

“A Lot of Bang for the Buck”— Results of the COPC Impact Survey

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Abstract

Respondents to our 2011 survey on the impact of Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) grants administered by HUD between 1994 and 2005 reported deep and lasting impacts on their respective institutions. These grants affected institutional structures, embedded community engagement within institutional cultures and academic curricula, and helped build reciprocal relationships of trust with community-based partners. Vernacularly speaking, COPC grants got a lot of “bang for the buck.”

Introduction

The genesis of this study came in the spring of 2010 when two of the authors of this paper participated as panelists in a plenary session on developing and sustaining community-based partnerships at the annual meeting of The Office of University Partnerships (OUP) in San Antonio, Texas. In part, our comments during this panel focused on work we had undertaken as administrator and grantee with the Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) program that was operated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) between the years of 1994 and 2005. Following the plenary session, the presenters were approached by several conference participants who expressed an interest in learning more about the successes of this COPC program. Subsequent conversations with HUD leaders further encouraged our efforts to undertake this study, wherein we attempt to document the impact of the COPC program upon the various constituents it was intended to reach—post-secondary educational institutions and the individuals and communities located within the geographic proximity to the universities and colleges that received COPC funding.

We, therefore, invited COPC recipients to respond to a survey regarding their experiences with the program and their perceptions of the lasting impacts it had on: 1) their institutions, 2) their colleagues, and 3) the communities affected by COPC programming. Within these three broad categories, we drafted questions intended to discern specific ways in which COPC funding had affected institutional practices and cultures. Furthermore, because COPC funding was intended to be used as “seed money,” and given the amount of time that had elapsed since the last COPC grant was awarded, we designed the survey to capture data regarding the ways in which COPC funding helped to leverage additional internal and external support for engagement activities. (For more on the COPC History and Philosophy, see below.) We also sought data that might enable us to understand if and how COPC activities had been sustained after the grant funding ended.

The results of our survey confirmed our sense of the value of COPC, and it is our contention that COPC grants proved to be an effective and efficient program within the federal catalog of grant programs, especially given the modest federal funding involved. In particular, we note that COPC funding likely achieved a number of valuable outcomes including: 1) involving colleges and universities in long-lasting and effective engagements with urban issues in the communities where they are located; 2) generating enduring changes in institutional culture and structure, in many cases embedding sustainable changes within an institution's curriculum and mission and; 3) providing significant benefits of COPC-funded work within the communities served by grant activities.

In what follows, we provide a brief history of the COPC program, succeeded by a discussion of our methodology and our analysis of the impact of COPC grants upon institutional recipients and their respective communities. We conclude our paper by articulating some of the implications of our findings and recommend how others might engage post-secondary educational institutions in supporting democratic practices, including community engagement. Note it is not our purpose to provide a comprehensive review of the expansive literature that describes and assesses the various methods developed to measure the depth and/or effectiveness of institutional-wide commitment and success with civic engagement pedagogies.

COPC History and Philosophy

The COPC grant program began with the Community Outreach Partnership Act of 1992, which authorized \$7.5 million to establish a demonstration project to create Community Outreach Partnership Centers. This act directed the HUD secretary to make grants to public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education to help assist in establishing or carrying out applied research and outreach activities addressing the problems of urban areas.

HUD's stated mission is to create strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities. The program areas mandated by the COPC program (housing, economic development, capacity building, education, technology, healthy communities, crime prevention, and fair housing) spoke directly to HUD's mission. However, HUD explicitly prohibited the use of COPC funds for brick and mortar projects within recipient communities.

The vehicle to administer the COPC grant funds, The Office of University Partnerships, was established in 1994 under the leadership of then HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros. COPC represented HUD's first efforts at true partnership programs with colleges and universities, tapping the multiple resources available among college faculty and students, and linking them with community partners to collaboratively work to ameliorate urban problems.

Institutions that received grants in COPC's earliest days were colleges and universities that had made historical commitments to their host communities prior to COPC funding. In fact, leaders at these institutions, including Judith Ramaley, then president

of Portland State University, and her colleague, Barbara Holland; Rex LaMore at Michigan State University; Wim Wiewel, then at the University of Illinois-Chicago; and Ira Harkavy at the University of Pennsylvania, helped shape the COPC program by assisting a variety of institutions in their successful efforts to secure COPC grants.

In subsequent rounds of funding, the pool of recipients changed significantly. Owing in part to the purposely broad COPC policy guidelines (for example, defining an “urban community” as one with a population of 2,500 or more), and to the work of HUD staff in encouraging all types of colleges to apply, the grantee pool grew from predominantly major urban-area institutions to a much more representative sampling of American institutions of higher education, which included liberal arts colleges, two-year and community colleges, and minority-serving institutions.

While the first COPC grants were over \$500,000 for a three-year period, later grants starting in 1996 were for a maximum of \$400,000 for the same three-year period. In keeping with the philosophy of democratic civility—a practice wherein community members listen to one another, consider opposing viewpoints and work toward finding common solutions founded and implemented through collaborative action—the COPC program encouraged the creation of community advisory groups as part of the program’s design.

HUD viewed COPC funding as “seed money,” and in the early years institutions were only eligible for a single grant. While this policy changed in the late 1990s to include a second round of funding (New Directions Grants) based on the demonstrated success with the first grant, the underlying philosophy behind the “seed money” concept required that colleges accrue significant matching funds and, along with their community partners, articulate a means of sustaining the partnership efforts beyond the initial federal support. Applicants were required to provide at least 25 percent of the total budget for proposed outreach activities and at least 50 percent of the total budget for proposed research activities. Applied research was to be an important aspect of a COPC grant. For more on the history of COPC in relation to community research, see Author 2006. For more information on COPC as a government initiative “intended to stimulate the growth of Engaged Research Centers” for the development of collaborative research approaches “focused on local communities,” see Nyden and Percy 2010. This emphasis on research was an attempt by the architects of the COPC program to formally link the intellectual capacity of a college or university to the needs of the host community. It also required that outreach activities grow out of this research. Our data indicate many institutions, based on their ability to identify these leveraged resources, have been able to sustain and expand these efforts up to ten to fifteen years after COPC funding ended.

Methodology

In the summer of 2010, we developed a survey questionnaire that sought to illuminate the impact of COPC-funded activities. Because we were particularly interested in understanding the legacy of COPC grants on institutions, individuals, and communities,

the survey was divided into three broad sections, titled: 1) Structural Impact on Institution, 2) Impact on Community Partnerships, and 3) Community Impact. See www.butler.edu/media/3104998/copc_impact_survey.pdf for a copy of the survey instrument. We are grateful for the assistance provided by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) for survey management and administration. In particular, we appreciate the cooperation and assistance of Dr. John Saltmarsh, co-director of NERCHE, and Brad Arndt, editorial and operations consultant.

We piloted the survey in the fall of 2010 and distributed it to twenty-two institutions selected to ensure an equal spread across geography, institutional type, and year when they had received COPC grants. Surveys were e-mailed to contacts at these institutions, and, wherever possible, these e-mails were addressed to individuals who had been integral to the respective program's COPC grant. In cases where these individuals were no longer associated with the grantee institution, we addressed the survey to the institution's relevant administrator. Survey participants were not asked to identify themselves beyond answering questions pertaining directly to their COPC-related functions. However, the majority of viable e-mail addresses on our initial target list and self-identification in survey responses suggest that a combination of former COPC staff, faculty, and/or administrators completed the survey.

The initial survey was accompanied by a cover letter wherein we explained the survey was designed as a pilot and that we welcomed respondents' comments and suggestions regarding both the survey's design and the wording of the questions. Furthermore, we noted that "upon receipt of the initial results, [we would] refine the survey tool based on these results and your suggestions" (e-mail correspondence August 23, 2010). We also stated "our intention to broaden the survey group to include other institutions that received COPC funding" (August 23, 2010).

Ten institutions returned the pilot survey, and after considering the suggestions offered, we revised the questionnaire slightly in November 2010, adding opportunities for respondents to provide narrative comments and rewriting one question to yield more specific information about measurable results and long-standing impacts.

In March 2011, we e-mailed the revised survey to the ninety-eight institutions that had received COPC grants, but had not been included in or did not respond to the initial pilot survey. A second request for responses was circulated in October 2011. We received a total of thirty-two responses to the final survey. However, because the pilot survey differed from the final survey only in minor details, as previously described, we included the pilot survey responses in our data pool. This gives us a total of forty-two responses, or a 39 percent response rate (42 responses out of 108 COPC grantees).

COPC grants were awarded to different types of institutions. As a check to ensure that our sample was representative of the universe of COPC recipients, we tabulated both the percentage of awardees by institutional type and the percentage of institutional types represented in our sample.

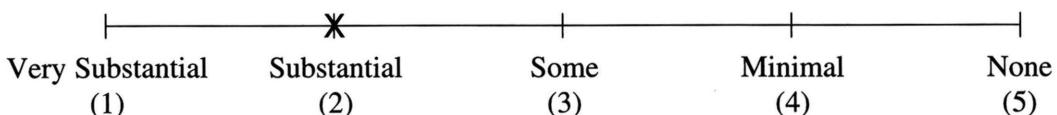
Institutional Type	COPC Awardees	Survey Sample
Land Grant	22%	20%
Private/Liberal Arts	22%	33%
State/Regional	43%	38%
Technical/Engineering	4%	5%
Two-Year	6%	5%
Medical School	3%	0%

With the exception of medical schools and a slight overemphasis on private/liberal arts schools, our sample appears to reflect the complete range of awards made to educational institutions during COPC's grant history. Given the small sample size, we do not include detailed analysis of our data based on institutional type, but, in the "Limitations and Further Research" section, we do note two potentially meaningful patterns that emerge when responses are grouped by institutional type.

Findings

The COPC program sought to bring post-secondary educational institutions and communities together to address urban issues. Federal funding was directed to post-secondary educational institutions with the implicit goal that COPC grants would stimulate and/or enhance community engagements and assist post-secondary institutions to become and remain vital in affecting positive changes in their respective communities.

Our data suggest the COPC program did have a deep and lasting impact on college and/or university recipients. When asked, for example, to rank "the overall impact of the COPC program on your institution," the average response falls at "substantial" (2.0 on a five-point scale, Q14—this reference indicates that the quotations and data reported here derive from Question 14 of the final survey. Similar citations will be used throughout the paper to indicate the specific questions that are the source of survey wording and responses):



We believe that this impact derives from COPC's effectiveness in creating institutional structures and institutional cultures that foster community partnerships. We are cognizant, however, that *institutions qua institutions* do not interact with community-based organizations. It is the faculty, staff, and students who interrelate with community residents and organizational representatives and vice versa. Consequently, within the context of the argument we set forth in this paper, we use the term "institutional structures" to refer to the tangible documents, policies, and practices—institutional missions, curricula, budgets, recruitment, and retention efforts (of

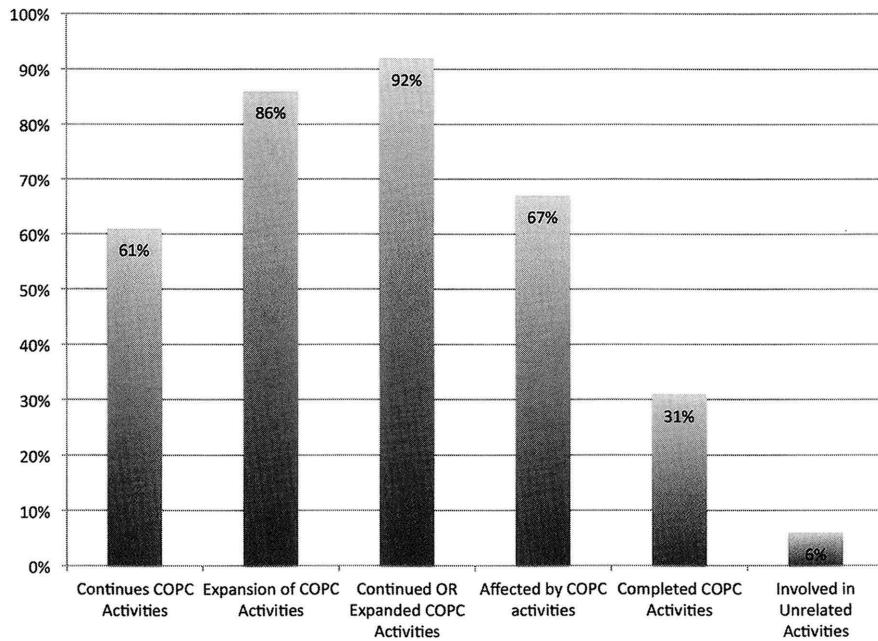
students, faculty and employees alike)—that set a structural framework within which university/college personnel pursue their work (for a comprehensive description of the markers of institutionalization, see Bringle and Hatcher 2000, 275). We use the term “institutional cultures” in a broad anthropological sense to refer to the shared attitudes, beliefs, and values informing the decisions of university/college personnel as they formulate goals, implement programming and curriculum, expend resources, seek funding, and evaluate both the significance and success of their endeavors (including research, teaching and service). In broad terms, institutional structures and cultures that foster community partnerships not only support and place value on community partnership activities, but also are infused with the message and purpose of educating “students holistically, such that their cognitive and affective learning takes place within the context of applying what one has learned for the betterment of self *and* others” (Brabant and Braid 2009, 67).

In order to explore the impact of COPC funding in greater detail, we present quantitative and qualitative analyses of our data within the framework of three general categories: 1) Persistence of Engagement and Impact on Institutional Structures, 2) Impact on Institutional Cultures, and 3) Community Impact. Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive but interdependent. The specific ways in which COPC-funded activities have influenced individual attitudes and beliefs (culture) help to shape the development of institutional structures supporting engagement. These institutional structures, in turn, help to support and develop an institutional culture that values engagement. A similar reciprocal influence can be mapped in the relationship between community and post-secondary institution.

Finding 1: Persistence of Engagement and Impact on Institutional Structures

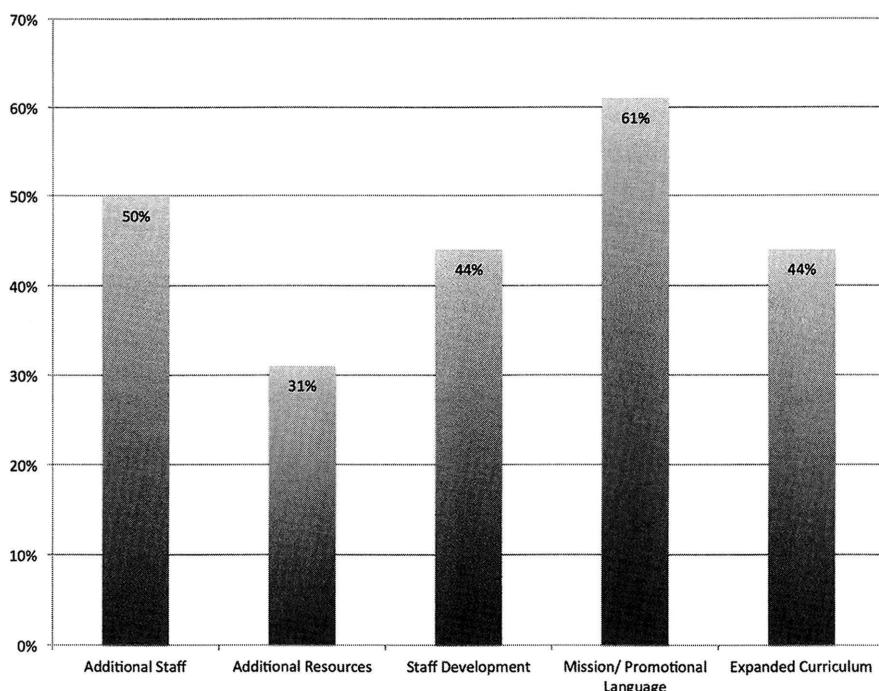
Survey results reveal that a majority of institutions continue robust community engagement activities well after federal funding ended. In fact, 86 percent of respondents report that “the institutional structure or vehicle for partnerships created by or enhanced by the COPC grant still continue[s] to operate today” (Q2). Furthermore, responses to Question 3 (see the following graph) indicate that 92 percent of the schools for which this “institutional structure or vehicle” continues to operate note that it either: “continues to be involved in activities directly related to the COPC grant” or “has expanded the activities from the COPC grant to related areas and issues.” In addition 67 percent of these institutions reported that they have “become involved in other activities unrelated directly to the COPC grant but affected by COPC activities.” This suggests that the current community engagement work of these institutions is in many ways a continuation of and/or an evolution of COPC-sponsored activities.

Q3—Current Status of Institutional Structure (n = 36 = institutions reporting “the institutional structure or vehicle for partnerships created by or enhanced by the COPC grant still continue[s] to operate today”)

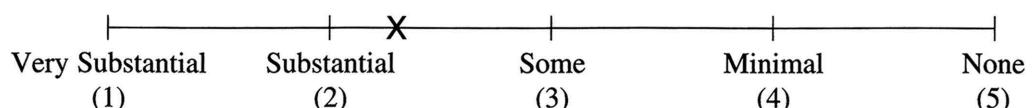


Furthermore, 86 percent of respondents state that their institution has “increased its commitment to community engagement” (Q10). When institutions were asked for details about this increased commitment (see graph above), 44 percent indicated they had “committed to staff development/training on community engagement,” 61 percent reported incorporating “significant language of commitment to community engagement” in “institutional mission and/or promotional materials,” 50 percent said they had “hired additional staff/creating a new office/department,” 31 percent noted they had “committed additional resources to the community, and 44 percent “expanded curriculum related to community engagement” (Q10).

Q10—Details of Increased Commitment to Community Engagement (n = 36 = institutions reporting an increase in commitment since COPC)

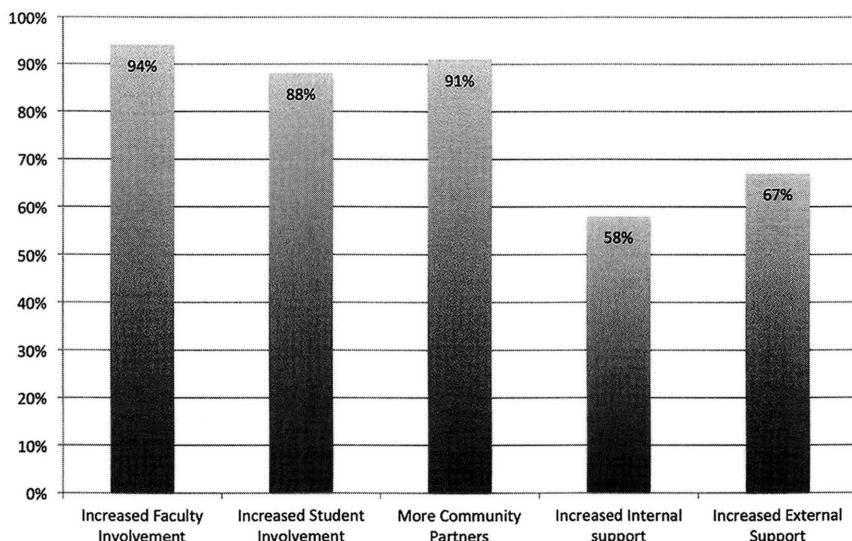


When asked in another question about “campus-wide community partnership activities,” 79 percent of all respondents said that these activities have “increased” (Q16). A follow-up question for institutions reporting such an increase asked, “to what extent can [this increase in activities] be attributed to or were they affected by COPC activities,” the average response falls between the options of “some” and “substantial” (2.3 on a 5.0-point scale, see following graph, Q17):



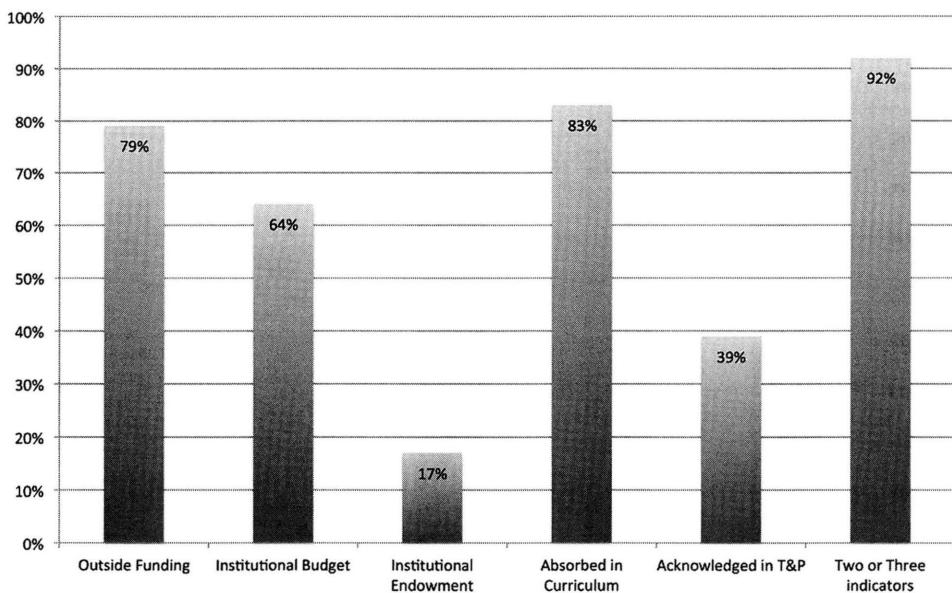
Furthermore, these same respondents indicated that these increases could be documented through (see the following graph): “additional faculty involvement” (94 percent), “greater student participation” (88 percent), “increased number of community partners” (91 percent), “increased financial support from inside the institution” (58 percent), and “increased financial support from outside the institution” (67 percent) (Q18).

Q18—Documentation of Increase in Community Partnership Activities (n = 33 = institutions reporting an increase since COPC)



The persistence of engagement implies a degree of institutionalization of COPC activities along with a concomitant impact on institutional structures. This relationship is perhaps clearest in relation to the impact COPC appears to have had on the educational mission of many institutions that received COPC funding. Integration of pedagogical strategies into the academic curriculum is a type of “gold standard” for sustainability in the academy. Once an idea is embedded within the curriculum, it typically becomes a sustainable practice. A second indicator of sustainability is the inclusion of a program as a line item within a given institution’s budget—and one might argue that an institution’s budget is the clearest indication of its values. For those respondents who reported that “the institutional structure or vehicle created or enhanced by COPC” still “continues to operate,” we asked “how the institutional structure [for partnerships] and community partnerships have been sustained since the COPC grant” (Q4). In response (see the following graph), 83 percent of these respondents stated, “activities [were] absorbed in curriculum (e.g., service-learning, community-based research),” 64 percent indicated community activities have been sustained through a “line item in institutional budget,” and 79 percent note “continued outside funding.” Further, 92 percent of these institutions noted two or more of these options provided support for sustaining COPC-related work.

Q4—How Institutional Structure has been Sustained Since COPC (n = 36 = institutions reporting this structure continues to operate)



In relation to the total response pool, these percentages are only slightly lower: 71 percent report “activities [were] absorbed in curriculum (e.g., service-learning, community-based research),” 55 percent indicated community activities have been sustained through a “line item in institutional budget,” and 67 percent noted “continued outside funding.” In addition, there is evidence of curricular institutionalization in narrative responses. For example, in answers to Question 21 respondents noted that COPC activities “transformed classes into stronger experiences for students,” “increased our integration of engagement in our classroom instruction,” and that they were “able to engage students in engaged scholarship.” Similarly, responses to Question 13 (What would you list as the three most important impacts on your institution as a result of COPC related activities) pointed to educationally based outcomes, such as “core curriculum service requirement,” “significant changes in syllabi,” “increased community-based learning,” “broader involvement in service learning,” and “a shift from an emphasis on service to academic community-based learning” (Q13). We believe this kind of integration of pedagogy and outreach is one of the lasting legacies of COPC work.

While we cannot posit a causal relationship between COPC funding and the reported increase in commitment to community engagement, deepening of community partnership activities, and curricular integration, the data reported here in relation to the overall response pattern do suggest that such a relationship exists.

Finding 2: Impact on Institutional Cultures

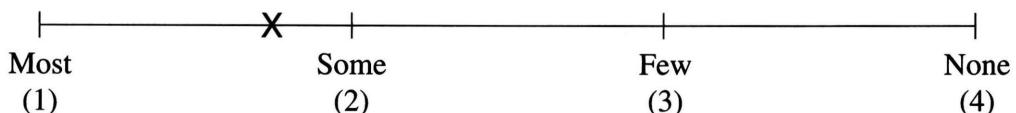
There is evidence in our data that COPC funding also proved to be a valuable catalyst for embedding community engagement within institutional cultures (for more detailed discussions on how discrete academic units, especially the academic department, play an integral role in creating and nurturing a culture embracing the ethos of civic engagement at the heart of the COPC program, see Kecske 2011, and Zlotkowski and Saltmarsh 2011). This evidence emerges in response to a question that asked respondents to list the “three most important impacts” of COPC activities on their “institution.” On the one hand, responses to this question pointed to an increase in both the visibility of this work and to an increase in understanding and valuing community engagement activities within institutions. For example, respondents noted: “Increased awareness of and involvement in urban issues among faculty,” “increased visibility of faculty engaging in community partnerships,” “increased awareness of the positive impact we can have on the community,” “shift in awareness of ways in which the university relates to the larger community,” “greater credibility for this work on campus,” and that it “provided concrete outcomes that could be pointed to when [we] demonstrate why we matter.” On the other hand, respondents suggest that this increase in awareness, valuation, and enhanced status has led to concrete and even structural changes on their campuses. These changes are noted in comments that indicate a fait accompli: “Deeper institutional commitment to civic engagement,” “university commitment to engagement,” or that it “resulted in a structure to support faculty and students who wish to make meaningful contributions, as well as responses indicating ongoing change: “Developing a legitimacy for engagement and the partnerships with high level university administrators and board members” and “changes in culture—faculty and administrators more greatly value service learning teaching methods”.

A second dimension of cultural impact is revealed in data that indicate faculty and staff gained valuable pragmatic experience related to community engagement. The value placed on this experience by respondents marks it as an important element of shifting institutional culture. For example, one respondent noted that at his/her institution faculty and staff “were able to try out the structure, processes, etc., necessary to carry on true applied practices before committing large amounts of [university] funding” (Q21). Other respondents commented that key impacts of the work were “shared wisdom on what works” (Q21), “better understanding of the tenets of community engagement (e.g. reciprocity, community-driven, transparency),” and “development of skills, knowledge, and understanding about how the community works and doesn’t work” (Q21). One respondent went so far as to say that COPC “. . . changed my life. I was reborn as a community activist and became concerned again about the plight of the poor and underserved and have given me the skills, etc., to actually make a difference” (Q21). Interestingly, this experience is distributed in multiple areas of campus: 69 percent of institutions report that their engagement work is structurally “located in several different offices” (Q6). Only 17 percent of institutions report having a centralized office and 14 percent report their work “takes place without any central office.”

There are indications that this increased experience with community-engagement work has had a lasting impact on institutional practice and institutional culture. For example, in response to Question 5 that asked respondents to “briefly describe how your current outreach activities are attributable to COPC-related activities,” respondents repeatedly highlighted the continuity of current work to COPC activities. Other respondents noted the foundational quality of COPC activities to current partnerships or approaches.

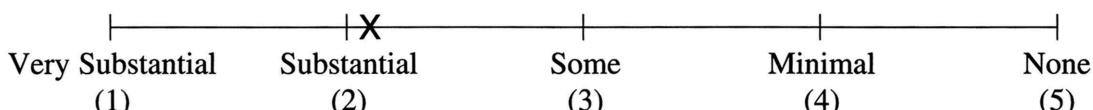
Institutions reported, for example: “A number of the activities developed as part of the COPC continue, particularly the community schools work,” “current outreach activities are an outcome of lessons learned through COPC-related activities,” “all of our work related to education can be attributed to our foundational work funded by the COPC grant,” and “the Collaborative Community Development strategy that we developed through COPC is now regularly utilized.” (Q5). In other words, COPC not only provided an opportunity for institutions to act on their commitments to engagement, but also provided the experiential knowledge necessary to perform community-based activities well and to sustain such efforts long term. One institution summed this up nicely by stating “we continued with the same types of activities and have now been doing this for sixteen years.”

Finally, COPC’s impact on institutional culture is evident in that work within the COPC grant program has served to generate relationships, both on and beyond the campus environments. On-campus relationships were developed across disciplinary lines and between academic and student affairs units. Evidence of this impact is extracted from comments such as “increased connections to others within our university involved with engagement” (Q21), “we found others who were committed to the same goals” (Q21), “increased interdepartmental collaborations” (Q13), and “created cross-campus partnerships that have sustained” (Q21). COPC grants also fostered relationships between academic personnel and community representatives. These relationships were indexed by comments that report increased knowledge and trust with community partners: “Long lasting relationships between faculty, staff, students, and administrators with community partners” (Q21), “enabled us to establish strong, sustained, trusting community partnerships” (Q21), and “longstanding relationships with community partners that continue to this day in other areas” (Q21). In fact, when asked “how many of the faculty and/or staff involved in the original COPC grant(s) continue to be involved in community partnership activities?,” the average response lies between “some” and “most” (1.7 on a 4.0-point scale, Q15):

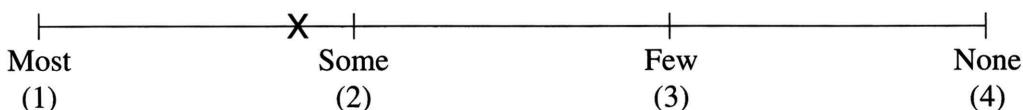


Finding 3—Community Impact

Our study did not survey community partners or community members to discern their perceptions of community impact. Additionally, we did not specifically ask for evidence of measurable community outcomes—for example, significant increases in homeownership or lower rates of teen-pregnancy (although eight institutions (19 percent) did report that they “were able to generate measurable outcomes to show a direct or indirect benefit from COPC-initiated partnership activities). Generating data on such measurable outcomes is not easy. (For insights into the challenges of developing assessment models intended “to measure the community impact of higher education civic engagement” efforts, see Stoecker, Beckman, and Min 2010, 177–196). Nonetheless, when asked to “rate the impact of the COPC program on the community,” no one rated this impact as “minimal” or “none,” and the average response came slightly below “substantial” (2.1 on a 5.0-point scale, Q30):

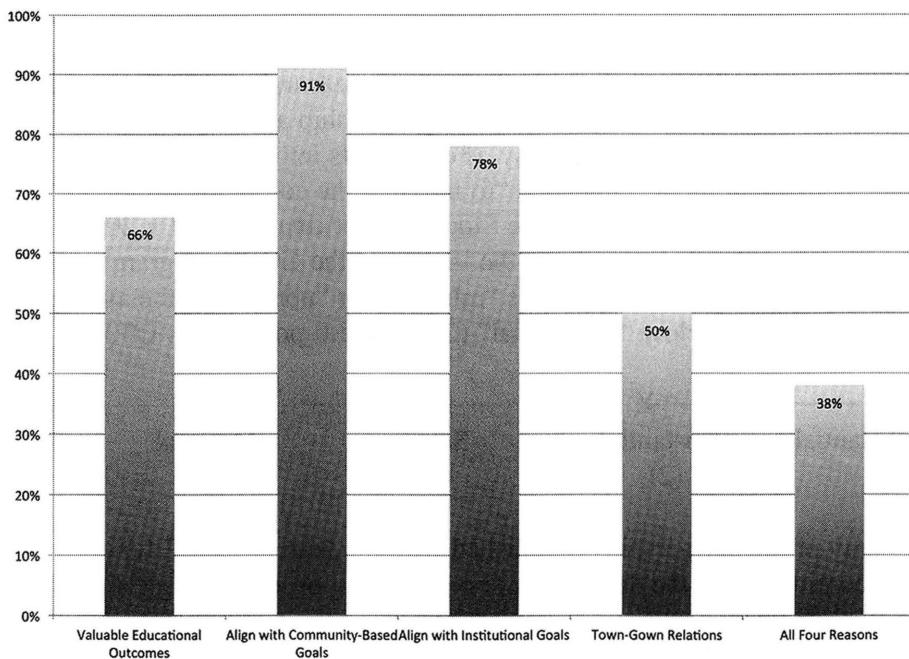


Further, many of the partnerships established with the help of COPC funding reportedly continue as of the date of our survey. In response to our question “if community partnerships continue today, how many of the original partnering organizations continue to be involved?” responses clustered between “most” and “some” (1.8 on a 4.0-point scale, Q23):



In order to discern the reasons for this continuity, we revised the survey, adding a new question: “If community partnerships continue today, why do they persist?” (Q27). Responses to this question (see the following graph) clearly indicate that respondents recognize the value of COPC activities for the education of their students, for their institutions, and for the betterment of their community partners. 66 percent of respondents indicated these partnerships “persist” because of “valuable educational outcomes,” 91 percent said it was because “programs align with community-based goals,” 78 percent selected that “programs align with institutional goals,” and 50 percent said “they are valuable in the maintenance of town/gown relations (Q27). Finally, 38 percent of respondents selected all four responses.

Q27—Why Community Partnerships Persist (n = 32 = institutions responding to revised survey)



When asked “if community partnerships do not continue, why were they ended,” only 22 percent of institutions indicated that they ended because “COPC funding ended” (Q28).

Survey respondents recognized that benefits of COPC accrued not only to the university/college, but also to area residents by enhancing the vibrancy of their communities. When asked “what would you list as the three most important impacts on your community as a result of COPC related activities,” answers focused on enhanced partnerships: (“increased trust/institutional ties between campus and community,” “through our involvement we built strong partnerships between organizations in the community that did not even speak to one another prior to the project. They continue to work together,” and “substantial increase of community partners who engage with our college and our students on a regular basis”); on services provided: (“created new community-based information system and data,” “increased educational attainment of area children through increased tutoring,” “improved race relations,” and the “creation of comprehensive plans and strategies for neighborhood revitalization”); and capacity building for community-based organizations (“community partners much stronger organizations,” “aided the organizational capacity of certain neighborhood groups and residents,” and “provided financial and logistical support . . . “ Q31).

Limitations and Further Research

As a primary research project with a self-selecting pool of respondents, we acknowledge the possibility of bias in both the data and its interpretation. Given this reality, the insights we report should be viewed as suggestive rather than conclusive.

It also could be argued that other variables might better explain the apparent success of the COPC program and the reported persistence, even increase, of engagement efforts represented in our data. For example, one could surmise that only institutions with successful COPC stories responded to our survey. While it would be a mistake to generalize the percentage of successful grantees in our sample to the experience of all grantees, we, nonetheless, have thirty-six stories of success. These thirty-six institutions are in and of themselves particularly striking examples of the long-term effects of COPC funding given that the COPC program started in 1994 and ended in 2005, with many reporting institutions received their three-year grants long before 2005. Many institutions in our data set have continued their engagement for over ten years with one institution noting the fact that they have continued community-engagement activities for fourteen years beyond the funding period.

A second criticism of our assertion of relationship between funding and persistence might hold that COPC regulations required significant cash and/or in-kind match commitments from the applicant institutions. As previously noted, institutions were required to provide at least 25 percent of the total budget for outreach activities and at least 50 percent of the total budget for applied research activities. Based on Armand Carriere's experience as director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of University Partnership from 2001–2005, COPC staff regularly estimated that the average match provided by a successful COPC applicant was \$600K, or 1.5 times the amount of the COPC grant. This means that only institutions with sufficient financial commitment—and by implication sufficient commitment to community engagement—were selected as grantees. Yet the persistence of institutional involvement in community engagement—even the expansion of community engagement so long after government funding ended—is noteworthy. There also are indications that this work has not only continued, but also has become institutionalized (see Findings 1 and 2).

There are some tantalizing patterns in our data. We present this data in our “limitations and further research” section for two reasons: 1) our sample set is too small to determine statistical significance of these responses, and 2) we simply do not have data from our current survey to allow us to discern the full implications of these patterns without further research.

The first pattern emerges in the responses to four questions when these responses are grouped by type of institution: land grant institutions ($n = 7$), liberal arts institutions ($n = 13$) and state/regional institutions ($n = 15$). The relevant questions are: Q14—"How would you rate the overall impact of the COPC program on your institution?," Q17—"to what extent can [your reported increase in "campus-wide community partnership

activities”] be attributed to or were they affected by COPC activities?,” Q20—“how would you rate the impact of COPC program on yourself and others who worked on the COPC program?,” and Q30—“how would you rate the impact of the COPC program on your community?” For these questions, the mean responses by institutional type were as follows:

Type	Q14— Impact on Institution	Q17— Impact Attributable to COPC	Q20— Impact on Faculty/Staff	Q30— Impact on Community
Land Grant	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.9
Liberal Arts	2.1	2.6	1.4	2.0
State/Regional	2.3	2.4	1.5	2.3

These responses suggest that COPC funding was perceived by respondents at land grant institutions to have had a greater impact on their institutions, partnership activities, and on their respective communities. Paradoxically, these same individuals reported that the COPC had less impact on themselves and “others who worked on the COPC program” at their institutions. We do not know why this is the case in contrast to data reported by liberal arts and state/regional institutions. We invite other researchers to consider these differences and to explore their significance.

A second pattern emerges with respect to these same four questions when we grouped institutions in terms of whether the COPC funding “helped establish an entirely new vehicle or structure for partnership and outreach activities” ($n = 20$) or “were added to and enhanced the activities of an already existing office” ($n = 20$). The means for these categories were as follows:

Group	Q14— Impact on Institution	Q17— Impact Attributable to COPC	Q20— Impact on Faculty/Staff	Q30— Impact on Community
Existing	2.2	2.4	1.7	2.2
New Vehicle	1.7	2.0	1.4	2.0

These numbers are, perhaps, not surprising. They indicate that respondents at institutions where COPC grants created new structures or vehicles for engagement activities perceived that this work had a greater impact on the institution, personnel, and communities that were involved in the COPC-funded activities.

Conclusion

Since the inception of this research project, our goal has not been the resuscitation of the COPC program per se, but rather to explore what aspects of the COPC program were particularly successful and should be emulated in future work that seeks to fund partnerships between universities and communities. Consequently, it has been our

intention to share our findings with a wide audience of scholars, community builders, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, as well as the officials at HUD's Office of University Partnerships and other appropriate policy makers. We also encourage potential funders who are interested in the work of civic engagement to examine the success of the COPC program and to recognize the significant outcomes that were achieved with a modest investment of human and financial resources.

Our investigation of the COPC program began with the hypothesis that COPC grants were effective in terms of their philosophical approach and monetary investment strategy. While it may be difficult to *measure* precisely the impact of COPC funding on communities within which the grants operated, our data suggests that the COPC program was successful. As previously noted, we find evidence that COPC moved some recipient institutions to alter the way they educate students and to redefine their university/college as a *partner* in their respective communities' vibrancy—both in terms of its long-range education of its students and the lives of its community members. COPC funding led to the alteration of institutional structures and cultures to reflect the COPC philosophy that a healthy community is a significant component of a meaningful and life-altering education. The permeability of university-community boundaries proved to be a valuable strategy for enhancing educational outcomes, improving town-gown relationships, and providing valuable support to community-based organizations.

These conclusions are directly supported in comments provided by survey respondents themselves. The final question in our survey asked, "In summation, please offer any additional information or data regarding the value of COPC programs to your campus and/or community." A number of institutions took the opportunity to comment broadly about their experience. For example, one institutional respondent stated: "I think the COPC grants helped jumpstart this university in the area of civic engagement. It caused us to examine our role in the community more closely and take greater responsibility for its vitality and success. We are a different institution today as a result of the COPC grants." Another respondent asserts: "COPC created the conditions for universities, as anchor institutions, to be relevant to the surrounding communities and to enable new knowledge to be created that is useful and much needed in resolving problems and fulfilling needs." A third respondent summed up his or her experience through the important idea of efficacy: "A sense that we can make a difference because we have made a difference."

Despite the evidence we have presented that many institutions have sustained community engagement activities long past the period of COPC funding (and for some, these activities predated COPC grants), university-community partnerships like those encouraged by, and supported with COPC, will not continue by wishful thinking alone. As Barbara C. Jentleson acknowledges in her account of Duke University's community partnership with its host community of Durham, North Carolina, "consistent, long-term support of program initiatives . . . [is] critical to the success of partnerships and institutionalization of university-community partnerships" (8). She suggests that such support needs to include an ongoing "national dialogue" to identify

“the common themes, solutions, and adaptations that universities and communities must make if they are to continue working together,” faculty who engage in “community-based projects and research” that facilitates the exchange of information from the academy to the street and vice versa, and financial resources (8). We concur that leveraging human and financial resources remains a crucial component of any university/college-led community engagement program.

Our data indicate that COPC funding supported the effort by post-secondary institutions to build reciprocal relationships of trust and structures for sharing resources with their community-based partners. Some COPC recipients reported they were able to attract funding from local private sources to aid in further developing and sustaining effective community-based programming initiated with COPC. Presumably these funds were forthcoming because the projects aligned with the funders’ community-based goals and missions. On the one hand, these successes can be understood as further indication evidence that COPC “seed money” has born the rich fruit of ongoing collaborations within the institutions and communities in which the COPC existed. On the other hand, given the transformations in institutional culture and structure precipitated by COPC funding suggested by our data, these financial successes can be understood as aiding in the transformation of educational institutions by enhancing their ability to engage with and support community-based efforts. Importantly, the institutionalization of this work in the curriculum also should lead to new generations of civically minded students who carry a community-orientation with them throughout their lives.

While financial resources will always be necessary to address the urban problems COPC attempted to ameliorate, the greatest resource of post-secondary institutions lies in their intellectual power—the power to gather, analyze and disseminate knowledge. This is not a resource to be squandered, but one to be used effectively and generously to aid citizens in the identification and examination of problems that plague neighborhoods and communities throughout United States.—problems that stem from poverty, illiteracy, homelessness, and deteriorating infrastructures. As our study demonstrates, the COPC program helped post-secondary institutions to work closely with their partners to affect positive changes within their respective communities. Vernacularly speaking, COPC grants indeed got “a lot of bang for the buck.” Our survey results, therefore, lead us to urge potential funders to examine the success of the COPC program and recognize the significant outcomes achieved when public and private resources are effectively leveraged to support the work of civic engagement.

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