

# Building Capacity as Anchor Institutions: Infrastructure, Structure, and Strategy

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## Abstract

As campuses seek to advance community engagement, and embrace their role as anchor institutions within their community, questions emerge regarding how this role connects to and informs priorities within larger institutional mission and goals. Welch & Saltmarsh (2013) have noted that, historically, infrastructure—a center or office that supports and coordinates community engagement—has been a key component to institutionalizing community engagement. This article differentiates between infrastructure and organizational structure. It identifies some implications of this, as institutions build a foundation for their anchor institution mission—who, how, and to do what. The article calls attention to what is necessary if we are to fulfill our public missions and is useful as campuses consider who is involved in conversations about their anchor work, why this is important for the community and the campus, and who should be involved.

**Keywords:** community engagement; organizational structure; roles and responsibilities; alignment; institutional mission

## Introduction

This essay examines three bodies of literature. First, it reviews organizational structure, with particular focus on higher education organizations. Secondly, it looks into institutionalization, and the characteristics that influence institutional processes. Lastly, it investigates both community engagement and anchor mission work in higher education and their potential relationship(s) to the processes and structural factors that influence how widely and deeply these streams of work in higher education can inform and change our respective institutions. We offer the reader a metaphor connecting “athletics in higher education” (writ large) to illustrate the potential for following the adage “structure follows strategy” (Chandler, 1962) when it comes to vertically organizing the community engagement and anchor mission work.

We begin by defining community engagement and anchor mission work noting their similarities and differences. A community-engaged anchor institution includes the business operations and economics within how an institution defines community engagement. The campus presents its economic self-interest within the context of economic reciprocity with the historically disenfranchised community. Dubb, McKinley, and Howard (2013) define anchor mission as “a commitment to consciously apply the long-term, place-based economic power of the institution, in combination with its human and intellectual resources, to better the long-term welfare of the communities in which the institution is anchored” (p. 48). Interest in anchor mission is because “often local residents are excluded from wealth-building opportunities because of discriminatory education, criminal justice, employment, and financial lending policies. Universities that leverage hiring, procurement, and investing along with scholarship, research, and public service

resources can help address inequalities while creating stronger reciprocal community relationships” (Sladek, 2017, n.p.). The anchor mission also aligns with an increased desire (or pressure) for institutions of higher education to measure the collective impact of the organization; assessing its contributions to the greater good of society in ways that go beyond graduation rates and job placements.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has defined community engagement as the “collaboration (among) institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Janke & Shelton, 2011, p. 3). Community engagement is valued because it “enriches scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhances curriculum, teaching and learning; prepares educated, engaged citizens; strengthens democratic values and civic responsibility; addresses critical societal issues; and contributes to the public good” (Janke & Shelton, 2011, p. 4). Today, the push for community engagement is because we need “innovation, democratic participation, and opportunities for social mobility in a dynamic new world” (Pasquerella, 2018, p. 1). To “cultivate the voice, talent, and active public participation of the next generation of local citizens in a global world” because our society depends upon it (Cantor, 2018, p. 1).

The similarities and differences between an anchor mission and community engagement are worth noting for the purposes of discussing infrastructure and organizational structure to support institutionalization. To begin, we note two similarities. First, both embrace the role that institutions play in thriving communities and have expressed commitments to their responsibilities through rhetoric, staffing and resources. They value this work because it is good for the community, but also improves scholarship and education (Cantor & Englot, 2014). Second, they share similar values and recognize the importance of reciprocity in relationships. Reciprocity being defined as “recognition, respect, and valuing of the knowledge, perspective, and resources that each partner contributes to the collaboration” (Janke & Shelton, 2011, p. 4).

However, anchor institution missions and community engagement each have distinctive qualities. First, the goal or primary outcomes each seeks to measure typically differ. Assessing outcomes of community engagement have historically focused on student learning and success or faculty as engaged scholars and their partnerships via teaching and learning or research (Norris & Weiss, in press). On the other hand, anchor-institution initiatives are driven by community impacts and how that may occur through a variety of means (e.g., procurement, hiring practices, enrollment management strategies, real estate investments) as well as teaching and learning, research, and service. Second, anchor-institution projects are more likely to define “community” primarily in terms of local contributions. Conversely, community engagement is more likely to broadly define community, even so far as global activities, because the focus is on the process of engagement, or how the institutions works *with* community, as opposed to where the engagement occurs. Lastly, leadership, infrastructure, and organizational structures to support these initiatives differs across campuses. This last three are the focus of this article.

Moving forward we use the term “anchor work” to represent activities associated with community engagement or anchor institution initiatives. The essay begins with literature on the organizational structure of institutions of higher education and how they incorporate change and

innovation. This sets up our introduction of a metaphor that may be useful for campuses, as they think about how to structure themselves in order to institutionalize anchor work. We identify the implications as well as limitations of this metaphor and make recommendations for leadership, fundraising, and developing metrics or goals.

## **Overview of Organizational Structures in Higher Education**

The organization-structure literature is extensive. For the purposes of this essay, the literature the authors examined has been limited to higher education, with particular emphasis on the complex and unique characteristics that distinguish colleges and universities organizationally (Birnbaum, 1988; Blau, 1994; Blau & Schoenherr, 1971; Parsons, 1971; Perrow, 1986; Santos et al., 1998). The context of this essay focuses on the internal structures seeking to establish anchor work.

How an organization is structured depends, to some extent, on the particular characteristics that define and differentiate the organization's purpose and method of operating (Rothblatt, 1995; Schein, 1992). Once its purpose is determined, the organization's structure becomes the first step in its design (Lewis, Goodman, & Fandt, 2001), with the creation of substructures and work groups (e.g., committees) to support its primary goals or mission. An organization's structure is defined by the framework or institutional parameters that connect the policies, activities, roles, and reporting relationships needed for the organization to perform, if not fulfill, its purpose (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Dalton, Todor, Spendolini, Fielding, & Porter, 1980; Fincher, 1982; Robbins, 1983; Selznick, 1948). These structures have common characteristics that define their schema for productive work, and extend from the organization's history, mission, and the particular values and cultures that distinguish the organization from others.

Historically, higher education's organizational model takes shape with a minimum degree of standardization, which allows for high levels of autonomy among its historically key constituency and decision-making body (i.e., faculty). Minimum standardization contributes to high levels of ambiguity, which is a chief characteristic of academic organizations (Baldrige & Deal, 1983). This also influences the way(s) that administrators and others view what is important to the organization's performance of its mission, vision, and goals. Autonomy, decision-making, and minimal standardization are important to understand, as well as the differentiating organization features of size, geographic location (i.e., urban, rural), institutional type. All of these, as well as student and faculty demographics can also "prescribe or restrict behavior[s] of organizational members" (Dalton et al., 1980, p. 57) and influence the methods by which academic and administrative goals or tasks are structured and achieved.

Santos and others (1998) refer to higher education organizations as decentralized bureaucracies, which enable adaption to conditions in the external environments in which they operate. To achieve balance between bureaucratic structures and the multifaceted work of its internal constituents (faculty, staff, students, administrators, stakeholders, etc.) and external pressures or stakeholders, higher education organizations frequently use looser coordinating processes than those found in more traditional organizational settings (e.g., the business model of organizations with managerial and administrative cultures). Yet these loosely coupled organizational constituents and structures, partnered with environmental factors, must operate within an administrative framework in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that act to control or sustain ever-scant resources or

capital (e.g., human capital, social capital, political capital) and oversee the managerial processes to build its capacity to keep on achieving its mission and goals.

In all, the literature recognizes that higher education organizations have a centralized administrative structure that oversees resource or capital allocation and managerial operations. A parallel academic division is responsible for all aspects of teaching and instruction, conducted in a decentralized work structure of faculty work, student affairs, and a unit for public affairs, university communications, or community engagement. These work areas, and therefore the loose coupling of these structures operate parallel to each other yet are interdependent, i.e., they are connected by the mission and goals of the organization. Integral to the success of these connections across work are structures and processes associated with embedding innovation into the culture of the organization as a starting point for the institutionalization of change.

### **Organizational Structures for Anchor Work**

Complex institutional and environmental factors, community interaction, and a unique form of change evolves from anchor work. To implement and sustain anchor mission work, institutions need to recognize how varying elements of structure link to deliberate and intentional processes to bring communities and the higher education organization together. Sustaining change innovation requires understanding the relationship between the organizational factors that distinguish it from other institutional initiatives. As more institutions implement anchor work (and try to normalize them), it is essential to understand the organizational contexts that influence its sustainability and “the institutional factors that affect decision-making at every level and every stage of operations (Glemon et al., 2001, p. 107). Furco (1999), Furco et al (2009) and Glemon et al. (2001) point out that the convergence of complex processes that define, and are integral to, the institutional structure strongly influence those initiatives.

Self-assessment tools for the institutionalization of service learning or community engagement serve as evidence and further validate the importance of structure (Furco, 1999; Holland, 1997, 2009; Gelmon, Seifer, Kauper-Brown, Mikkelsen, 2005). In large part, these self-assessment tools indicate that some degree of a coordinating entity (e.g., center, office, committee, clearinghouse, faculty percentage of time) must exist. However, they do not mention elements of shared responsibility, collaboration or partnership with other units or leaders on campus and typically focus on supporting pedagogic practices (i.e., service-learning). Gelmon et al.’s (2005) self-assessment tool notes that community engagement must connect to other structures, constituents, and policy-making entities (e.g., board of trustees, faculty senate.) Furthermore, institutional commitment requires both words and strategic actions, i.e., merely mentioning how community engagement is a core value or part of the mission for the campus is not enough.

By emphasizing a centralized unit (e.g., center, office) we can appreciate that structure, in terms of having it and thinking about ‘where’ it is located, is a key factor in normalizing innovative change in higher education institutions. For example, the centralized unit could have “affiliations of infrastructure with academic affairs, student affairs, residence life, development, and the president’s office, sometimes jointly affiliated” (Holland, 2009, p. 90). In some cases, a senior-level position, such as vice president or vice provost occurs, but it is more common to create a position for a Director who focuses on engagement activities (Holland, 2009). Holland notes

how scope can range widely across campus contexts and perhaps that this is influenced by the degree to which the institution already has a decentralized or centralized model for supporting community engagement (supporting service-learning, coordinating campus-community partnerships, engaging students in co-curricular programs of volunteering, etc.). While Gelmon et al. (2005) do not speak to organizational structure specifically, they do state that “community engagement is named as a high profile effort on campus along with other efforts such as: recruiting and retaining minority students, improving teaching effectiveness, establishing community partnerships, conducting community-based research, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, etc.” (p. 4). Giving credence to the role community engagement could and should have in relation to a campus’s strategic plan or goals is useful, but does not illustrate the scope of responsibilities, the necessary partnerships, how the leader is positioned (political, networking, or convening power), or how the work is structured to support the goals of the institution.

### **Environment, Structure, and Institutionalizing Anchor Work**

This section provides perspectives of institutionalization that disrupts higher education towards a more democratic purpose (i.e., accessible, equitable, just, fair, engaged, deliberative, etc.) through anchor work. Institutionalization of initiatives requires certain personalized factors to operate in the internal environment and be valued not for what is produced, but for the values that those operations represent to the institution. These personalized factors and values provide clarity about organizational identity and purpose. They mean, in organic terms, that organizations “are open to their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive” (Morgan, 1997). The external environment or community context must inform the structural-functional perspective of higher education organizations.

Scholars define institutionalization in the literature in different but complementary ways. They describe institutionalization using two distinctive elements. One focuses on rule-like, organized patterns of action and behavior. The other embeds action permanently in the institution without tying that action to specific individuals (Zucker, 1977). For the purposes of this essay, we will focus on changes in organizational design that support and enable innovation and change, thereby influencing policies and procedures that move special projects to a standardized and routine process. Institutionalization, in this conceptualization, is the process that links the structural characteristics of the organization to the shared meanings and values that the organizational culture internalizes (Perrow, 1986; Prentice, 2002; Selznick, 1948; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983). Institutionalization is contingent, then, on the fit or conformity between the layers within the larger context and external environment (i.e. place-based community) in which the organization operates. The study of institutionalization therefore raises questions. How can the organization coordinate its behaviors to facilitate the adoption of new characteristics? How can the organization promote new activities (Jelinek, 1979) to become part of the routine work environment? How can the organization adopt rule-like paradigms of behavior (Zucker, 1987) without being tied to specific individuals or situations?

Kanter (1983) notes that institutionalization is a process that cannot occur in isolated places within an organization. It must touch other parts of the organization and involve the participation of others if it is to gain permanence. Certain integrative actions assist with institutionalization, “weaving the innovation or change initiative into the fabric of the organization’s expected

operations” (Kanter, 1983, p. 300). A similar definition is that institutionalization is change that has reached the point of losing its “special project” status, and it has become “part of the routinized behavior of the institutional system” (Curry, 1992, pp. 9-10). We can think of institutionalization as a point in the process when certain behaviors are expected and assumed in order to achieve desired outcomes across the layers through which the organization operates. We must also remind the reader that cultural influences dominate each level of the organization and therefore processes (Curry, 1992; Schein, 1992; Tierney, 1988).

Here we may distinguish institutionalization from change, a distinction that is critical, despite their very close relationship. Where change is difference or newness, institutionalization is making change last and helping it gain a sense of legitimacy, value, and permanence in an organization. Whether or not change is lasting depends on two factors: the process by which the change itself proceeds, and the leadership to gather support for managing the change process over time. This essay focuses on the structures by which the change itself proceeds and how it is therefore organized or structured within higher education institutions.

To facilitate institutionalization, it is essential that the relevance of ‘the change’ be identified and supported as it relates to areas such as institutional mission, organizational readiness or adaptivity, constituents’ capacities, and access or allocation of other important capital and resources (Kezar, 2002a; Curry, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Kanter, 1983; Kimberly, 1979). Thus, the organization’s purpose, its readiness for change in terms of attitudes and motivation, the ability of its members to understand and absorb the value of change, and the fiscal structures that provide access to resources to support new initiatives are essential elements for sustained change. Change initiatives should not be attempted in isolation but, as Kanter and Curry contend, should focus on creating the ability to identify and develop internal forces and support systems that connect to the process itself.

Internal forces that drive change and innovation come from both vertical and horizontal linkages. According to Dill and Sporn (1995), higher education organizations require structures that nurture innovation, adaptability, and cohesion in order to respond to change. Here we are talking about vertical as opposed to horizontal coordination, and the way these design elements can prevent or facilitate implementation of an innovation (Kanter, 1983). For example, “horizontal linkages [have the ability to] break through structural barriers, collapse psychological distance, and cut through competition among diverse institutional units” (Chickering, 1999, p. 40), promoting incentives for participation and support for change. Successful institutionalization, however, must also require sufficient vertical linkages that intersect with the lateral structures of the organization for new ideas to be accepted, new policies and practices to be tested, and new behaviors to be learned (Chickering, 1999).

If vertical and horizontal linkages are not intentionally thought about, attempts at change will not always be successful. Some campus initiatives remain in a state of limbo without becoming integral to the design, structure(s), and routine assumptions of the organization. They eventually dissipate or disappear. A successfully institutionalized innovation or disruption depends on certain organizational characteristics that influence the shape of change, and how it becomes permanent in the organization (Curry, 1991, 1992). In the rest of this essay, we will first explore anchor work, an innovation that seeks to change and shape an organization such as higher

education, and offer an example from college athletics to illustrate how to think about the vertical design or structural elements necessary to vertically organize higher education institutions.

### **Metaphorically Speaking...How Collegiate Athletics Can Inform the Vertical Structure for Institutionalizing Anchor Work**

The following metaphor is useful for further illustrating what we see as a challenge when institutionalizing anchor work. We hope this metaphor is useful for campuses as they reflect and engage others in a dialogue about how to implement and sustain anchor work. College athletic programs are commonplace, regardless of actual expense to the university, and for good reasons. First, schools can leverage athletics to recruit students. Moreover, hiring coaches capable of nurturing the growth and development of their student athletes is paramount to recruitment efforts and success of the program. Second, athletics contributes to a vibrant campus culture, which fosters a sense of pride, belonging, and loyalty that is unique and engages multiple stakeholders, including the local community. Third, if done well, athletics can generate revenue through sponsorships, donations (aka, boosting), and of course (sporting) event attendance (see Table 1). Given these similarities, we see value in looking at the organizational structure of athletic programs.

Table 1. *Metaphor*

Collegiate Athletics	Anchor Work
Attract students who want to participate in athletics while gaining an education	Attract students who want meaningful, applied learning experiences as part of their education
Hire coaches who can develop student athletes as <u>players</u> <u>and</u> students	Hire faculty who develop students as professionals within their chosen field <u>and</u> their civic-mindedness
Create a sense of belonging and commitment to the local community; foster pride, and loyalty to the institution	Create partnerships within the community; make commitments to the community; foster pride and appreciation for the campus
Generate revenue and encourage participation in campus events	Generate funding to support research, outreach, and engagement; encourage reciprocal partnerships

While the majority of scholars and practitioners involved in anchor work do not normally think in this way, the overlap is undeniable. For example, much like athletics, rich and meaningful anchor work can attract students seeking meaningful learning opportunities. Similar to athletics, which relies heavily upon the leadership and expertise of coaches, we look to our engaged faculty and staff. Likewise, a campus culture that supports anchor work holds great potential to develop a sense of pride and appreciation amongst faculty, staff, and students, but more importantly, amongst members of the community. In addition, if campuses are able to capture the fruits of anchor work, then their policies, courses, research, and initiatives will connect to

issues in the community and to student learning and success, telling a robust story of engagement. We believe anchor institution work and community engagement holds great potential to diversify funding beyond internal grants and external contracts and contribute to our communities in meaningful and lasting ways.

To illustrate, we offer a few examples. If athletics gives the community an aggregated identity and has uniforms, awards, parades, etc., can the anchor institution create that same kind of bonding and allegiance because of the economic development work it does for local businesses? Can it garnish capital, through qualified investment vehicles, from alumni who want to support and invest in employee-owned businesses or permanent affordable housing to protect community members from displacement? Similar to setting goals for a winning record or number of athletes with academic achievements, can an anchor institution set equally powerful goals with the community, such as decreasing poverty by a percentage or increasing participation in healthcare HMOs or census reporting? In general, how can fulfilling the public mission to this extent create a positive feedback loop that translates into quality of life of local residents and strengthen its place in civic partnerships across the state?

### **Implications and Considerations Using the Metaphor**

So, if we understand community engagement and our anchor work to include a broad scope of activities, how does that influence infrastructure, organizational structure, and our strategy? Specifically, how we allocate work (differentiation), coordinate roles and responsibilities (integration), and create and implement a comprehensive vertical strategy for success? We think that examining the various aspects generally included in ‘nationally recognized athletics program’ offers an opportunity to reflect, and ultimately, consider the organizational structure(s) necessary to achieve and normalize our anchor missions and sustain the work of community engagement.

Table 2 identifies roles within athletics and the type of activities or tasks associated with the role. As the metaphor implies, the table includes a similar scope of work or responsibilities for staff/faculty involved in anchor work. It is worth noting that we are not implying the current centers or offices that support community engagement should hire more staff and resources that equate to the positions or seek to amass resources that it takes to run athletic programs. Instead, consider the scope of responsibility and subsequent tasks. We suspect campuses will need to consider relationship-building, informal organizational structures, and aspects of distributed leadership (Liang & Sandmann, 2015) through other entities or people who have similar goals.

Table 2. *Infrastructure and Organizational Structure Metaphor with Athletics*

<b>Job Title, Position, or Activity</b>	<b>Tasks Associated with Athletics</b>	<b>Tasks Associated with Community Engagement/Anchor Institution Initiatives</b>
Awards & Recognitions	Recognize players and coaches who exceed expectations (e.g., community service awards, academic achievements).	<p>Recognize faculty, staff, and students who meet or exceed expectations.</p> <p>Community partner awards and recognitions. Neighborhood awards and grants.</p> <p>Advocate for internal systems, processes, and guidelines that align with best practices (e.g., promotion and tenure policies, annual reporting guidelines that call attention to and acknowledge engagement, IRB protocol).</p>
Communications, Public Relations, & Government Relations	<p>Tell stories of impact to a variety of stakeholders and enhance campus image.</p> <p>Advocate for policies and regulations impacting players, coaches, the league, and the sport.</p>	<p>Disseminate findings that tell a story of impact and how faculty, staff, and students are working to address community issues.</p> <p>Leverage faculty expertise for expert testimony; influence public policy.</p> <p>Work with legislators on issues effecting higher education and our communities.</p>
Compliance Officer (e.g., Title IX policies, equity, diversity, inclusion, legal issues)	<p>Ensure equitable access and participation.</p> <p>Foster interaction with diverse others.</p> <p>Investigate allegations between stakeholders (e.g., between students and coaches)</p>	<p>Examine community engaged activities to ensure equitable access and participation.</p> <p>Ensure community engagement is strategically connected to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (e.g., pipeline programs, recruit underrepresented students and faculty).</p> <p>Advocate for democratic engagement and manage town-gown relationships.</p>
Events Management	Manage logistics associated with events (e.g., parking, tickets, RSVPs, navigating campus, signage, etc.).	Manage logistics of campus-community partnership activities (e.g., parking, public meeting spaces, policies, directions, invitations, marketing).

<b>Job Title, Position, or Activity</b>	<b>Tasks Associated with Athletics</b>	<b>Tasks Associated with Community Engagement/Anchor Institution Initiatives</b>
Development	Active participant in fiscal matters; offer direct support or supplementary information that enhances the financial sustainability of the campus (e.g., sales, sponsorships, purchasing, fundraising, donations, etc.)	<p>Demonstrate and support how anchor institution initiatives can be instrumental in the financial sustainability of the campus and the community (e.g., impact of grants and contracts, capital campaigns, fundraising, etc.).</p> <p>Create alternative strategies for addressing talent gaps (e.g., offer corporate training/technical assistance, entrepreneurship, credentialing programs, etc.)</p> <p>Advocate for institutional commitments related to the community (e.g., Live/Hire/Buy initiatives, local purchasing policies, real estate acquisitions, etc.).</p>
Track, Monitor, and Assess Progress	<p>Monitor student eligibility, enrollment, and scholarship requirements; track student progress toward degree.</p> <p>Respond to requests for information (e.g., student conduct, mid-semester grade reports, alumni, compliance).</p> <p>Document and submit information for NCAA standards (e.g., recruitment policies, evidence).</p> <p>Evaluate satisfaction and success.</p>	<p>Monitor community engaged activities and document how students, faculty, and staff are addressing issues in the community.</p> <p>Respond to requests for information (e.g., student participation in service-learning, hours, engagement by county, service on community boards, etc.)</p> <p>Submit information for awards and accreditation.</p> <p>Set goals, define success; evaluate programs and initiatives and assess progress toward goals.</p>
Facilities, Tours	Manage on-campus spaces, access, and safety (e.g., lighting, security, building maintenance, environmental sustainability).	<p>Manage or support others responsible for on-campus and off-campus educational spaces (e.g., clinics, service-learning sites).</p> <p>Advocate for a welcoming and inviting campus for the community (e.g., museums, theatres, athletic events); campus visits or delegations from other countries, campuses, high school visits.</p>

<b>Job Title, Position, or Activity</b>	<b>Tasks Associated with Athletics</b>	<b>Tasks Associated with Community Engagement/Anchor Institution Initiatives</b>
Training & Risk Management	<p>Training and professional development for staff, administrators, coaches, and students (e.g., work environment issues, harassment, student rights and responsibilities).</p> <p>Ensure policies and procedures are in place to protect others (e.g., background checks, equipment safety, and security).</p>	<p>Oversee the implementation of policies and procedures (e.g., programs involving children, background checks, transportation, etc.).</p> <p>Faculty development programs that support community engaged scholarship and practice</p> <p>Prepare students for engagement with the community.</p>
Student Development & Success	Works directly with students related to academic success (e.g., registration, good academic standing, progress toward degree, mentoring, tutoring, access to support services, leadership).	Develop, implement, or support programs that support student success through community engagement (e.g., service-based scholarship, community work study, co-curricular engagement opportunities, networking, civic learning).

**Leadership**

Table 2 included a wide range of roles, responsibilities, and tasks to assist campuses as they consider how work is allocated and roles and responsibilities are coordinated if the campus is to fully embrace their role as an anchor institutions. However, leadership is worthy of additional consideration. Both athletics and community engagement are increasing their respective leadership appointments at the vice president/chancellor level, with direct reporting lines to the president/chancellor. For athletics, we may observe Oregon State University, University of Louisville, or University of Arizona. For community engagement, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, Duquesne University, University of Pittsburgh, Virginia Commonwealth University, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, or University of Minnesota, are splendid examples. We also note that additional research is needed to explore these positions: job description, staff support, budget, responsibilities, deliverables, etc.

This trend toward executive-level leadership, who have a large portfolio of responsibilities as it relates to anchor work, shows how the strategies to enact a vision of this magnitude is fundamentally connected to priorities, initiatives, and decisions across the vertical structure of higher education and its many other initiatives. These others include diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, student success, recruitment and enrollment strategies, academic affairs, institutional priorities, sustainability, and more. To tie this back into the metaphor - do you hire a leader who is responsible for creating a vision and implementing a strategy (e.g., vice president for athletics/engagement) or someone who has expertise in a predominant area (e.g., basketball or football coach/faculty development)? This becomes even more challenging if you expect them

to work with other units and with people on and off campus (e.g., compliance officer, legislators, recruitment and enrollment). We are suggesting campuses consider what constitutes anchor work taking a broader appreciation for all that is possible and necessary. Then, identify an executive-level leader who understands all aspects of this work and has positional power (e.g., convene, work across academic, administrative, and community silos, political capital, legitimacy in the academy and community).

### **Challenges with the Metaphor**

The challenge, which any leader will face, is creating a vision for why this work is worth the investments, like we invest in athletics, and is able to deliver evidence of success. In the case of athletics, metrics exist and are relatively easy to capture. For example, overall record, rankings within the conference, number of student athletes exceeding academically, hours of service in the community, etc. Metrics are useful for creating and articulating a vision for the work, not to mention measure progress or success. Within community engagement, the metrics are limited to student learning (e.g., number of service-learning courses, number of service hours, number of community partners). Moreover, even those merely indicate what we are measuring, not quality or what success would look like. The work around anchor institution mission has developed the “Anchor Dashboard Metrics,” which is helpful for campuses trying to figure out what to begin tracking and monitoring (Sladek, 2017). The field of community engagement is also building capacity to identify metrics and indicators of success, particularly those that are useful for influencing policies, programs, and practices. We could learn a few things from athletics by setting measurable goals and aligning performance appraisals (i.e., promotion and tenure guidelines) (Norris & Weiss, in press).

The other challenge with this metaphor is that some might assume the goal is to generate additional revenue. After all, many athletic programs are famous for their financial role in higher education, including the privileges that sports teams have received in the way of resources and real estate. We acknowledge this as a limitation or potential for misinterpretation and therefore worthy of clarification. In relation to anchor work, campuses run the risk of privileging certain types over others (e.g., community-engaged research, volunteering, anchor housing, or business centers). However, there are financial considerations for anchor work and most campuses perceive these as ‘costs of doing business’ (e.g., marketing, public relations, sponsorship, etc.) just like we acknowledge that not all sports generate enough revenue to cover costs. While it is difficult to account accurately for the income and costs associated with anchor work, we acknowledge that telling a story of the campus’s anchor work is worth leveraging for development purposes. If campuses embrace their anchor mission and hire an executive-level position to lead this work, some aspects of fundraising will inevitably fall within their scope of responsibilities.

Moreover, while sports have provided access to college for black and brown students, what has been the cost of the university doing business like that? How could the university’s support of the anchor mission influence athletics to create more equitable and inclusive systems? How could universities continue to leverage sports to create a place-based identity that is excited about the value of education and not just athletics? One of the authors of this article is a former college athlete and can testify that not all athletic programs prioritize the sport over an education. In fact,

the majority do not. However, one limitation of this metaphor is that it may create a negative perception of anchor work, depending on one's background and experiences with athletics. We see value in the metaphor and recognize that not all college athletic programs are the same and anchor work varies by institution and context as well.

## **Conclusion**

The institutionalization of community engagement has historically focused on infrastructure, which cannot be dismissed, and in fact, should be recognized for the important role it has played in the history of this work—the dedication of time, edifices, places, people, policies, practices, dollars—visually, rhetorically, and literally. Having a designated place, center, or person has given our campus constituents *and* community members somewhere to go, someone to answer questions, and literally support the work. While we have made it a priority across our engaged campuses, we still know very little about various aspects of operationalizing the infrastructure for community engagement (see Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013), or how it relates to the intended outcomes or 'impact' of this work. Further research is needed, therefore, to better appreciate the role of structure (both vertical and horizontal) as it relates to students' civic learning and democratic engagement; faculty's engaged scholarship; the economic or developmental impacts in our community; and so much more.

Our ability to illustrate the depth and breadth of activities associated with anchor work and how structure should follow strategy through the metaphor of athletics is limited. However, its ability to articulate the vertical factors associated with organizational structure give us much to consider. Again, the historical focus on creating a single, central or centralized place or space indicates by itself that our leaders and units are relatively insular and inner-focused. Institutions of higher education must accept the challenge to take a step back, expand our sights, or more correctly, bring more into our purview, which thereby necessitates greater alignment and higher vertical structures partnered with strong leadership.

The anchor institution initiative, consequently, opens our work, our leaders, our constituents, our resources, and our operationalization of this work into areas of risk, threats, and opportunities that were not (necessarily) there before, or at least did not lie within the purview of community engagement. Moving forward, we are curious and cautiously attentive to how forces of change, both internal (e.g., new leadership, innovative ideas, new initiatives) and external (i.e., accountability, competition, globalization, technology, and legislation), affect infrastructure, structure, and the institutionalization of anchor work now and in the future.

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