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Exploration of a Pathway From Leadership Development to Institutionalization of Community Engagement

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Abstract

The institutionalization of community engagement is a lengthy, complex process to which higher education change agents have turned their attention over the past few decades. This study examined the experiences of participants in leadership workshops designed specifically to develop the capacities of campus and community leaders to facilitate this work. Using Conner's (2006) curve of commitment, this research highlighted factors contributing to and deterring community engagement, and explored the role of leadership development in the institutionalization of community engagement. Findings revealed five critical issues related to this work: administrative support, faculty buy-in, positionality/power dynamics, resources, and embeddedness—with administrative support and leadership serving as a linchpin. In addition to the need for effective leadership development as a pathway to supporting this multifaceted organizational change, the results also underscored the need for a model of shared leadership to guide the purpose, planning, and persistence necessary for institutional change.

Keywords: community engagement, institutionalization, leadership development, organizational change, shared leadership

Higher education institutions have been on an extended trajectory of institutionalizing community engagement (Saltmarsh & Harley, 2011; Sandmann & Jones, 2019). One of the recommended pathways to institutionalizing community engagement—understood as the "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (Albion College, n.d., para. 7)—is leadership development. Kotter (1998) maintained that leadership is the only way to foster and develop an organizational culture; however, not all higher education leaders possess the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the often large-scale change that the institutionalization of community engagement may require. Furthermore, unpredicted changes are occurring in the labor force, with higher education experiencing its largest personnel shift in 40 years (Trower, 2012) as members of the baby boomer generation retire in droves (Jones & Sandmann, 2019; Sandmann & Plater, 2013). Consequently, there has been significant leadership and personnel turnover on campuses, creating turbulence around most decision-making (Field, 2019). Moreover, these leadership changes are occurring not only at the executive level, but also among other senior-level and middle-management positions. In a study comparing the average tenure of higher education presidents—now 6.5 years (Gagliardi et al., 2017)—to the average 10 to 15 years needed for a change to become embedded, Kezar (2009) found that no meaningful change initiative would sur-

vive unless a president's successor adopted it or other institutional factors sustained it.

Societal relationships—from neighborhood connections within local communities to international governmental relations—have shifted seismically since the early months of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has left little unchanged in the daily lives of individuals and within institutions. Not only has it rattled personal and collective health, the ripple effects of global economic disruption and politicized divides have further complicated relationships in communities and institutions. Within this disruptive and largely unprecedented milieu, the institutionalization of community engagement, itself a complex, multifaceted change process, is occurring. This process demands more than adding an office of community engagement or offering service-learning and community-based learning courses. It requires thoughtful, continuous leadership to position community engagement as a strategy within which the institution honors its covenant with the public (Weerts, 2016), as well as a consistent scholarly method for fulfilling the institution's mission functions of teaching, learning, and research.

How can the capacities of a new cohort of higher education leaders be developed? Now more than ever, for the sake of collective health and well-being, there is a critical need for institutions of higher education and their communities to cocreate and apply the knowledge and practices necessary for solving the world's most pressing problems. Colleges and universities are uniquely positioned to provide elected officials, policymakers, and other stakeholders with the empirical data needed to make the most informed decisions possible in times of great uncertainty. However, the communities surrounding higher education institutions provide important environmental context for applying these research-driven empirical data. To succeed in these efforts, leaders must possess relevant knowledge, skills, and experience for navigating rapid contextual changes while nurturing the slower moving, incremental organizational and cultural development necessary to buttress their institutions in the future.

This article presents a study that investigated one such initiative, a multiyear leadership development approach to leading and sustaining the integration of community engagement on college and university campuses through leadership and faculty development in a team setting. The ongoing initiative—the Engagement Academy for University Leaders (EA)—comprises programs that bring together representatives and teams from diverse higher education institutions to learn and practice the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to incorporate community engagement into the fabric of their institutions. The results of this survey research study indicate that there are five critical issues to consider when undertaking the process of institutionalizing community engagement. The findings also highlight the importance of leadership development to the successful implementation of such change efforts.

Engagement Academy for University Leaders

With an 8-year track record, the Engagement Academy for University Leaders is an executive-level educational event designed for higher education leaders committed to developing institutional capacity for community engagement. More specifically, EA provides professional development and mentored planning and learning opportunities to teams of senior- to mid-level higher education leaders that prepare them to advance community engagement strategies in support of their respective institutions' goals. The academy is national and global in scope and scale, involving participants who represent an array of institutional types and missions. There are two major EA programs: a nationally focused, small-group program and a state, multistate/region, or multicampus program, which is shorter in length and enrolls a larger number of participants (https://engagement.umn.edu/engagement-academy-university-leaders).

Being anchored in theories of leadership and organizational change at the campus level distinguishes EA from other professional development programs in community engagement. EA draws heavily on literature in the domains of leadership, management, change processes, and institutional boundary-spanning. As a cornerstone of the program—in line with its institutional change focus—participants attend as members of an institutional team. Teams are shaped according to the goal identified in the required prework. This goal may relate to a goal already acknowledged in a plan or as a programmatic priority at the institution or some other urgent priority or challenge that could be supported and enhanced by

community engagement; conversely, it may relate to the advancement of engagement as a primary focus or in relation to other goals. Whatever the objective, an institution sends a team whose membership is aligned with the desired outcome of the experience. Teams are encouraged to include one or more individuals with senior-level authority related to their chosen goal, as well as three or more people from other administrative levels who play diverse roles related to the topic or goal. Team members may include personnel in relevant management positions, practitioners, faculty, and institutional community partners.

In an effort to continually improve the program and to advance knowledge about engagement leaders, program participants over the past 8 years have been involved in a University of Georgia IRB-approved study. This article reports on the results of a recent follow-up survey related to that study.

Theoretical Model

Although there are many theories and models of organizational change (Burke, 2014; Kotter, 1996; Weick & Quinn, 1999), as well as considerable research on higher education organizational change (Birnbaum, 1991; Kezar, 2001, 2018) and change resulting specifically in the institutionalization of community engagement (Farner, 2019; Holland, 1997; Jones & Sandmann, 2019), the foundation of this study was informed by Childers and Sandmann's (2011) model of institutional change, which resulted from an exploration of data associated with the first four Engagement Academies for University Leaders, offered from 2008 to 2011. Attendees at these EAs were designated by their institutions as community engagement organizational change leaders. As such, they were tasked with fostering commitment among those who are considered crucial to institutionalizing community engagement: sponsors, agents, and targets. Childers and Sandmann's study examined the question "What are the nature and contextual (or antecedence) factors, characterized by the participants, of institutional changes of engagement that have occurred on their campuses after their attendance at the Academy?" The resultant model, an adaptation of Conner's (2006) framework, comprises a progressive, phased process of institutionalizing complex change in an organization, with a particular emphasis on commitment as the root of change. (For a full explication of Conner's stages of commitment, see Chapter 9 in his *Managing at the Speed of Change.*)

In Figure 1, the vertical axis of Conner's (2006) commitment model represents the degrees of support for a particular change,

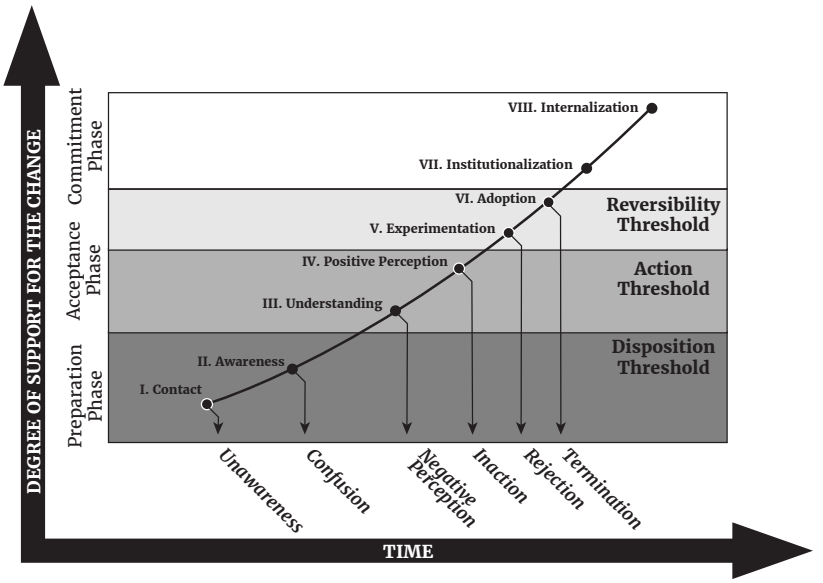

Figure 1. Conner's (2006) Stages of Commitment
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and the horizontal axis represents exposure (in length of time) to that change. According to this model, a curve of commitment develops over the following stages: reaching a threshold of understanding (preparation), passing a line of commitment (acceptance), reaching a line of irreversibility (commitment), and, finally, achieving institutionalization. Each phase—preparation, acceptance, and commitment—must be completed before transitioning to the next. As Conner documented, building and maintaining organizational commitment is both complex and costly, with most sponsors and change agents having little understanding of the effort and expense involved in acquiring it. Similarly, Childers and Sandmann (2011) found that in order to reach the line of irreversibility, community engagement, as a complex organizational change, must be advanced through the knowledge, buy-in, and full commitment of key leaders. So how are such knowledgeable, committed leaders developed?

Methods

The goal of this follow-up study was to understand how community engagement was institutionalized over time within Engagement Academy colleges and universities and the role that leadership development through the EAs played in these institutionalization efforts. The inquiry investigated the following questions:

- To what extent has the institutionalization of community engagement been achieved in EA institutions?
- What are the major factors contributing to or deterring the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education?
- What is the role of leadership development in the institutionalization of community engagement?

This retrospective study surveyed administrators, faculty, staff, and a limited number of community team members who had attended one of the EAs and undertaken defined plans to increase community engagement on their campuses. Study participants were surveyed about their experiences implementing community engagement institutionalization action plans on their respective campuses and were asked to reflect upon the facilitators of and barriers to change.

Instrument Development

The study questionnaire was developed to evaluate the experiences of Engagement Academy participants who were working to institutionalize community engagement at their college or university. The survey (available from the authors) was derived from evaluation tools of previous EAs and included quantitative and qualitative questions. Survey items focused on institutional, contextual, and personal elements, such as participants' institutional type and role, and whether they participated as part of an institutional team. Qualitative questions addressed matters such as the type of change that respondents undertook as part of their action plan, whether their action plan had progressed since participating in the EA, the changes that may have taken place at their institution, and facilitators of and barriers to plan implementation.

Sample

The survey sample represented a group of faculty and administrators who were actively and intentionally pursuing community engagement at their institutions and who had participated in past Engagement Academies, including the National Engagement Academy for University Leaders and regional, state, and preconference EA variations. The attending colleges and universities represented by the study sample varied in size, geographic region, and Carnegie classification. Engagement Academy participants included administrators, faculty, and staff from a variety of departments, units, and positions at colleges, universities, and technical colleges, along with a smaller group of institutional community partners. Some program participants worked specifically in the community engagement or outreach units of their institutions; others were embedded in more traditional administrative or academic departments (e.g., governmental affairs, student affairs) or colleges (e.g., a college of education). Individuals in the sample were selected because they had demonstrated their intent to advance community engagement by participating in an EA. Additionally, through their participation, this group had developed a plan for institutionalizing community engagement on their respective campuses. The EAs had provided these participants with knowledge, evidence-based research, tools, and strategies around community engagement and institutional change for leading, facilitating, or otherwise advancing the process of

institutionalizing engagement.

Of the participants who responded to the survey, 40% had attended a National Engagement Academy, and 60% had participated in a regional, state, or preconference EA. Eighty-three percent had attended as part of a team from their institution. A variety of different institutional types were represented within the respondents, as shown in Table 1.

A majority (98%) of the respondents still worked at the same institution at which they were employed when they participated in the EA. Participants held a variety of roles at their respective institutions during their involvement in the EA: 33% worked in engagement and outreach administration, 19% in academic affairs administration, 7% represented student affairs administration, 17% were faculty members, 15% held a joint appointment, and 10% held positions not included in any of the previously named categories. (Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.)

Data Collection

Data were collected through an online survey sent to all past EA participants. More specifically, the survey was implemented using Qualtrics software and distributed via email to all individuals who had participated in EA sessions from 2008 to 2015. The initial contact included a letter describing the nature of the study and providing a unique link for completing the questionnaire. This first contact was followed by two subsequent email prompts at the 4-week and 6-week marks. The survey remained open for a total of 8 weeks.

A total of 439 surveys were distributed to all former EA participants whose email addresses were available. Of the surveys distributed, 37 were undeliverable (including seven addressed to individuals who had changed organizations and were no longer available at the email address on file). One hundred sixteen surveys were returned, with 89 fully completed, for a completion rate of 22%.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and summarize quantitative data, including participant characteristics and affiliations, such as institutional type, institutional role, and group composition. Responses to open-ended questions were examined using the stages of qualitative data analysis suggested by Merriam (1998), including narrative, coding, interpretation, confirmation, and presentation. Data were coded manually through a content analysis of the open-ended responses. Codes were "data-driven" and were generated "based on words and phrases in the texts" (Popping, 2015, p. 32). An exhaustive list of codes was developed to fully encompass all of the ideas presented in the qualitative data. These codes were then examined for patterns and common categories to determine what, if any, relationships existed between them (Kawulich, 2004). Results from this analysis were clustered into major themes that emerged from the data, and the themes were then verified through peer review and examination (Ruona, 2005).

Table 1. Respondents' Reported Institutional Type

Institutional type	*N*	Percentage of respondents
Research university (very high research)	25	28%
Research university (high research)	11	12%
Master's college (medium programs)	11	12%
Doctoral research	9	10%
Associates	8	9%
Master's college (larger programs)	7	8%
Master's college (smaller programs)	7	8%
Baccalaureate arts and sciences	6	7%
Baccalaureate diverse	3	3%
Baccalaureate associates	2	2%

Note. Percentages total less than 100 due to rounding.

Findings

The study's findings offer insights into what is happening in institutions that are investing in leadership development in an effort to institutionalize community engagement.

Extent of Institutionalization

Not unexpectedly, none of the institutions represented by the Engagement Academy participants surveyed had fully institutionalized community engagement, although many reported, in their self-assessment, that they had made significant progress. The degree of progress toward "fully institutionalizing community engagement" was based on respondents' self-assessment of their institution against the Holland matrix (Holland, 1997), which evaluates an institution's commitment to community engagement based on seven organizational factors. Respondents were asked to compare their institution's placement on the Holland matrix after participating in the Engagement Academy with where they felt their institution ranked prior to the workshop. Those institutions that had made positive strides had identified critical focus areas for their efforts, such as codifying community engagement in strategic plans, committing resources to support community engagement initiatives, examining current promotion and tenure guidelines for inclusion of community-engaged scholarly efforts, and providing development and support for faculty members working in community engagement. If mapped on the curve of commitment (Conner, 2006), most of these institutions would fall within the preparation and acceptance phases, with only a few moving into the commitment phase; others had "fallen off" or otherwise exited the curve altogether. Those who reported that their community engagement work had halted often cited changes in leadership and/or administrative priorities.

Participants often reported a less linear movement through the curve of commitment—for instance, their work may have paused, fallen, and then looped back as the conditions changed, and they regrouped or otherwise adapted to the change to continue moving forward. Changing environmental and organizational conditions were reported as barriers to institutionalization efforts, but in some cases, if the necessary supports were in place, engagement leaders could correct their trajectory and continue to advance their work. This nonlinear movement can be visualized as "loops" along the curve of commitment. Table 2 summarizes the reported progress of EA participants.

As illustrated in Figure 2, time was not necessarily a function of successfully completing an action plan. Those participants from the earliest EA sessions surveyed (2008–2011) reported no progress to significant progress, but no institutions reported completion of an action plan. However, participants from later EAs (2012–2014) did report successfully completing their stated action plan. So although time is logically an important factor in reaching institutional goals, it is not the most important factor. The scale and primary focus of participants' action plans are shown in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively. The scale of change was almost evenly split between programs (33%), systems (28%), and organizational (28%), with changes to policy the least reported scale of change at 12% (percentages do not total 100 due to rounding). Faculty and staff, administrators, and community members were most often the primary focus of the action plan, with students more moderately so. Most plans were focused on the unit or university level and the local or regional community.

Table 2. Current Status of Action Plan of Engagement Academy Institutions

Reported status of action plan	*N*	Percentage of respondents
No progress (0% completion/implementation)	11	14%
Some progress (25% completion/implementation)	27	33%
Meaningful progress (50% completion/implementation)	24	30%
Significant progress (75% completion/implementation)	13	16%
Complete implementation (100% completion/implementation)	6	7%

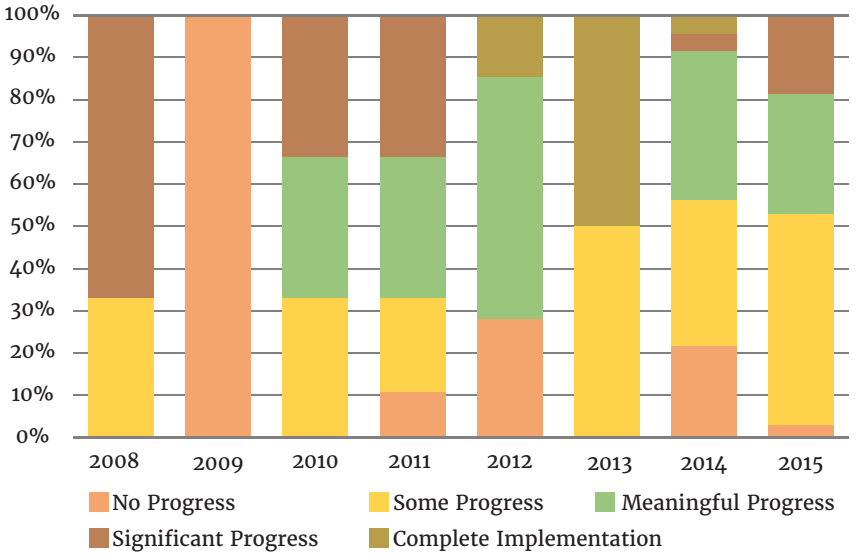

Figure 2. Reported Status of Action Plan by Year

Table 3. Action Plan Scale of Change

Scale of change	*N*	Percentage of respondents
Programs change	40	33%
Organizational change	34	28%
Systems change	34	28%
Policy change	15	12%

Note. Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 4. Primary Focus of Action Plan

Focus Area	Not at all important		Low importance		Slightly important		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important		Total
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	
Students	4	5%	8	10%	13	16%	25	**30%**	19	23%	13	16%	82
Faculty/Staff	1	1%	1	1%	4	5%	9	11%	44	**54%**	23	28%	82
Administrators	1	1%	5	6%	8	10%	16	20%	29	**36%**	22	27%	81
Community members	3	4%	6	7%	11	13%	20	24%	23	**28%**	19	23%	82
Unit level	3	4%	3	4%	7	9%	27	33%	30	**37%**	11	14%	81
University-wide	3	4%	7	9%	3	4%	12	15%	29	**35%**	28	34%	82
Institutional level	20	**25%**	14	17%	10	12%	17	21%	8	10%	12	15%	81
Local	4	5%	2	3%	3	4%	13	17%	27	**36%**	27	**36%**	76
Regional	9	12%	8	11%	5	7%	19	25%	25	**33%**	10	13%	76
State	11	15%	12	16%	13	17%	15	**20%**	15	**20%**	9	12%	75
National	17	23%	18	**24%**	9	12%	18	**24%**	10	14%	2	3%	74
International	23	**31%**	19	26%	12	16%	10	14%	7	9%	3	4%	74

Note. Some percentages total more or less than 100 due to rounding.

Contributing Factors and Deterrents

Upon further analysis of the data, five critical issues surfaced from the examination of EA institutions' commitment to and institutionalization of community engagement: administrative support, faculty engagement, positioning and power, resources, and embeddedness.

Administrative Support: "New Administration With New Priorities"

Many respondents noted that one of the most important factors influencing institutionalization was the support—or lack thereof—from their institution's key administrators. As one respondent observed, "Champions of the concept need to reside at a high level institutionally, and need a critical mass to carry the work forward to imbed the concept into the culture." The data revealed that not only do top administrators need to advocate for institutionalization, but leadership support from administrators is necessary at all levels throughout the campus. Faculty members need support from deans, who need support from provosts, vice presidents, presidents, and chancellors. "The dean is very supportive but it does not seem that she was getting the administrative support that she would have needed to follow through," noted a respondent. Another complicating factor is the widespread administrative turnover at many institutions, reflecting the trend discussed earlier. New administrators have new priorities, which may or may not include community engagement. Some respondents noted that they had been making progress with institutionalization but that leadership turnover had forced them to slow down, pause, or halt their work completely. This was a recurrent theme in respondent comments:

> I believe if we hadn't lost our leader, we would have made significant progress in promoting a culture change related to CES [community-engaged scholarship] on campus. However, the institution has been in constant turmoil throughout the year and our leaders are paralyzed when it comes to decision making.

According to respondents, leadership turnover caused not only shifting priorities, but also a general sense of confusion and chaos, as well as challenges in decision making, necessitating a constant repositioning of institutional goals and priorities as the new administration worked to settle into place. However, the data indicated that not all leadership turnover was negative. Several respondents commented that new leaders promise to have a positive impact on their institutionalization efforts. They shared that newly hired administrators bolstered their institutionalization work because it was congruent with and even advanced leadership's priorities. Some noted that it was possible to move forward without the support of leadership if there was a highly motivated and passionate group of key players and stakeholders; however, changes taking place as a result of such group activity were reported to be small and limited in scope.

Faculty Engagement: "That's Not the Way We Do It Here"

Faculty represented a second group on campus that was reported to significantly impact the institutionalization of community engagement. Many respondents spoke of their personal commitment to and involvement in community engagement on their campus, and of the support or indifference of their fellow faculty members. Promotion and tenure stood out as one of the strongest facilitative factors related to institutionalization at the faculty level. Several participants reported that their institution had made changes to promotion and tenure so that community-engaged research and teaching were now recognized as "rewardable" forms of scholarship. For some, this occurred in individual units or colleges, but several reported that the inclusion of community engagement in promotion and tenure guidelines had been implemented across the institution.

Specific efforts to educate faculty members about the importance of community engagement work and to support them in conducting this type of research and teaching were noted by several respondents. These practices included peer work groups, faculty development programs and symposia, and release time to work on community-engaged projects or service-learning classes. Yet, even accounting for these efforts, the struggle to increase the number of faculty members on their campus who were involved with and supportive of community-engaged work was notable. Some reported that they were working alone on community engagement within their

department or unit; others worked with and through a similarly committed core of peers. Some institutions were addressing the slower uptake by established faculty by seeking out new, young faculty members zealous about community engagement. One respondent shared that "several departments have recruited CES faculty specifically and have very engaged programs with many, many students involved in the community." Respondents linked general faculty resistance to a lack of understanding about the importance of community engagement, the additional work required for involvement in this type of initiative, and the continued presence of "silos" and the challenges of connecting like-minded faculty across institutions. Despite these challenges, many of the respondents remained resolute in their commitment to increasing faculty involvement in community engagement on their campus. As one person noted, "Our work is about helping our colleagues see that engagement helps them do their work better."

Positioning and Power: "What Community Engagement Is (and Isn't)"

Respondents reported that power struggles within institutions, manifesting in different ways on different campuses, also influenced the institutionalization of community engagement. They noted that multiple units on their campus were undertaking "engagement" or "outreach" initiatives but were using very different definitions of community engagement, resulting in very different outcomes. One respondent summarized this phenomenon on their campus as "multiple 'engagement' work coming from across senior administrative offices that do not work with the Office for Engagement, and don't really do engagement work." Contributing to these difficulties is a "lack of broad awareness of what engagement means":

- "Engagement is a buzz word to many who see a way to benefit from [the] language of engagement, but who don't know what 21st century engagement really is about."
- "The 'engagement' term has been co-opted to refer to anything that has to do with external entities. The term now is used in so many of our administrative units, which confounds the advancement of a community engagement agenda that is more participatory and reciprocal in nature."

Other participants noted a lack of alignment, or a "conflict," among different departments' engagement efforts and a need for campuswide organization. One respondent noted that one of the most significant barriers to institutionalization on their campus was "coming to a common consensus on what exactly we are trying to accomplish and what is best for the institution." This challenge includes more than a campus definition of community engagement or necessary infrastructure. Campus culture, traditional views of academic work, skepticism, and the slow pace of change at institutions are complicating factors. Many noted that "people are already very busy" and that it is "hard to create the time and space to think about how the pieces fit together or could be better integrated." However, those concerned about this work remained committed to getting more stakeholders at the table to create "the necessary paradigm shift" and "[show] the value of engaged work and how it can meet multiple university objectives" and "incredibly positively impact the institution."

One respondent shared that involving an important stakeholder in learning more about community engagement and its positive impact on other institutional priorities strengthened their work toward institutionalization:

> One of the people who attended was the AVC for Economic Development and it was huge in helping him to understand what community engagement is and what [it] is not and how it's different from but sometimes complementary to or aligned with economic development goals.

Resources: "Overwhelmed and Understaffed"

Access to appropriate resources was overwhelmingly found to facilitate or hinder the institutionalization of community engagement. In this context, resources include funding, staff and faculty time, support systems, staff positions, and tools. Respondents shared a variety of resource woes, including cuts in funding, inadequate or loss of staffing, shifting professional time commitments, lack of time, and lack of support from development offices. Often, community engagement competed

with other initiatives at institutions for prominence, attention, and funding. Many respondents noted that with limited staff time and funding, community-engaged work often took a back seat to other efforts, including technology transfer, commercialization, patents, partnerships with industry, and economic development. As one participant noted, "Lots of new initiatives compete for shrinking dollars." Although this finding is not surprising, it represents a significant challenge to institutionalization efforts. "Budget pressures 'de-institutionalized' engagement," one respondent shared. "Institutional stressors," such as budget shortfalls and student enrollment drops, were seen to have a ripple effect across campus initiatives, including community engagement.

However, the findings related to resources were not all negative. Some respondents shared that their institution had recently provided necessary support for community engagement work. Examples included grants for projects, release time to work on service-learning classes, and support (including funding) for community-engaged scholarship from key units on campus. Several participants reported that community engagement initiatives had been included in their institution's capital campaigns.

Embeddedness: "Integrating Engagement Throughout the Strategic Plan"

The last critical issue that emerged from the data was the impact attributable to the extent of community engagement within the institution. *Embedded* in this sense refers to inclusion in organizational charts, strategic plans, offices/units/colleges/centers, councils, and other institutional frameworks. Community engagement is recognized and codified when it is included in various plans and is visible within organizational charts. Many respondents shared that their institution had added offices or units to support community engagement work, including teaching/learning, research, and scholarship. Others noted the inclusion of community engagement in various plans, policies, and processes, such as institutional engagement plans, strategic plans, and other campuswide initiatives (e.g., diversity and inclusion, student success, and economic development). Respondents mentioned the Carnegie Elective Community Engagement Classification process as one way that institutions were seeking to assess, expand, and advance their community engagement work. However, not all institutional changes were positive for community engagement. That is, some changes in organizational structure and plans were reported to have shifted institutional focus elsewhere: "The University's interest in becoming stronger in research has lessened an interest in service and community engagement."

The five critical issues identified within the study data represent the fuel powering institutional movement along the curve of commitment. They support the work of preparation, acceptance, and commitment. Administrative support, faculty buy-in, positionality/power dynamics, resources, and embeddedness appear to drive the work of the institution through the various stages of commitment. As the data suggest, should these supports be insufficient for whatever reason, the work of institutionalization can falter, causing a pause or loop in progress, or a full exit off the curve.

Role of Leadership Development

All Engagement Academy survey respondents noted the significant impact of leadership on the institutionalization of community engagement. When examined collectively, the five identified issue clusters were found to be interconnected, with leadership serving as a linchpin (Figure 3). If effective leadership was in place, each of the critical issues could be addressed and optimized. In addition to data related to administrative support from senior leadership, respondents made a clear case for support from multiple layers of leaders, including bottom-up and top-down leadership.

Discussion

Institutional leaders, especially those in positions of power and decision making (e.g., presidents and provosts), need the skills, knowledge, and experience to guide the work of organizational change to foster the institutionalization of community engagement. Particularly, leaders must be able to communicate the need for and importance of community engagement; understand how community-engaged work supports and enhances other institutional priorities; create pathways to include community engagement within existing structures, policies, and operating procedures; address necessary cultural and attitudinal changes;

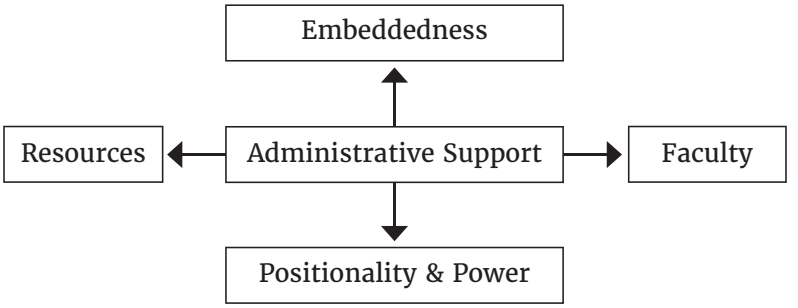

Figure 3. Role of Leadership in Institutionalization Critical Issues

identify and empower campus leaders in community engagement (including administrators, faculty, and staff); and garner the needed resources (funding and otherwise) to adequately support the work of institutionalization. Although some of these skills overlap with other leadership functions, competing priorities, pressing issues, and day-to-day operations can overshadow efforts. Study participants reported that the pedagogy of the EAs not only allowed them to develop and practice these important skills, but also provided the space and time needed to focus on community engagement efforts by removing leaders from the daily demands on their energy to engage with others in colearning and planning.

For the institutionalization of community engagement to be realized, change must occur at both the individual and institutional levels. Engagement Academy attendees reported that individual outcomes were related to increased confidence and knowledge, and to establishing contacts within a national network of peer leaders. Although organizational change was largely the culmination of individual changes, it also related to higher level systemic shifts in structure, policy, and practice. The relationship between these changes is shown in Figure 4. Walters (2013) adapted Wilbur's four-quadrant model to illustrate the individual and collective components of organizational change. Individually, people within an organization have the necessary beliefs and mind-sets to accept and support community engagement. These beliefs are translated into actions and changes in behavior to engage in community-engaged teaching, learning, and research. Collectively, the organization then experiences a shift in culture to embrace community engagement as a part of its identity. Such changes are then translated into changes in organizational systems (such as structures, policies, and practices) to foster the inclusion of community engagement for the institution. Without individuals dedicated to the effort, any attempted change will fail since that change will not be adopted by a critical mass of stakeholders to sustain it. Similarly, even if individuals are devoted to community engagement, without necessary shifts in culture and organizational systems, the process of institutionalization will not be realized. These quadrants represent the relationship between leadership and organizational development, and both are required for community engagement to become institutionalized.

Whereas the adapted four-quadrant model (Walters, 2013) is a static representation of organizational change, the Conner (2006) model captures the process as it occurs. Conner's framework is an effective delineation of the different stages of the institutionalization of community engagement, showing how the process begins with preparation and awareness and moves through understanding, acceptance, and adoption. Conner's curve of commitment illustrates the pattern of relationship between individual leadership development and organizational development. It also demonstrates the many ways that the work of organizational change and institutionalization can fail and "fall off the curve." However, one aspect the Conner model does not accurately display is the complexity of the actual work of institutionalizing community engagement. This work is neither simple nor linear; it does not move from Point A to Point B in a straight line. Instead, the work of institutionalization comprises a series of loops as the work stalls and loses steam during times of transition, new leadership,

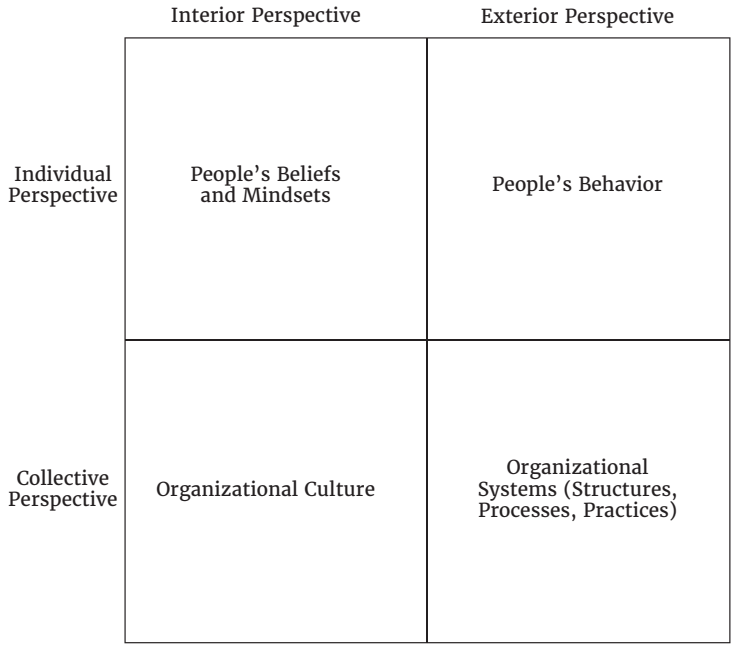

Figure 4. Adapted Wilbur Four-Quadrant Model (Walters, 2013)

budget cuts, or other disruptions to the process. Although these interruptions can cause the work to stop and "fall off," it is also possible for the work to be sustained—by faculty and staff who continue their own community-engaged research and teaching during times of leadership transition, by community engagement units who navigate budget cuts, and by new leaders who infuse new support for community engagement when they take on their role. Based on the data collected for this study, we propose that the Conner model is an effective tool for accurately illustrating the process of institutionalizing community engagement. However, we suggest that Conner's parabolic curve be replaced by a series of loops representing the stalls, challenges, pauses, fallbacks, failures, start-agains, and persistence of those who engage in the work of institutionalizing community engagement (Figure 5). This adjusted model more accurately describes the work as reflected in the data, namely the responses from participants engaged in this work at their institutions.

The loops represent the influence of not only internal pressures, but also the impact of much larger disruptions to institutions, including natural disasters, recessions, and, as experienced beginning in 2020, pandemics or other public health crises. These types of external events can quickly derail "normal" and planned initiatives on campus as leadership quickly shifts focus in order to mitigate the impact of an emergency. This shift in focus is often accompanied by a shift in budget, as funds are reallocated for response measures—potentially resulting in a diversion of funds from other campus efforts, including community engagement. Long-term budget decreases (due to a recession or other financial crises) have the potential of stopping work completely or otherwise damaging efforts that may be perceived as outside the essential functions of the organization. If furloughs and layoffs follow budget decreases or freezes, remaining staff and faculty members may have less time to work on community-engaged efforts.

However, these external events can also provide enhanced expectations and support for community-engaged work. Emergencies are often met by a community response—an outpouring of support for those impacted and group efforts to help improve conditions. As universities are integral members of their communities, they are well positioned to lead these efforts and can be strategically important for the distribution of supplies or information to the surrounding area. This provides opportunities to foster new and bolster existing relationships, which in turn can support and further future community-engaged

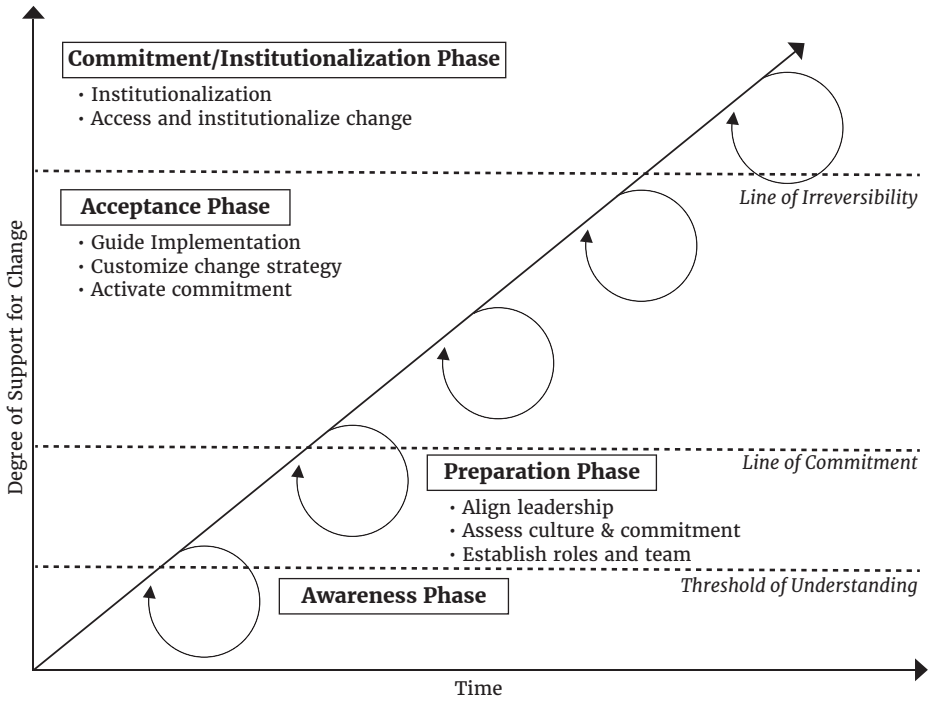

Figure 5. Adapted Conner (2006) Stages of Commitment Model

work on campus. Additionally, institutions may also be the recipients of funding from government or nonprofit entities to support community emergency response efforts or future research.

Implications

This study has several implications for the work of institutionalizing community engagement:

1. Who: A model of shared leadership should be considered when undertaking the institutionalization of community engagement.
2. What: The work of institutionalization occurs at three levels—the individual, the initiative, and the institution.
3. How: Leadership development and organizational development are intertwined in the institutionalization of community engagement.

Shared Leadership—the Who

Not surprisingly, the data from this study confirm the critical role of executive leadership in the institutionalization of any campus innovation, but they draw further attention to the effectiveness of shared leadership in moving institutionalization up the curve of commitment. As Kezar and Holcombe (2017) argued, in an institution characterized by shared leadership,

- a number of individuals are leading;
- leader and follower roles are seen as interchangeable;
- leadership is not based on position or formal authority;
- multiple perspectives and expertise are capitalized upon for problem solving, innovation, and change; and,
- collaboration and interactions across the organization are typically emphasized. (p. 3)

These characteristics were evidenced by the EA teams returning to their campuses and, over a period of years, working collectively on their action plans and some variant of the issues of institutionalization they chose to work on while attending the academy. In a case study of one of the participating campuses, Farner (2019) chronicled these "coalitions of the willing" (p. 150), internal engagement leaders who served

as advocates, conveners, problem solvers, and technical experts traversing hierarchical boundaries. This conception argues for leadership development programs to focus not on the identification and cultivation of individual leadership skills, but rather on an examination—through teams—of organizational structures, relationships, and processes that promote shared leadership and collaborations. Thus, a shared leadership framework should be adopted when choosing and creating curricula and development programs for faculty, staff, administrators, and community partners who will lead institutionalization efforts.

Three Levels of Change—the What

For the institutionalization of community engagement to reach the line of irreversibility, the work must occur at three levels: the individual, the initiative, and the institution. Individuals benefit from attitudes, skills, resources, and knowledge necessary for promoting and enacting community-engaged work. Preparing individuals to achieve such work requires thoughtful, iterative professional development programs, time and funding to pursue community-engaged teaching and research, incentives for including community-engaged methods in their work, training and development, and administrative support from department heads, deans, and others. Programs such as the Engagement Academy can provide faculty, staff, and administrators, as teams, with the skills and knowledge for leading community engagement at their institutions. Necessary forms of support include both how to implement initiatives and how to address organizational change in order to lead the institutionalization of community engagement across the institution.

Institutionalizing community engagement includes effective and impactful community engagement initiatives across campuses. These initiatives may fall within teaching, research, and service, or more likely will involve elements of teaching, research, and service. Some institutions have embraced "global challenges" as monikers for such initiatives or have adopted local neighborhood-based efforts. Such initiatives require adequate funding, involvement and buy-in from the community, necessary infrastructure and training for faculty, staff, and students, and sound program development, delivery, and evaluation. Support for community engagement initiatives is needed at multiple levels within the institution—from the "boots on the ground" implementers to the boosters, advocates, and champions in executive positions.

Finally, the work of institutionalization has to address the institution as an entity, which often requires processes and procedures for undergoing cultural and organizational change. How this work occurs looks different at each institution but includes some common themes. The institution publicly promotes the work of community engagement in events, speeches, fundraising campaigns, and strategic plans. Existing structures, centers, or units provide effective support for individuals engaged in these types of initiatives. Community engagement is seen across campus and throughout academic and student support units, and is included in teaching, research, and service. Lastly, faculty, staff, students, and administrators can readily identify community engagement as an integral part of the institution.

Relationship Between Leadership Development and Organizational Development—the How

As implied in the two previous recommendations and illustrated in the adapted Wilbur model (Walters, 2013), both leadership development and organizational development are key facilitators of institutionalization. Studies have shown that effective leadership skills are required for the successful implementation of organizational changes (Gilley et al., 2009; Sarros et al., 2008; Warrick, 2011). Gilley et al. noted that "leaders' thoughts and skills are manifested in actions, structures, and processes that enhance or impede change, further strengthening the linkage between leader behaviors and effectiveness in implementing change" (p. 40). Without the necessary knowledge and applicable skills for leading change, efforts to institutionalize community engagement will ultimately fail. However, few leaders have been trained specifically in how to champion and implement change within organizations (Warrick, 2011). The Engagement Academy is one model for providing this training by offering institutional leaders an immersion experience in change management and implementation. These leaders reported being equipped with the knowledge and skills desirable for shepherding community engagement institutionalization on their respective campuses.

Limitations

Although the data provided by EA participants was rich and complex, the study is limited because of the sampling strategy used. Only individuals who had participated in an EA were included in the sample. Consequently, this sample did not include all institutions who are currently tackling the work of institutionalizing community engagement. This strategy skews sampling toward institutions who have at least minimal support for community engagement as evidenced by the funding and time invested to send representatives to the EA. Additionally, this sample could theoretically also omit those institutions who have fully moved through the curve of commitment, have completed the process of institutionalizing community engagement on their campus, and did not participate in an EA. Another limitation is that this study did not specifically investigate the intersection of the work of institutionalizing community engagement with similar efforts toward Carnegie classification, so the scope of how these two efforts interact is unknown. Finally, this study took place before the global pandemic that began in 2020. Our academic landscapes have been significantly altered as communities across the world respond to and recover from this once-in-a-century crisis. How these changes impact the work of institutionalization of community engagement is yet to be fully seen or realized.

Final Thoughts and Future Research

Institutionalization is a lengthy process with variable permutations. The modified Conner (2006) model shows that institutionalizing community engagement is not a linear process and that it most likely takes longer to achieve than a 5-year strategic plan. This complex work can stall, spin out, and drop off the curve, or it can be kept in a holding pattern, like a plane waiting to land at a busy airport. External changes, such as student demographics, leadership pools, and public support, along with internal changes in leadership, priorities, curricula, and more can influence such efforts. This type of organizational and cultural change takes time to achieve and requires changes and buy-in from all levels—from students to chancellors to community partners. Is it possible for institutions to reach the line of irreversibility? Most likely, yes, but this institutionalization cannot occur without intentional purpose, planning, and persistence. Perhaps as part of institutionalization, institutions move from the line of irreversibility to internalization, wherein community engagement becomes such an embedded part of the institution that it is just "done" as part of its identity.

As recent worldwide events have shown, the external environment can and does exert a strong influence on the inner workings of institutions. During times of uncertainty and crisis, competent and effective leadership is even more critical for ensuring an ardent and authentic enactment of higher education missions. The 2020 pandemic has revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of organizations and communities. How today's leaders and institutions respond will impact communities for years to come. Perhaps this is an opportunity to reset higher education's commitment to work for the greater good of the local and global community. Institutions can lead the charge to embrace an appreciation for science, to better align campus research with real-world challenges, and to cogenerate public health knowledge and practices with community partners. Institutions, working alongside policymakers, elected officials, community leaders, and the next generation, can lead the way in increasing dialogue and communication through networks, providing needed scientific knowledge to inform decision making in times of uncertainty and to broaden collective perspectives in an effort to help communities help themselves through long-term mutually beneficial partnerships.

The pandemic has required an almost immediate shift in how colleges and universities operate—whether through online classes or shifts in research priorities. In what may be the "new abnormal" (Friedman, 2020), such changes require adaptive, inclusive thinking and skills. The learnings from previous Engagement Academies and other leadership development efforts position them to continue building the capacity of leaders and emerging leaders of campuses to develop the systems and mechanisms within their organizations to heighten collaborative citizenship, promote citizen science, and inform community decision making.

Given the difficulty of this work, change makers are advised to be intentional about development at the individual, initiative, and institutional levels. As this study showed, leadership development and orga-

nizational development are intertwined in the process of institutionalizing community engagement. However, leadership development efforts themselves must be creatively responsive. Considering the new opportunities, methodologies, and questions of the current global context, research such as this study provides a baseline from which to explore further the impacts of future leadership development efforts and the resulting movement through the curve of commitment toward emergent innovations.

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