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Fitzgerald, H. E., Burack, C., & Seifer, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of Engaged Scholarship: Contemporary Landscapes, Future Directions: Volume 2: Community-Campus Partnerships (Transformation in Higher Education)*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.

### Review by A. Scott Reed

**I**n a word: comprehensive. These two volumes contain a compendium of material—historical lessons, reflections, research results, issues, predictions, and more. Beyond all of this, the volumes are much more than a handbook. They provide an indexed and ready reference to the advancing field of engagement. Although of most value to academics who are learning about and practicing engagement, the two books will also be useful to community members and institutional leaders wishing to advance the understanding and practice of engaged scholarship. The authors provide multiple and distinctive lenses with which to view engaged community scholarship—from the perspectives of funders, policy makers, universities, students, and community members.

What are some of most intriguing issues that might inspire readers to examine this hefty, nearly thousand-page product by nearly 80 authors?

### Definitions

There is enough ambiguity and variety in use of the term “engaged scholarship” that the books should be read with an eye toward gaining a better understanding. As a result of explication of this term that the work offers, the reader will become a better manuscript reviewer, will more closely examine the nature of relationships among engaged partners, and will be better able to discern among the scholarship “of” engagement, scholarship “on or about” engagement, and scholarship “for” engagement. The examples will help the reader visualize ways that engagement manifests itself on campuses, and in communities of place, interest, and practice.

It seems that the concepts of engagement and scholarship are separable (i.e., not all engagement is scholarly). Although the handbook illustrates numerous examples of engaged relationships, more attention to defining consistent and recognizable elements of

a scholarly engagement would be useful. As a result of this shortcoming the reader is prepared to intellectualize how engagement cuts across the historic university missions of teaching, research, and service and is also equipped to diagnose the extent to which benefits of engaged relationships are reciprocal and mutually beneficial. Regrettably, understanding common and accepted standards of scholarship receives too little attention. Members of institutional promotion and tenure committees continually seek ways to better describe *scholarly* engagement. Often, to qualify, some form of new knowledge must be created that is validated by peers and appropriately made available to other scholars (especially future ones) such that relevant knowledge can advance over time.

The work of Ernest Boyer continues to be a major driver within many of the associated chapters. His seminal 1990 Carnegie Foundation publication, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, is likely the most cited and praised stimulus for bringing us to the present state of understanding. The numerous references to Boyer highlight the many ways his work is interpreted and used. Authors point to the continuing evolution of Boyer's work that, soon before his death, began to explore the scholarship of engagement.

## **Institutional Differentiation**

Organizations vary greatly in the way they are chartered and organized, and in their behavioral cultures related to engagement. Numerous authors in the Handbooks interpret and develop conclusions around predominant academic norms and the forces that affect the extent to which academicians embrace engagement as a part of their work. There are many reasons for this—and although the tools to address them are not yet clear, lessons are piling up through the willingness of some to document and share experiences.

Notable causes examined by some authors include historic emphases on research missions, including a premium on “basic” in contrast to “applied” knowledge. Seven chapters describe cultural differences and approaches to engagement across the higher educational landscape, including land-grant universities, liberal arts colleges and community colleges, and those institutions that serve urban, faith-based, Hispanic, and tribal communities. This “domain emphasis” helps readers to understand and see the extent to which engagement intersects with the varying missions of academic institutions.

## Origins of Engagement Leadership

The Handbooks make clear in numerous ways that leadership for engaged work can come from administrators. Most significant are the roles described of community members, students, and faculty members who are motivated to pioneer such work. Through engaged learning, students play an essential leadership role in helping to evolve pedagogy that drives improved practices both outward into community improvements, and inward into university course syllabi and learning outcomes. However, additional work is needed to focus on the roles of those charged to lead their institutions toward engaged work. Some early lessons about encouraging emerging scholars are included, as well as scattered references to incentives and reward systems. But the professoriate changes slowly, and tends to reinforce dominant cultures. Overall, leaders are not asking that faculty members work more, but that the best people work differently. Thus, a logical extension of these volumes would conduct a meta-evaluation of best *leadership* practices for administrators.

## The Nature of the Engagement

While stopping short of developing a taxonomy of relationships, the volumes describe several distinct typologies. Fundamental differences occur in roles and relationships within engaged work, depending upon the nature of the topic, resident expertise within the partners, and the nature of the partnership itself. Of some concern is the dominant model of university-community relationship, in which the playing field is not level and universities are seen to be in controlling roles. Needed is a more robust understanding of how communities can increase influence in relationships. Too often, partnerships are simply prescribed by funding agencies and higher education institutions. Negotiating for successful outcomes can be enhanced through additional work in understanding differences among types of relationships.

## Community Differences

Communities are distinctive and varied. The rhythms of community needs—political, budgetary, and environmental—do not necessarily respect college or university calendars. Thus, effective community engagement requires attention to dimensions of time and place not typically associated with academic work, whether teaching matriculated students, implementing research, or reaching out to provide knowledge for public good. Beyond engaging with a

community, university members are challenged to recognize that they also are members of a community.

### **Assessing Impacts**

Each party in an engaged relationship shares a stake and often a distinctive measure in what constitutes a successful outcome. Universities may voluntarily participate in a credentialing process through the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in which their commitment to and work with communities is evaluated. Some writers in the volumes, however, express concern about the durability of transformative institutional change toward embracing engagement. Similarly, there is a tendency to describe engagement activities rather than to measure the long-term impacts of those activities on communities.

### **Looking Toward the Future**

The value of engagement demands additional work both within and outside colleges and universities. These two books describe challenges, and provide examples and suggestions for institutionalizing community engagement. The greatest barrier is that resources for engaged work typically have not been sustained to allow consistent and ongoing community relationships. Some writers also indicate concern about equity among communities regarding access to university resources (i.e., communities located proximate to campuses often enjoy advantages).

To effectively summarize this impressive collection of intellectual papers is not possible given the range of topics. The readings are so voluminous that few will be motivated to study them in their entirety. It is likely, however, that readers will overlay their own circumstances on appropriate topics to better design, implement, and evaluate their own engagement activities. For this reviewer, this comprehensive work stimulated deep reflection and a renewed commitment to his institution's strategic plan for outreach and engagement.

### **About the Reviewer**

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