

A Framework to Understand and Address Barriers to Community-Engaged Scholarship and Public Engagement in Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Across Higher Education

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Abstract

Scholarship addressing public and community engagement in tenure and promotion often invokes Ernest Boyer's landmark 1990 report, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, and goes on to lament the lack of progress made in the three decades that have followed. This review intervenes: We synthesize extant scholarship on community-engaged scholarship and public engagement (CES&PE) in appointment, tenure, and promotion (APT); lay out three central challenges to the advancement of CES&PE; review the strategies institutions and individuals have leveraged to advance more equitable and effective processes; and caution against potential inadvertent, damaging consequences of reforms focused solely on CES&PE. We argue not only that recognition for CES&PE in APT is essential for fulfilling the institutional missions of universities for the public good, but also that it is essential to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice on college and university campuses.

Keywords: appointment, promotion, and tenure, public engagement, community-engaged scholarship, faculty development, institutional change



Promotion and advancement is a mechanism to re-craft higher education's relationship with society in a way that serves society more effectively.

—National Academies of Sciences, 2020, p. 2

Although higher education institutions frequently brand themselves as vehicles for the promotion of the public good, practices that delegitimize faculty public engagement—especially related to appointment, tenure, and promotion (APT)—undermine this claim. Three decades have passed since Ernest Boyer published the landmark 1990 report *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, which sheds light on the critical misalignment between genuine faculty desire to further the public good and the incentives that guide their work. Generations of scholars have followed Boyer in arguing that APT systems often undervalue, disincentivize, or even punish community-engaged scholarship and public engagement (CES&PE), despite its centrality to many institutional missions and stated faculty values (e.g., Abes et al., 2002; Antonio et al., 2000; Cavallaro, 2016; Changfoot et al., 2020; Glassick et al., 1997; Moore & Ward, 2010; Sherman, 2013). Compelling argumentation since 1990 notwithstanding, myriad institutions, academic units, and faculty have shied away from or actively protested large-scale APT reform that could welcome CES&PE into the fold of valued and rewarded academic activity. We synthesized literature on the inclusion of CES&PE within APT processes in order

to establish a holistic argument in favor of CES&PE-minded tenure reform and a starting point for those wishing to champion it.

Our efforts reflect a growing scholarly recognition in the fields of higher education and public and community engagement that faculty incentive structures inhibit faculty CES&PE (e.g., APLU, 2019; Blanchard & Furco, 2021; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020; McCall et al., 2016; PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020; VSNU et al., 2019; Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship, 2010). This work also reflects our lived experiences in student and staff roles within institutional public engagement offices: We have observed this phenomenon via ongoing discussion in our national networks, including The Research University Civic Engagement Network (TRUCEN), a collective within Campus Compact (n.d.), the Support Systems for Scientists' Communications and Engagement workshop series (Smith, 2019), and in our day-to-day interactions and experiences with institutional, disciplinary, and cross-disciplinary colleagues and faculty. Nonetheless, we were and are cognizant of our positionality as proponents of CES&PE and the limitations posed or implied by the anecdotal nature of our individual experiences. Therefore, we turned to the literature to address our overarching questions: What challenges most inhibit the recognition of CES&PE within the APT process, and how do they manifest? Consequently, what structural, institutional change-making strategies might exist to address these issues? We further sought to identify gaps in the literature that we could address. Throughout the course of our research, we determined the need for a centralized source of arguments and interventions in favor of CES&PE-minded APT reform to advance dialogue and action on this issue and present our efforts for debate and expansion among the community of practice and scholarship at large.

Project Design

We conducted an extensive literature review, populating a citation manager with scholarship and reports about community engagement scholarship and public engagement in appointment, tenure, and promotion. To source materials, we reviewed individual resource lists from the members of the project team, major journals in the fields of higher education and community

and public engagement, and public outlets such as *Inside Higher Ed* that address this intersection. We sorted these materials into categories, including "Institutional Guides and Documents," "Reports," "Scholarship," and "Media," then read, tagged, and compiled notes about each item, noting relevant terms, themes, and connections as they emerged.

We vetted themes and connections with members of working groups at both our institution, the University of Michigan, and TRUCEN. In doing so, we assessed the accuracy of our takeaways by comparing them against the experiences of faculty, practitioners, and administrators working in the field. Based on peer and expert feedback and additional research prompted by it, we identified and resolved gaps in our synthesis. In particular, we incorporated findings from organizational efforts to reform APT, including those by the National Academy of Sciences.

This literature review and drafting process informed our selected vocabulary for this article. Our review surfaced myriad terms used to describe engaged work, each with different scope and shades of meaning. Rather than elevate one specific term over another, we chose to use the term *community-engaged scholarship and public engagement* (CES&PE) to capture a wide range of projects that span the fields of research, teaching, and service. We refer readers to the Michigan Public Engagement Framework (Aurbach et al., 2020) and other efforts conducted by Doberneck et al. (2010), O'Meara et al. (2015), and Blanchard and Furco (2021) for discussions of the multifaceted efforts faculty and other CES&PE practitioners undertake to support community constituents outside the university and contribute to the public good.

Based on the literature, we also identified several key findings and themes that provided the structure for our article. First, we synthesized arguments most commonly cited in support of CES&PE-minded APT reform, described in the "Imperative for Change" section. Second, we identified and organized our observations around three central themes or core impediments to organizationally sanctioned prioritization of CES&PE: the lack of consistent definitions and standards for activity that constitutes CES&PE, insufficient structures to document and assess publicly engaged work, and limited or lacking promotion and reward mech-

anisms to actively incentivize it. In “Foci for Reform,” we summarize the themes using verb pairs that also serve as section subheadings: define and standardize, document and assess, and promote and reward. These three foci for reform, discussed in the corresponding section, encapsulate nearly all of the APT-related issues called out in the literature as especially challenging for CES&PE scholars and succinctly capture much of the reform work that could address these issues. In “Strategies for Change,” we use these challenges as a framework for reviewing and categorizing the interventions raised in the scholarship to address these issues; we then identify gaps in existing recommendations for CES&PE-related APT reform.

Although many organizations and scholars have come to similar conclusions about the problems related to CES&PE and APT, our review contributes to the literature by consolidating disparate findings on challenges and interventions into a singular framework that can help organize the efforts of APT reformers. In service to this goal, we not only address key foci for reform but offer an extensive overview of relevant change-making strategies raised in the literature. We conclude our essay with several critical tensions that receive limited discussion in the scholarship and yet pose important challenges that demand the attention of APT reformers. Ultimately, we hope that our analysis will inform and invigorate efforts to reform APT and move the national conversation toward action.

Imperative for Change

The stated priorities of many higher education institutions across the country evoke notions of community uplift, public good, and social improvement. Yet paradoxically, APT structures just as frequently invalidate faculty CES&PE work as a legitimate means to secure tenure—by glossing over CES&PE, applying limited standards to it (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Korner et al., 2020; O’Meara, 2001; O’Meara et al., 2015), or even punishing involvement in it (Changfoot et al., 2020; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)—even though tenure policies set the tone for how the academy and institutions function and enact their stated values (National Academies of Sciences, 2020). Instead, traditional forms of research consistently receive the most recognition, with CES&PE activities often relegated to the least valued

service bucket even when they easily align with research or teaching expectations (Christie et al., 2017; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016). Ultimately, the holistic incorporation of CES&PE into APT processes becomes a matter not of institutional or faculty preference but one of imperative to uphold the stated, socially conscious *raison d’être* of the modern-day university.

On the most basic level, APT policies must reflect CES&PE to realize the very institutional values and aspirations explicitly lauded in mission and strategy statements. To start, CES&PE contributes to knowledge advancement, widely regarded as the epitome of academic pursuit (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). As Ellison & Eatman (2008) articulated, CES&PE allows faculty to “bring different knowledge to a project or program” (p. xii) and to “mak[e] knowledge ‘about, for, and with’ diverse publics and communities” (p. 1). CES&PE not only creates knowledge but offers an especially direct contribution to the public good, a hallmark of nearly all institutional missions (Ellison & Eatman, 2008). By extension, institutions must invest in intentional support for CES&PE in order to actualize explicit references to public engagement in mission statements, strategic plans, and other guiding documents. Efforts to promote CES&PE can then increase institutional accountability to the public, especially critical in today’s tense climate around funding and public support for higher education.

Given the inextricable link between CES&PE, the public good, and public accountability, the success of institutional efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) relies heavily on institutions’ ability to deliver on their commitment to CES&PE. First, institutions and their constituent units that devalue CES&PE perpetuate structural discrimination against minoritized scholars (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Korner et al., 2020; Ray, 2019). CES&PE often attracts scholars with marginalized identities, including race and gender (Misra et al., 2021; O’Meara, 2001; O’Meara et al., 2015; Settles et al., 2020), and appeals to scholars whose work or positions are additionally devalued in the academy, such as an interdisciplinary focus or adjunct or professional status (O’Meara et al., 2015). The absence of explicit standards for CES&PE means that APT reviews of CES&PE scholars exacerbate the harmful biases that pervade even the most formal evaluations of minoritized scholars

(McCall et al., 2016; Mitchell & Chavous, 2021; National Academies of Sciences, 2020; Settles et al., 2020.)

Second, lack of attention to and support for CES&PE disregards the demographics, interests, and needs of students and their communities. Given the increasing diversity of new generations of students and, subsequently, new faculty (Korner et al., 2020), organizational antiracism requires “acting on the needs of faculty and student communities within an institutional context” (PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020, p. 10). In terms of CES&PE, this imperative entails alignment of institutional priorities to students’ desire to “connect their academic work to the societal issues they care about” (Furco, 2010, p. 380) and thus to robust support for faculty CES&PE. Notably, promoting CES&PE for students only can worsen the whiplash and disillusionment that graduate students experience upon joining a university faculty and encountering a “civically disassociated world” (Ellison & Eatman, 2008, p. 17). Support for and promotion of CES&PE activities must occur at every level of the institution and among all campus constituencies.

Finally, insufficient recognition of and funding for CES&PE ultimately harms communities and publics that stand to benefit from scholars’ involvement in CES&PE. CES&PE often entails engagement with under-resourced communities; therefore, barriers to faculty and student involvement in CES&PE deny communities the uplift that institutions claim to provide. Further, minoritized scholars for whom CES&PE is “especially risky” (Ellison & Eatman, 2008, p. xiii) often lead the way on impactful CES&PE work that embodies Boyer’s (1990) ubiquitously cited gold standard for community engagement (Antonio et al., 2000; Kafka, 2021; Korner et al., 2020; Misra et al., 2021), which asserts “that academics’ work is both created with and communicated to the public, and that it meets a public good” (Barker, 2004 and Starr-Glass, 2011, cited in Renwick et al., 2020, p.1233). Status quo APT processes deter the scholars most likely to actualize purported institutional support for local communities.

Ultimately, the importance of CES&PE to institutional missions and social advancement requires that institutional stakeholders move beyond one-off simple fixes ostensibly aimed at supporting CES&PE and instead exercise persistent leadership and

collaboration within and across organizational levels to integrate CES&PE into APT standards. Attempts to include CES&PE in APT review rarely “accomplish much more than incorporation of definitional and valuing language” (O’Meara et al., 2015, para. 23) and often sideline complex issues like documentation, impact, and peer review (O’Meara et al., 2015). In part, this roadblock arises from the tendency to cherry-pick limited solutionist responses or singular interventions rather than reckon with the multifacetedness of the initiatives needed to effect APT change (J. Risien, personal communication, May 10, 2018). Changfoot et al. (2020) argued that contextual interventions entailing “individual faculty actions” and structural interventions involving “program and policy change” must occur in tandem, rather than with one used to excuse the absence of the other (p. 242). Further, because APT reform requires significant political capital with those “at the forefront of . . . reforming P&T” (Risien, 2018, n.p.), systemic reform requires backing from senior leaders who can insulate faculty from risks as consequential as job loss. Without prolonged, cross-cutting resource allocation to building CES&PE into APT, devaluation of CES&PE will continue to depress scholars’ organizational affinity (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; O’Meara, 2001), undermine their job performance (O’Meara, 2001), and exacerbate recruitment and retention issues, especially for marginalized faculty (Aguirre, 2000; Antonio et al., 2000; Cavallaro, 2016; Misra et al., 2021; Vogelgesang et al., 2010).

Foci For Reform

Throughout our review, we gleaned three prerequisites—derived from “sticking points” and “hotspots” that stall reform (Janke et al., 2016)—for meaningful inclusion of CES&PE in APT processes: CES&PE must be formally defined and standardized, consistently documented and assessed, and visibly promoted and rewarded. In the following section, we delve into each of these three problem areas and their consequences for CES&PE-involved faculty. We contend that these three foci for reform remain actionable and essential areas of focus, even while we recognize that valid and significant technical and procedural barriers may present themselves across different institutional contexts. However, we also note that resistance to the notion of reform may represent symptoms of deeper issues, rather than procedural difficulties. Any APT reform that

would value CES&PE on even ground with a traditional scholarly portfolio necessarily challenges existing power structures in the academy. It may therefore occasion significant resistance from those who benefit from or align with the system as it stands. We urge readers to interrogate obstacles to defining and standardizing, documenting and assessing, and promoting and rewarding CES&PE in APT reform with these frames in mind.

Define and Standardize

The process of elevating CES&PE within APT requires that reformers establish and institutionalize standard language to describe CES&PE within their organizational contexts well before they tackle the development of corresponding metrics and reward structures. At every level—including faculty, departments, units, institutions, and disciplines—lack of consistency and clarity around what counts as CES&PE perpetuates confusion, frustration, disregard, and penalties that disincentivize the pursuit of CES&PE, as discussed below. Further, efforts to operationalize CES&PE often stall over epistemological debates about the nature of engagement and scholarship that distract from the work of creating practical, context-responsive language for CES&PE. Ultimately, the absence of agreed-upon definitions for CES&PE constitutes one of the most fundamental roadblocks to the integration of CES&PE into APT systems.

Several issues comprise the overarching “define and standardize” challenge, most apparent of which is the inconsistency—or in many cases, complete lack—of formalized language to describe CES&PE and to therefore set a positive tone for how people understand and interpret the value of CES&PE work. CES&PE is described in different terms depending on the department, field, or institution, including engaged scholarship, “outreach scholarship, public scholarship, scholarship for the common good, community-based scholarship, . . . community engaged scholarship” (O’Meara et al., 2015, p. 52), civically engaged scholarship, participatory research, and translational research (Doberneck et al., 2010). At the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, a 2016 working group found 38 proxy terms for CES&PE across departments, including “broader impact,” “extension,” “outreach,” and “public influence scholarship” (Blanchard & Furco, 2021, p. 10). Further, scholars and

practitioners often observe misalignment between administration and faculty. “The generalized way publicly engaged scholarship is described by institutional leaders does not resonate with many faculty members,” Doberneck et al. (2010, p. 6) wrote, emphasizing a need for mutually intelligible ways of describing CES&PE work. This lack of shared language and concepts muddies the efforts of individuals, departments, and institutions attempting to communicate the value of CES&PE to key stakeholders (Doberneck et al., 2010), including APT committees.

Perhaps even more insidiously, the official policies that do exist are often incongruent with what is informally promoted to faculty as acceptable and valid intellectual work, even when a department, unit, or institution ostensibly upholds the value of CES&PE in their formal APT criteria (Changfoot et al., 2020; National Academies of Sciences, 2020). Echoing common faculty frustration over discrepancies between stated and enacted guidelines (National Academies of Sciences, 2020), Risien (2018) reported that policies may express support for reviewing activities beyond grant funding and number of publications, but practice “does not generally follow policies and guidelines” (para. 2). For example, junior CES&PE scholars often receive advice to steer clear of CES&PE projects pretenure and to focus instead on traditional forms of peer-reviewed, discipline-specific, and single-authored research (Changfoot et al., 2020; Christie et al., 2017). In tandem, CES&PE scholars often encounter the perception that the community is only “an object to be studied” and community- and publicly engaged projects do not and cannot constitute “research” (Changfoot et al., 2020, p. 242). The popular conflation of CES&PE exclusively with “service” and restrictive understandings of what constitutes rigorous scholarship obscure and undervalue faculty work before, after, and at the point of tenure review (Blanchard & Furco, 2021).

Consequently, in the face of inconsistent formal standards and contradictory informal practices, faculty are disincentivized from CES&PE involvement because they struggle to discern how or if their CES&PE work will count toward tenure—a challenge especially pernicious for scholars of color and those with other backgrounds minoritized in the academy (Settles et al., 2020). Guiding documents often associate CES&PE with “the undervalued realm of service,” rather

than using “inclusive language that allows for multiple and expansive impacts of faculty work” (Korner et al., 2020, p. 9). For example, CES&PE may manifest as “technical assistance, policy analysis, program evaluation, organizational development, community development, program development, or professional development” (based on Lynton, 1995, as cited in O’Meara, 2001, p. 47) rather than as a research article. In one department, these knowledge-making artifacts might count as research, in another, as service, and in a third, they find no avenue to institutional recognition (Cruz et al., 2013; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). This inconsistency has particularly detrimental effects on minoritized scholars. “Faculty of color face so many barriers, so many doubts, [are] often marginalized, often given too much minority service, outreach responsibility. When the time comes for tenure, they learn that it doesn’t count. . . . They don’t get promoted,” lamented Orlando Taylor (as cited in Ellison & Eatman, 2008, p. 18).

Document and Assess

As with defining and standardizing, inconsistency poses a major challenge to effective and equitable systems of evaluation for CES&PE scholars. Lack of clarity troubles APT processes for all academics, but the ambiguity of expectations is especially pronounced for engaged scholars. Like most faculty, CES&PE scholars undergoing APT encounter ambiguous standards, vague success metrics, if any, and a lack of clarity about the appropriate mix of teaching, research, and service (O’Meara, 2001, p. 46). These factors lead to negative downstream consequences, including lower performance, increased turnover, and lower commitment to the organization (O’Meara, 2001). APT evaluation requirements likewise do not offer useful indicators to track progress, particularly for CES&PE work that defies neat categorization into either research, teaching, or service (Christie et al., 2017). Specifically, many APT processes insist on artificial, line-in-the-sand distinctions between teaching, research, and service and the activities that count for each, rather than treating each category as a component of an inherently overlapping Venn diagram (Furco, 2010; National Academies of Sciences, 2020).

Just as institutional policies leave scholars in the dark, literature on CES&PE offers minimal guidance on how to measure CES&PE,

leaving faculty without useful benchmarks or language to establish the quality and value of their work. Even foundational scholarship on APT standards often relies on abstract constructs to describe what makes CES&PE effective (Blanchard & Furco, 2021; O’Meara, 2001). For example, our review of the scholarship and institutional documents, including faculty handbooks, uncovered criteria for excellence in CES&PE such as “requires the rigorous application of discipline-related expertise” (Rutgers University, quoted in Korner et al., 2020, p. 22) and “address and help solve critical social problems” (Syracuse University, 2009, quoted in Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016, p. 75)—goals that, while admirable, offer little to faculty seeking to understand how their dossier will be evaluated when submitted for a review process. To further complicate matters, funding mechanisms generally overlook the costs associated with conducting meaningful and thorough evaluation (National Academies of Sciences, 2020). In the end, researchers who advocate for a standardized evaluation system concede that despite “a large number of toolkits and resources available to guide the evaluation. . . . evaluation of public engagement tends to be done rather poorly” and “evaluation findings are rarely shared widely or lead to demonstrable changes in engagement practice” (Reed et al., 2018, p. 145).

In the absence of clear structures to measure CES&PE and its outcomes, assessment of CES&PE frequently relies on an individual faculty member’s ability to “sell” their work to their review committee or their committee members’ preexisting level of familiarity with and support for CES&PE. Often, CES&PE faculty are forced to build a case for their work by downplaying its public engagement and relevance to the community and instead equating it to more traditional forms of scholarship (Blanchard & Furco, 2021; Changfoot et al., 2020; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016). Ultimately, the lack of clear CES&PE definitions and standards combined with confusing evaluation practices adds up to systemic disregard for publicly engaged work that institutions claim to value.

Promote and Reward

Inconsistent, informal, or biased evaluation of CES&PE undergirds equally inconsistent—and, at times, absent—structures for promoting, incentivizing, and rewarding engaged work. As a result, many insti-

tutions fail to formally reward in faculty advancement processes the very work that countless mission statements and even university marketing efforts cite as a hallmark of universities' contributions to the public good. The impact of this systemic disregard on engaged faculty and the fields of community and public engagement is severe: Lack of recognition for CES&PE within APT processes impedes faculty involvement in, and therefore the advancement of, CES&PE. Faculty interested in engaged work may delay CES&PE in favor of discipline-specific publishing, returning to CES&PE only after tenure or forgoing it entirely (Changfoot et al., 2020). As Saltmarsh and Wooding (2016) observed, "When institutional policies are silent on engagement, they create disincentives for faculty to undertake community engagement across their faculty roles and often punish them when they do" (p. 75). This lack of recognition, at least proportionally to time and effort, poses one of "the most significant deterrent[s]" (Abes et al., 2002, p. 6) to faculty involvement in CES&PE (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007).

Two particular beliefs about academic research often drive institutional disregard for CES&PE. First, CES&PE is often seen as less valuable or rigorous than traditional research. As Christie et al. (2017) pointed out, "The evident consensus is that basic research followed by publication in top-tier, refereed journals is viewed with the weightiest consideration" (p. 29). With CES&PE often legible only as "service," it frequently falls outside the "research and scholarship and creative activity" that matter most in APT (Kafka, 2021; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016, p. 78). Further, collaborative and/or interdisciplinary research—foundational and valued in CES&PE spaces—comes in tension with many disciplines' APT emphasis on independent work aligned to a single field (HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020). These perspectives also stem from and entrench sexist and racist attitudes, which position CES&PE as the domain of women and people of color (Wiltz et al., 2016).

Second, CES&PE projects—often more local and less prescribed than other forms of knowledge-making—clash with approaches to scholarship focused on high productivity and national prestige. Some faculty resist CES&PE work because they erroneously believe that local impact counteracts regional or national preeminence and institutional prestige (O'Meara et al.,

2015; Pelco & Howard, 2016). Further, senior tenured faculty commonly perpetuate their own experience-based assumptions about normative scholarly practice through their departments' hiring and APT processes. As a result, "new and tenure-track faculty are often encouraged to pursue narrow research paths toward highly specialized expertise that produces short-term outputs" (Changfoot et al., 2020, p. 241) rather than "involved, messy, and time consuming" CES&PE (p. 247). Ultimately, as Saltmarsh and Wooding (2016) observed, this "common dilemma" occurs across the United States when new faculty who "produce knowledge through new forms of scholarship" arrive on campus to find an academic system "that fails to recognize or reward their work and prevents them from thriving as scholars" (p. 74). Paradoxically, although tenure may be more difficult for CES&PE scholars to attain, it is especially necessary for protecting long-term work that does not satisfy commercial demand (Horn, 2015, p. 35).

Not only are they often unprotected by tenured status, CES&PE scholars may also be penalized because the lack of standards for CES&PE amounts to near-explicit punishment structures for engaged scholars. Because CES&PE often falls outside the scope of work recognized in APT, CES&PE involvement relies on faculty members' internal motivation and "free time" (Abes et al., 2002, p. 15; Banerjee & Hausafus, 2009). Faculty who choose to pursue CES&PE often find themselves sacrificing other professional responsibilities or pursuing it in addition to the "correct" research that qualifies them for appointment, tenure, and promotion (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2009; Changfoot et al., 2020, p. 242). Although this challenge creates especially inordinate pressure for scholars at research-intensive universities, it can lead to burnout and exhaustion for academics at any institution type (Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016). Critically, this dynamic further marginalizes minoritized scholars, who are often expected to contribute to DEIJ and service projects with no compensation or recognition and outside their other copious faculty responsibilities (Flaherty, 2021; Misra et al., 2021). Changfoot et al. (2020) questioned "whether meeting both specific disciplinary expectations and being engaged scholars is more than what should be expected of faculty" (p. 254). At best, "the incongruity between tenure and workload demands" (Christie et al., 2017, p. 32) keeps

faculty inside disciplinary boundaries and away from innovative scholarship and teaching. At worst, it traps scholars in less secure and less valued contingent positions (Korner et al., 2020, p. 4), upends their APT opportunities, or altogether ends their academic careers (Korner et al., 2020).

Strategies for Change

The three challenge areas to CES&PE-related APT reform gleaned from the literature—define and standardize, document and assess, promote and reward—not only elucidate the stumbling blocks to APT change but provide a framework for prioritizing interventions that best align to reformers' desired outcomes. Specifically, APT reformers can choose preferred change strategies based on the particular roadblock(s) they aim to address, thus ensuring that investments target their specific goal. To support these efforts, we have compiled into a single repository the disparate tactics identified across the scholarship as ways to better recognize CES&PE within APT processes. We opted to present all 34 identified interventions and make no value judgments so that reformers may identify and select relevant strategies based on their specific institutional contexts. As we compiled these interventions, we categorized them into nine themes (standardized definition, metrics, and expectations; expansion of criteria for valued research; CES&PE-specific APT dossier sections and templates; broadened scope of peer review; formalized competencies for APT reviewers with respect to CES&PE; demonstrated commitment to CES&PE; CES&PE-specific development opportunities; CES&PE-specific financial support; and grassroots efforts to promote CES&PE), identified which of the three roadblocks each one addresses best, and determined the organizational level at which leaders must be involved to implement each. An accompanying AirTable database provides the detailed, scholarship-grounded list and explanations of identified interventions, sortable and filterable by each of these three dimensions. Interested readers may access the AirTable database, which enables filtering by different categories, at <https://airtable.com/shrpd7uI3IBRTEKD5>. If readers are interested in exporting preferred views of the data for use with attribution, they may contact the corresponding author, Neeraja Aravamudan, directly. For immediate reference, we have summarized the 34

identified interventions by thematic category and roadblock(s) addressed in Table 1. The process by which a group of campus stakeholders might identify and implement interventions that advance their goals is illustrated in Figure 1 and discussed in the accompanying model scenario below.

Model Scenario

At Hypothetical University, unclear tenure expectations are holding back CES&PE scholars and discouraging them from performing further engaged work, because they don't know how that work will be assessed or they find out too late that it doesn't advance their tenure portfolio. An institution-wide response to this problem would be great, but advocates determine that, based on campus climate, a more grassroots approach has a greater chance of success. They use the AirTable to find possible responses and resources for change at the department level, locating an intervention that would both clarify definitions around community-engaged scholarship and public engagement (Define & Standardize) and delineate how work would be evaluated (Document & Assess). Members of the Sociology Department faculty then write a proposal for a committee to amend the departmental policy with specific criteria and metrics for CES&PE. The committee is charged with consulting the institution's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) office and departmental DEI advocates about opportunities for collaboration—how could the amendment also explicitly support DEI work, or open rather than close doors for future change? It also draws on literature cited in the AirTable, resources from the American Sociological Association, the work of peer institutions, and discussions with the community engagement office on campus to draft the metrics. Advocates rally support through direct conversations with other faculty, and the amendment is approved at the department level. After celebrating, they set their sights higher: With a successful model from the Sociology Department, might the College of Arts & Sciences be willing to make similar changes?

Outstanding Tensions and Strategic Considerations

Although literature in favor of CES&PE promotion within APT processes sheds light on the three external roadblocks to reform that we have discussed thus far, it gives limited if any attention to several especially conten-

Table 1. Interventions for Appointment, Tenure, and Promotion Reform

Thematic Category	Interventions	Define and Standardize	Document and Assess	Promote and Reward
Standardized definition/metrics/expectations	Institution-wide definition of CES&PE (APLU, 2019; Baker, 2001; Blanchard & Furco, 2021; Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017; Furco, 2010; O'Meara et al., 2015; Pelco & Howard, 2016; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)	X		
	Unit-level alignment to institution-wide CES&PE definition (Cunningham et al., 2013; Pelco & Howard, 2016)	X		
	Explicit metrics for what "counts" as CES&PE within APT (Cunningham et al., 2013; Jordan et al., 2009; Pelco & Howard, 2016; PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020)	X	X	
	Publicly available APT criteria for CES&PE and relevant examples (Klein & Falk-Krzesinski, 2017; Korner et al., 2020; PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020)			X
	FAQ on CES&PE within APT (Liu et al., 2017)			X
	Formal mentorship/guidance on how best to fill out CES&PE sections of dossier (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020; Korner et al., 2020; Klein & Falk-Krzesinski, 2017; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)		X	X
	Introduction of a tenure-by-objectives system (Boyer, 1990; Christie et al., 2017; O'Meara, 2001; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)		X	X
Expansion of criteria for valued research	Legitimization of short-term impact (Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020; O'Meara et al., 2015)	X	X	
	Legitimization of local impact (Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020; O'Meara et al., 2015)	X	X	
	Legitimization of collaborative and interdisciplinary work (APLU, 2019; Changfoot et al., 2020; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Klein & Falk-Krzesinski, 2017; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016; VSNU et al., 2019)	X	X	
	Diversified list of publication types that count as scholarship (Blanchard et al., 2012; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; O'Meara et al., 2015; Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship, 2010)	X	X	

Table continues on next page.

Table 1. Continued

Thematic Category	Interventions	Define and Standardize	Document and Assess	Promote and Reward
CES&PE-specific APT dossier sections and templates	Inclusion of CES&PE-specific dossier sections (Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017; HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020; Janke et al., 2016; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)		X	X
	Inclusion of case study portfolio option within APT dossier (Ellison & Eatman, 2008)		X	X
Broadened scope of peer review	Inclusion of CES&PE faculty within dept. in CES&PE candidate review (HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020)		X	
	Inclusion of CES&PE specialists from other departments in APT reviews (Klein & Falk-Krzesinski, 2017; PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020)		X	
	Inclusion of community members in peer review opportunities (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Jordan et al., 2009; Korner et al., 2020; O'Meara et al., 2015; Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship, 2010)		X	
	Solicitation of recommendation letters from outside the academy (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; McCall et al., 2016; PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020)		X	
	Maintenance of a centralized log of strong CES&PE peer reviewers outside the department (Ellison & Eatman, 2008)		X	
Formalized competencies for APT reviewers with respect to CES&PE	University- or unitwide CES&PE competencies (Blanchard et al., 2009; Jameson et al., 2012)		X	X
	APT reviewer trainings on CES&PE evaluation (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007; Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017; HIBAR Research Alliance, 2020; Jordan et al., 2009)		X	X
Demonstrated commitment to CES&PE	Establishment of formal reports on CES&PE (Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)		X	X
	Establishment of formal committees/councils/conferences on CES&PE (Baker, 2001; Blanchard & Furco, 2021; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Pelco & Howard, 2016; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)		X	X
	Incorporation of CES&PE into key strategy documents (Baker, 2001; Korner et al., 2020; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016)			X

Table continues on next page.

Table 1. Continued

Thematic Category	Interventions	Define and Standardize	Document and Assess	Promote and Reward
	CES&PE language within official offer letters for CES&PE faculty (Ellison & Eatman, 2008; Klein et al., 2016; Korner et al., 2020; Working Group on Evaluating Public History Scholarship, 2010)			X
CES&PE-specific development opportunities	Fellowship programs for developing and/or leading CES&PE faculty (PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020)			X
	Tailored CES&PE workshops and trainings (APLU, 2019; Doberneck & Schweitzer, 2017; Korner et al., 2020)	X		X
	CES&PE-focused mentorship for engaged graduate students (Ellison & Eatman, 2008)			X
CES&PE-specific financial support	Internal grants offered exclusively for CES&PE (APLU, 2019; Baker, 2001; Jordan et al., 2009; O'Meara et al., 2015)			X
	Internal rewards exclusively for exceptional CES&PE work (Baker, 2001; Jordan et al., 2009; O'Meara et al., 2015)		X	X
Grassroots efforts to promote CES&PE	Connection to institutional mission (Changfoot et al., 2020; Franz, 2011; O'Meara, 2001)			X
	Peer benchmarking (Changfoot et al., 2020)			X
	Demonstration of individual (over just project) impact (Changfoot et al., 2020; Jordan et al., 2009; Klein & Falk-Krzyszinski, 2017; O'Meara, 2001)		X	X
	Ally network-building (Changfoot et al., 2020; Ellison & Eatman, 2008)			X
	Personal accountability in seniormost academic ranks (Changfoot et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2017; O'Meara, 2001)	X		X

tious issues that reformers themselves may perpetuate through their efforts to improve APT. In part, this omission may reflect that the tenure track and often individual faculty-level foci inherent to literature on the integration of CES&PE into APT draws attention away from a systems-level view of how changes in favor of tenure-track academics influence broader aspects of institutional operations. Hence, we believe it is imperative to raise awareness of four issues that we find can result from this phenomenon: threats to DEIJ reform, inequities between tenure-track and non-tenure-track

CES&PE-involved faculty and staff, tensions between incremental and radical change, and debates around rigor and definitions of research. We frame these issues as a call to action for change agents to engage with the potential for unintended, perverse consequences of their efforts and preemptively contemplate means to address them.

Most critically, academics initiating CES&PE-related APT revisions must ensure that their work recognizes other important and ongoing reform efforts, in particular the push for robust recognition of marginalized

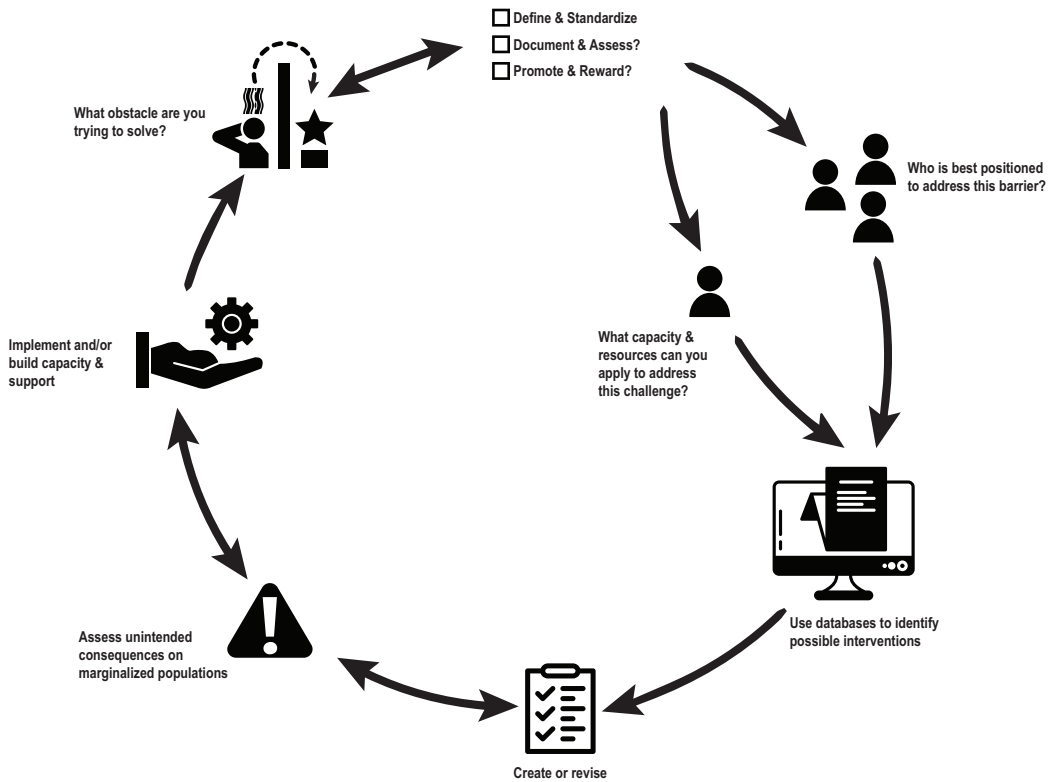


Figure 1. The Framework in Action.

faculty and DEIJ work in tenure and promotion (e.g., Flaherty, 2021; Kafka, 2021; Sylvester et al., 2019). As we argued earlier, efforts to incorporate CES&PE into APT necessarily intersect with and can further tenure reform focused on DEIJ (Misra et al., 2021). For example, initiatives to produce clearer standards and evaluation strategies, diversify journals considered “top-tier” by review committees, and document inclusive teaching strategies that support CES&PE scholars also serve to recruit, retain, and support faculty of color and those focused on DEIJ scholarship (Misra et al., 2021). However, just as CES&PE-minded reform may uphold DEIJ objectives, it can easily devalue, jeopardize, or derail DEIJ work if performed in a vacuum in which emphasis on certain CES&PE goals overshadows equally important but adjacent DEIJ priorities. Other arenas—including innovation and entrepreneurship (Carter et al., 2021; PTIE Organizing Committee, 2020) and arts integration (Harp & Stanich, 2018)—face related challenges and should similarly be considered. Ultimately, CES&PE advocates should investigate and implement context-specific strategies for advancing CES&PE that credit and integrate the work of organizers push-

ing for more equitable APT structures that include a wide variety of scholarship and academic effort.

Given that CES&PE-minded APT reformers should account for imperative DEIJ outcomes, they must also strive to resolve inequities between tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty and staff involved in CES&PE. To start, scholarship lamenting pervasive institutional devaluation of CES&PE remains largely silent on this phenomenon’s equal—if not greater—effect on non-tenure-track CES&PE academics. By overlooking the work of non-tenure-track CES&PE practitioners, this literature implicitly reinforces tenure-track positions as more valuable and powerful than non-tenure-track ones. Such literature should, for example, address means to decrease the already heightened risk and job insecurity, further exacerbated by CES&PE work, of tenure-ineligible positions (National Academies of Sciences, 2020). It should also investigate how CES&PE-related APT reform may inadvertently harm the CES&PE efforts of those outside tenure-eligible ranks. With this gap in the literature in mind, we acknowledge that our review does not touch

on documentation and reward structures for non-tenure-track, publicly engaged faculty and staff. In doing so, we hope to raise readers' awareness of this problem within their own APT reform efforts.

As one strategy to narrow these equity gaps, scholars and administrators involved in APT redesign must account for the active, yet underrecognized and minimally rewarded, contributions of nonacademic staff to faculty members' and institutional public engagement efforts. Professional staff ensure the continuity and impact of institutionally sanctioned CES&PE work by fostering opportunities for campus constituents' public engagement, facilitating partnerships with community stakeholders, and offering project support and professional development (Martin & Ibbotson, 2021; Watermeyer & Rowe, 2021; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008, 2010). However, they rarely receive credit for their contributions to the CES&PE-related successes of the institution and the faculty they support, cannot easily access extramural funding, and are not formally reviewed on their CES&PE efforts within promotion processes—even as they must often “challenge the academic status quo and go the extra mile to accomplish something” (Watermeyer & Rowe, 2021; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 644). As a result, a focus on integration of CES&PE into reward structures solely for tenure-track faculty may inadvertently deepen existing inequities between faculty and staff and undermine stated goals to promote CES&PE. Ultimately, we urge readers to

- consider the applicability of the issues we highlight throughout this document to non-tenure-track scholars and staff;
- conceive of the challenges that APT presents for CES&PE not as a singular problem affecting tenure-track positions but as a manifestation of pervasive institutional devaluation of CES&PE that harms employees regardless of tenure status; and
- implement CES&PE-related APT reform that intentionally avoids perpetuating devaluation of CES&PE outside the tenure-track ranks and interlocks with efforts to raise organizational awareness, respect, and appreciation for CES&PE conducted by all institutional employees.

In addition to keeping DEIJ concerns top of mind, APT reformers must grapple with the tension between progress via immediate but incremental changes meant to help CES&PE academics secure tenure and the possibility that these changes may undermine more substantive APT reform that would elevate and celebrate CES&PE—and other work undervalued in the academy—in its own right. For example, given the persistent promotion and valuation of research as “greater than” both teaching and service at research-intensive institutions, many CES&PE academics are forced to frame their publicly engaged work as research to receive sufficient recognition and qualify for APT (Blanchard & Furco, 2021; Changfoot et al., 2020; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016). On one hand, this strategy can contribute to the success of scholars imminently facing APT. On the other hand, advice on how scholars can acquiesce to the current system reinforces that system's devaluation of CES&PE in the long term. Specifically, only a fraction of CES&PE work fully qualifies as research by standard institutional and APT policy definitions. As a result, scholars' attempts to incorporate as much of their CES&PE work into the research bucket as possible may “perpetuate a persistent misperception that engaged scholarship is a less rigorous form of scholarship” and therefore that CES&PE as a whole deserves less attention (Blanchard & Furco, 2021, p. 15).

This case-in-point showcases two foundational questions that APT reformers must contemplate and resolve within the context of their institutions. First, as posed by Laurie Leshin, president of Worcester Polytechnic Institute: “Are we trying to take the current [APT] road, full of potholes, and make it as easy a road as possible for anyone who would like to go down it, or are we trying to build a different type of highway?” (National Academies of Sciences, 2020, p. 3). And second, as Tom Rudin, director of the National Academies' Board on Higher Education and Workforce, asked, can both these charges be accomplished simultaneously? (National Academies of Sciences, 2020).

As also inadvertently evident through this example, APT change agents must strategize how to navigate the contentious debates around conceptualizations of research and rigor that CES&PE work invariably invokes and that may overly widen the scope of intended reform. To start, many scholars and

activists would argue that current definitions and operationalizations of “research” within APT policies are overly restrictive (National Academies of Sciences, 2020). Pushing the boundaries on the kinds of CES&PE that can and should count as research can catalyze more overarching APT reform. For example, it can lead to evaluation systems that formally and consistently recognize more diverse forms of research, including many CES&PE initiatives. However, simultaneous efforts to redefine research and incorporate CES&PE into APT would likely encounter significant resistance and might further entrench misconceptions about CES&PE. Further, although an expansion of the “research” concept may benefit CES&PE, it still does not account for the reality that CES&PE spans research, teaching, and service boundaries, as well as other activities that complement but do not fit neatly into one of these categories. Neither does it address how the perceived merit of diverse CES&PE projects should not hinge on whether they qualify as research. Attempts to increase recognition for CES&PE within APT therefore must also promote recognition for nonresearch activities, yet again expanding the scope of an already contentious intended reform.

Conclusion

APT may be primarily experienced as a reward structure for individual faculty members, yet the daily operations of this process can easily obscure the systems-level view of APT as a means to work toward the public good. In an ideal world, APT procedures should incentivize teaching, research, and service that serve and improve the welfare of communities beyond the campuses of higher education institutions. To revisit

the epigraph for this essay, “promotion and advancement is a mechanism to re-craft higher education’s relationship with society in a way that serves society more effectively” (National Academies of Sciences, 2020, p. 2). From this perspective, shifting policies in favor of community-engaged scholarship and public engagement within APT systems constitutes a prerequisite of effective academic evaluation.

As CES&PE-minded APT reformers strive to close the gap between this ideal and the current reality, our tripartite framework and corresponding repository of interventions can guide the development of their high-priority goals and steps to pursue them. We posit that the categories of define and standardize, document and assess, and promote and reward capture the array of issues that preclude effective evaluation of CES&PE work within APT processes. Therefore, they offer an organizing mechanism to ensure that change agents’ efforts collectively target substantive areas of reform rather than drive marginal, disparate, or only short-term improvements. Even so, we urge reformers to build on the natural alignment of CES&PE promotion within APT structures and institutional commitments to DEI, as well as the parallel need for recognition and reward for non-tenure-track faculty and staff who facilitate institutional CES&PE work. Conscientious work to recognize and reward CES&PE in APT processes shifts the balance of power among institutions, individuals, and the broader public to honor often-sidelined faculty, communities, and local partners. This kind of APT reform thereby aligns the university more closely with the institutional mission statements that give them their charge.



Note

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