Collecting Data to Inform Decision Making and Action: The University of Vermont's Faculty Community Engagement Tool

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"A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle."—Kahlil Gibran (Lebanese-American Poet)

*A*scertaining the breadth and depth of community engagement at the level of the university or college *(Bergkamp, 1996; Hartley, Harkavy, & Benson, 2005; Maurasse, 2001; Siscoe, 1997; Ward, 1999)*, academic department *(Battistoni, Gelmon, Saltmarsh, Wergin, & Zlotkowski, 2003)*, academic discipline *(Steinke & Harrington, 2002; Zlotkowski, 2000)*, and individual faculty member *(Korfmacher, 1999; Wade & Demb, 2009)* has been the focus of a great deal of literature concerning community engagement in higher education. Other attempts at describing and analyzing community engagement have focused on efforts to inventory service-learning projects and courses *(Jacoby, 1996)*, as well as community-based research activities *(Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donahue, 2003)*. Evaluative instruments designed to assess a university's or college's institutionalization of service-learning practices have been devised and widely utilized *(Furco, 2001; Holland, 1997)*. These instruments, however, have looked at institutional practices and capacity, not the specific community engagement practices of individual faculty members in the context of an academic unit. Some frameworks have been devised to account for the individual engagement practices of faculty members and used to assess faculty review, promotion, and tenure (RPT) activities *(Hyman et al., 2001; O'Meara 2005; Wade & Demb, 2009)*. These frameworks have largely been developed at land-grant institutions that have undertaken substantive reforms to reformulate how faculty outreach and service is defined and assessed. These reform efforts were reviewed as a function of the tool development process highlighted in this article. Although such instruments have been extremely useful in documenting and supporting the community engagement activities of individual faculty, their use in strategic planning processes for entire schools or departments has not been documented in the literature. The coupling of data collection and strategic planning at the school-wide or department level has been noted in the "engaged

department" work sponsored by Campus Compact *(Battistoni et al., 2003)*. It is the coupling of data collection tools with these planning processes that will be highlighted in the latter part of this article.

We begin the article with an inventory of the existing efforts to categorize faculty community engagement activities across some of the leading land-grant institutions in the United States. The frameworks that each institution has adopted to track and document faculty engagement are highlighted. An overview of the survey instrument designed by the authors is then provided, followed by two cases of the application of the instrument at the University of Vermont: one in the School of Environment and Natural Resources and one in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics. In the next section, we synthesize and present research data we used to inform strategic planning at the department-wide, school-wide, and university-wide levels at the University of Vermont.

Existing Tools to Describe Faculty Community Engagement

Several typologies have been devised to document the range of faculty community engagement practices undertaken. These typologies were largely developed during the 1990s and early 2000s in response to institutional interest in recasting the understanding of faculty service and outreach. In most instances, these reform efforts entailed the development of typologies through which expanded notions of faculty service and outreach could be articulated and rewarded. Many institutions reformed their definitions of faculty scholarship and work to reflect Ernest Boyer's framework of scholarship as teaching, discovery, integration, and engagement *(Boyer, 1990)*. Many land-grant universities undertook reform agendas that led to revisions of their faculty reappointment, promotion, and tenure guidelines. For a deeper exploration of the wider reform efforts within which these tool developments unfolded, see O'Meara's *(2005)* extensive examination of these issues.

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In 1993, Michigan State University (MSU) began an effort to better categorize, support, and reward extension faculty activities.

Their model differentiates between types of outreach: outreach instruction (noncredit instruction); outreach research (applied research, capacity-building, evaluation studies, policy analysis, technical assistance, and technology transfer); clinical services; student experiential/service-learning activities; and public events and information. MSU has sought to incorporate this expanded appreciation and definition of outreach into its review, promotion, and tenure process *(Michigan State University, 1993)*. A comprehensive survey has been used to gain a better understanding of the extent of faculty outreach activities.

Simultaneously, North Carolina State University (NC-State) instituted an annual reporting requirement of faculty outreach activities. "It is necessary that each faculty member document and report such activities in a comprehensive and standard format," stated NC-State administrators. "The following categories outline the format and general kinds of documentation related to outreach and extension that should be included in each faculty member's annual activity report. Such documentation serves as the basis for evaluation" *(North Carolina State University, 1994)*. These categories were ranked in decreasing order of importance: program and activity relevance; program delivery; collaborative activities; and recognized professional achievement *(North Carolina State University, 1994)*. NC-State also outlined a series of guidelines for providing "evidence of excellence" in outreach, and detailed mechanisms for evaluating faculty community engagement activities.

More recently, the University of Minnesota (UMN) undertook an extensive look at its policies concerning faculty community and public engagement. In 2000 the university's president convened the University Council on Public Engagement to consider the question, "How can public engagement move from discrete programs and centers or university pronouncements to become 'part of the bloodstream' of everyday work?" This question set UMN on a reform agenda. The council released a report outlining different types of faculty work that support public engagement. The council drew distinctions in the report between "disciplinary work" (basic and applied research, teaching and advising students within the academy, and service to the profession and the academic community); "outreach work" (research, teaching, and service that involve faculty with members of the public outside of the university and the academic discipline); and "engagement work" (which combines research, teaching, and service in projects that involve stakeholders outside academia as cocreators and collaborators, generally with the goal of developing useful knowledge for innovations in community

practices, public policies, or social or economic change) *(University of Minnesota, 2004)*. What is noteworthy about the UMN effort is the distinction between outreach and engagement, a line that is blurred in all of the other models reviewed here.

In the late 1990s, with funding from the Kellogg Foundation, a committee of Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) faculty members convened to discuss and review the institution's faculty reward system. Their charge was to make recommendations to the university community to better align faculty assessment with actual practice. The result was a comprehensive framework for assessment they called "Uniscope 2000" *(Hyman et al., 2001)*. Building upon Boyer's framework for scholarship, and overlaying this framework with the traditional pillars of faculty work (research, teaching, and service), the Penn State group derived a model of assessment that was able to take into account the multiple functions of faculty scholarship. The Uniscope model differentiates between the various types of scholarship found within teaching, service, and research; the media through which this scholarship is conveyed; and the range of potential audiences for each particular form of scholarship. This model provides the most sophisticated tool for ascertaining the scope of faculty engagement work found in the reforms studied here.

Another recent model was developed at Ohio State University (Ohio State) to holistically examine, understand, and predict the community engagement activities of Ohio State faculty members. This tool, the "Faculty Engagement Model," was designed to "offer a comprehensive perspective outlining the personal, professional, and institutional factors likely to predict engagement participation" *(Wade & Demb, 2009)*. The Faculty Engagement Model is presented as a means through which institutional leaders may consider policies and programs to enhance faculty involvement in community engagement activities.

All the models presented above were designed as instruments to describe and assess the engagement activities of individual faculty members. They reflect Boyer's vision of an expanded view of scholarship and provide useful points to references around which the scholarship of engagement may be documented and valued. The use of these models has been generally restricted to considerations of the faculty review, promotion, and tenure processes. To date, they have not been used to inform strategic planning or to develop strategies for building deeper institutional supports and incentives for community engagement activities at the institutional or unit level. The Faculty Community Engagement Tool

(FCET), developed by the authors at the University of Vermont, was designed with these goals in mind. By combining several of the features found in the models described above, the FCET was designed to be integrated into a continuous cycle of planning and evaluation at the unit or university level.

Perhaps the most widely used instrument in this field is Furco's rubric for assessing the institutionalization of service-learning at the unit or university level *(Furco, 2001)*. This rubric situates the institution as the unit of analysis. Furco's tool furthermore asks key stakeholders to assess institutional progress toward a set of best practices, according to a scale from less implementation to greater implementation. Although Furco's rubric has been widely adopted and used to assess the institutionalization of service-learning, it lacks the capacity to determine the range of faculty engagement practices and attitudes that are possible. In contrast, the Faculty Community Engagement Tool (FCET) focuses on faculty practices and faculty perceptions of those practices.

> *"FCET was designed to be integrated into a continuous cycle of planning and evaluation at the unit or university level."*

The University of Vermont's FCET is designed to explore faculty challenges and motivations for their community engagement activities in order to highlight areas for improving faculty support and incentives. The FCET inventories the breadth and scope of faculty community engagement activities. The remainder of this article provides strategies for applying the results of the FCET to strategic planning at the level of an academic unit by University of Vermont constituencies through the lenses of two case studies.

Faculty Community Engagement Tool (FCET) Design

The Faculty Community Engagement Tool (FCET) was designed at the University of Vermont with the two critical questions that guide most planning of utilization-focused evaluation projects: (1) What are the intended uses of the research data and (2) Who are the intended users? *(Patton, 2008)*. The goal behind the development of the FCET was to align the collection of baseline data on faculty community engagement activities with the development of programming and policies designed to facilitate, develop, and sustain these activities across the university.

The specific objectives driving the development of the FCET were defined as:

- Inventorying and assessing the current community engagement activities of faculty members within a given unit;

- Identifying needs and opportunities to support, develop, and sustain community engagement; and

- Generating specific recommendations to various stakeholder groups based on findings regarding infrastructure needs and opportunities.

Faculty involvement in community engagement activities was chosen as the unit of analysis because of the role faculty members play in initiating and executing teaching, research, and outreach activities in the community *(Bell, Furco, Ammon, Muller, & Sorgen, 2000; Driscoll, 2000; Garcia & Robinson, 2005; Holland, 1997; Robinson & Barnett, 1996)*. Drawing on the expanded models of faculty engagement found in the Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, University of Minnesota, and Pennsylvania State University reform efforts, faculty community engagement practices are not limited to service-learning courses offered by faculty members, but include community-based research, pro bono activities, and other forms of academic outreach found within the literature *(Hyman et al., 2001)*.

The FCET

The FCET[2], a web-based survey, asks respondents to complete the survey whether or not they engaged in community-based work, and to answer the questions in terms of their role as a faculty member. When it was applied in two academic units at the University of Vermont (UVM), respondents provided their official title, which allowed us to determine their tenure track or nontenure-track status. The survey was broken down into sections: community-based teaching activities; community-based research and outreach; informational and support needs; and faculty attitudes toward engagement. Each of these sections is discussed below.

Section One: Community-Based Teaching Activities. Respondents reported on up to three courses they teach or have taught in which students interacted with the community (Figure 1). They described the structure of those interactions based on a typology of curricular formats for community-based learning *(Koliba, 2002)*. If students conducted projects with the community, the faculty respondents indicated who defined the project.

Figure 1. Template to inventory community-based teaching activities

SECTION 1: TEACHING

Do you teach any courses in which students work or interact with the community (either with individuals and/or groups or organizations in the community)?

YES ___ *(send to following questions if Yes is checked)*   NO___ *(redirect to next section)*
I don't teach courses at UVM ____ *(redirect to the next section)*

If so, what course(s)- *If you teach several such courses, start with the one you are currently teaching or have taught most recently (there's space to include 3 courses).*

Course name:
Course Number:
Which semester(s) was this course taught?:
Average number of students per class:
Was this course designated as a Service-Learning course through the CUPS Office?
__Yes
__No

How are these community interactions structured? *Check all that apply.*
__ Field trip(s)
__ One time/short-term service project
__ Extra-credit for students who complete a project in the community (not all students elect this option)
__ Individual students or small groups complete projects with different community organizations
__ Entire class works on same project
__ Entire class works with the same community organization
__ Students work with community organization to define project
__ Students in class continue a project/relationship begun by a previous class (build upon
   previous work)
__ Other (please specify)

If students complete a project with the community, who defines the project?
__ Community organization develops project in advance of class
__ Students work with community organization to define project
__ You (the faculty member) met with organization(s) in advance of class to plan the projects
__ Other (please specify)

Do you teach/have you taught additional courses that interact with the community*?

Figure 2. Template to inventory community-based teaching, research, and outreach

SECTION 2: ENGAGED TEACHING, RESEARCH, & OUTREACH

We're also interested in the range of activities you are involved in. Please fill in the matrix for the non-classroom TYPE OF ACTIVITY (top row) you have engaged with for each COMMUNITY AUDIENCE (left column). Community audiences are grouped by geographic area (Local, State, National, International).

Check all that apply to your role as UVM faculty/staff.

	Community-Based Teaching	Applied Research for	Policy Analysis	Program Evaluation	Workshops/ Outreach	Technical Assistance/ Consulting	Expert Testimony/ Media Communication	Member of Boards, Committees, Planning Groups
LOCAL: Small Community-Based Groups								
LOCAL: Non-profits								
LOCAL: Pre K-12 Schools								
LOCAL: Businesses								
LOCAL: Government Offices/Agencies								
STATE: Regional Non-profits								
STATE: Mid-size Businesses								
STATE: Government Offices/Agencies								
NATIONAL: Non-Profits								
NATIONAL: Businesses/Corporations								
NATIONAL: Government Offices/Agencies								
INTERNATIONAL: Non-profits/NGOs								
INTERNATIONAL: Multinational Corporations								
INTERNATIONAL: Government Offices/Agencies								

Figure 3. Template to assess support needs and interest in program and resource offerings

SECTION 3: PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Would any of the following programs/resources be useful to you?

Check all that apply.

__ community projects/contacts that you might use in some of your courses/teaching
__ a trained service-learning teaching assistant to work with your course
__ mini-grants to support work with the community through a course
__ information on service-learning pedagogy
__ community organizations/individuals that are related to your research interests
__ information on community-based research (collaborative research with the community based on community needs)
__ listing of grant opportunities for community-based research
__ listing of opportunities to publish community-based research
__skill development workshops for students
   other general or specific suggestions for programs/resources from CUPS:

Section Two: Community-Based Teaching, Research, and Outreach Activities. Faculty respondents were asked to report the teaching, research, and outreach activities they were involved in for a given community audience (Figure 2). Community-based research categories included policy analysis, program evaluation, and applied research for a given community audience. Outreach categories included community-based teaching, workshops, technical assistance, media communication, and membership on community boards. The community audience categories included nonprofit organizations, schools, for-profit businesses, and government agencies grouped by geographic area (local, state, national, and international) *(Hyman et al., 2001)*. The term "community-based teaching" was used instead of service-learning because it included a broader spectrum of teaching approaches, and because respondents may not have been familiar with the term "service-learning."

Section Three: Information and Support Needs. This section of the survey allowed respondents to select from a list of programs and resources that would be useful to them in their community engagement activities (Figure 3), including information and training sessions on community-based research methods, and mini-grants to support service-learning projects. The programs and resources list was developed from existing programs offered by the campus-wide university service-learning office (CUPS) as well as by potential offerings suggested by faculty members during informal conversations.

Section Four: Faculty Attitudes Regarding Community Engagement. Faculty respondents were asked to rank the importance of institutional incentives that currently motivate or would motivate them to engage in community-based academic activities (Figure 4). These included incentives such as financial compensation, course release time, and recognition in the promotion and tenure process *(Garcia & Robinson, 2005)*. Faculty members ranked the

Figure 4. Template to assess faculty attitudes and concerns regarding engagement

SECTION 4: ATTITUDES

Understanding your views of community engagement will help us prioritize the support we can offer you.

What institutional incentives do/would motivate you to engage with the community?
For each, select the level of importance to you.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	N/A
Extra financial compensation					
Course release time to pursue service-learning					
Institutional acknowledgements and awards					
Professional development/learning opportunities in service-learning					
Professional development/learning opportunities in community-based research					
Recognition in tenure/promotion process					
Smaller class sizes					
Travel to community engagement/service-learning conferences					

Other institutional incentives that do/would motivate you to engage with the community? *(short essay box)*

What outcomes do/ would motivate you to engage with the community?
Select the level of importance to you.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	N/A
YOURSELF: increased awareness of community-level environmental issues					
YOURSELF: increased sense of involvement with the community					
YOUR STUDENTS: improved understanding of and ability to apply course material					
YOUR STUDENTS: increased awareness of community-level environmental issues					
YOUR STUDENTS: increased participation in the community					
GENERAL: meeting genuine community needs					
GENERAL: improved community- university relations					

Other outcomes that do/would motivate you to engage with the community? *(short essay box)*

importance of outcomes from these activities, such as "increased sense of involvement with the local community," "improved student learning," and "meeting genuine community needs" *(Garcia & Robinson, 2005)*. They were also asked to share their concerns and ideas regarding general community engagement activities and support for those activities in the school or department.

Supplemental Qualitative Methods

Many studies of the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education have employed either qualitative *(Bergkamp, 1996; Ostrander, 2004; Ward, 1999)* or quantitative methods *(Garcia & Robinson, 2005; Robinson & Barnett, 1996; Siscoe, 1997)*, but few have used both. The FCET, which is a primarily quantitative assessment, is designed to be enhanced using a mixed method approach *(Caracelli & Greene, 1997)*. Previous applications of this tool have (1) combined quantitative data from the survey with descriptive information from qualitative survey questions and interviews or (2) facilitated a dialogue about an organization's data with various stakeholders and decision makers within the organization as a strategy for bringing meaning to the data in planning processes. The two cases presented below offer more detailed discussion of the methods employed.

Cases from Two Academic Units That Used the FCET

Planning for faculty community engagement at the department or school level requires answering three key questions:

1. Which faculty members are currently engaged in the community and, if so, at what level *(Holland, 1997)*?

2. What barriers and associated support needs do engaged faculty identify?

3. If faculty are not already engaged, is there a desire to cultivate community engagement practices in the future?

Once a need and desire have been established, the research data should be used to inform decisions for programs and initiatives to support engaged-scholarship activities in university schools and departments *(Bringle & Hatcher, 2000)*.

This section presents methods and examples from the results of our research; suggests which audience might use aspects of the data to guide decisions; and demonstrates how these results have informed planning for unit-wide faculty community engagement in two academic units at the University of Vermont (UVM). UVM

Table 1.Overview of Selected Cases: RSENR and CDAE

	Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources	Department of Community Development and Applied Economics
Undergraduate Students	590	300
Graduate Students	118	90
Full-time Faculty Members	34	18
Designated Service-Learning Courses 2008–2009	12	15
Faculty Fellows for Service-Learning	9	9

is a public, Research I land-grant university that has just over 1,000 full-time faculty members, with a total student enrollment of approximately 9,000 undergraduates and 1,300 graduate students.

The UVM Office of Community-University Partnerships and Service-Learning (CUPS) supports faculty members, students, and partners in community engagement activities—specifically service-learning and community-based research. Created in 2003, the CUPS Office offers professional development in service-learning and community-based research through individual consultations, an established Faculty Fellows for Service-Learning program, and a Service-Learning Teaching Assistant program. The CUPS Office also serves as a "front door" for community members interested in working with university faculty, students, and staff through academic classes and/or research.

Selected Cases: A School and a Department

The Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources (RSENR) is one of 10 colleges and schools at the University of Vermont. The RSENR has 34 full-time faculty members who are affiliated, at the undergraduate level, with an integrated core curriculum and six different academic programs (Natural Resources, Wildlife Biology, Forestry, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, and Recreation Management). The school enrolls 590 undergraduate students and 118 graduate students. In 2006, the school partnered with the university's CUPS Office to create a graduate assistant position to support RSENR community engagement activities and to connect the school's faculty members with the general resources available in the CUPS Office. To date, nine RSENR faculty members have participated in the Faculty Fellows for Service-Learning program offered by the CUPS Office.

The Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE) is one of six units within the University of Vermont's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS). The mission of the department reflects its commitment to engaged teaching and research: "CDAE supports sustainable local, regional, and international communities through interdisciplinary research, education, and outreach that serve the public interest." A relatively young department at UVM (established in 1996), it has recently experienced tremendous growth in its three undergraduate majors, eight minors, and two master's degree programs. The department has approximately 300 undergraduate majors and 90 graduate students.

The Department of Community Development and Applied Economics is regarded as a campus leader in service-learning, offering 15 service-learning courses during the 2008–2009 academic year. It has developed four long-term service-learning programs in the Caribbean and Central America *(Baker, 2006)*. Nine of its faculty members have participated in the Faculty Fellows for Service-Learning Program offered by the CUPS Office. CDAE partnered with the CUPS Office in 2008 to create a graduate assistant position, similar to the graduate position in the RSENR, to support CDAE faculty members in their community engagement activities.

School of Environment and Natural Resources (RSENR): Methods, Selected Results, and Next Steps

RSENR methods.

In order to develop a sustainable program to support community engagement in the school, research was conducted to determine the current extent of community-based teaching, research, and outreach activities, and to identify needs and opportunities to support that work in the future. The results of this research were intended for use by the CUPS Office, the RSENR Dean'sOffice, and the community engagement coordinator in the school. The RSENR research process featured both qualitative interviews and the Faculty Community Engagement Tool (FCET).

Before the FCET was developed, a sample of RSENR faculty members participated in qualitative interviews to provide more descriptive information about engagement activities as well as to inform parts of the general survey design. Ten faculty respondents were selected based on their reputations for extensive work with community groups and organizations through their research and/or teaching. Interviews of these "early adopters" provided a general context for attitudes toward and approaches to community engage-

ment in the school as a whole as well as highlighting the more advanced approaches to engagement currently being implemented. The respondents ranged from full, associate, and assistant professors to nontenure-track associate professors and part-time lecturers.

Eligible respondents for the FCET included all faculty members with a primary appointment in the RSENR and any staff member with teaching or research responsibilities in the school (n = 45). There was an 84% response rate for the survey (38/45), although only 36 respondents filled out the survey completely. All lecturers in the school responded, as did 78% of tenured faculty members, 67% of tenure-track faculty members, and 78% of research and extension faculty members. Survey analysis of quantitative data was primarily descriptive. Qualitative responses (for open-ended questions or places where "other" was specified) were included and were coded with the interview results. All RSENR faculty members who completed the survey were involved with the community through their academic activities. Seventy-four percent of respondents teach or have taught courses in which their students interact with the community through projects that might be considered service-learning. Due to the high survey response rate (84%), we are fairly confident that the results are representative of RSENR faculty activities and attitudes.

RSENR selected findings

Understanding the factors that motivate faculty members to engage with the community is crucial for promoting community engagement, as well as for developing relevant programs for supporting their work *(Garcia & Robinson, 2005)*. RSENR faculty reported attitudes about the importance of several outcomes of community engagement. Using a Likert scale question (Very Important = 3; Important = 2; Somewhat Important = 1; Not Important = 0), responses were not mutually exclusive. RSENR faculty respondents ranked meeting genuine community needs as the most important motivator for their participation in civic engagement activities. They also ranked, in order of importance, "improved student understanding of and ability to apply course material," "increased student awareness of community-level environmental issues," and "increased student participation in the community" as "important" or "very important" motivators. The other motivators, "increased personal sense of involvement with the community," "improved community-university relations," and "increased personal awareness of community-level environmental

Figure 5. Percent of respondents by faculty level reporting certain institutional incentives for civic engagement important or very important
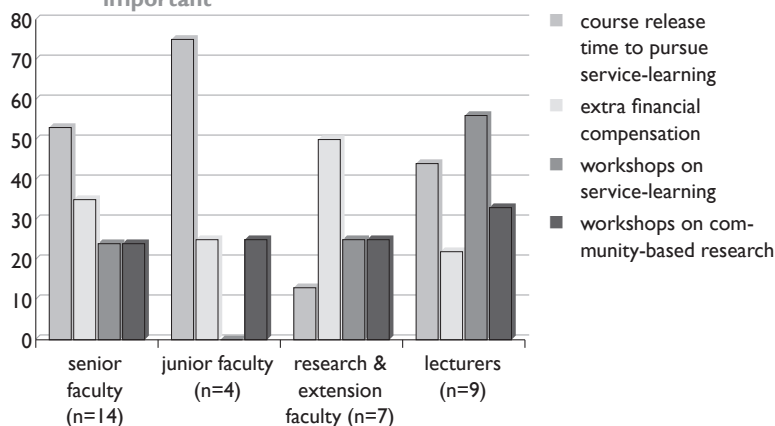
issues," were ranked as "important," but less so than the previously mentioned motivators.

The fact that faculty respondents ranked "meeting genuine community needs" as most important for motivating them to engage with the community is a significant outcome for faculty members at this research university. This result suggests that RSENR faculty members value the role that their academic activities can play in meeting community needs. This in turn may indicate that faculty members will support and participate in efforts to cultivate community engagement practices in the school.

Attitudes toward community engagement activities varied by faculty appointment type, particularly between tenured and tenure-track faculty members, and between tenured/tenure-track and nontenure-track faculty members. Figure 5 highlights differences between faculty appointment types in the importance of several institutional incentives that would motivate them to get involved in the community. The figure shows the percentage of respondents of each faculty appointment type that ranked the incentives as "important" or "very important." The remaining percentages include faculty members who did not respond to the question, selected "not applicable," or ranked incentives as "somewhat important" or "not important."

More than half of the tenured and tenure-track faculty respondents ranked "course release time" as an important motivator for participating in community engagement activities, and this was more popular than "extra financial compensation" or "opportunities to learn more about service-learning or community-based

research." Conversely, fewer nontenure-track faculty respondents ranked "course release time" as an important motivator, and, in general, faculty members at these levels were equally motivated by "extra financial compensation" or "professional development opportunities."

These results suggest that the time constraints posed by community engagement activities are more of a concern for tenured and tenure-track faculty members than for nontenure-track faculty members. Although the majority of tenure-track faculty respondents ranked "course release time" as important, none of them ranked "learning opportunities in service-learning" as an important motivator for participating in the community. Only 25% reported "learning opportunities in community-based research" to be an important motivator. The authors suspect that learning opportunities such as workshops may be perceived as another demand on time that could be spent on other academic responsibilities.

Responses by tenure-track faculty members suggest that they are concerned about the pressure that community engagement activities may place on the time they need to fulfill their other academic responsibilities *(O'Meara, 2005)*. In addition, their emphasis on the importance of learning about community-based research, juxtaposed with their comparative lack of desire for more learning about service-learning, suggests that opportunities to develop their research skills are considered more important than opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

Each of the tenure-track faculty members who were interviewed (2 of 10 interviewees) emphasized their commitment to community-engaged scholarship, while simultaneously citing time constraints as a major barrier. One explained that "the reason I got into this field in the first place was because I care about environmental issues and I don't want to sit in an ivory tower and do research. I want to get out there and do something about the issues, and hopefully put my research to work." The other was immersed in community-based research partnerships, and emphasized her commitment to "meeting her [partner's] needs, addressing issues of concern to them, and capacity-building with them." The importance of meeting genuine community needs was also expressed by all tenure-track faculty FCET respondents (n = 4, 67% response rate). This suggests that, although tenure-track faculty members are concerned about time constraints, they are committed to making their academic activities relevant to the community, and are likely to participate in community engagement activities despite the time commitment.

This information was useful for planning programs that promote, support, and sustain community engagement in the school. The descriptive interview data deepened our understanding of motivations for tenure-track faculty and suggested that their commitment to applied academic activities and to meeting community needs prevails over their concern for time limitations. The key message here is that tenure-track faculty members, in particular, perceive community engagement activities to be significantly time-consuming, which underscores an observation made by O'Meara *(2005)*. The results imply, to both administrators and support staff, that actions to reduce the time constraints posed by community engagement activities are important for motivating tenure-track faculty members to get involved or stay involved in addressing community needs. These actions could include (1) offering incentives such as course release time; (2) establishing support programs that, for example, provide service-learning teaching assistants to reduce the workload for faculty members; and (3) helping faculty members approach community engagement more efficiently by encouraging them to view community engagement as a complement, rather than an addition, to their academic activities. The results also suggest that tenure-track faculty members may be more motivated by opportunities to connect civic engagement to their research activities, whereas nontenure-track faculty may be more interested in programs and opportunities to enhance their teaching activities through community engagement.

RSENR next steps

In the Rubenstein School for Environment and Natural Resources (RSENR), this preliminary research was successful in highlighting the extent to which faculty members are linking their academic activities to community needs. Based on the FCET and the interview findings, as well as recommendations from faculty members and from the literature, the major strategic decision was made to create a staff position to support community-based teaching and research in the RSENR. In 2007, RSENR administrators and the UVM CUPS Office created a full-time community engagement coordinator position based in the school using temporary, external funding through the Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA program, with the hope that fuller institutionalization of a more permanent position would follow.

The FCET and interview process was also successful in highlighting the need for more research into community engagement in the school. In the 2007–2008 academic year, the RSENR's community

engagement coordinator supported research on the student experience of service-learning versus community-based learning in the school *(DePasquale, 2008)* and on the expectations that new RSENR undergraduate students have for experiential learning experiences *(Westdijk et al., 2008)*. With the incentive of a Campus Compact "Engaged Department Initiative" grant from 2008 to 2010 *(Battistoni et al., 2003)*, the support of this new staff position, and the leadership of an associate dean, RSENR is in the process of assessing and modifying service-learning and problem-based learning in the undergraduate curriculum. The primary goal of this assessment and curriculum modification is to bring more coherence and intention to student, faculty member, and community partner experiences.

In 2009, the RSENR's ability to support community engagement was enhanced by the appointment of a new dean. As a seasoned service-learning instructor, recipient of the Vermont Campus Compact "Engaged Scholar" award in 2007, and an active participant in the Engaged Department Initiative since 2008, the new dean is well situated to further cultivate and sustain community engagement within the school.

The Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE): Methods, Selected Results, and Next Steps

CDAE methods

The Department of Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE) partnered with the CUPS Office in 2008 to create a graduate assistant position, similar to the position in the RSENR, to support CDAE faculty members in their community engagement activities. A primary responsibility of this position was to utilize the FCET to gain a better understanding of how to support and sustain community engagement in the Department of CDAE. Based upon the experience in the RSENR, slight modifications were made to the FCET to enhance its usability in the Department of CDAE. Supplemental interviews were not used in the CDAE process since the FCET tool was previously developed in the RSENR. Instead, a department-wide facilitated dialogue session was held to gather qualitative feedback from the FCET results.

All Department of CDAE faculty members (full-time and part-time) were invited to participate in the web-based FCET. Twenty-three faculty members responded, providing a 93% response rate (23/25). All lecturers in the department responded to the survey, along with 93% of the tenure-track faculty members and 66% of the

research and extension faculty members. Open-ended responses were coded using content analysis.

A summary of the FCET survey results and a list of discussion questions were distributed to all faculty members prior to a department meeting. At the department meeting, the graduate assistant delivered a presentation featuring FCET survey results, which were used to guide a facilitated dialogue with faculty members. Gajda and Koliba *(2007)* suggest that facilitated dialogue about an organization's data with various stakeholders and decision makers within an organization is a useful strategy for linking data analysis and planning processes. Following Gajda and Koliba's proposed format, the results of the FCET survey were presented to administrators and faculty leaders in the department in a dialogue framed around questions such as:

- Was there anything in this data that surprised you?

- To what extent does this data reflect your own perceptions of the Department and the activities of its faculty members?

- Would you want to change anything about the distribution of these activities in the future?

The facilitated discussion served two purposes. First, it validated the results found in the survey. Second, it spurred a rich discussion about community engagement by members of the department.

CDAE selected results

Ninety-three percent of respondents reported teaching courses in which their students interacted with the community within the last 5 years (n = 23). Faculty members reported teaching 37 courses that included a community interaction. When asked to describe the nature of interaction, faculty members reported having individuals or small groups work with different community organizations in the same course in 54% of classes (n = 37). Faculty members reported that students defined projects with community partners in 49% of courses rather than the projects being predetermined by the faculty member or community partner. Students continued to work with the same community partners from previous semesters in 41% of courses. Fewer courses involved one-time or extra-credit interactions. Understanding how faculty members structure community interactions in their courses can enable more strategic support to enhance the quality of the experience for faculty members, students, and partners alike.

Table 2. Challenges related to community-based teaching reported by CDAE faculty

Challenges	Percent of Total Respondents
Communication issues between student and partner	52%
Lack of time for planning interactions with partner	44%
Conflict between students working in groups	39%
Students unable to complete tasks	39%
Logistical challenges	35%
Communication issues between faculty and partner	26%
Students unwilling to complete tasks	26%
Difficulty integrating academics and community	22%

(Responses were not mutually exclusive; n = 23)

Faculty members reported experiencing a variety of challenges in service-learning courses (Table 2). More than 80% of respondents reported experiencing at least one challenge. The most common challenge reported was "communication issues between students and the community partners" (52%). Faculty members also indicated that another important challenge was a lack of time to effectively plan interactions with community partners (44%). There was no significant difference found between tenure-track and nontenure-track faculty members. In their open-ended responses, several faculty members further emphasized how much time is necessary to effectively plan and implement meaningful service-learning projects. "Students unable to complete tasks" and "conflict between students working in groups" were also significant challenges (39%).

The facilitated dialogue shed light on the challenge of students being unable to complete tasks. Some faculty members relayed experiences with students who had not produced professional products that were useful to the community partners. Others shared instances of students being unable to complete their tasks due to unreliable partners. The FCET also showed that Department of CDAE faculty members were somewhat less concerned with the difficulty of integrating the community interactions with the content of their courses (22%) compared to the other challenges included in the FCET. This finding suggests that the Department of CDAE faculty members may be interested in more advanced professional development workshops that go beyond introducing the basic principles of service-learning.

Seventeen faculty members reported community involvement through their research or service activities (74%).[1] Department of CDAE faculty members reported working primarily with local, small, community-based groups and nonprofits, as well as state governmental agencies and regional nonprofits. Sixty-five percent of faculty respondents reported conducting research with a community partner in the forms of applied research, policy analysis, or program evaluation. Applied research was the most common form of research activity. Almost three-quarters of the respondents reported participating in at least one type of service activity in the community, such as facilitating workshops or serving as a member of a board or planning group. Department of CDAE faculty members were asked to identify what sector their community partners represented (e.g., government offices and agencies, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, or educational institutions). Most faculty respondents reported partnering with the nonprofit sector (70%) and government offices or agencies (65%). Fewer faculty respondents reported partnering with business (35%) and educational institutions (26%).

Most faculty members in the Department of CDAE conduct their engaged research and service with local-level organizations (70%). It is significant to note, however, that more than half of the faculty respondents reported research or service done with international organizations. Working with international partners can pose different challenges than working with local partners. This knowledge could inform efforts by the CUPS Office to better support faculty members in partnership development and management.

The FCET revealed that Department of CDAE faculty members collaborate with a wide variety of partners. During the facilitated dialogue session, the department discussed whether or not this breadth in partnerships was a strength or a weakness. Some thought that the scope of CDAE projects suggested a rich range of opportunities for students and faculty members to explore and apply community development concepts and practices. These faculty members commented that community development, by definition, must be framed as an inherently intersector undertaking, involving the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Other faculty members expressed concern about the department's lack of concentration in fewer areas, suggesting that its interests and partnerships are too diffuse either to make a lasting impact or to build up a faculty body of expertise. All faculty members participating in the discussion agreed that more consideration needed to be given to this issue.

Taken as a whole, the findings from both the FCET and the facilitated dialogue session provided a collective affirmation of CDAE's commitment to community engagement. Furthermore, the facilitated dialogue about the FCET findings resulted in concrete action steps that will guide the continuation of the Department of CDAE's engaged department process. Mapping of the undergraduate curriculum emerged as a key next step for the department. Faculty members shared student questions about why specific courses are requirements for their major. For example, a student recently complained about having to take a strategic business planning course for the Community and International Development major. Recognizing that students were unclear about how courses within the curricula fit together, faculty indicated that mapping would enable them to strategically reexamine the current curricula while providing students with an explanation of how the curricula fit together. The department shared an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with the Office of Community-University Partnerships and Service-Learning during the 2009–2010 academic year. VISTA has been dedicated to providing support for its service-learning courses and continuing the Engaged Department process within the Department of CDAE.

Utilization of Data for Action Planning

The two cases presented above provide examples of evaluation designed to inform the decision making of several different constituencies (Table 3). The more specific interests, attitudes, and needs of individual faculty members in different faculty career tracks provide useful data to inform both short- and long-term programming goals for the community engagement coordinators in each of the academic units. General information about faculty challenges and support needs, and about attitudes toward advancing community engagement activities, can guide the decisions of the university-wide Office of Community-University Partnerships and Service-Learning. Administrators in both the RSENR and Department of CDAE are interested in how this data can be used to inform strategic planning, for example, by revealing strategies for supporting and retaining faculty members. Table 3 presents suggestions for how a few of the previous examples of results from the RSENR and CDAE may be used in different ways by each constituent.

Understanding the motivations of faculty members for engaging with the community is crucial for all data users. These results may validate (or contradict) assumptions that a campus or

Table 3. Implications of Results for Various Recipients and Users of Data

Results Category	Constituencies			
	Unit Faculty Members	Unit Community Engagement Coordinator	Unit Administrators	University Engagement Office (CUPS)
Faculty Motivators for Community Engaged Scholarship (CES)	Reveals peer values related to CES	Suggests which programs/resources will be most useful/relevant to faculty members Highlights important strategies for promoting CES by faculty members	Reveals faculty members' values related to CES and guides strategic planning (e.g., engaged faculty retention strategies) Highlights important strategies for promoting CES by faculty members	Suggests which programs/resources will be most useful/relevant to faculty members Highlights important strategies for promoting CES by faculty members
Comparisons of Faculty Motivators by Faculty Appointment Type	Reveals peer values related to CES Raises awareness about how values may differ depending on faculty appt. type	Suggests which programs/resources will be most useful/relevant to faculty members within each appt. type (e.g., tenure track vs. non Highlights important angles for promoting CES activities by faculty members within each appt. type	Reveals faculty members' values related to CES and guides strategic planning (e.g., engaged faculty retention strategies Raises awareness about how these values may differ depending on faculty appt. type	Suggests which programs/resources will be most useful/relevant to faculty members within each appt. type (e.g., tenure track vs. non Highlights important angles for promoting CES activities by faculty members within each appt. type
Challenges Encountered by Engaged Faculty Members	Identifies common challenges faced by individual faculty members Promotes sharing of strategies and tools to overcome challenges	Guides the Coordinator in providing relevant support to faculty members engaging in CES	Highlights key areas for resource investment by administrators to improve conditions for faculty members' CES activities	Provides guidance for designing effective professional development opportunities for faculty members
Current Levels of Faculty Community Engaged Scholarship (CES)	Reveals collective influence as a whole faculty body, which may prompt individual or collective actions to shift the distribution of CES activities in the community	Informs the matchmaking process, as it suggests the community audience these faculty members generally work with	Provides data and rationale for external fund raising Creates opportunity to evaluate the overlap between school mission and actual impact	Informs the matchmaking process, as it suggests the community audience these faculty members generally work with Highlights the collective influence as a whole faculty body, which may prompt actions to shift the distribution of CES activities in the community

unit holds about its faculty's community engagement and impact, while providing the rationale for actions to support—or abandon— initiatives to cultivate community engagement activities in the unit. Administrators need to know if community engagement is a priority for faculty members before they act to institutionalize sup-

port structures for it. For coordinators of these activities at the department, school, or university level, awareness of the important motivations for faculty members is essential for guiding decisions about program development and resource allocation. The differences in these motivations by faculty appointment type can also help prioritize programs, which target various faculty career tracks. They also can raise the awareness of administrators and faculty peers about the different

> *"Administrators need to know if community engagement is a priority for faculty members before they act to institutionalize support structures for it."*

challenges faced by faculty members in different career tracks. For unit-specific community engagement coordinators, these results reveal the activities, attitudes, and needs of specific faculty members (if data are not anonymous), while campus-wide community engagement staff can get a sense of the particular academic unit's identity as it compares to other units on campus. At the University of Vermont, exploring these issues at the level of the academic unit was essential because the discipline appears to impact the ways in which faculty members engage with communities, and as a result, the ways that administrators and staff can most effectively motivate and support them. This may be true of other large research universities *(Totten & Blanchard, 2009; Zlotkowski, 2000)*.

Information about the challenges faculty members face in their community engagement activities is crucial for validating existing programs, as well as for initiating new faculty support programs. At the administrative level, data on faculty challenges can inform and justify resource allocation to support faculty engaged scholarship. Faculty members may feel a sense of solidarity in knowing that their colleagues face similar challenges, or they may learn about challenges they had not realized their colleagues were facing. Information about faculty challenges is also crucial for community engagement coordinators at unit or university-wide levels.

Results about the current level of faculty member community engagement provide administrators with information that can be shared in documents promoting the school to funders or to the

broader community. They also present an opportunity for decision makers to evaluate how well these activities are aligning with the mission of the unit. Individual faculty members may be curious about how their work aligns with work by the entire faculty body. This knowledge may initiate actions to shift their future activities to better align with, or complement, the work of their colleagues. In addition, these results provide baseline data for future evaluation of community engagement activities. The distribution of activities in the community suggests the types of organizations with which the units have experience. This knowledge can be useful when new community organizations or projects need to be matched with faculty member expertise.

Lessons Learned from the Research Process

The FCET was found to be most effective when applied as part of a broader initiative to enhance the unit's community engagement activities. The FCET survey presented here is designed to provide a primarily quantitative snapshot that should be enhanced with qualitative participatory methods such as focus groups or interviews. In addition, faculty members are just one of the constituencies involved in, and impacted by, community engagement activities. This study focused on faculty members because of the pivotal role they play in initiating and executing teaching, research, and outreach activities in the community *(Bell et al., 2000; Driscoll, 2000; Garcia & Robinson, 2005; Holland, 1997; Robinson & Barnett, 1996)*. The RSENR has followed the study on faculty activities with research on the expectations and experiences of students in the school *(DePasquale, 2008; Westdijk et al., 2008)*. The Department of CDAE is planning a similar student-focused study. The campus-wide service-learning office at the University of Vermont (UVM) has also instituted a survey of community partners involved in UVM-based service-learning projects. Other subsequent studies could focus on systems-level analyses of the community engagement activities of an academic unit (e.g., the curriculum mapping study that both RSENR and CDAE are conducting) *(Battistoni et al., 2003)* or measuring the social capital of faculty members within a unit (e.g., the amount of collaboration with each other, or common community partners, on research projects and grants).

A limitation of the FCET is its design for application at the level of a single academic unit, which can present the challenge of small sample sizes. For this study, the authors were able to mitigate this challenge by securing high response rates (87% in the RSENR and 92% in CDAE). It is interesting to note that, although

sample size was a problem in these smaller units with a population of roughly 25 to 40 respondents, it was in fact the small size of those units, coupled with a utilization-focused approach, that allowed the authors to attain high response rates. Faculty and administrator investment in the research is directly related to the usefulness of the data for decision making within the unit *(Koliba & Lathrop, 2007)*. Therefore, establishing trust and buy-in from respondents and administrators through participatory action research approaches is a critical element in the success of this research tool.

Future Action and Follow-up

Research on community engagement activities in higher education provides information that can be used to guide decisions directed toward institutionalizing support for community-engaged scholarship. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research instruments produces comprehensive results that can be enriched by descriptive data *(Caracelli & Greene, 1997)*. Designing such a study requires an understanding of how the data will be used, and by whom.

Following successful application in two University of Vermont (UVM) academic units, the research tool constructed for this study will continue to be revised and applied in other academic units across campus by the Office of Community-University Partnerships and Service-Learning (CUPS) as part of Campus Compact's "Engaged Department" process *(Battistoni et al., 2003)*. As in the two cases provided here, the FCET will be used within the context of a broader utilization-focused evaluation process tailored to the needs of each academic unit. The results of the research, combined with an action research approach, provided an essential foundation for the CUPS office to explore the balance of centralized and decentralized support for academic community engagement on this large campus. While the methods employed and needs revealed varied slightly between the two cases, both units chose to continue providing staff support for community engagement within the unit and selected the "Engaged Department" process as the framework for their future strategic planning regarding community engagement.

We have framed the use of the FCET as integrated into a continuous cycle in which planning and evaluation are coupled. We believe, however, that this and other tools can also be useful in conducting in-depth research of faculty community engagement practices. The wealth of potential research questions that may be drawn

from an analysis of such data is great. We encourage researchers to use the FCET to explore such subjects as the relationship between a faculty member's attitudes toward engagement and their practice of community engagement; the type and geographic scope of engagement activities; and the different challenges and motivations for community engagement depending on faculty rank and roles. The authors encourage others to use the Faculty Community Engagement Tool (FCET) to enhance the practice and institutionalization of community engagement activities at their institutions.

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Endnote

1. Although faculty teaching activities have been added to the survey question on community engagement activities (Figure 2) for the tool presented in this article (see previous sections), they were not included on previous versions of the survey applied in these cases.

2. If readers would like to request a complete copy of the FCET survey template, they may e-mail partnerships@uvm.edu.

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