedom to pursue a life worthy of human dignity. This way of putting it heralds an important underlying referent found throughout the book, especially in versions embraced by Nussbaum: the Aristotelian notion of *eudaimonia*, which some commentators translate as authenticity, or "living in accordance with one's deeply held values" *(Wright, cited in Kreber, p. 9)*. As Sen and Nussbaum assert, capabilities are both external and internal. Relating capabilities to identity allows Kreber to create a bridge between what she proposes are *external* and *internal* (or *in-person*) aspects of civic-mindedness: other-oriented action (external) and self-cultivation (internal).

Through this approach, civic-mindedness becomes intrinsically valuable to professionals as a practice that enriches their own well-being along with the well-being of the community. There is no separation or opposition, as an ethic of principles (deontology) would maintain. Kreber cites Nussbaum approvingly to the effect that, according to eudaimonistic thought, one becomes engaged because "these people count for me" *(p. 96)*. Following the tenets of virtue ethics to which Kreber partly adheres, one's character (or being good, that is, *virtuous*) is the source of motivation to engage in virtuous action in community, and the interaction, with supports, develops one's practical reasoning and practical wisdom

(*phronesis*). When higher education sets out to cultivate these inner qualities in students, it fosters the growth of professionals who will be motivated and disposed to enhance the capabilities and freedoms of others. As Kreber notes, it is a far cry from becoming self-referential and self-absorbed; rather, self-cultivation enables professionals "to create a better world through their professional practice, a practice which [in turn] has as its aim to expand basic capabilities in society" *(p. 56)*.

I have strayed into the area of self-cultivation, but before going further in this direction we need a better grasp of what Kreber means by authenticity, the second theme announced in her definition of civic-mindedness. Unpacking authenticity will serve to identify the personal dispositions and qualities that higher education should cultivate in students, so as to nurture their authentic professional identities. I found this discussion particularly interesting. In the field of community and civic engagement, references to authenticity generally pertain to the context, activities, and experiences associated with engagement. For instance, engagement is deemed authentic when it addresses real rather than contrived community needs and involves participants in activities that are both meaningful and potentially change-inducing. Kreber reviews several writers from this and other fields, whose contributions support the notion that meaning-making and achieving a sense of one's purpose are central to authenticity; furthermore, they involve abilities, such as critical thinking and practical reasoning, that arguably are learned best though (community) engaged pedagogies and that higher education should develop in all students. Kreber's focus on authentic identity also brings into the conversation themes from the field of identity development, including professional identity development. Here, meanings accord more closely to her own, recalling at times the definition of *eudaimonia*, above: For instance, authentic professional identities are linked to practices that connect to one's central values, and authentic professionals feel empowered to do what matters to them.

Kreber's review of this literature also serves as a rationale for digging deeper, toward theoretico-philosophical roots. This she does in two ways. First, she advances authenticity as an existential issue, one that is necessarily bound to the historical context. The question is, what does authenticity mean, in terms of one's being and actions, in our present historical moment? Second, she connects the existential to two additional dimensions of authenticity: critical and communitarian. The latter will be more familiar to

readers in the engagement field, but the three together constitute a somewhat novel lens for considering civic engagement.

For the existential dimension of authenticity, Kreber turns primarily to the work of Ron Barnett, a prominent British social philosopher in the field of higher education. Key to understanding the meaning and practice of authenticity in our times are the notions of supercomplexity and strangeness. For Barnett, multiplying, contradictory, contested, and incompatible knowledge frameworks are key. This state of affairs goes beyond mere uncertainty and reaches into the very core of our being. If we dare face ourselves and the world as it is, we must contend with perennial strangeness, and its consequent disorientation, anxiety, dissonance, and sense of homelessness. Authenticity poses a challenge that is both emotional and intellectual: it requires us to refrain from self-deception and find "the courage to question received wisdom and convention" *(p. 35)*. The only way out is to embrace the strangeness, be open to learning from and through it, and so become authors of our lives, "'beings-for-themselves' who take responsibility for our actions and stand by our inner commitments" *(p. 36)*.

This language lends itself easily to integrating the critical and communitarian roots of civic engagement into an emergent three-dimensional framework for authenticity. First, the above discussion offers a fundamental disposition (*openness to experience—and to strangeness*). Critical consciousness, with its focus on emancipation from the influence of hegemonic and oppressive understandings of self and world, adds a critical dimension, which Kreber captures through the quality (or virtue) of *moral commitment*. Communitarian roots, with their emphasis on involvement in communities as a practice that gives us meaning and purpose, contribute the third dimension: *responsible engagement*.

From here, we can extrapolate at least some of the substance of self-cultivation—which is discussed in Chapter 5 and is directly or indirectly featured in subsequent chapters. Self-cultivation must be rooted in authentic desires, which requires the ability to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic ones: If we embrace traditional practices or organizational goals, is our desire to do so authentic, or does it originate in 'colluded selves' *(p. 72)*, a misdirected sense of obligation, and corrupted institutional practices that are embodied in us? Self-cultivation involves digging out such roots, which is not always pleasurable but is growth inducing. It requires, in turn, the cultivation of emotional qualities such as courage and resilience. In turn, enacting civic-mindedness as authentic professionals requires, beyond even communicative and emancipatory

knowledge (Habermas), embracing political or public emotions (Nussbaum). Skills at public deliberation, for instance, must go hand in hand with "cultivating *love for our principles and ideals, and empathy and compassion for others*" *(p. 98,* italics in original*)*.

How is this to be done? Kreber introduces related practices and pedagogies for transformative learning, briefly noting some existing approaches and pedagogies through which students can develop empathy and self-awareness and cultivate public emotions. These are respectively the pedagogies of compassion, contemplation, and public emotions. With regard to engagement as action with others, she references Biesta's public pedagogies, which distinguish between *doing for*, *doing with*, and an Arendtian-derived pedagogy designed to generate spaces in which freedom is invited and may enter. We don't encounter the latter frequently, but it is something worthy of imagination and consideration. The book ends by providing summarizing statements pertaining to authentic professional identities, reviewing key questions for educators that were introduced in the first chapter, and considering questions to be posed to faculty who teach in professional programs, with a view to gaining insights into transformative practices to facilitate public engagement.

Kreber spends considerable time explaining the various theories that inform her work. On a first reading, I felt that this detracted from the whole, preferring a more synthetic approach to theory building. On reflection, however, I now offer this question: What if we considered her approach through the lens of civic-mindedness? Could we then see it as a refusal to appropriate others' work, in a display of the very qualities that underlie civic-mindedness—humility, for instance? Does the fact that she delves extensively into the writers who have shaped her thinking comport with a scholarship of collaboration that, wittingly or unwittingly, challenges the normality of single authorship and thus of what we might call a scholarship of appropriation? It is a worthwhile alternative to consider in a field that is committed to democratizing knowledge.

This book has much to commend it. In this review I have emphasized Kreber's conceptual contributions, but readers who are researchers should not feel left out. For instance, it would be interesting to use her framework as a lens through which to consider such constructs as the civic-minded graduate and the civic-minded professional. Her suggestion for descriptive research to identify existing educational programs that subscribe to some of the tenets of authenticity are also worthwhile. Explorations of applied phro-

nesis in fields such as nursing and medicine may also yield useful insights and knowledge of practice.

There are limits to what can be accomplished in a single book, and I have alluded to some of these. Overall, Kreber has produced a book that begs further exploration of the questions it raises. Could we assume that by taking up a leadership position in a higher education institution, she has put these on her agenda? If so, I look forward to the sequel.

About the Reviewer

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