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To What End: Measuring Engagement With our Communities

CONTENTS

5 **To What End? Assessing Engagement with Our Communities**
Valerie L. Holton
9 **Inclusive Assessment: Toward a Socially-Just Methodology for Measuring Institution-Wide Engagement**
Guiseppe Getto and Dennis McCunney
25 **A Community-Based Activities Survey: Systematically Determining the Impact on and of Faculty**
Lane Perry, Betty Farmer, David Onder, Benjamin Tanner, and Carol Burton
47 **Deepening the Institutionalization of Service-Learning: The Added Value of Assessing the Social Return of Investment**
Kathleen Stanton-Nichols, Julie Hatcher, and Amanda Cecil
75 **Leveraging Internal Partnerships and Existing Data Infrastructure to Track and Assess Community Engagement across the University**
Valerie L. Holton, Jennifer F. Jettner, Jennifer L. Early, and Kathleen K. Shaw
99 **Measuring Community-University Partnerships across a Complex Research University: Lessons and Findings from a Pilot Enterprise Data Collection Mechanism**
Valerie L. Holton, Jennifer L. Early, Jennifer F. Jettner, and Kathleen K. Shaw
125 **A Centralized Strategy to Collect Comprehensive Institution-wide Data from Faculty and Staff about Community Engagement and Public Service**
Emily M. Janke and Kristin D. Medlin
147 **Tracking Culture: The Meanings of Community Engagement Data Collection in Higher Education**
Howard Rosing
165 **Supporting University-Community Partnerships through Shared Governance and Assessment**
Kelsey Beckett
185 **The Complexities of Community-Based Websites**
Ann Bomberger and Michelle Homan
200 **Coalition Members**

To What End? Assessing Engagement with Our Communities

Valerie L. Holton

Urban and metropolitan universities are integrally connected with their surrounding communities. This is seen in how we teach our students, how we generate new knowledge, and how we value and engage in service. This is also seen in the increasing understanding of the role we play as anchor institutions that can intentionally contribute to the collective capacity of our cities. But how do we know if our efforts are making a positive difference in the lives of our students, employees, and communities?

This issue of *Metropolitan Universities* showcases efforts by colleges and universities to measure some of the effects of their engagement with their communities through teaching, research, and service activities. This collection of articles reveals how institutions of higher education are developing frameworks and tools to aid in this process. The articles were selected for inclusion in this issue for two primary reasons. First, each article contains some evidence of the effectiveness of their approach, as well as identifies the challenges faced. Second, each article reflects approaches that can be applied in other institutions. As the field of institutional research and effectiveness continues to develop, these articles can inform the practice among members of CUMU and similar institutions.

Three themes emerge across the articles. First, the institutions represented here deeply value their engagement with their communities. This is important to understand, particularly when talking about data collection. None of them are seeking to merely collect data, but rather to collect data that will inform their practice, tell their institution's and the community's story, celebrate and recognize successes as well as areas for improvement, and engage in long-term planning that may deepen the impact.

Second, the efforts reflected here are largely driven by offices that focus on engaged activities rather than offices of institutional research. However, institutional researchers and their offices are primarily responsible for the institution-wide data that informs reporting, planning, and decision-making. The scope of institutional researchers is wide, addressing topics associated with admissions, curriculum, enrollment management, student life, and athletics. Given their expertise, reporting responsibilities, and central role in providing information to support university-planning and decision-making, it is worth exploring the connections between institutional research and the community engagement field and offices.

Third, the development of mechanisms that collect systematic campus-wide information on community engagement is challenging because of the multiple constituencies involved and the diversity of models and strategies. Campuses describe efforts to define engaged activities and identify measureable outcomes that make sense across disciplines and in the context of communities, and that can be aggregated meaningfully. But, despite the complexity of the process, all the authors see great value in the effort to identify and assess engagement efforts, whether that rests in the ability to enhance collaborations, improve practices, or deepen the value of engagement across the campus.

Getto and McCunny reflect on the effort at East Carolina University to develop an inclusive assessment methodology in order to meet multifaceted institutional needs and navigate challenges. This methodology seeks to counteract a focus on quantitative approaches by proposing the use of a mixed-method approach that is intended to enhance the role and voice of community partners.

Perry, Farmer, Onder, Tanner, and Burton from Western Carolina University describe the development of a measuring, monitoring, and tracking system for faculty engagement, particularly as it occurs through courses. The paper provides insights into the development and administration of a survey to collect this type of information.

Using the Kecskes (2009) Community-Engaged Department Rubric, Stanton-Nichols, Hatcher, and Cecil evaluate service-learning institutionalization within Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. They propose adding an additional dimension, social return on investment, to help academic leaders understand the benefits of investing in service-learning and more broadly in campus-community partnerships.

Virginia Commonwealth University provides two examples of data collection efforts with an emphasis on using existing data. First, they describe a process of identifying internal partnerships as a way to track and assess community engagement across teaching, research, and service. Holton, Jettner, Early, and Shaw describe the approach, lessons learned, and uses of the data. In the second article, the team at Virginia Commonwealth University reviews the development and implementation of a pilot enterprise data collection process used to identify and describe external partnerships. They highlight findings from the pilot, how the information has been used, and recommendations for future systematic data collection efforts.

Janke and Medlin explain how the University of North Carolina Greensboro has answered the question, “How do I get faculty and staff to record information about their community engagement and public service activities, partnerships, and contributions?” They present insights about who to talk with, questions to prepare for, and conversations that will increase participation from faculty and staff to report their activities annually.

Howard Rosing of DePaul University has contributed an essay to this issue that challenges campuses to be thoughtful and candid about their motivations and aims for gathering data that describes their community partnerships. He makes a strong case for more intentional attention to how we use such data to describe our role in community impacts, which too often may only highlight what seems successful from the campus perspective. Can we learn to use data to critique and improve our work? How can we recognize and honor the contributions of community expertise that clearly benefit our institutions? Do we measure and examine what doesn't work, and why, as well as what goes well?

The final two articles focus on the collection and use of information in efforts involving partnerships.

Beckett describes Towson University's new partnership governance and new partnership support system. This includes a framework of four types of partnerships, their characteristics, evaluation expectations, and the support that will be provided by the university. The article also highlights how the information gathered through this effort supported the institution's response after the 2015 riots in Baltimore City.

As part of a larger focus on community-university partnerships aimed at improving the sustainability and viability of its surrounding community, Gannon University has launched the GreenEriePA.org project, a web portal for environmental efforts in Erie County, Pennsylvania. Bomberger and Homan describe the development and ongoing operations of this community-based website and make recommendations for similar efforts.

In conclusion, most urban and metropolitan universities are working to develop these data collection mechanisms and to create the infrastructure to use this valuable information in university planning and decision-making. This collection of articles advances the national dialogue and serves as guidance for other institutions who are also asking, "To what end?"

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Inclusive Assessment: Toward a Socially-Just Methodology for Measuring Institution-Wide Engagement

Guiseppe Getto and Dennis McCunney

Abstract

Institutions are increasingly being called upon to collect large amounts of data to demonstrate community impact. At institutions with strong and wide-reaching public engagement/service missions, this expectation is even greater – both for quality improvement and for demonstrating regional transformation. Despite these expectations, the decentralized culture of many campuses and lack of external incentives for individual faculty and departments can present significant barriers to telling a complete, representative, institutional story of engagement. This article explores the efforts of one campus to develop an inclusive assessment methodology in order to meet multifaceted institutional needs and navigate challenges. We take into account the particular dynamics of a specific campus culture to develop a process that is unique to the needs and particularities of our institution. At the same time, we hope that this methodology will demonstrate transferability to other institutions.

Public universities are under increasing pressure to justify outreach and engagement efforts through measurable, definable community impacts. At the same time, this call for easily-understood impacts can short-change efforts that involve qualitative, gradual, and harder-to-define outcomes. These qualitative impacts can include the perceptions different community partners have of the institution, the often messy process of partnership building, and the process of brainstorming issues that are of mutual import to both the institution and community members. At best, rushing to create measurable, institution-wide impacts on communities, risks sabotaging long-term, sustainable, reciprocal program development. At worst, it risks alienating community members from engaging in partnerships at all.

Engaged scholars and administrators cannot ignore the culture of austerity that is pervasive within public universities, however. We are expected to do more with less. We are expected to justify our efforts in all realms, not just those related to outreach and engagement. So, measurable, definable community impacts must be collected and reported in a timely manner. In other to meet both these needs – the need for slower, more qualitative assessments of community impacts and the need for quicker, more easily defined impacts – we introduce a methodology we call “inclusive assessment” that seeks to mesh qualitative and quantitative data collection within the same assessment effort in order to ensure inclusivity.

In order to fully explore this methodology, its limitations, and the opportunities it presents for new research into institution-wide engagement efforts, we reflect on our own experiences utilizing inclusive assessment at an engaged university with strong ties to its local community, a university that is also feeling the crunch of austerity. We begin with a literature review of assessment scholarship to identify trends around the development of more flexible, mixed-methods approaches to assessment. Through these trends, we identify key precedents to the methodology of inclusive assessment. We then explicate this methodology and its key tenets. Finally, we demonstrate the viability of this methodology by drawing on our experiences deploying it at our own institution. Our ultimate goal is to provide other scholars and practitioners with best practices for meeting programmatic needs while continuing to thrive in difficult economic times.

Inclusive Assessment: Towards a New Methodology

More and more institutions are being expected to champion a "culture of evidence" around their community engagement efforts. With statewide governing boards and legislative bodies charged with making funding decisions according to campus performance, external pressures that demand accountability are felt on nearly every campus. These pressures seem particularly poignant in statewide systems, as one-size-fits-all models of accountability and performance often create friction when applied to local contexts and campuses (Douglass, Thomson, and Zhao 2012). The evidence being called for can range from impacts on local community health indexes to quantitative measures of student engagement to numbers of community-engaged courses. In "A Scholar-Practitioner Model of Assessment," Erwin and Wise (2002, 68) note that "assessment results are increasingly 'counting' toward institutional funding, state appropriations for higher education, governance, and reputation. In this high stakes environment, the quality and credibility of learning outcome data are becoming more sophisticated and complex."

To complicate things further, there is an ever-widening range of definitions in the field of community engagement. Scholars and historians in the field note that practitioners – both early career and seasoned professionals—must navigate a "sea of definitions" when first engaging in this work (Ikeda, Sandy, and Donahue 2010). While one institution may talk of service-learning and equate it with community-engaged learning, other institutions may talk of civic engagement and the democratic learning outcomes achieved by their students. This lengthy set of terms – understandably dependent on and arising from particular campus cultures – does little to provide a clear path for institutions to tell their own narratives of community impact. Member institutions of the University of North Carolina have engaged in recent dialogue about this challenge. A community and economic engagement report published by the UNC system (University of North Carolina, Office of International, Community, and Economic Engagement 2015) notes that "ongoing conversations continue...about what criteria campuses should use to assess and quantify their ability to engage the community. And while community and public service is now one of the five elements of institutional effectiveness in reaffirmation reports submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) (Standard 3.3.1.5), there is no agreement on how to define, measure, or improve university engagement" (p. 5).

This push for accountability measures has been presented from a quality improvement perspective. The availability of accurate data and accompanying analysis would, naturally, allow institutions to fill gaps in their overall community engagement strategy. As a result of this external call for accountability, many institutions have worked to develop common measures. This has led to some streamlining and efficiency. At the same time, it has encouraged institutions to engage in internal conversations about their own systematic collection of engagement data and the resources they put toward that effort. In 2013, University of North Carolina President Tom Ross challenged campuses to remember their overarching commitment to the people of the state, saying, “Community engagement and economic development are two critically important and closely interconnected strategies through which UNC students, faculty, staff, and alumni contribute to the promotion of vibrant, healthy, sustainable, and safe communities in North Carolina” (University of North Carolina, Office of International, Community, and Economic Engagement 2013, 2).

In order to meet the demands for an increasingly varied and metric-driven reporting system, we introduce a methodology we are calling “inclusive assessment” that seeks to counteract a focus on pure numbers with the use of qualitative engagement data. This informed use of qualitative data can further enable institutions to collaborate with community members. Listening, as scholars in community-engaged research methods know, is a critical foundation for this work, and ensures the inclusion of “issues of identity and difference as a way of helping [engagement participants to] alter their personal and worldviews” (Chesler and Scalera 2000, 19). At the same time, as the Creating Impact in North Carolina…UNC Engagement Report (University of North Carolina, Office of International, Community, and Economic Engagement 2015) recently suggested, “there is no agreement on how to define, measure, or improve university engagement.” Inclusive assessment thus seeks to present a new model for defining the assessment of university-based engagement around three goals:

1. Assessment Goal 1: Formulating Cross-Disciplinary Teams for Assessment
2. Assessment Goal 2: Measuring Activities versus Impacts
3. Assessment Goal 3: Formulating Data Collection Processes in Decentralized Environments

We explore each of these goals extensively below. They were articulated both through our own internal conversations working in a large, public university with deep community roots and through our growing understanding of the needs of scholars at other universities who seek more flexible, adaptable methodologies for conducting assessment.

Though this methodology was developed in the context of creating assessment goals at our own institution, we view these goals as benchmarks for an incipient methodology. By this we mean to indicate that after developing these assessment goals, we realized that meeting them would require a new methodology for assessment community engagement data. As we worked to meet these goals, we thus began to develop inclusive assessment as a means of understanding whether or not we had reached these goals. Having met several of these goals, we now hope that inclusive assessment can be of use to engaged scholars at other universities trying to meet similar goals.

Existing methodologies for assessment within universities are often underpinned by problematic assumptions regarding the relationship between campuses and their local communities and thus warrant the development of new methodologies. Weerts and Sandmann (2008, 74), for instance, tracked the ways in which universities often use a "one-way" model of knowledge creation when engaging communities, a model in which communities are seen as empty vessels to be filled with university-based knowledge. Similarly, D'Arlach, Sánchez, and Feuer (2009, 5) warn that when universities set out to assess their engagement efforts based on university-conceived goals, "community engagement becomes an end for the university and not a mutually agreed upon goal." In a somewhat radical critique of using "scientific measures of success" to benchmark university-based community engagement, Mathieu (2005, xiv) has argued that such approaches assume the "university [as] the controlling institution determining movements and interactions."

In the wake of such strong critiques of university efforts to measure the success of community engagement based on their own scale, inclusive assessment draws heavily on several established methodologies for empirical research that lend themselves to an inclusive, socially-just approach to data collection. Focused ethnography, for instance, attempts to account for the "pluralization [sic] of life-worlds and the enormous specialization [sic] of professional activities [which] demands ever detailed descriptions of people's ways of life and their increasingly specialized [sic] and fragmented activities" (Knoblauch, 2005). An ethnographic approach incorporates "detailed accounts of the concrete experience of life within a particular culture and of the beliefs and social rules that are used as resources within it" (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, 10). Focused ethnography, as differentiated from traditional ethnography, is characterized by the use of "relatively short-term field visits" as opposed to the full immersion common to other varieties of ethnography (Knoblauch 2005). Similarly, inclusive assessment is developed on the premise that total immersion within the contexts being assessed is not always possible, especially at larger universities. Rather than engage in long-term field visits, inclusive assessment seeks to collect contextualized data whenever possible in short-term visits to contexts that are neglected by large-scale assessment approaches.

In this way, another important precedent for inclusive assessment is mixed-methods research, particularly what Creswell (2014, 15) called "convergent parallel mixed methods" research. For Creswell, this is "a form of mixed methods design in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem." Similarly, inclusive assessment seeks to gain a more holistic picture of community outcomes by focusing on team-building across departments, the measuring of specific activities rather than impacts, and the collection of data in environments that don't naturally connect with one another (i.e., university needs for accountability vs. community needs for activities that solve problems). In other words, rather than attempting to adapt our own institutional contexts to the needs of existing research and assessment methodologies, we attempted to adapt existing methodologies to the needs of our context by combining them into a holistic framework.

Finally, this turn from a larger-scale view to a micro-view that attempts to capture the relationship between key engagement metrics (i.e., total hours of engagement, numbers of partnerships, numbers of projects, etc.) and more qualitative means of assessment (i.e., specific outcomes as articulated by both community partners and scholars, student perceptions of engaged teaching, etc.), also draws on qualitative case study methodology (Miles and Huberman 1994; Stake 1995, 2000; Yin 2009). Inclusive assessment seeks to capture and describe a cross-sectional view of assessment data that includes numerical data that meets administrator needs, qualitative data that takes into account community needs, and a focus on the specific context from which all this data arises. By bundling this data into one multi-faceted case, powerful new insights are gleaned without sacrificing rigor and institutional outcomes. Below we present our own institutional context to demonstrate the need for such a methodology and to provide a limited case for the development of this methodology.

Institutional Context

Our campus has a long history of serving and engaging with the local community. Originally a teacher-training school in North Carolina, the institution grew up out of its local community and has striven to not forget its roots. Indeed, the school touts its commitment to public service and regional transformation at almost every turn – in strategic planning documents, in mission statements, and in official university communications. There is also significant evidence that this commitment goes beyond talk, however. Many faculty engage in community-based research projects. Students regularly serve the local community through co-curricular volunteer activities, often contributing more than one hundred thousand hours to the community per year. And community outreach activities – from summer camps to literacy programs to nutrition education programs – fill university calendars.

This culture of community engagement centers around the notion of "servire," the university's long-standing term to describe its mission which translates as "to serve." Official publications describe this commitment to public service as "ECU faculty, staff, and students working to improve communities in North Carolina and beyond. Our students, faculty, staff, and senior leaders all are integral parts of our community, and our community is an integral part of who we are at ECU" (East Carolina University n.d.). This notion of campus and community being inextricably linked – and being integral to one another – creates a unique environment on campus. As such, the institution – by definition – cannot do its work if it is not engaged with and listening to its community. While there are inherent power differences between a large institution and a small, rural community, both institutional efforts to stay true to its mission and community pride help maintain a healthy partnership.

Much of our work on campus also involves a deep awareness of place and historical context. According to Wilkinson (1990, 75), "our species thrives on the subtle, intangible, but soul-deep mix of landscape, smells, sounds, history, neighbors, and friends that constitute a place. An ethic of place respects equally the people of a region and the land, animals, vegetation, water and air." In rural areas in particular, or in any community where the power differential between campus and community is pronounced, community engagement mandates that university administrators, faculty, and students recognize the importance of place to community stakeholders. At our institution, we have explored ways to use the concept of place to collaborate with our local rural community in a variety of ways.

This place-based awareness stems from two sources in our view. First, because the university speaks regularly of striving to live out its mission of service, that mission becomes less of an externally imposed mandate and more of an intrinsic identifier for the campus community. As the university chancellor states often in passing, "Community engagement and service are in our DNA on this campus." When describing the culture and overall feel of the campus, many make mention of its connection to the community and region. Second, the location of the university in a historically poor and marginalized region of the state makes the overall need for intentional sharing of university resources much greater.

Specifically, because our institution's place-based service happens in a largely rural setting, relationships between faculty, students, administration, and community partners are fostered and nourished with this context in mind. The twenty-six counties in Eastern North Carolina have historically been some of the poorest counties in the entire state. Thus, the need for strong, sustained partnerships that have identifiable outcomes and impacts in the community is a necessity. The university is the largest institution of higher learning in the region. Thus, there is the recognition that not only is community engagement built into the fabric of the institution, but there are limited resources already coming into the community. Greater responsibility is placed on the institution to be responsive to the community and its needs.

Assessment Goal 1: Formulating Cross-Disciplinary Teams for Assessment

Much can be said for institutions that figure out how to work across so-called "silos," particularly when it comes to institution-wide assessment. Being able to articulate a campus' engagement narrative based on a seamless and efficient data collection system and subsequent analysis can be a daunting challenge. But many campuses take up this challenge with the hope of achieving this goal. A key part of this challenge seems to be the overall level of receptivity to collaboration and partnership with participants. That is, campus stakeholders must be able to see how their assessment work not only benefits their individual units, but also the institution as a whole. Seeking and articulating shared purpose and common goals are significant challenges and opportunities. This means that when assessment is done in an atmosphere of support and mutual encouragement, individuals can approach the work as a team. Noted assessment scholar and author Trudy Banta praises this kind of approach, saying "Assessment is most effective when undertaken in an environment that is receptive, supportive, and enabling" (Banta 2002, 62). Our team-building efforts tried to keep this in mind as we built a cross-disciplinary team for assessing community engagement efforts. Our institution undertook the challenge to build an assessment team based on both accountability and support.

At the invitation of our statewide Campus Compact office, a group of engagement leaders on our campus convened to attempt to develop this team. Campus Compact served as the initiating body for this work, having invited groups of institutional teams over the past few years to engage institution-wide assessment work. Presented as a type of professional development activity for engagement leaders on campus, the initiative promised to provide guidance, support, and direction for each campus enrolled in the cohort for the initiative. Further, the initiative brought together leaders from other institutions across the state, helping to continue to build a network of statewide engagement in higher education.

Leaders from our assessment office, health sciences campus, student affairs, chancellor's community relations staff, and others were invited to join the team. These individuals were chosen so that a broad spectrum of university representatives would engage in the discussion. This group ranged from senior administrators responsible for school or divisional assessment reporting to institutional research staff to departmental representatives charged with "on the ground" assessment. As such, our evolving cross-disciplinary assessment team began the process by developing a project charter to clarify our aims. This charter was articulated in a bold manner. The charter reads:

In an effort to support the mission of the university – 'to be a national model for student success, public service, and regional transformation'—the objective of the Measuring and Monitoring Community Engagement (MMCE) project is to successfully institutionalize a comprehensive measuring and monitoring system that will document ongoing initiatives and their impact across the university and communities of North Carolina and beyond. MMCE will also afford the university systematic processes for capturing, analyzing, evaluating, and disseminating community engagement data to inform and guide our decisions. Reliable, valid, and accessible data will increase the university's capability to more efficiently redirect institutional resources in an effort to respond to rapidly changing public and regional needs. Additionally, MMCE will allow the university to capture an institutional narrative of public service activities.

Much of the work of this group centered around identifying current data collection processes – annual outcomes assessment for units across campus, engaged research activities by individual faculty, and engagement metrics requested by statewide reporting systems. Somewhat surprisingly, many of the individuals around the table were unaware of the extensive nature of our data collection across campus. Similarly, many were unaware about just how these data had been used for either internal improvement or external reporting. The team-based approach allowed stakeholders from different divisions and reporting areas within the university to come together, to understand each other's work, and to attempt to determine how to best use the vast array of data being collected. Our goal was to move away from assessment as accumulating a "repository of information" to assessment as "thoughtful and structured change and improvement." Ultimately, we challenged ourselves to understand the mantra of "the mission is my mission."

There is precedent for this type of team-based approach, particularly within decentralized campus environments. Arcario and others (2013, 22) suggest that “the creation of a strong faculty-led assessment leadership team who are committed to an on-going process of thinking and rethinking the outcomes assessment approach” is critically important for each campus. Thus, not only should the outcomes assessment process be continually evaluated, but the broader engagement assessment process should also be continually critiqued. Our team-based working group attempted to do just that – identify current data collection and make thoughtful recommendations for how these data could be used to tell key parts of the institution’s story about its connection to the community. One important next step in this team-based process will be to include community partner voices. Only internal campus stakeholders directed the work for this first iteration. Community voices will help to further ground this process and provide important perspective.

Assessment Goal 2: Measuring Activities versus Impacts

Over the past several years, institutions have been expected to report engagement metrics. Many universities collect student community service hours that serve as useful data for internal reporting and messaging. These hours and accompanying information on student placements within the community can provide interesting insight into trends in student engagement. Moreover, there are a number of third-party data collection systems that allow universities to easily track their students’ engagement hours in the community. These systems allow for reporting on types of social issues in which students take action and total numbers of students who are self-reporting those hours as well as providing a snapshot of hours contributed to local community partner agencies.

While the collection of these quantitative data can offer interesting information about student involvement, some questions exist about the overall usefulness of these data. Further, there is lack of rigorous agreement at the highest levels of reporting on key definitions and concepts. The Creating Impact…UNC Engagement Report (University of North Carolina, Office of International, Community, and Economic Engagement 2015) suggests that:

> we know that the majority of our campuses have been designated ‘engaged universities’ under criteria developed by the Carnegie Foundation and a majority of our campuses have been named to the ‘honor roll’ of the national President’s Higher Education Community Service based on a different set of ‘engagement’ criteria. Ongoing conversations continue at meetings of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities about what criteria campuses should use to assess and quantify their ability to engage the community. And while community and public service is now one of the five elements of institutional effectiveness in reaffirmation reports submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) (Standard 3.3.1.5), there is no agreement on how to define, measure, or improve university engagement (p. 5).

With a multitude of criteria at the national level, campuses are pulled in different directions when it comes to deciding how to dedicate assessment resources.

At large institutions, there are also inherent flaws in collection and reporting when data are largely self-reported. Mechanisms exist to verify student participation in community engagement activities, but these mechanisms are never without error. Therefore, these engagement hours only tell part of the story of student engagement. For the most part, they offer a surface-level view of student involvement and activities.

Our inclusive assessment strategy, then, takes into account this push for collecting and reporting on these metrics, but attempts to diversify this data with qualitative accounts. We couple these broad assessment and reporting measures with smaller, more focused efforts. For example, our institution has begun to collect narratives of community impact to highlight some of the qualitative aspects of student engagement. These narratives are sometimes used for larger external reporting. We have also used these narratives for internal "annual report" functions as well as institution-wide divisional reporting. These narratives are frequently used to highlight how we are working toward achieving objectives stated in our strategic plan. Our next step is to find ways to catalog these narratives for easy access. Unfortunately, with multiple internal reporting and data repositories – from assessment data warehouses to faculty performance portfolios to student engagement tracking systems – this goal is not without its challenges.

Further, qualitative understandings of data we collect on student service hours show what students learn from their experiences. We have developed an observation protocol to guide our assessment efforts for large-scale "days of service" activities. These observations are designed to capture data that might go unnoticed and unreported if only quantitative measures were used. For example, students might report on a survey instrument that their overall commitment to community was enhanced as a result of the experience of service. They also might report that they have a greater sense of citizenship, largely because of the interactions they had with local community. To add to this picture, observation data – collected by trained students – might describe actual student interactions with community leaders. These qualitative data show students asking questions, listening intently. Other data might describe student body language during the experience. While the students might seem comfortable around their peers and working in small groups (as one would expect of first-year students), observation data might tell us that their interactions with unfamiliar contexts in the local community brought discomfort.

To further add to the overall picture of this experience, student leaders are asked to collect student responses to reflection questions. During the service experience and shortly afterward, student leaders engage other student participants in a guided conversation. These conversations attempt to summarize student experiences – to let them voice their individualized "lessons learned" – with the goal of each student listening carefully to each other. Once students are finished talking about their experiences, they aggregate their shared experiences into common themes. A closing activity with all participants – also led by day-of-service student leaders – involves each small group sharing their compiled lessons learned and take-away themes. These themes are then used to draft an assessment report about the overall day. Student Affairs educators review the student reflections and select key quotes to share with community partners. Again, these themes are compared with compiled survey data from an online assessment instrument.

Other examples come out of our alternative break programming within our Division of Student Affairs. While each student is expected to complete a "service experiences survey" both before and after their travels, other qualitative measures are also employed. Using a model borrowed from National Public Radio's "This I Believe" program, students participate in a closing reflection activity once they return from their trip. After collectively reviewing their reflection notes and daily journal activities, the student participants attempt to summarize their experience in a "now what?" framing. That is, as a group, the students make a statement about what they experience, what they learned about the community and/or particular community and social issues, and what they believe moving forward. In a sense, the exercise encourages students to make their commitment more concrete and sustainable. They state it publicly for other students, faculty, and administrators to hear at a closing ceremony for the program. This closing program provides a forum for students to articulate a public statement about their learning where they make a firm commitment to the community from which they learned.

All of these assessment methods seek to paint a fuller picture of student learning through service. Thus, while challenges exist about how service experiences and community engagement work can be categorized and classified, these diverse assessment measures are intended to provide a more holistic view. Further, they can help provide a solid grounding for critiques against assessment efforts that only describe activities. While description of activity is important, this more holistic approach helps to further elucidate impact on students. Additionally, the assessment results – and the process of generating and collecting them in public forums – allows students to hear about the learnings of other students directly. This can be a powerful exercise and enables students to teach each other about their experiences. Thus, the assessment effort serves a twofold purpose: collecting program data for quality improvement and providing summative, public experiences for students to educate one another.

Assessment Goal 3: Formulating Data Collection Processes in Decentralized Environments

Our third goal emerges as both an achievement and a work in progress. Our hope is that we will continue to refine this goal as we develop staff – both professional and student – capacity in program assessment. One of the significant challenges related to the assessment of engagement work is that there are a variety of assessment "champions." These champions do good work on campus and are committed to both ongoing quality improvement of their work and telling an important public service narrative. Yet, these individuals are located within different divisions, schools, and departments. With different reporting structures, position responsibilities, and spheres of influence, these individuals could very easily work in isolation within their respective areas. Our engagement assessment team seemed to understand this challenge from the start. Thus, our strategy involved identifying resources and assets at our ready disposal.

Those identified assets certainly included student leaders who are regularly engaged in community engagement work. They take seriously the programs they oversee, often infusing passion into them that no professional staff member could offer. Many of those who are best poised to lead this assessment work are student staff members and student leaders. But student participants in community engagement programs can also add to the institution's public service narrative as well. These students often carry remarkable stories of transformation, partnership with community agencies, and initiatives on specific social issues. Our work involves making sure that these powerful student stories are heard and promoted.

We took as our lead some of the outreach and process-building work that was done for our institution's Carnegie Community Engagement Classification application. In reflecting on one campus' efforts, assessment leader Zuiches (2008, 44) suggested that it is important to "reach out to leaders in units on campus where programs are conducted and records are kept – a vital prerequisite on a decentralized campus. Whenever possible, make the request in person. Describe your need or word the survey instrument you use in campus-vernacular terms instead of the language of the Carnegie framework." Because our campus had worked diligently to collect useful information for the Carnegie classification in 2008, and subsequent re-appointment in 2015, we sought to build on the culture of assessment that was created through that process.

What emerged was a renewed conversation about recognition and rewards for engaged faculty. A few empirical studies have been conducted into the work of civic engagement within the university and the specific role faculty play in this work (Dey 2009; Ellison and Eatman 2008; O'Meara 2012; Ward et al. 2013). The focus of this literature has been describing and making intelligible how faculty contribute to civic engagement through their main activities (e.g., teaching, research, and service). Of these studies, none have focused specifically on early career faculty, however, and the way these professionals develop identities as researchers vis-a-vis the scholarship of engagement. Instead, the focus has been on establishing structures of inclusion for conducting civic work across disciplines, largely by describing successful examples of this work across a wide variety of disciplines.

One of the most robust examples of this descriptive scholarship is Ellison and Eatman (2008, iv), who interviewed dozens of faculty at a variety of career stages across disciplines ranging from the visual arts to education. In their own words, their aim is to "propose concrete ways to remove obstacles to academic work carried out for and/or with the public by giving such work full standing as scholarship, research, or artistic creation." Specifically, they seek to describe the work of engaged faculty across four "continuums" (2008, ix):

- a continuum of scholarship within which academic public engagement has full and equal standing;

- a continuum of scholarly and creative artifacts;
- a continuum of professional pathways for faculty, including the choice to be a civic professional; and
- a continuum of actions for institutional change.

Their goal in describing these continuums is to map the many ways in which faculty create knowledge that is useful to partners beyond the university.

Ultimately, our efforts challenged us to further the work of scholars such as Ellison and Eatman (2008, ix) and others by more fully describing how stakeholders involved in community engagement deal with a variety of "conditions of knowledge." In other words, we wish to understand how conditions within universities both influence, and are influenced by, engaged knowledge-making. We posit that these conditions of knowledge are affected and influenced by a variety of cultural factors within individual academic disciplines and units. Perceptions of engaged and public forms of scholarship, particular emphases articulated by accrediting bodies, agendas and perspectives promoted by departmental leaders, and key thought leaders within fields – to name only a few – are all potential influences that impact one's identity as an engaged scholar. Further, by focusing on disciplines beyond the humanities and social sciences (e.g., the health sciences), our assessment work hopes to add a more inclusive scope to the work of engagement.

These various efforts at building a system of data collection processes in a decentralized environment – from valuing the unique contributions of student leaders and participants in the assessment process, to building on previously established work patterns, to using this process to encourage us to think about the many ways faculty assess their engagement work – now have positioned us well. We are able to see with more clarity the gaps that exist on our campus and opportunities that may have not been capitalized upon previously. As the saying goes, "the destination is the journey." This journey of building campus-wide networks to streamline data collection and analysis has shown us what next steps we might take in our journey toward inclusive assessment.

Conclusion

More than anything, we hope to further a conversation regarding holistic, inclusive approaches to the assessment of university engagement projects. We invite fellow researchers and practitioners of engaged scholarship, teaching, and service to try out, critique, and help refine the methodology we are calling inclusive assessment. This methodology is simply an outcome of our own struggles to assess engagement in a manner that is fair to all stakeholders involved, including community members. It is also an outcome of our attention to the exciting engaged research happening at universities around the world.

We hope to follow up this article with a case study that explores our methodology and its limitations within the scope of a specific engagement project and its attendant outcomes. Our goal in this follow-up study will be to assess the strengths and limitations of inclusive assessment as an empirical model for producing research findings as well as assessment outcomes. This new goal will undoubtedly cause us to reassess (pun intended) this model and its validity in a research context. Some questions we hope to answer in this inquiry will include: What are the limitations of this model as a research methodology? Can inclusive assessment as inclusive research produce outcomes for both scholars and local stakeholders? What needs to shift in our approach for this to happen?

We present this next step here in hopes that other scholars will try out this methodology in various contexts as a tool for research, assessment, or both, and will create their own outcomes and inclusive models. As we develop this methodology within our own institutional context, we are very curious if it will be useful in other contexts, and if not, why? Ultimately, whatever context fellow engaged scholars are operating in, we hope inclusive assessment will help them think about how to respond to institutional pressures without sacrificing the needs of community members. Such an aim calls for more robust models for assessment and research that are flexible and socially just.

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A Community-Based Activities Survey: Systematically Determining the Impact on and of Faculty

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Abstract

As a descriptive case study from Western Carolina University (WCU), this article describes the development of a measuring, monitoring, and tracking system (the WCU Community-based Activities Survey) for faculty engagement in, adoption of, and impact through community engagement practices both internal and external to their courses. This paper will outline the process for developing and refining the WCU Community-based Activities Survey and will highlight the goals and perspectives that informed the survey design, the approach to administering the survey across the institution, and approaches for generating buy-in from and recognition for faculty. Clearly, an essential element in the equation of institutionalized community engagement is the professoriate, and faculty assessment of mutually beneficial outcomes is imperative. Finally, this paper identifies the transferable lessons learned through the development, distribution, and assessment processes associated with this case and offers both the process and survey as resources to the field of community engagement and service-learning.

This article, a descriptive case study of Western Carolina University (WCU), focuses on the development of a measuring, monitoring, and tracking system for faculty engagement in and impact through community engagement practices both internal and external to their courses. This survey is called the WCU Community-based Activities Survey. As a Carnegie Community Engaged classified university (2008, original classification; 2015, reaffirmation), the concepts, practices, and mechanisms for measuring community engagement are pervasive across the institution. These practices and mechanisms include systems for obtaining a clearer picture of the impact on the community and partners, the institution, students, and faculty. The focus of this article is not necessarily on the development of faculty in the practice of community engagement as much as it is the involvement and inclusion of faculty in the measuring, monitoring, tracking, assessing, and evaluating of the practices and impacts of community engagement work within an institution. When it comes to institutional adoption of community engagement practices, Boyer (1990) identified faculty priorities in academic pursuits (e.g., teaching, scholarship and research, service, and engagement) as being essential for producing a greater spectrum of approaches and an improved awareness and reaction to the needs of society.

An essential element in the equation of institutionalized community engagement is the professoriate (Ward 1996). Considering that an institution's faculty is such a large, productive, and integral variable of this equation, it is essential to know where and to what extent engagement is occurring across faculty members and their home departments, colleges, and whole institutions. While the practice and implementation of community-engaged pedagogies are pervasive at WCU, an organized, systematic approach for the measurement and monitoring of those practices was not customary until the 2010-2011 academic year. Since then, great strides have been made to foster a culture that values the importance of the measuring, monitoring, and tracking of community engagement specifically from a faculty perspective.

Initially, an overview of the institution's mission, vision, core values, and strategic directions as they align with the conceptualization of community engagement will be addressed. Following this, literature pertaining to motivations of faculty and the underpinnings of community engagement assessment will be discussed. The WCU case will describe the theoretical underpinnings associated with the measuring and monitoring of impact and address the process for soliciting and incentivizing faculty participation. A description of how the survey was designed and the process that was implemented at WCU will be presented and transferable recommendations will be identified. This article will address one faculty-centered approach to information collection that has helped in the following ways:

- created an evidence-based standard or baseline of faculty engagement,
- prompted the development of a recognition program for determining and sharing exemplar practices/cases,
- established a database valuable for future interdisciplinary collaboration, public relations, reporting, and storytelling, and,
- framed much of the engagement work across campus in a clearer more well-defined context.

Institutional Context and Framing a Community-Engaged Institution

To begin, a clear conceptualization of what is meant by the term community engagement must be identified. Since WCU is a Carnegie community-engaged classified institution, it is appropriate to frame community engagement through the following definition from the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification description.

> "Community engagement describes collaboration between 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. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good."

Juxtaposing this definition with the relevant components of the WCU Vision 2020 strategic plan demonstrates a clear connection between the university's purpose, goals, and vision and the key components of community engagement being supported specifically through the Carnegie application foundational indicator of 'Institutional Identity and Culture.' The cornerstone of WCU's Vision 2020 (Western Carolina University 2012, 3) strategic plan is formed by the institution's mission and vision.

> WCU Mission: To improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in our region, state, and nation through engaged learning opportunities in our academic programs, educational outreach, research, and creative and cultural activities.
>
> WCU Vision Statement: To be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university.

In the foundational indicator of 'Institutional Identity and Culture,' an institution's mission and vision statement, strategic plan, and accreditation/reaffirmation documentation are identified as integral foundational imperatives (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2015). Driscoll (2014) found that of the 120 institutions classified as community engaged in 2008, 119 of them had an explicit connection between community engagement and their strategic plan. Moreover, "in most cases, community engagement represents a substantive component of the plan with descriptions of an increase/expansion/enhancement of community engagement activities; particular emphasis for community engagement such as economic development, sustainability, and education; and/or support for increased faculty development and participation in community engagement" (Driscoll 2014, 6). WCU's strategic plan (Western Carolina University 2012) aligns with each of these descriptions (Driscoll 2014) and serves as a fertile soil for cultivating an environment conducive for community engagement (see Table 1).

Table 1. Aligning WCU's Strategic Plan with Community Engagement Best Practices

Driscoll Descriptions
Community engagement represents a substantive component of the strategic plan with descriptions of…
"… an increase/expansion/enhancement of community engagement activities;…"
"… a particular emphasis for community engagement such as economic development, sustainability, and education;…"
"… and/or support for increased faculty development and participation in community engagement…"
WCU Vision 2020 Strategic Plan
Goal 1.1: Deliver high-quality academic programs designed to promote regional economic and community development.

Goal 1.3: Ensure that all programs included cross-curricula, experiential, applied, and international/global awareness opportunities for all students.

Goal 1.1: Deliver high-quality academic programs designed to promote regional economic and community development (key curricular focus areas – creative arts, education, environment, health, innovation and technology, and recreation and tourism).

Goal 3.2: Position the university as a key leader in regional economic and community development efforts.

Goal 3.3: Align internal processes and reward systems to foster external engagement.

A clear connection between community engagement and the mission of an institution is imperative. Holland (1997, 9) recognized that many of the challenges experienced within institutions pursuing a formalized approach to community engagement were "linked to real or perceived misalignments of the campus mission and institutional actions regarding service." These particular misperceptions, of which a lack of institutionally supported discussion and dialogue was cited as the most influential, led to confusion and "engagement anxiety," and seemed to inhibit a more extensive and committed development of community-engaged practices across campus. Stated more explicitly, "campuses with the most success in achieving their plans are those in which the plan is congruent with a broadly understood and accepted mission, and is articulated in the language of the campus" (Campus Compact 1996, 6). Additionally, Holland (1997) characterizes the highest level of integration of the mission as when "service is seen as a central and defining characteristic" for the university. According to Driscoll (2008, 39), to be identified as a Carnegie community-engaged institution, an applicant must demonstrate that its mission communicates "that community engagement is a priority."

The importance of campus-based support is clear, but it seems that a lesser degree of focus has been put on the influence of wider institutional systems on community engagement at member campuses. WCU is one of seventeen University of North Carolina system institutions. As a member of the UNC system, each campus is responsible for operationalizing the UNC strategic plan, "Our Time, Our Future." This document calls for an annual engagement report and community engagement is a key focus of the strategic plan and the annual report. The primary focus of this report is to identify the myriad ways that "UNC campuses, students, and faculty are connected to and engaged with local/regional community partners via experiential courses and initiatives, research, and public service" (University of North Carolina n.d.). This report is based on data submitted annually through the UNC Economic and Community Engagement Metrics system (UNCEM). Of particular value was the UNCEM's delineation between community-*based* and community-*engaged* academic learning. Simply stated, community-*based* is defined "broadly to include any type of course in which students are asked to work with community partners and/or in the community context" (Janke et al. 2013, 2). The community-*engaged* definition is explicitly aligned with the Carnegie definition presented previously. The emphasis on the measuring, monitoring, and tracking of community engagement at the UNC system-level demonstrates that it is a priority. For UNC member institutions, not only is it a priority to implement community-engaged practices, but to measure and monitor them.

These perspectives were pertinent to the value placed on the measurement and monitoring of faculty community engagement at WCU. The process of measuring and monitoring community engagement approaches has an inherent way of determining what is defined as community engagement. The mechanisms developed have a capacity for operationalizing and refining what is really meant when an institution claims to be community-engaged. We measure and monitor what matters most. In order to measure and monitor this phenomenon as an institution, what matters most must be determined and this juncture dictates when the true meaning of community engagement begins to take shape for each institution.

Faculty Motivation for Adoption of Community Engagement Practices

Recently, the body of empirical research on faculty motivation for the adoption of community engagement has been framed through three lenses similar to Astin's (1993) input-environment-output (IEO) model. These modified lenses – individual factors, institutional factors, and environmental factors – are codified in this article as the individual-institutional-environmental (IIE) model (O'Meara 2013). These three factors serve as a frame for understanding the starting point for motivation and involvement of faculty in community-engaged activities. While the individual factors (e.g., gender) and environmental factors (e.g., disciplinary-based paradigms and epistemologies) are difficult or, in some cases, impossible to influence, the institutional factors (e.g., recognition/rewards) that incentivize or encourage faculty adoption of community-based activities and engagement can be heavily shaped and influenced by policy, strategic plans (mission and vision), and leadership.

If a key motivation for faculty is influenced by recognition and rewards systems (Gelmon et al. 2001), then it is important that an institution knows and understands where community engagement is occurring (and occurring well) on its campus. This approach can help promote a broader awareness of best practices, identify areas for improvement, clarify the goals and expectations of what community engagement looks like in practice (Holland 2013), and provide high-quality assessments that can support institutions' prudent investment into community engagement activities (Waters and Anderson-Lain 2014). A key factor in fostering a culture for community engagement is faculty members' perceptions of the rewards associated with this practice.

Approaches to Measuring and Monitoring Community Engagement within the Faculty

There has been a clarion call for more robust and, specifically, quantitative data collection mechanisms. Mechanisms which can generate data that are comparable across institutions and that could contribute to "generalizations about practice, theory, and policy" within the field of community engagement (Waters and Anderson-Lain 2014, 90). Additionally, due to many compounding factors contributing to the understanding of community engagement and its impact, this area has consistently received greater attention over the past decade (see Table 2).

Table 2. Contextual Examples of Various Approaches to the Measurement and Monitoring of Community Engagement

Demonstrating Resource/Organization	Context	Citation
Carnegie Community Engagement Classification	National	Driscoll 2014
Campus Compact	National & Regional	Waters and Anderson-Lain 2014
University of North Carolina-General Administration Community & Economic Engagement Metrics	State (North Carolina)	Janke et al. 2013
Community Engagement Highlights - Western Carolina University	Institution	Farmer et al. 2014

Compare this to the concern offered by Van Note Chism, Palmer, and Price (2013, 208) that "particularly within the arena of assessing the impact of faculty development, both general faculty development studies and those on service-learning have used relatively informal methods, such as faculty satisfaction questionnaires, or have focused on issues other than authentic evidence of faculty growth and the processes that facilitate it," and it is clear that more robust assessment mechanisms are necessary. This conclusion creates a situation that calls upon an approach that does not simply measure satisfaction of faculty in their community engagement endeavors, but seeks to include them as assessors of the impact, educational value, and personal significance associated with community engagement and its systematic measurement across campus.

Additional concern is demonstrated in a review of 121 Campus Compact member institutions' online surveys being utilized to evaluate service-learning impacts for students, faculty, and community partners, where Waters and Anderson-Lain (2014) concluded that the concepts of "professional development" and "impact/influence of scholarship" were not found in this review of surveys. The WCU Community-based Activities Survey design can mitigate this specific gap and in conjunction apply Gelmon and others' (2001) assessment matrix for faculty surveys (Gelmon and others' 2001 matrix in connection with Holland's 1997 matrix will be reviewed in the following section as integral elements/resources in the development of the WCU Community-based Activities Survey).

When it comes to measuring and monitoring community engagement, Holland (2013) offers the following pragmatic practices to consider when developing appropriate mechanisms:

- Focused – Trim and Fit to Purpose
- Reinforcement of
  - institutional goals and strategies
  - external goals and strategies
  - any plans or principles associated with engagement

- Educational and Developmental
  - reinforce best practice
  - encourage reflective practice
- Useful – Internal and External Reporting
- Linked to rewards, recognition, visibility, planning, and funding

These specific factors offered by Holland (2013), among others, have been considered in the development (and modification) of the WCU Community-based Activities Survey.

The WCU mechanism sought to "go beyond counts of participation…[or] satisfactions" (Van Note Chism, Palmer, and Price 2013, 201) and to make a connection between a specific course; the clarity in course design and connection to established community-engaged pedagogy criteria; the associated benefits to the community and students; and the level of internal, external, and professional development support provided an individual faculty member. The process, underpinnings, and decision strategies that were made to develop the WCU Community-based Activities Survey will be discussed in the next section.

In conclusion, if community engagement is to become and *remain* a part of an institution's culture, then it is imperative that effective measuring and monitoring practices are also adopted. When it comes to this type of information there is perhaps no other constituent group than faculty with as much stock and voice in community engagement's pervasiveness, adoption, application, and ultimately impact in practice.

A Case Description: Developing, Administering, and Evaluating the WCU Community-based Activities Survey

This section outlines the process for organizing and structuring the WCU Community-based Activities Survey and demonstrates the special emphasis placed on establishing goals that informed the survey design, the approach to administering the survey across the institutions, and approaches for generating buy-in from faculty.

Goal of the Survey

The overall goal of WCU's Community-based Activities Survey project was to obtain a more complete picture of the institution's engagement efforts in support of its vision "to be a national model for student learning and engagement that embraces its responsibilities as a regionally engaged university." While community engagement is the highest standard of partnership, this survey sought to capture all community-based activities occurring within WCU's faculty with the intent to determine which are classified as community-engaged. The survey results provided essential data for WCU's 2014 Carnegie Community Engagement Re-Affirmation application and the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 UNCEM reports. The UNC system now requires its seventeen constituent members to complete annually the UNCEM survey which assesses the UNC system's "collective progress in community engagement and economic development." Additionally, specific findings from the survey have been disseminated among both internal and external audiences to increase awareness of WCU's strong community engagement profile.

How the Survey Was Developed

An interdisciplinary team composed of both faculty and administrators was charged with developing and implementing the WCU Community-based Activities Survey, analyzing the results, and sharing the findings. The team included a faculty member serving in the newly created position of provost fellow for engagement, the director of the Center for Service Learning, the director of assessment, and the associate provost of undergraduate studies. Each team member's perspectives and skill sets contributed significantly to the success of the project and serves as a powerful example of the advantages of interdisciplinary and faculty/staff collaboration. Support was provided from the Office of the Provost, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and The Office of Assessment. The faculty fellow for engagement received either a one-course release or a stipend per semester. While the primary focus for this position initially was to lead WCU's Carnegie community engagement re-classification effort, helping create and manage the Community-based Activities Survey was part of that process.

As is good form for any research project, the team started by reviewing existing literature on measuring and monitoring community engagement. The team also identified and reviewed several other universities' surveys related to faculty community engagement. The team's next order of business was to heed the advice of Hanover Research (2011, 6) offered: "Clearly defining 'community engagement' and specifying in detail what types of activities will be accounted for is essential to accurate data gathering and reporting." This enabled the team to craft survey items that essentially underpin the conceptualization of community engagement.

The WCU Community-based Activities Survey utilized the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's definition for community engagement (highlighted previously). WCU sought to track the range of teaching/learning and scholarly activities occurring under this umbrella definition, but also wanted to identify a "gold standard" or Stage IV of community engagement specifically tied to the curriculum (see Figure 1 and the listed criteria for description of what this stage includes). At the heart of the Carnegie Foundation's definition of community engagement is the idea of mutual benefits and reciprocity for both university members and community partners. Consequently, WCU sought to measure whether faculty members believed their community-based activities were resulting in benefits for both their students and their community partners, as well as for their own scholarship and learning. Figure 1 seeks to break down each aspect of the definition of community engagement and from each individual's responses determine at what stage each of their courses align (note: a separate survey of community partners and students served to help better understand this perceived benefit).

Each faculty member received a specialized link to the survey that presented the courses they had taught during the semesters they were responding. At that point in the survey respondents were provided the opportunity to select the radio button that indicated each course's alignment with the survey's definition of community-based activities (e.g., for each activity where you and your students interacted in meaningful ways with community partners within the nonprofit, business, education, governmental, health-related, or other sector). If the radio button was not selected, then that indicated that the course had no integration of any community-based activities and the respondent would not have to respond to any of the follow-up course-based items. If the respondent selected the radio button, they would then complete five follow-up items that align with the stages identified in Figure 1.

To achieve this Stage IV "gold standard," faculty members needed to:

- indicate there was a community-based activity (and identify and describe the community partnership),
- affirm and demonstrate that the activity was connected with learning outcomes,
- indicate that the student learning activity also included reflection,
- agree that the activity benefitted the community (≥5 on 1-10 scale), and
- agree that the activity benefitted the students (≥5 on 1-10 scale) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Representation of Each Level and Corresponding Factor to the WCU Community-based Activities Survey

Stage	Community-Based Activity	Student Reflection & Course Project	Benefit to Community Partner	Benefit to Engaged Students
I	•			
II	•	•		
III	•	•	•	
IV	•	•	•	•

For example, a nutrition professor (Dr. Smith) teaches five course sections over the semesters under review. She selects two of the courses (NUTR101 and NUTR303) as having community-based activities associated with the course experience. For both courses, Dr. Smith answers five follow-up items. In the NUTR101 course, Dr. Smith arranged for a panel of community and public health nonprofit directors to come to class and discuss the current state of affairs of nutrition in the local community. As a project in the course, the students were required to research a community nutrition-related issue, connect the concepts presented by the directors on the panel, and provide a personal critical reflection on the congruence between the two sources (Stage II). As a more intensive example, in the NUTR303 course, Dr. Smith arranged site visits to five different community and public health nonprofit organizations. She set up these partner sites before the semester began based on an explicit request from each partner. As an assignment at each site, a group of six students conducted an appreciative inquiry that resulted in an asset map of resources, opportunities, and partners associated with the partner organization. In addition to the asset map, each student group served ten documented hours at each site in order to better understand the extent and type of work the partner organization provided in the community and completed a critical reflection assignment framed using Clayton and Day's DEAL model demonstrating the benefit to the student (Stage IV).

In addition to determining a 'gold standard' (from the data collected in the survey) for community engagement tied specifically to academic courses, the team also sought to determine the degree to which faculty members' course-based community engagement activities were tied to their scholarly productivity and professional development. Through their review of 121 Campus Compact member institutions' online surveys, this particular connection is one that Waters and Anderson-Lain (2014) identified as important, but was not currently being measured or monitored.

The Holland Matrix for Community Engagement (Holland 1997) identifies four levels of community engagement ranging from level one, low relevance to level four, full integration across seven dimensions (mission; promotion, tenure, and hiring; organization structure; student involvement; faculty involvement; community involvement; and campus publications). As a point of clarification, Holland's matrix informed WCU's survey design, but utilizes different language to describe the levels (Holland) or stages (WCU Community-based Activities Survey). Moreover, Holland's work focused on the institution as a whole while the focus of this survey is the individual professor and respective courses they teach. While all of these dimensions are important, two of these dimensions – promotion, tenure, and hiring/faculty involvement – are relevant here. To achieve level four, or full integration in the promotion, tenure, hiring category, according to the Holland matrix, "community-based research and teaching are [would be] key criteria for hiring and evaluation."

WCU adopted the Boyer (1990) model of scholarship in 2008. Since that time, the institution has continued to refine and enhance its support for scholarship across the Boyer model. WCU has an institution-wide definition of faculty scholarly work that uses community-engaged approaches and methods. This definition can be found in the faculty handbook and is included in the departmental Collegial Review Document template provided to all departments by the Office of the Provost. While departments retain flexibility in how they recognize and reward scholarly products, the faculty handbook enjoins departments to recognize and reward faculty work in multiple areas of scholarship, including the scholarship of engagement.

Given the emphasis on and support for community engaged scholarship, both in the engagement literature and in WCU policies, the team devoted a section in the survey to measuring how much support faculty were receiving, both internally and externally, to pursue community engagement scholarship. The team also sought to arrive at a baseline measure of faculty productivity in community-engaged scholarship, including the "scholarship of teaching and learning," since no institution-wide assessment of this variable had been conducted to date.

After the team was satisfied with its draft, the survey was piloted with several faculty members from across the colleges who had expertise in both survey design and community engagement. Those faculty members provided invaluable feedback that was incorporated into the final version of the survey questionnaire which was first administered in fall 2013.

How the Survey Was Administered

The first version of the survey was administered three times, with slight adjustments to the schedule to accommodate feedback from faculty. The first administration occurred in October 2013 and included all courses taught in the previous spring and summer semesters. The survey for the fall courses occurred at the end of the fall semester, just two months after the previous survey. The final administration of the first version was administered in June 2014 for the previous spring and early summer courses (see Table 3).

Table 3. WCU Community-based Activities Survey Distribution Overview

	Survey 1a	Survey 1b	Survey 1c	Survey 2a (beta version)
Population Surveyed	Faculty & Instructional Staff	Faculty & Instructional Staff	Faculty & Instructional Staff	Faculty & Instructional Staff
Semesters Responding	Spring 2013, Summer I & II 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014 Summer I, 2014	Summer I & II 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015
Time of Semester Administered	October 10, 2013 – November 1, 2013	December 13, 2013 – January 21, 2014	June 19, 2014 – July 11, 2014	April 13, 2015 – May 15, 2015
Incentive	Free coffee	Free coffee	Free coffee	STAR Project Program

In preparation for administration, a list of faculty and courses was built such that each row represented one faculty member's courses. This data was then loaded into a Qualtrics Panel to use for distributing the survey. For the first two administrations, multiple sections of the same course were combined in an effort to simplify faculty data entry. The increased complexity and confusion created by doing this ultimately resulted in the decision to list all courses for the third administration of survey one (in the most recent administration, faculty with over twenty-five courses were contacted and asked specifically which courses they wanted listed, vastly decreasing the complexity of the survey). (For a more technical description of how the design of the Qualtrics survey was done, please contact the lead author.)

Getting Buy-In and Inspiring People to Respond

To emphasize that the survey was an institutional priority and supported at the very highest levels of WCU's administration, the team asked that the survey be released from both the chancellor's and the provost's emails with a cover letter signed by both. During the survey administration timeframe, WCU welcomed a new provost who seized the opportunity to encourage faculty to complete the survey. The provost also asked the deans to encourage department heads to urge their respective departments to participate. Department heads then encouraged their individual faculty to complete the survey. The survey team set a goal for 100 percent of faculty to complete this survey. *This did not mean that we expected all faculty to have community engagement activities to report.* Rather, if a faculty member did not have curriculum-based community engagement activities to report, he/she simply needed to start the survey and click on the link indicating such. That constituted completing the survey. This option was provided to help distinguish between people who had no relevant activities to report versus people who simply didn't want to complete another survey.

As a minor additional incentive, a Starbuck's gift card and signed note of appreciation, sponsored by the Office of the Provost, was mailed to each respondent to the survey. This provided one tall drip coffee as a sign of appreciation from the institution (see the beta version section for a more robust demonstration of additional incentives that helped increase faculty commitment to complete the survey).

The response rates for the first two administrations were 38.9% and 40.9%, respectively, but the response rate dropped dramatically, to 20.5%, for the third administration. The poor response rate for the third administration was most likely due to it being administered during the summer when many faculty are off-campus and not monitoring campus email. This survey administration was also only open for three weeks while the first two were open for four week, and it had only two reminders while the first two had three reminders. Clearly, timing is an important consideration when administering surveys that include faculty respondents.

Building a Beta Version: Processing Feedback and Crafting an Improved Mechanism

After administering the WCU Community-based Activities Survey three times, there was a substantial body of feedback that had been acquired from the survey participants. Feedback was obtained through open-ended feedback questions offered at the end of each survey administration, through constant direct feedback to the design team, and through facilitated conversations with key faculty members (e.g., the provost's Advisory Board for Academic Community Engagement, former service-learning faculty fellows, and other key constituents).

This feedback was categorized into four themes and was the focus of the beta version modifications to the survey:

1. Time commitment and survey length
2. Repetition associated with course-based partner descriptions
3. Clear incentives for faculty beyond simply tracking data, including recognition and reward
4. External-to-course community engagement by faculty

Two consistent issues emerging from the feedback from faculty was associated with time. The first issue related to the length of time it took faculty to complete the survey, particularly given the frequency of the survey. Many faculty members asked that the survey be shortened so that it would be less time consuming. The team discussed shortening the survey but ultimately determined that the data being collected was critical to the institution's community engagement profile. The team determined the survey could be offered once a year (open from mid-April through mid-May), reducing the frequency faculty are asked to complete the survey from three times to one time, while maintaining the survey's original purpose. Also, the survey was left open for five weeks instead of four, including the three weeks before final exams, final exam week, and the week after finals. In this way, faculty members were able to respond to the survey during a window that best fit their schedule. The second time-based issue faculty reported was around the repetitive nature of reporting their courses' community engagement partners, descriptions, and respective alignments which meant that many of the faculty who completed the survey and had more than one course integrating community-based activities identified that the community partners associated with their courses (read: course 1, course 2, course 3...) were typically the same, or at least similar. In this, faculty members were required to type and retype the same information 2-3 times. This issue was mitigated by adding a function to prepopulate subsequent course profiles with previously completed course profile descriptions, thereby reducing the time it took faculty to complete the survey. This was specifically valuable to those faculty members who were teaching 2+ courses with substantive community-based activities.

One of the most complex issues realized in the development of the beta version of the WCU Community-based Activities Survey was the clear connection and alignment associated with the incentivizing of faculty participation in a relevant and consistent way. For example, the simple distribution of a Starbuck's gift card or a raffle for an iPad did not seem to bring with it the cachet or intention the team wanted the survey (and its completion) to carry. The team realized that the incentive had to be something credible and seen as relevant to the work the respondents were submitting. This is how the STAR Projects concept emerged and became a key component of the beta version of the survey. STAR Projects indicate those exemplars from the faculty that specifically meet the following criteria in order to be considered: description and contact information of those involved in the project, including a mutually beneficial and collaborative community partnership; students must be clearly involved in a curricular or co-curricular manner; and intentional faculty/staff engagement and commitment must be evident. Respondents submitted their STAR Projects through 150-word project descriptions and were assessed by a committee of faculty and administrative staff. The top STAR Projects were identified across the seven 2020 Vision curricular categories of the institution (creative arts, education, environment and sustainability, healthcare, innovation and technology, recreation and tourism, and an open category) and each of the seven projects was awarded a $500 professional development support grant in connection with their engagement projects. Each of these seven STAR Projects are to be showcased on a monthly basis on WCU website's homepage, and all seventy-eight identified projects are included within the "engagement at WCU" section of the webpage.

The survey team realized that some engaged projects were not being captured by the survey. Specifically, by design, the survey was only capturing course-related community-based activities because respondents had to select courses that included an engagement component from a drop-down menu before being prompted to enter additional information for those courses. Community-engaged activities that were taking place outside of courses were, therefore, not being reported. In order to remedy this, a section was added to the survey that allowed respondents to enter information for their non-course-based (or, external to course) community-engaged activities. Ninety-six out of 284 survey respondents reported external-to-course engagement activities when this new survey section was piloted, thus allowing a more complete institutional profile of engagement activities and also providing clear recognition of those activities. The first administration of the beta version (April – May 2015) generated an overall response rate of 33.8% (though still short of the high of 40.9%). It is hoped that after the announcement and awarding of the seven STAR Projects has been made public and the showcasing of the other seventy-one submitted projects on the engagement website, the faculty response rates to the survey will continue to increase.

Notably, through the beta version of the survey, WCU has increased its support for faculty who wish to pursue engaged scholarship and the WCU Community-based Activities Survey is now an important mechanism in supporting and advocating this work.

Analyzing and Applying the Data

The data that have been collected through this process has illuminated a substantial body of information that would have otherwise been unknown to UNC-GA system administrators, WCU administrators, faculty, students, and the external community. While the focus of this article is to describe and illuminate the process associated with survey development, there were interesting data collected that provided insight into a range of areas in which the institution previously had no systematic knowledge. In particular, the number of intellectual contributions and the awards and recognition received by faculty related to their engagement activities were pleasantly surprising. Through this survey, WCU administrators learned that there were eighteen unique peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters published (or in press) by thirty-three different faculty in connection with their engagement activities. In addition, there were seventy-five presentations and sixty-seven creative works or projects. In total, over 60 percent of respondents reported scholarly productivity related to their community engagement activities. Thirty-two faculty members reported having received at least one award or recognition, with nine of those reporting having received more than one, and nine reporting receiving at least one external award or recognition at the community, state, regional, or national level. These data are rich with information that previously existed in files and databases spread throughout the university, but now has been brought to light and connected with the university's mission of engagement with the community. In sum, engaged scholarship emanates from all of WCU's colleges, runs the gamut from creative projects to technical reports to peer-reviewed publications; addresses a wide range of community engagement issues; and benefits faculty, students, and community partners.

These findings were compiled as part of a summary of WCU's Carnegie Community Engagement Re-application and distributed in the form of a full-color booklet to all departments and to new faculty during new faculty orientation, summer 2014. With the new, beta version of the survey, the university is able to showcase STAR projects using the faculty member's own words, from over seventy-five submitted community engagement activities. This showcase is included on the university website and summarized in a full-color brochure and, like the findings from the first survey, distributed to all departments and to new faculty during new faculty orientation, as well as to state legislators, friends of the university, alumni, and community partners. In addition to being a dynamic tracking and measuring mechanism, the WCU Community Engagement Faculty Survey is now an important mechanism for also supporting and recognizing that work.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

An overarching goal in this process of developing a systematic approach to monitoring and measuring community engagement from the faculty perspective was not only to seek information from faculty regarding their work, but also to educate and inform faculty of what is meant by community-based activities. Additionally, the inclusion of faculty in the measuring and monitoring of community engagement has seemed to have sparked interest across campus. The gamut of projects identified as STAR projects in conjunction with those that were submitted for consideration serve as living examples of community engagement across the disciplines. The data collected seems to have generated a common experience around the meaning of community engagement. Administration has facilitated forums where data from various student, faculty, and community engagement surveys are presented and discussed. The survey has served as a common point of discussion and is leading to a more informed understanding of our community engagement profile while creating a space for dialogue to occur. The seven potentially transferable lessons learned around *survey administration consideration and associated benefits of survey use* are as follows:

Table 4. Selected WCU Community-based Activities Survey Considerations in Design and Benefits of Implementation

Survey Administration Considerations (the process)	Associated Benefits of Survey Use (the ends)
Align and inform the survey with the institution's strategic plan, mission, and vision	Created the first ever evidence-based standard or baseline regarding the extent of faculty engagement
Obtain buy-in at the action level and include key faculty and staff in the survey's development	Prompted the development of a recognition program for determining exemplar practices/cases
Obtain buy-in at upper-administrative level from the outset	Established a database valuable for public relations, reporting, and storytelling
Frame surveys using simplified language as this can help clarify purpose and create a consistent language around complex topics (e.g., community-based activities)	Framed much of the engagement work across campus in a clearer, better defined, and more positive context

Administer the survey once a year (maximum) and leave the survey open for response for at least five weeks (minimum)	Systematic approaches of data collection, analysis, and dissemination (distribution) brought the community engagement conversation out of the margins and into an institutional-wide context
Increase response rates through appropriate rewards and recognitions, but be systematic and intentional (e.g., the beta version of the survey)	Simplified internal/external reporting processes to the UNC system (UNCEM survey)
Disseminate high quality reports from the data collected and showcase exceptional examples through website, marketing, public relations, and other channels (respondents will want to see the outcomes)	Provided opportunity for faculty and staff to empirically see, not anecdotally imagine, the depth and breadth of the engagement profile and has helped put WCU's community-engaged efforts within a larger perspective/context

Our next steps are to continue to modify the WCU Community-based Activities Survey and administer it each year in hopes of consistently increasing response rates. The showcasing of the STAR project submissions is also an excellent way of explicitly demonstrating the great work in which a campus is engaged. Finally, the most influential next step will be when the survey is embedded into Activity Insight/Digital Measures, a faculty database for annual faculty activity and evaluation, and all input variables can be included and collected on an ongoing basis. WCU is currently on a staggered implementation plan across its six colleges with two colleges coming on board each year with the Digital Measures software over the next three years. Under these conditions the survey will not have to be distributed and open for a specific period of time because faculty will be able to simply input all of their information through the Digital Measures system. As noted previously, the measuring and monitoring of community-engaged approaches have an inherent way of determining what is considered part of the community engagement profile of an institution. The mechanisms developed have a way of operationalizing and refining what is really meant when an institution claims to be "community engaged." This has been evident at WCU and the survey has been one of many initiatives developed in the past four years to develop a personal habit and campus culture of service, engagement, and learning.

Conclusion

What we choose to measure matters. Intentional, collective efforts to measure faculty members' community engagement across an institution demonstrate commitment, value, support, and, perhaps most importantly, the idea that the *doing* of community engagement work is not only acceptable, but valuable. In this, the ends (measuring and monitoring) truly help justify the means (the doing of community engagement activities). The WCU Community-based Activities Survey has not solved all of the challenges associated with community engagement at WCU, nor has it answered all of the questions.

Essentially, the survey does not seek to provide all the answers; in fact, it serves as a key resource for our campus to ask more pointed, informed, and pressing questions – the types of questions that an institution would not know to ask unless it has this type of baseline information. The complexity of community engagement is consistently increasing, and the demand for informed measuring and monitoring practices and output has never been higher. Simply stated, WCU now knows better than ever before where, what, and by whom community engagement activities are occurring across the complex campus. The system is developed and there are still modifications to be made, but when it comes to obtaining faculty perspectives and documenting the gamut of their engagement activities with the community, WCU is now more informed. Being more informed is the first step to making better decisions. Better decisions lead to a wiser use of resources, and a wiser use of resources benefits everyone.

Additional Resources:

- Qualtrics Survey (link): http://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/OIPE/Community-based_activities_at_WCU_Faculty_Survey-201405-201504.pdf.
- STAR Projects (link): http://www.wcu.edu/about-wcu/leadership/office-of-the-provost/ugstudies/engagement-at-wcu/Examples_of_Engagement_at_WCU.asp.
- WCU Carnegie Report (link): http://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/PDFs/WCU_Carnegie_Community_Engagement_Summary_Report_2014.pdf.
- E-mail used to solicit response (link): http://www.wcu.edu/WebFiles/OIPE/Community-based_activities_at_WCU_Faculty_Survey_Letter_Invitation_2015-04-01.pdf.

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Deepening the Institutionalization of Service-Learning: The Added Value of Assessing the Social Return of Investment

Kathleen Stanton-Nichols, Julie Hatcher, and Amanda Cecil

Abstract

Strategies to institutionalize service-learning are well documented (Furco 1996; Holland, 2000). Using Kecskes (2009) Community-Engaged Department Rubric we evaluated service-learning institutionalization within a school at a metropolitan campus. As a result, we propose adding an additional dimension, social return on investment. This added dimension helps academic leaders to understand the benefits, for a variety of stakeholders, of investing in service-learning and more broadly in campus-community partnerships. Implications and recommendations are offered to replicate this analysis.

Over the past two decades, American higher education has come to value service-learning as an effective high impact teaching strategy (Finley n.d.), and this teaching strategy is now considered a core component of community engagement (Reich 2014). There is solid evidence of the steady growth of this pedagogy across institutional types (Fitzgerald 2010) and disciplines over the past twenty years (Campus Compact 2012). In the United States, this growth is perhaps best captured through the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement (Driscoll 2008). Yet, similar growth has occurred internationally, and understanding the variations of how this teaching strategy is institutionalized in higher education is an emerging area of comparative study (Gelmon et al. 2004).

As noted by Holland (2000), the degree to which universities, schools, and departments are engaged in service-learning varies based on institutional leadership, type, mission, and resources. Understanding the mechanisms that support the growth and institutionalization of service-learning at the campus level is well documented (Bringle and Hatcher 1996; Furco 1996; Holland 2000). There is less clarity as to the implications of growth at the departmental or school level. Building primarily upon the work of Furco's conceptualization of institutional change, Kecskes developed a rubric for evaluating departmental support structures for service-learning (Kecskes, 2009).

The current case study uses the Community-Engaged Department Rubric (CEDR) (Kecskes, 2009) to assess the level of institutionalization of service-learning within the School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM) at Indiana University-

Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Our initial goal was to assess our strengths, identify gaps, and make recommendations as to how to improve our work as a faculty going forward. However, with success and growth in service-learning in PETM, there are new challenges and opportunities that we face. There is heightened emphasis on our campus (thus, in our school) to serve as an anchor institution to facilitate both community and economic development (Taylor and Luter 2013). Decline in state funding has, in part, contributed to a stagnate budget to support community engagement at both the campus and school level, and within our school, we have limited faculty and staff resources to support service-learning. Increasingly, we work within a context of increased emphasis on faculty research productivity. Many faculty remain dedicated to using service-learning, yet we wonder to what extent our investment is producing returns for all stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty, administration, and community). Prior to this analysis, we asked ourselves a set of fundamental and somewhat "nagging" questions:

- How do we track and know the scope of what our faculty is doing in terms of service-learning specifically and community partnerships more broadly?
- How well are we currently doing, and what do we need to collectively do as faculty to improve our practice going forward?
- Has our investment in service-learning generated sufficient returns in terms of benefits for various stakeholders (e.g., student learning, faculty scholarship, school mission, alumni support, community partners)?

Utilizing Kecskes' (2009) CEDR, we examined school-based evidence to assess service-learning institutionalization levels in our school. CEDR contains six dimensions: 1) mission and culture, 2) faculty support, 3) community partner support, 4) student support, 5) organizational support, and 6) leadership support. This rubric was previously utilized in other departmental analysis (Beere, Votruba, and Wells 2011) and provided meaningful and accurate dimensions for evaluation. A further discussion of the CEDR is provided in later sections of this article. Characteristics within each dimension guided our assessment and helped identify steps to deepen our practice. Subsequently, we discovered a critical gap in the CEDR: no dimension existed within CEDR to assess the "social return on investment" of service-learning, particularly from a campus-community partnership perspective.

In developing the social return on investment (SROI), we specifically examined work done in Canada which will be discussed in detail in the later part of the article (http://www.sroi-canada.ca). The proposed dimension includes five components (i.e., community cohesion, quality of life, social networks and capacity building, social inclusion, health). We recommend that this new dimension be added to the Kecskes' framework, arguing its necessity, particularly in the context of competing demands for faculty time and increased community engagement. This case study presents an example of how schools can assess the institutionalization of service-learning as well as examine social return on investment.

Campus Context for Community Engagement

The School of Physical Education and Tourism Management is located on a campus that is highly engaged and recognized for its practice and scholarship on service-learning. Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is a metropolitan campus and this urban location affords opportunity for an array of campus-community partnerships. The campus is comprised of twenty-one different schools and includes a strong tradition of practice-based education across the professions. The campus has been recognized nationally (e.g., Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement, Presidential Honor Roll for Community Engagement, *U.S. News & World Report*) for its commitment to service-learning and community engagement. The campus mission of civic engagement, current strategic plan, annual performance indicators, and goals for undergraduate learning are well aligned with community-based learning strategies.

The Center for Service and Learning (CSL), now in its twenty-second year, is the centralized unit charged with cultivating a campus culture of community engagement among students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The CSL now reports to the Vice Chancellor for Community Engagement and is comprised of nine full-time staff as well as graduate students to support program implementation, research, and scholarship. CSL staff support the development of service-learning courses at the undergraduate and graduate level by working with faculty, academic staff, and instructional teams from each of the schools on campus. Consultations with instructors focus on course design, assessment, reflection strategies, partnerships, and the scholarship of teaching and learning. Consultations with teams of faculty focus on curricular change and sequencing courses within the program or major to reach targeted academic and civic outcomes. CSL faculty development programs include workshops, faculty learning communities (e.g., Boyer Scholars, Community Partner Scholars, Public Scholars), the Engaged Department Initiative, and the Engaged Scholars Roundtable Series. CSL conducts research on service-learning, civic outcomes, and partnerships, and each summer hosts the IUPUI Service Learning Research Academy to support scholarship and research on service-learning and community engagement (see www.csl.iupui.edu for further information).

The CSL offers a variety of funding streams to support faculty. These include curriculum development grants, travel stipends to support attendance and presentations at national conferences, and scholarship funds for Service Learning Assistants through the Sam H. Jones Community Service Scholarship Program. Faculty can apply for a Service Learning Assistant to support them in implementing service-learning courses, conducting community-based research, or providing professional service to a community organization (see http://csl.iupui.edu for further information about these various programs).

CSL also manages the Community-Based Learning Inventory, and annually instructors are asked to upload information about their service-learning courses. This inventory provides important data about service-learning for both the campus and for each school (http://csl.iupui.edu/about/campus-reports/index.shtml). This data is used for annual reports and for understanding organizational capacity for service-learning. The inventory asks faculty to provide information on a) service-learning courses (e.g., number of students, service hours contributed, required vs. optional service component), b) community partners (e.g., name of organizations, types of services provided, zip codes), and c) instructional design and implementation (e.g., faculty appointment type, reflection components, patterns of communication with community partners). Annual report data from the Community-Based Learning Inventory was used to evaluate school-based institutionalization.

The use of service-learning as a high impact teaching practice (Finley n.d.) varies among faculty in each of the schools on campus, with the highest participation rates in the School(s) of Business, Liberal Arts, and Physical Education and Tourism Management *(http://csl.iupui.edu/doc/annual%20report/2012-13-highlights.pdf)*. According to campus data gathered through the National Survey of Student Engagement, our students report higher participation rates than both our peer institutions and the national average (Hahn and Hatcher 2013). For freshmen at IUPUI, 56 percent report participating in service-learning compared to the national average of 41percent; for seniors 58 percent report participating compared to the national average of 48 percent.

School Context for Service-Learning

The School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM) is comprised of two departments, Kinesiology and Tourism Conventions and Event Management (TCEM). The school has approximately 1,246 undergraduates with 944 in kinesiology and 302 in TCEM. As students matriculate through the curriculum, they have multiple service-learning, community-based research, and scholarship of engagement experiences. As evidenced by data in the CSL Annual Dean's Report, the school has considerable breadth and depth in service-learning courses and community-based participatory research (Table 1). For example, in 2011-2012, kinesiology and TCEM taught thirty-four and twenty-six service-learning courses respectively, students contributed over 40,000 hours to the community, and courses ranged from entry to pre-graduation levels with the majority of service-learning courses offered at the 200 level (for most students their second year of coursework). Approximately sixteen faculty, representing 53 percent of faculty in the school (e.g., tenured, tenure-lined, lecturers, clinical) teach service-learning courses. Faculty engaged with a diverse range of community partners and within a diverse range of community-based settings including public schools, nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and on-campus community programs.

Table 1. School of Physical Education and Tourism Management Service-Learning Course by Level.

Class Level	# of Classes	Service Hours
100	2	290
200	26	28,513
300	17	2,680
400	15	9,642
Grad	n/a	n/a

Data for Table 1 and the following tables was provided by the CSL annual dean's report, 2011-12. Additional data collected for reaccreditation and program reviews in

2008 and 2011 was used in this analysis. Data from these reports indicate that there is general consensus among our faculty that service-learning has improved student professional competencies, and the concept of service-learning "fits" well within both fields of kinesiology and tourism management. Both kinesiology and TCEM could be considered "service-oriented" fields to some degree. Although broad in scope, aspects of each discipline align well with community engagement to support student learning. As an essential dimension to enact the mission and vision of the school, service-learning is a routine part of a larger discussion regarding student-learning outcomes and an ongoing aspect of curriculum planning. Faculty members receive administrative support (e.g., graduate students) or funding for service-learning related projects. Summarily, the dean and department chairs recognize the contribution that service-learning offers.

Kinesiology. Kinesiology is a broad term meaning the study of human movement and is represented by disciplines such as physical education, teacher education, adapted physical activity, biomechanics, exercise physiology, and motor development. Kinesiology majors seek degrees in teacher education or pursue post-graduation training in physical therapy, occupational therapy, sports medicine, or personal training. All kinesiology fields require specific clinical skills (e.g., exercise prescription, teacher competency) and many students are required to pass disciplinary certifications to pursue their chosen field.

The kinesiology department offers on average seven service-learning courses per semester. These courses allow faculty to assess student knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions that are measured as part of their professional competencies. Physical education teacher education students are evaluated on six professional standards while participating in service-learning, and those seeking a degree in exercise science must pass specific American College of Sports Medicine knowledge, skills, and abilities competencies. Community-engaged learning settings allow kinesiology students to apply clinical skills (e.g., teaching, exercise testing) to a specific population and allows for broader measures such as disposition, instructional delivery, and cultural competence (Peterson, Judge, and Pierce 2012; Domangue and Carson 2008). The ability to develop specific clinical skills is vital to kinesiology students' career success. The Department of Kinesiology has worked with local public schools, family and children with disabilities, health care providers, and after-school programs.

Tourism, Conventions and Event Management. "Service" in the hospitality, tourism, and event professions is a common term, typically used to refer to an interaction between a guest/attendee and service provider (e.g., hotel front desk worker, restaurant server, cab driver). Providing good service is a trained process that combines technical and interpersonal skills to ensure the visitor has a positive and memorable experience (Powers and Barrows 2003). According to Koppel, Kavanaugh, and Van Dyke (2004) the overall goal of service-learning is to broaden students' understanding of the community and industry role in making any community a better place to live and visit beyond their immediate work environment. The Department of TCEM also aspires that students exhibit competencies that focus on problem-solving, teamwork, and conflict resolution (Christou 2002). This requires that future professionals demonstrate, at a high-level, the ability to work with people of different races, ethnicities, and religions and work within the context of local, national, and international societies. Notably, while existing forms of experiential education put an emphasis on the technical preparation of students, service-learning adds a broader set of educational goals that are focused on the professional's civic orientation to their work and lives. The Department of TCEM partners with the Indiana State Museum, Indiana Senior Games, and other small destinations, event organizers, and groups bringing event tourism to Indianapolis.

Community-Engaged Department Rubric

Academic leaders are essential to advancing curricular change, but the buy-in from faculty within departments is fundamental to sustaining initiatives across time (Langseth, Plater, and Dillon 2004). Campus Compact, a coalition of more than 1,100 colleges and universities, endorses the idea of departments as a critical force in institutionalization. Through resources such as the Engaged Department Toolkit (Battistoni et al. 2003) and Engaged Department Institutes sponsored by national and state Campus Compacts (e.g., California, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Vermont), there was a shift in strategy and focus from individual faculty as change agents to the collective action of faculty through departmental change initiatives (Kecskes 2006). The Community-Engaged Department Rubric (CEDR) was designed to assess department level community engagement (Kecskes 2009). The CEDR has six dimensions abbreviated as mission, faculty support, community partner support, student support, organizational support, and leadership support. The six dimensions outline specific characteristics that articulate and define each dimension. Four stages of the rubric (i.e., Awareness Building, Critical Mass Building, Quality Building, Institutionalization) allow for each dimension to be assessed along a continuum.

The CEDR is designed as a tool for teams of faculty to collectively assess present level engagement and to identify action steps to deepen the integration of service-learning into the curriculum. There are many examples of how others have used the CEDR in both assessment and research. Chadwick and Pawlowski (2007) utilized this departmental rubric to study Creighton University's context and growth in service-learning courses. Beere, Votruba, and Wells (2011) gave examples of how the rubric was used to measure faculty productivity, department engagement, and student progress. Recently, Eddy, Randall, and Schmalstig (2014) published a three-year report on service-learning effectiveness in STEM fields at California State University (CSU). Using Kecskes' rubric, the CSU campuses reported cross-campus integration of service-learning effectiveness highlighting course development, faculty research and presentations, and departmental grants. We found the rubric to be compelling for our use in evaluation of our school, in part, because of its previous utilization, but perhaps more importantly its holistic measurement of community engagement (e.g., community partners).

Evaluation of data took place within the framework of the school level. Two authors are faculty in the school, and they were primarily involved in collecting, assessing, and evaluating service-learning efforts and data, although certain examples will be department specific. The two faculty are highly-engaged in service-learning pedagogy, were both Boyer Scholars through the Center for Service and Learning (CSL), and each has been instrumental in navigating school and departmental curriculum changes to address community engagement. One has developed and administered two community-engaged clinical programs for the past twenty years and also serves as a senior scholar at the CSL. The third author works at the campus level as executive director of the CSL.

The authors used a relatively unhampered operationalization procedure gathering and condensing existing data and generating new data for this analysis. Data collected from a 2008 and 2011 program review were used as well as existing course, faculty, and community partner data from the CSL Inventory. All data were initially relevant whether the number of courses labeled as service-learning courses or the number of faculty-reported community partners. The authors also utilized existing resources, such as CSL annual reports as well as collecting new evidence (e.g., student focus groups, administrator interviews). Each CEDR dimension included relative examples that schools could consider as evidence of meeting specific levels of the dimension. The authors examined evidence holistically before considering specific dimensional attributes and then discussed examples to determine where or if the evidence supported CEDR dimensions and, if so, at what level. This process was repeated several times before coming to consensus on the final evaluation.

Social Return on Investment

As we evaluated the school's service-learning institutionalization, we noted that there were some aspects of campus-community partnerships not captured in the CEDR. From our perspective, to capture community engagement benefits or mutually beneficial outcomes, the CEDR needed an added dimension. Strong partnerships with community organizations are the bedrock for effective service-learning (Jacoby 2014). A full range of partnerships provides an essential network between students, faculty, administrators, community organizations, and residents to support and sustain good service-learning practice (Bringle, Clayton, and Price 2009). Like relationships, partnerships have a range of qualities, from transactional to transformative, yet working toward mutually beneficial outcomes is part of best practice in service-learning course design (Bringle and Hatcher 2002).

To capture the added and reciprocal value derived from campus-community partnerships through service-learning, we initially explored the concept of return on investment. Return on investment (ROI) is a metric used to evaluate the financial consequences of investments. In business, ROI typically measures profitability by asking the questions, "What does a business receive in relation to what it spends?" or "Do the returns and profits justify the costs and investments?" However, valuation metrics that are purely monetary in nature may not be the best measure for service-learning investment because these values communicate cost versus value. For example, the CSL currently uses the independent sector estimate for the value of an hour of volunteering, currently $23.07 per hour (Independent Sector 2014) to estimate the economic contribution of hours contributed through service-learning courses. While this is a useful proxy for economic value, it does not attempt to capture how the program adds value to the community organization.

We propose that a more useful metric for service-learning that captures added value is *social return on investment* (SROI). In the nonprofit sector, SROI is used to determine social, environmental, and economic impacts that an organization has on its community. According to the Roberts Foundation (http://redf.org/what-we-do/invest/), SROI analysis measures community changes that result from investment that are subsequently valued by organizations and people. What is markedly different about SROI compared to ROI is the definition of return. Emerson, Wachowicz, and Chun (Unite for Sight n.d.) state that social value or return cannot be reduced simply to economic or socio-economic terms; rather returns are defined through their intrinsic value. Social value is created when "resources, inputs, processes or policies are combined to generate improvements in the lives of individuals or society as a whole" (http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/1957.html). Improvements include products (e.g., community garden, tutoring program, website design) but is also about outcomes such as a community's cultural identity, improvement in quality of life, and residential access to services where none was previously available.

Metrics of SROI are not easily reduced to economic value associated with investment. In fact, measuring SROI proves to be quite complicated. Previous metrics of SROI focused on social entrepreneurship that focused on resource creation or processes that result in cost savings for public systems. Others, like the New Economics Foundation (http://www.neweconomics.org/issues/entry/social-return-on-investment) have proposed examining an investment over a period of time in relation to capital structure that is developed to support the investment. This idea can be analyzed further considering cost-savings or value-added approaches (e.g., service being provided that only exists as a result of the social investment). Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, and Kerrigan (1996) stated returns can also be university-based such as increased enrollment, better graduate placement, improved learning and scholarship, and increased media attention. Although the metrics of SROI might be complicated, the lesser approach to not considering the added intrinsic value or improvement resulting from investment is equally unattractive. We argue that SROI is a useful metric for evaluating the level of school engagement and how service-learning contributes to social value and quality of life, and provides services in community-based settings that would not otherwise exist.

SROI as a New CEDR Dimension

Social return on investment capitalizes on added value; change that when added is valued by stakeholders. It is a stakeholder driven form of evaluation and, therefore, evaluation metrics may vary. However, several resources emphasize stakeholder involvement, mapping outcomes, and establishing impact (http://socialventures.com.au/assets/SROI-Lessons-learned-in-Australia.pdf). Because SROI is not currently considered in the CEDR we propose adding this important dimension. Our literature review on SROI surfaced many different metrics used to evaluate SROI, however, one stood out containing metrics for both campus and community engagement.

SROI Canada (http://sroi-canada.ca) identifies seven elements by which social return on investment can be measured: community cohesion, graduation rates, job placement, quality of life, expanded social networks, social inclusion, and improved health. After careful consideration of these elements, we found replication amongst the observable metrics and condensed seven dimensions into the five dimensions described below (see Table 4 for further information). For example, it seemed rather reductionist to consider only graduation rates in a single dimension when rates could be related to quality of life. Similar to the approach taken by Kecskes (2009) in the CEDR, we identified characteristics that are representative of each SROI dimension. We have defined and described these elements below and Table 4 describes elemental characteristics along the continuum.

Community cohesion represents the idea that people from different backgrounds can live together peacefully with decreased conflict and increased sense of community (http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Resources/Toolkits/Health/TheNatureof CommunityCohesion). Schools or departments could measure how they assist community strategic development such as building community vision or relationships that are developed in the workplace, schools, and neighborhoods. Schools could consider evidence such as faculty who sit on community advisory boards and use their expertise to facilitate decision-making. Also included could be community-based participatory research projects whose purpose is increased cohesion.

Quality of life (QOL) is defined as the general well-being of individuals and societies that can include social, emotional, as well as physical health parameters (http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/foundation-health-measures/Health-Related-Quality-of-Life-and-Well-Being). Characteristics of QOL could include community programs that focus on mental health services or exercise programs that focus on physical well-being. As a metric, we argue that the Canadian elements of graduation rates and job placement should be collapsed into QOL. One could argue that community well-being is a direct result of individual well-being. Schools could evaluate departmental community-engaged programs from an aspect of QOL (e.g., medical students provide new outpatient services at community-based free clinics, health indicators of community residents improve as a result of a service-learning program), but could also report on more simple measures such as number of patients served or change in community health indicators.

The third characteristic of SROI is expanded social networks. Perhaps the most unique SROI characteristic, expanded social network capitalizes on helping communities build their social network profile. This may include website development, capitalizing on social networks to build advertising profiles, or helping increase awareness through social media campaigns. Each of these possibilities may enhance the community's ability to build their "capacity" through new relationships, social ties, or service growth. Added to the CEDR, schools may be able to identify substantial product measures to demonstrate expanded community networks (e.g., website development, social profiles, marketing materials, etc.).

Characteristic four, social inclusion, stresses individual inclusivity. According to Cappo (2005), "inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity" (http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/userfiles/file/Social%20Inclusion%20June09.pdf). The opposite of social inclusion is being excluded from social, economic, political, and cultural systems. Social inclusion is fundamentally based the education of those less powerful (e.g., minorities, people with disabilities). We argue that social inclusion is linked to but distinct from QOL measures. Service-learning courses done in partnership with community organizations would focus on empowerment or addressing disparity issues. We propose that social inclusion has both input and output measures to reflect institutionalization. Schools could help communities identify areas where social inclusion is lacking and build out partnerships to address such issues.

The last element in the SROI dimension is health. For the sake of this proposed dimension, health relates to communities and individuals (e.g., global and specific). As with other dimensions of SROI, health has links to quality of life and capacity building. However, as a measure of social return, we propose that health be linked to disparities encountered by communities and individuals who benefit from campus-community partnerships.

Assessing Institutionalization of Service-Learning

To determine our school's level of service-learning institutionalization we used Kecskes (2009) Community-Engaged Department Rubric (CEDR). Assessment of institutionalization using the CEDR occurs by evaluating evidence across four different stages or ratings: 1) Awareness Building, 2) Critical Mass Building, 3) Quality Building, and 4) Institutionalization. Awareness Building represents the initial stages of community engagement. Faculty may be thinking about how best to conduct community engagement, but there is little to no departmental support (faculty, institutional, partnerships) for implementation. Awareness Building also suggests departments are not collecting community engagement data nor are they actively engaged in monitoring or assessing student engagement. Faculty leadership is neither present nor represented in departmental review processes (e.g., tenure and promotion) and "influential faculty" (as noted in the rubric) are not involved in community engagement at this stage.

Stage two, Critical Mass Building, is characterized by "movement towards" understanding of community engagement. For example, mission and culture characteristics suggest departments have a generally accepted notion of community-engaged teaching and service but not an articulate definition. A small number of faculty are involved in community engagement, and partnerships are building but not sustained. Involved faculty have leadership roles within the unit and may also be involved in other national activities.

As departments move toward stage three of institutionalization described as Quality Building, a distinct jump from "some to many" is noticeable. Department mission directly mentions community engagement, faculty are involved in assessing community-engaged activity and are also supported through funding sources and/or sabbaticals to perform community-engaged research. Community partners are involved in departmental decision-making regarding community-engaged work (e.g., student involvement and assessment). Lastly, Quality Building is also recognized in academic promotion and review. Department promotion and tenure documentation explicitly states scholarship of teaching and learning or public scholarship, and there are well-recognized leaders among the faculty.

Institutionalization represents departments that have a sustained level of engagement and involvement. Departments at this fourth stage have a well-accepted definition of community engagement, and faculty, regardless of their personal involvement in community engagement, know and understand the benefits. Promotion and tenure processes allow for advancement in community engagement, and systematic assessment and evaluation efforts regarding community engagement are continuous. Institutionalization also represents efforts that are long-standing and supported by administration. The department highlights its community engagement in marketing materials and is celebrated for its engagement. Students are involved at many different curricular levels and are recognized for their involvement in community-engaged activities. Students may also be assisting faculty in research. At this stage, community partners can be provided incentives for involvement. Finally, community-engaged faculty are advocates for their work, nationally known, and serve as leaders within the university or their field.

We examined multiple pieces of evidence to evaluate the level of institutionalization across seven dimensions within the School of Physical Education and Tourism Management (PETM). We reviewed campus data provided by the CSL, data collected for reaccreditation and program reviews over the past seven years, information derived from two student focus groups, information from community-participant-focus-group data, interviews of ten engaged faculty, and an interview with the dean (see Table 6 for sample questions). Kecskes (2009) does not provide specific evaluation criteria for each ranking but rather gives examples of category content. Therefore, we considered examples of not only campus-community involvement but partnership length, regularity of student involvement, length of student involvement, as well as other factors such as social capital and cultural capital generated through service-learning courses (Flora and Flora 2005).

The following section summarizes our findings. As we examined our school's community-engaged work, determination of the stage of institutionalization was based upon clear examples of a majority characteristics (or lack thereof). For each of the CEDR dimensions (including the proposed addition of SROI), we provide evidentiary examples as well as recommended next steps to improve our community engagement practice.

Table 2. Estimated Economic Contribution by Students in Service-Learning Courses by Department.

Department	Sections	Enrollment	Service Hours	Service Hours in Dollars
Kinesiology	34	796	12,980	$282,834.20
TCEM	26	883	28,145	$613,279.55
Total	60	1679	41,125	$896,113.75

Dimension I: Mission and Culture. Based on the evidence reviewed, we evaluate this aspect of our school to be, overall, in the *quality building* phase of institutionalization. According to Kecskes (2009), dimension one of an engaged department involves mission and culture supporting community engagement. Based on the evidence, we concurred that our school's mission statement and culture are indicative of a high level of institutionalization as evidenced by the following:

> "The IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management capitalizes on its rich history and unique location in downtown Indianapolis to prepare future leaders in kinesiology and tourism by translating theory into practice. The school's distinct culture and unique combination of disciplines foster innovative research, learning opportunities, and civic engagement that enhance quality of life and economic development of local, national and global communities."

However, specific definitions of community-engaged teaching, research, and service have not yet been established within the school. Although there is a campus definition of service-learning (Bringle and Hatcher 1996), the lack of a well understood definition of service-learning within the school has been an issue in course alignment with campus course coding policy (http://due.iupui.edu/center-for-coordinated-initiatives/iupui-rise-program). Taking the time to come to consensus on our definition could also centralize or highlight the school's context of service-learning such that faculty engage with the same understanding of service-learning.

The weakest component of our school's mission and culture is collective self-awareness and action. Institutionalization would suggest that our faculty collectively assess and evaluate engaged teaching, research, and service. Assessment and evaluation of engagement is currently done individually or when needed for an outside body (e.g., program evaluation, reaccreditation). These types of assessments are not systematic or collective within our school. To move our school closer to institutionalization, our school would benefit from formal annual assessment of service-learning outcomes. With a clear school-based definition of service-learning, outcomes could not only be course-based but also mission-based.

Dimension II: Faculty Support and Community Engagement. From the evidence under review, we rated this dimension overall as moving towards *institutionalization*. From faculty knowledge to involvement of tenured/tenure-track faculty, our school is deeply committed to service-learning. Our school promotion and tenure guidelines include service-learning (e.g., course development or program implementation) as part of teaching excellence. As a result of participation in several campus initiatives (e.g., grants, faculty development workshops) faculty are knowledgeable about service-learning and community-engagement opportunities. Five faculty members have participated in the CSL Boyer Scholars Program and both kinesiology and TECM have involved teams of faculty in the Engaged Department Institute. These opportunities have translated into scholarly presentations on campus and at disciplinary conferences as well as academic publications (Judge et al. 2011; Wang, Fu, Cecil, and Avgoustis 2006). Many faculty have received funding for Service Learning Assistants and have successfully secured external grants to support service-learning programs and community-engaged research.

Dimension III: Community Partner and Partnership Support. From the evidence under review, we rated this dimension overall as *awareness building* in some characteristics or simply “not done” in others. Examination of community partnerships and community support yielded an uncomfortable awareness that while we have numerous partners, we do not collaborate in terms of community voice, access to resources, and incentives. Our partnerships, in some cases, are much more structural (e.g., placement) than they are collaborative, and, therefore, may not yield partners SROI in terms of cohesion, quality of life, and perhaps other factors as well. Partnership voice, shared resources, and recognition are not norms within our school. Evaluation for awareness building and beyond suggests that engaged departments routinely recognize partners as well as form advisory committees that help shape and grow partnerships.

While our school lacks formal recognition of community partners, many faculty are engaged in capacity building to support partners. For example, three community-engaged programs focused on disability and activity have formed an advisory committee that consists of community partners, faculty, and persons with disabilities. In this example, the committee is focused on increasing community programs and building funding sources. As a faculty, we need to focus our efforts on giving our partners more voice in terms of leadership and recognition. While individual faculty members collaborate, the school as a whole does not. Our school could benefit from a continuous assessment and evaluation of community partnerships such as having a staff member that regularly assesses our numerous service-learning programs or forming an advisory committee that routinely meets with our dean to provide guidance and voice to our community engagement.

Dimension IV: Student Support and Community Engagement. We evaluate student involvement, leadership, incentives, and recognition to be *institutionalized* in our school. Faculty commitment to service-learning provides students multiple opportunities (no less than one course per semester, typically in kinesiology) throughout their course curriculum. Students can also receive undergraduate research grants to assist faculty with community-based participatory research. Further incentives include Sam H. Jones Community Service Scholarships and campus recognition and awards (e.g., IUPUI Top 100 Students, William M. Plater Medallion for Civic Engagement).

Moving forward we could consider deepening our involvement by engaging more students in community-engaged research. This would align with the campus-wide community engagement Urban Health and Wellness Grand Challenges Research Initiative. Student involvement could be supported through undergraduate research funds or a new use of Service Learning Assistants focused on community-engaged research. Our school could also consider funding student research that assesses and evaluates programmatic outcomes of service-learning.

Dimension V: Organizational Support for Community Engagement. From the evidence under review, we rated this dimension overall as *quality building*. Institutional support for community engagement work is readily available for faculty and evidence of this support is visible in the school. The dean, associate dean, and program directors provide monetary support, space allocation and/or assistance with community space, and course development. Service-learning faculty are often supported by the dean and department chairs via course "buy-outs" and by graduate assistants for course and program management. Where our school is lacking in organizational efforts is in the areas of assessment and evaluation, long-term engagement planning, continued faculty involvement, scholarship, and dissemination of engagement efforts.

Our weakness, in part, is due to lack of long-term planning. Our community engagement perhaps superseded intention for these efforts. For example, engaged faculty report use of service-learning to enhance student learning and clinical skills but also see community connection necessary to build reciprocal learning relationships (Bringle and Hatcher 1996). As these relationships and learning opportunities expanded, neither faculty nor school administration developed plans for assessing and evaluating our long-term engagement as a school. We would benefit from strategic planning to develop specific goals and objectives as well as measurement criteria. Faculty could also consider specific student learning outcomes that reflected engagement as related to our school's mission.

Dimension VI: Leadership Support for Community Engagement. Based on review of the data, our school is *institutionalized* in department level leadership, yet we have not yet extended that leadership to the national level. Faculty find it difficult to extend their reach via campus and national work as teaching a service-learning course can be a time-consuming endeavor. Service-learning faculty are very familiar with publishing within their discipline, however, they lack the literature base within the field of community-engaged scholarship. The transition from disciplinary-based scholarship to scholarship on engagement can be very challenging. Our faculty may also find it difficult to feel confident using their community-engaged activities to seek promotion, however, this is less of a school-based issue than a campus understanding of "promotable community engagement." What is needed to encourage faculty leadership outside their discipline is the security that community engagement (or public scholarship) is supported by advancement (e.g., tenure and promotion) not just at the school level but at the campus level as well.

There is currently discussion and assessment at the campus-level relative to promotion and tenure guidelines. A new faculty learning community for public scholarship has been convened by CSL and academic affairs to examine how public scholarship can be more entrenched in the tenure and promotion process rather than on the fray activities done by faculty but not considered worthy of scholarship. Our school does support and encourage faculty advancement in community engagement but could offer more structured mentorship to encourage faculty to seek advancement in community-engaged scholarship.

Dimension VII: Social Return on Investment. We rated this dimension overall as *critical mass building* with yet another emphasis on lack of formalized evidence/assessment processes to articulate our progress. However, our school does have several positive indicators of SROI specifically related to community cohesion, quality of life, and health.

Community cohesion, job prospects, social inclusion and improved health: Kinesiology has partnered with three public schools providing physical fitness assessment and training for the local community. The success of this partnership resulted in investment from both school districts and outside funding to purchase fitness equipment. The success of the partnership also moved the school to hire a coordinator to organize partnership efforts. Kinesiology will also celebrate twenty years of offering quality physical activity programming for individuals and families of individuals with disabilities. Such programming has impacted over 1,500 individuals.

Our school also has two centers that will centralize some of our community engagement efforts. The kinesiology center is focused on public health issues addressing the continued need for affordable activity options and the TCEM center is focused on building sports tourism in our local community. If realized in terms of community partners, research, and engagement efforts, both centers may enhance cohesion, network, and health as related to community returns.

Improved education levels: Professional development has extended to student preparation as well. Recently the Department of Kinesiology adopted a service-learning-based physical education curriculum. This newly formatted curriculum relies on service-learning programs and courses to build student disposition, content knowledge, and skills across the curriculum. The Department of TCEM also added a program outcome focused on civic engagement and tracking student growth in service-learning courses across the curriculum.

Conclusion

Conducting this analysis of the level of institutionalization of service-learning within our school was an invaluable process and will certainly impact the future of our school’s community engagement. The utility of Kecskes’ rubric was instrumental in our understanding of engagement in terms of our accomplishments to date and our future direction. We used the six dimensions of the Community Engaged Department Rubric (CEDR) to frame our analysis, in combination with the new dimension of *social return on investment*. Together, this yielded very practical guidance for what we need to do to deepen and improve our practice in service-learning and community engagement in the future. We would recommend, if replicated, consideration of all types of data – qualitative, quantitative, and informal. Curricular mapping and interviews of community partners are also highly recommended as significant data points. An undertaking of such evaluation does require significant contribution from those involved but use of CEDR provides an excellent framework for understanding, evaluation, and analysis.

As we examined our investment in service-learning using the CEDR, the question remained: Did the investment yield value-added social returns? The answer is a resounding yes. Our school has made significant long-term fiscal investments and because of the school's service-learning commitment, our faculty, students, and community partners have benefitted. We have helped shaped institutional and community changes and have profoundly altered how to market our school and reward faculty.

Implications of this type of school analysis also exist for centralized units such as the Center for Service and Learning (CSL). Oftentimes, a centralized unit is charged to advance campus culture for community engagement. Rather than working one-on-one with faculty, a stronger organizational change approach would be tailor-made approaches for each school. As evidenced by this case study, a centralized inventory of community-based learning is one means to gather school-based data on courses, faculty, and community partners. This type of information is helpful to schools in terms of having output data readily available for reports, program review, grants, or scholarship. In addition, once a school has undertaken this type of intensive analysis, in partnership with the CSL and our administration, we could more effectively identify targeted programs and initiatives to address identified gaps.

The CEDR (Kecskes 2009) offers departments and schools generous criteria for service-learning and civic engagement evaluation. We found the rubric to be a very useful tool to assess service-learning investment and identify next steps for deepening engagement. In examining our own school, it was apparent our partnership investment had garnered returns difficult to evaluate with the CEDR, yet when measured considering SROI, we found considerable investment with regard to cohesion and impact. Perhaps measures of SROI effectiveness are reflective of our school discipline and culture. Highly engaged schools and departments should consider CEDR as an effective tool for evaluation, however, as written, CEDR lacks the means for assessing social return on investment. Engaged departments and schools may find SROI to be a useful additional means for thinking about investment and return when reporting on community engagement to various stakeholders.

Table 1.* School Service-Learning Course Offerings by Level

Class Level	# of Classes	Service Hours
100	2	290
200	26	28,513
300	17	2,680
400	15	9,642
Grad	n/a	n/a

*Data for following tables was provided by the CSL *Annual Dean's Report*, 2011-12.

Table 2. Economic Impact for Service-learning Courses by Department

Department	Sections	Enrollment	Service Hours	Service Hours in Dollars
Kinesiology	34	796	12,980	$282,834.20
TCEM	26	883	28,145	$613,279.55
Total	60	1679	41,125	$896,113.75

Table 3. Evaluation of School Engagement

Dimension I: Mission and Culture		
Dimensions	**School Evidence**	**Stage**
Mission	Engagement is included in school's mission and vision.	Institutionalization
Definition of Community-Engaged Teaching	Service-learning (SL) is included in teaching excellence but not defined as community-engaged teaching. School/faculty use SL definition as provided by center.	Quality Building
Definition of Community-Engaged Research	CBPR is not specifically designed but recognized as a research option, especially related to grant production.	Critical Mass Building
Definition of Community-Engaged Service	Community-engaged service is not defined in our school; however, as a practice is supported for service allocation in promotion and tenure.	Critical Mass Building
Climate and Culture	SL is supported by campus and school.	Institutionalization
Collective Self-Awareness and Action	Involved faculty utilized SL to assess pedagogical effectiveness, but the unit/school does not engage in a "regular" practice.	Quality Building
Dimension II: Faculty Support & Community Engagement		
Dimensions	**School Evidence**	**Stage**
Faculty Knowledge	Faculty are well-informed.	Institutionalization
Faculty Involvement and Support	Faculty at all ranks engage. Support is available via scholarships or other incentives.	Quality Building
Curricular Engagement	SL is infused throughout the curriculum.	Institutionalization
Faculty Incentives	Incentives are available through the university. Administrative support is available.	Institutionalization

Promotion & Tenure Integration	SL is criteria in teaching excellence. Recognition of faculty involvement is not well recognized at the university level.	Quality Building
Tenure-Track Faculty	Eight tenure-track or tenured faculty are involved in service-learning.	Institutionalization

Dimension III: Community Partner and Partnership Support and Community Engagement

Dimensions	School Evidence	Stage
Placement and Partnership Awareness	Multiple community agencies with long-term agreements and partnerships; well-established	Institutionalization
Mutual Understanding and Commitment	Multiple partnership agreements – some formalized and long-term, others less formal	Critical Mass Building
Community Partner Voice	We do not have any formal recognition of community partner voice.	n/a
Community Partner Leadership	Improving with center development and implementation of advisory committee	Critical Mass Building
Community Partner Access to Resources	It is unclear that community partners have access to our school resources.	n/a
Community Partner Incentives and Recognition	We currently do not have any formal mechanism for recognizing our community partners.	n/a

Dimension IV: Student Support and Community Engagement

Dimensions	School Examples	Stage
Student Opportunities	Because of multiple partners, students can volunteer or be involved at any time. Students often assist faculty with CBPR research.	Institutionalization
Student Awareness	Awareness begins before entrance (summer bridge courses); introductory courses are also used to introduce importance of service-learning.	Institutionalization
Student Incentives and Recognition	University has taken lead on recognition, and while faculty are encouraged to nominate students for university awards/recognition, the department does not have formal recognition.	Critical Mass Building
Student Voice, Leadership, and Departmental Governance	Strongest examples are the SLA scholarships available which allow for leadership; student SLA's are seen as leaders by faculty, peers, and community organizations	Institutionalization

Dimension V: Organizational Support for Community Engagement

Dimensions	School Examples	Stage
Administrative Support	Dean, associate dean, and department coordinators are fully supportive of community engagement endeavors	Institutionalization
Facilitating Entity	The university CSL provides formal structures to facilitate service-learning; language across university is universal	Institutionalization
Evaluation & Assessment	Due to the amount of service-learning and student/faculty involvement, this process is beginning.	Assessment and Awareness Building
Departmental Planning	Efforts have begun toward thinking about short- and long-range goals regarding engagement.	Critical Mass Building
Faculty Recruitment and Orientation	For as strongly involved and committed as we are to engagement, this is not used to recruit faculty.	n/a
Marketing	Recruitment materials, website, and visits all capitalize on our engagement.	Institutionalization
Dissemination of Community and Engagement Results	Most faculty utilize their engagement for scholarship or speaking to communities about engagement opportunities.	Quality Building
Budgetary Allocation	Support given to faculty through graduate assistant support; support given to faculty through Center of Service and Learning	Institutionalization

Dimension VI: Leadership Support for Community Engagement

Dimensions	School Examples	Stage
Department Level Leadership	Because we have evidence of faculty promotion and faculty have been promoted based upon their work, engagement is influential but remains hard to create a space with a changing university mission.	Institutionalization
Campus Level Leadership from Departmental Faculty	At least three tenured faculty engage in leadership positions within the university and within their discipline.	Critical Mass Building
National Level Leadership from Departmental Faculty	Discipline specific examples exist but unclear if this furthers "service" or service-learning	Awareness Building

Table 4. Proposed Dimension VII: Social Return on Investment

	Stage One Awareness Building	Stage Two Critical Mass Building	Stage Three Quality Building	Stage Four Institutionalization
Community Cohesion	Campus-community partnerships (CCP) intend to develop, but have not yet, a set of agreed upon community ideals that are valued.	CCP have allowed for strategic mission and vision planning within the community, and efforts have help shaped sense of community	CCP have structures in place to measure community cohesion.	CCP have substantially increased community cohesion as recognized by existing relationships in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools
Quality of Life Indicators (economic, social, physical)	CCP have begun discussions regarding specific QOL indicators (e.g., job placement, graduation rates).	Partners have identified specific QOL issues that need to be addressed and evaluated as result of partnership	CCP are regularly assessing QOL as part of the partnership agreement.	Evidence exists that QOL has improved as a direct result of partnership
Social Networks and Capacity Building	Structure is not in place to network and build capacity as a result of partnership.	CCP is building structure to identify significant barriers to capacity building	CCP have identified and begun to assess ways to improve capacity building that can result from partnership.	As a result of CCP investment and partnership, both community and department have increased capacity to serve constituents
Social Inclusion	Social disparities exist within the community and have been identified by CCP.	CCP have identified issues related to social inclusion that affect community	CCP report less disparity in services as result of partnership	CCP can identify specific social inclusion measures that have improved as a result of partnership

Health	Health-related issues are not yet identified by CCP.	Health-related issues have been identified by CCP and are related to health disparities within the community or individuals	Health (as defined by partners) is significantly improved (e.g., economic, physical, psychosocial) and can be attributed to partnership	CCP can identify specific health improvements that are attributed to partnership

Table 5. School Examples of SROI

Dimension VII: Social Return on Investment

Dimensions	School Examples	Stage
Increased Community Cohesion	• infused community or school-based/ university-based programs • long-term benefits identified by community partners • campus-community partnerships repeated and well established	Critical Mass Building
Improved Quality of Life	• documentation of established programs and work placement • long-standing programs have evidence of QOL changes with regard to physical activity patterns and engagement (length) • research on tourism and participants affect QOL	Critical Mass Building and Quality Building
Expanded Social Networks and Capacity Building	• long-standing partnerships have resulted in community coming to our school to engage • “numbers” include both number of engaged students, faculty, and partnerships	Institutionalization
Social Inclusion	• partnerships have resulted in increased activity or tourism-related opportunity that have repeated demonstrated increases in QOL	Quality Building
Health	• research/assessment has demonstrated by participating in CCP programs, participants have improved health (specifically physical) as a result • CCP programs have “physical parameter” assessments which demonstrate that by engaging in partnership, changes are seen in health patterns	Quality Building and Institutionalization

Table 6. Sample Student Focus Group Questions

1. Tell us about your service-learning experience in the school.
2. What was meaningful to you about your service-learning experiences?
3. In what ways do you find service-learning helpful to your learning?
4. What could the school do differently to enhance your learning and service-learning?
5. Is there anything more you would like to tell us about your service-learning experiences in the school?

Table 7. Sample Interview Questions with the Dean

1. How do you feel our community engagement has benefited our school?
2. Are you supportive of continued growth of community engagement?
3. What do you see as future growth opportunities and potential weaknesses in our community engagement?
4. In what ways do you envision school administrative support of community engagement (this referenced need for comprehensive assessment and evaluation of on-going programs)?

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Leveraging Internal Partnerships and Existing Data Infrastructure to Track and Assess Community Engagement across the University

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Abstract

Universities increasingly see community engagement as a means to achieve their mission. In order to assess the impact of these efforts, it is necessary to gather and analyze data from across the institution on community-engaged activities. This article presents a case study of Virginia Commonwealth University's efforts in developing enterprise data mechanisms that track and assess community engagement across teaching, research, and service activities. We focus attention on the importance of internal collaboration and reliance on existing internal data mechanisms as key strategies. Lessons learned and uses of the data are discussed.

Despite the value of community engagement enterprise data, few tools exist to support their systematic identification, tracking, measurement, and monitoring (Adams, Badenhorst, and Berman 2005; Greenburg and Moore 2012; Hart, Northmore, and Gerhardt 2009). This is due, in part, to the challenges associated with designing and implementing data collection mechanisms across large, complex institutions. Feasibility constraints are often around lack of funding, personnel, and the decentralization of large, complex universities (Furco and Miller 2009; Holland 2005). Additionally, there are no standardized operational definitions or models associated with community-engaged activities and outcomes (Furco and Miller 2009; Greenburg and Moore 2012; Holland 2001). To add further complexity, institutions often need both comprehensive campus-wide data as well as unit-level and project-specific data that provide more detailed information (Greenburg and Moore 2012). Consequently, the data needed are multifaceted and complex, necessitating data mechanisms that must reflect this reality.

This article presents a case study of Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) approach to developing enterprise data collection mechanisms that capture information about its community-engaged activities. This is intended to add to the growing literature on this topic (Furco and Miller 2009; Greenburg and Moore 2012; Hart, Northmore, and Gerhardt 2009; Holland, Scott, and Grebennikov 2010; Janke 2014). The aim in this article is to highlight VCU's approach of leveraging the resources of internal partnerships and existing data systems to track and assess community-engaged teaching, research, and service. The ability to collect this information internally is seen as an important first step in the larger effort to assess these efforts. The article begins with a brief description of VCU followed by a discussion of the approach used to systematically track and assess five types of community-engaged activities: service-learning, student volunteer service, twelve-month employee volunteer service, community-engaged research, and community-university partnerships. The following section provides detailed information about the data infrastructure for the key university-wide community-engaged activities. The paper concludes with a discussion of how the data can be used and lessons learned.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) was founded on a commitment to improve the health and well-being of its community through the education of its citizenry, development of new knowledge, and outreach. The founding schools of its two campuses were social work and medicine – both professional disciplines with an explicit focus on linking research and teaching to improve the quality of lives in the community. Later, as the commonwealth considered the creation of VCU from these campuses, the Wayne Commission recommended the establishment of an "urban-oriented state university" with the following statement that evokes VCU's founding public mission:

> "It has become increasing apparent that the conditions prevailing in our urban centers present many of our most critical national, state, and local problems. However we may view the social, political, or economic issues facing our nation today, we are aware that our future depends in large part upon the wisdom with which we attack and solve the dilemmas of our…cities….Rarely has so challenging an opportunity to combine the free pursuit of knowledge in its own right with the ready availability of that knowledge for the enlightenment and enrichment of the larger community of which it is a part been presented to an institution of higher education."
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> Report of the Commission to Plan for the Establishment of a Proposed State-Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area, 1967

VCU institutionalizes its mission through its strategic priorities and resource allocation. Notably, community engagement and regional impact is one of three themes in the university strategic plan and explicit language about community-engaged teaching, research, and service has been added to the university and unit-level promotion and tenure policies (http://future.vcu.edu). Following its initial designation in 2006, VCU again received the Carnegie Foundation's 2015 community engagement classification; one of fifty-four universities designated as being "community-engaged" with "very high research activity." Since 2007, VCU has also been recognized for student service through the US President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, receiving "Honor Roll with Distinction" in 2013 and 2014.

VCU's current strategic plan, the Quest for Distinction, emphasizes university-wide integrated planning, data-driven decision-making, and continuous assessment. Central to this effort has been a focus on establishing a sustainable enterprise data infrastructure and sustainable processes and information that can support strategic decision-making. Enterprise data refers to data that is shared across the many departments and units in the university (or organization). In the following sections we describe the efforts and the collaborations that were necessary to support the work, the specific data collection strategies, and provide examples of data collected. We begin by overviewing the key terms and concepts related to community engagement in use at VCU.

Development of Terms and Definitions

As part of the university's larger effort to institutionalize community engagement as a distinctive part of its identity, VCU's Council for Community Engagement (CCE) led the initiative to identify and define community engagement terms. The CCE, tasked with promoting community-engagement across the university, is composed of representatives from all university academic units, key research centers and institutes, and many of the support units. It was thought that this would contribute to a shared understanding of community engagement and associated activities as well as serve as the foundation for comprehensive data collection efforts. The process included a comprehensive literature review and small and large group discussions to refine the core elements of 'community-engagement' and related terms. Once finalized, these terms were reviewed and approved by the President's Cabinet in 2013 (Virginia Commonwealth University 2013). It should be noted that VCU officially adopted its definition of service-learning in 1997 using a similar process.

Building upon the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's definition (2006), VCU defines community-engagement as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity. It can involve partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems and serve as catalysts for initiating and/or changing policies, programs, and practices." This definition and related VCU defined community-engagement terms, summarized in Table 1, served as the foundation and key starting point for VCU's efforts to collect data about the various community-engagement components. For each community-engagement activity described later, an effort was made to create operational definitions. Collaboration among internal stakeholders was instrumental to those efforts.

Table 1: VCU Community Engagement Terms and Definition

Term	Definition
Community	A group of people external to the campus who are affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, similar situation, or shared values. Communities may share characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.
Partnership	Sustained collaboration between institutions of higher education and communities for the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources. Examples are research, capacity building, or economic development.
Community Outreach	The application and provision of institutional resources, knowledge, or services that directly benefit the community. Examples include music concerts, athletic events, student volunteers, public lectures, or health fairs.
Community Engagement	The collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity. It can involve partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems and serve as catalysts for initiating and/or changing policies, programs, and practices.
Community-Engaged Scholarship	The creation and dissemination of knowledge and creative expression in furtherance of the mission and goals of the university and in collaboration with the community. Community-engaged scholarship (CES) addresses community needs through research, teaching, and service in a mutually beneficial partnership. The quality and impact of CES are determined by academic peers and community partners.
Community-Engaged Service	The application of one's professional expertise that addresses a community-identified need and supports the goals and mission of the university and the community. Community-engaged service may entail the delivery of expertise, resources, and services to the community.
Community-Engaged Teaching/ Learning	A pedagogical approach that connects students and faculty with activities that address community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning. Examples are service-learning courses or service-learning clinical practica.
Community-Engaged Research	A collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community. Community-engaged research (CER) identifies the assets of all stakeholders and incorporates them in the design and conduct of the different phases of the research process.

Internal Collaboration

A primary tactic in VCU's approach to the development of the community-engagement data infrastructure has been to identify and leverage existing internal collaborations among units that have strategic involvement in the particular area. These collaborations often arise when internal stakeholders see an opportunity to more easily accomplish a strategic initiative or project by sharing information, resources, and personnel effort. Most of the project teams have been small and included members who had a shared interest in and understanding of data. These teams have been successful, at least in part, due to this shared understanding and commitment (Franz 2005). The teams also relied on informal relationships and processes. These ad hoc internal collaborations are especially prolific in a complex organization like VCU, with fourteen schools and colleges and an academic health system (Franz 2005; Ghoshal, Korine, and Gabriel 1994; Weick 1976).

A second tactic was identifying and intentionally complementing work that was already underway. VCU has attempted to coordinate and communicate community-engagement efforts through the CCE, but even this body of representatives drawn from across the university is challenged to keep informed of the wide-range of activities. One strategy that has proved helpful has been to ask project teams to develop and share talking points and project descriptions with others across the university.

The university's explicit focus on creating enterprise data infrastructure related to community engagement chiefly builds upon several ongoing, formal collaborations involving the Division of Community Engagement (DCE) and the Office of Planning Decision and Support, among other units. The DCE leads and supports efforts across the university related to community-engaged work and is housed within the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Its mission is to mobilize university-community partnerships that generate innovative solutions to societal challenges and prepare our students as engaged citizens of tomorrow. A key function of DCE is to monitor, assess, and celebrate the university's success in deepening its engagement through its core mission and functions. The DCE accomplishes that through efforts such as directing signature outreach programs; providing technical assistance and professional development for individual faculty and students; and overseeing ASPiRE, a living-learning community that promotes community engagement through academic coursework and co-curricular experiences for undergraduate students. In partnership with the Office of Planning and Decision Support, the DCE leads the development, implementation, and dissemination of data related to VCU's community engagement efforts.

The Office of Planning and Decision Support (OPDS), also housed in the provost's office, provides the foundational structure for data-driven decision-making. OPDS pairs data and analysis with decision-making throughout the institution to identify information needed for decisions that are consistent with the university's mission and strategic direction and to ensure that decision-makers have ready access to that information. The office has taken the lead in identifying institutional data "gaps," developing mechanisms and processes to collect new data, and vetting and standardizing data for internal and external use.

In reviewing the accomplishments to date, we see that the reliance on internal collaborations as well as the balance of formal and informal collaborations has contributed to VCU's success in these efforts. Consistent with the principles of community engagement, these collaborations were approached as a way to value and benefit from the diverse expertise found across the university. Similarly, the collaborations ensured that the initiatives were mutually beneficial both in terms of the data infrastructure and the outputs. This reliance on internal collaborations also supported the use of existing data infrastructure since many of the stakeholders were familiar with or actively using these systems.

Existing Data Collection Mechanisms

As VCU has developed its internal enterprise data infrastructure around community-engaged efforts, one consideration has been when (and whether) to alter existing enterprise data systems within the university and when (and whether) to develop or purchase an additional system (Furco and Miller 2009). The literature reflects the reliance on project-specific data collection mechanisms like one-time or annual survey tools to gather internal community engagement data (Greenburg and Moore 2012; Hart, Northmore, and Gerhardt 2009; Furco and Miller 2009). There is also a growing availability of software systems specific to capturing internal community engagement data. For example, University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) is collaborating with Treetop Commons to build the Community Engagement Collaboratory® (The Collaboratory®), a cloud-based software application that tracks partnership and public service activities between universities and communities. Additionally, Digital Measures' Activity Insite is a platform for collecting, aggregating, and reporting on all faculty activities, and they have added a model specifically for community-engaged activities (http://www.digitalmeasures.com). These are but two examples among many systems currently available to gather engagement data; this high level of activity signals the growing focus on data collection and impact analysis.

VCU has prioritized the use of existing data collection mechanisms to collect community engagement related data from our faculty, staff, and students. This approach has proved to have multiple benefits. Because many of the existing data systems are on a routine schedule and have mandatory completion requirements, they contain comprehensive population data – that is, data on all known instances of the activity across the university. For example, the use of the IRB application to track community-engaged research means that all approved human-subjects protocols involving community partners can be identified. This approach of using existing systems also limits response burden since information does not have to be entered multiple times. Finally, the inclusion of a few additional engagement related questions into existing mechanisms does not require the additional costs associated with the purchase and maintenance of a separate system.

In the following section, we present five examples of how VCU used internal collaborations to combine existing and novel data infrastructures (Table 2). These examples relate to the three dimensions of the university's mission: teaching, research, and service. For each, we provide some background information, the definition used, and a description of the data collection mechanism. We then illustrate the types of findings that are available through that mechanism and conclude with a summary of strengths and limitations. (See Holton, Jettner, Early, and Shaw 2015 for a description related to partnerships.)

Community-Engaged Teaching/Learning: Service-Learning

Background. Since 1997, VCU has officially recognized service-learning as a distinct pedagogy. It defines community-engaged teaching/learning as "a pedagogical approach that connects students and faculty with activities that address community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning. Examples are service-learning courses or service-learning clinical practica." VCU views service-learning as an intentional teaching strategy that engages students in organized service activities and guided reflection. The service activities must benefit the community and, in combination with reflection and other classroom-based learning activities, enhance the academic curriculum of participating students. Successful completion of a service-learning course is reflected on official student transcripts. The DCE is responsible for providing technical assistance to academic units and individual faculty members who design and offer service-learning courses.

Definition. The operational definition of service-learning requires the following three elements: (1) twenty hours of student service, (2) the service meets a community-identified need, and (3) student reflection that connects service and learning. Service-learning courses are approved by the DCE and are designated in Banner.

Data Collection Mechanisms. Service learning is tracked and assessed using three mechanisms: (a) web reports generated through the university's Banner system, (b) student surveys, and (c) faculty surveys.

University's Banner system. Approved service-learning courses are tracked by the university's Office of Records and Registration (registrar office) using Banner, a higher education administrative software application that tracks student, faculty, and course-related information. Once DCE reviews and approves service-learning courses, the registrar office tags courses in Banner as 'SRV LRN.' The OPDS and registrar office were critical partners for developing automated and reliable web reports for service-learning courses. Reports are available by semester and include the following information: student demographics, instructor demographics, and number of distinct courses and class sections by academic unit.

Table 2. Summary of VCU's Community Engagement Data Enterprise Systems

Data Component	Inclusion criteria	Collection Tool	Centralized[a] Database	Key Collaborators[b]	Responsible Party & Timeframe	Data Type	Population vs Sample	Data Use
Service-Learning (SL)	Courses officially designated as service-learning	Web-Reports (SL courses tag embedded)	Banner[c]	Registrar Office; OPDS	Faculty request SL course approval; Registrar Office adds SL tag; Semester basis	Descriptive data (# SL courses, enrollment, student data, & faculty demographics)	Population	Tracking & Monitoring; and Impact on Students
		Student Survey (SLIM)			Division; Annual basis[d]	Student perceptions	Sample	Impact on Students
		Faculty Survey			Division; Annual basis[d]	Faculty perceptions	Sample	Impact on Faculty
Student Volunteer Service	Activities that meet President's Honor Roll requirements	Email requests to identified unit contacts	In Development (RamServe)[d]	Student Affairs	Division; Annual basis	Descriptive data (# of hours, # of students)	Sample	Tracking & Monitoring
12-month Employee Volunteer Service	Approved service leave requests for 12-month employees	Electronic leave requests (CSL category embedded)	Human Resources[c]	Human Resources	Individual personnel; Ongoing basis	Descriptive data (# of hours, # of employees)	Population	Tracking & Monitoring
Community-Engaged Research (CEnR)	Approved human-subjects protocols	IRB application (questions embedded)	Internal Review Board (IRB) database[c]	Office of Research	Principal Investigator; Ongoing basis	Descriptive data (# CEnR, level of involvement, partner contact)	Population	Tracking & Monitoring
University-Community Partnerships	Satisfy official definition of "partnership"	Unit Survey	Partnership Map[d]	CCTR, OPDS	Division; Annual basis	Descriptive data (# partners, contact info, focus area)	Sample	Tracking & Monitoring

[a]*Centralized refers to mechanisms that collect university-wide data.*
[b]*The Division of Community Engagement collaborated with the listed departments/units.*
[c]*Existing mechanisms*
[d]*Novel mechanisms*

Service-Learning Impact Measure (SLIM). The SLIM is an online survey used to evaluate the impact of service-learning on students. Developed by DCE, the SLIM measures the impact of service-learning experiences on a variety of learning and behavioral outcomes. For example, the SLIM assesses students' intent to continue serving, skills they gained through service-learning opportunities, and the extent to which service-learning was beneficial in developing awareness of local issues, increasing their ability to work in diverse groups, and understanding their own biases and privileges. At the end of each semester, DCE emails the survey to all students enrolled in service-learning courses. SLIM is separate and distinct from the academic units' course evaluations (Virginia Commonwealth University, Office of Service-Learning, Division of Community Engagement 2014-2015; see SLIM Report Appendix for SLIM tool).

Online Survey of Service-Learning Faculty. Faculty members who teach service-learning courses are emailed an online survey to inform program evaluation efforts. Developed by DCE, this survey assesses perceived level of support and impact of service-learning on their teaching and scholarship. For example, faculty members are asked to what degree they perceive administration (e.g. president, their dean, committee chair) to be supportive of service-learning and what services provided by DCE were useful to them. Beginning this year, this survey will be conducted yearly (up from every two years).

Examples of Findings. Banner reports show that for the 2014-2015 academic year, ninety-two instructors delivered 117 distinct service-learning courses to 3,608 enrolled students. Among the instructors, 71 percent were female, and 17 percent were tenured. According to the 2014-2015 SLIM report, the majority of service-learning students reported that the course helped them develop specific skills, such as working effectively in diverse groups and being more aware of their own biases and prejudices. Qualitative data revealed that students generally perceived their service-learning experience to be positive and 31 percent indicated that they intended to continue to serve with the partner organization.

Faculty who had taught service-learning courses during the 2011-12 academic year (n=69) were surveyed, of which 77% responded. Faculty members agreed or strongly agreed that they have been impacted by their service-learning/community-engaged activities in the following ways: 98% reported the classroom experience was enriched, 91% reported a strengthened sense of community, 89% reported they were more satisfied with their jobs, 82% saw their teaching improve, 62% had increased innovation in their scholarship and research, and 47% reported their research had increased relevance. Approximately half of faculty members (53%) had generated a total of seventy scholarly products from their service-learning/community-engaged activities. In addition, the majority of faculty perceived leadership to be supportive; 88% described the president and provost as very or extremely supportive followed by students (79%), department chairs (76%), deans (67%), and colleagues (58%). (See Virginia Commonwealth University, Office of Service-Learning, Division of Community Engagement 2013 for full report).

Summary. Data from the automated web reports, SLIM survey, and faculty survey supports the development of high-quality, high-impact service-learning courses and provides the university with critical information about its service-learning courses that enables ongoing evaluation of the impact of service-learning on university-level priorities and promotes high quality research on service-learning. Banner data combined with SLIM surveys have been used to compare various outcomes between service-learning and non-service-learning students (Lockeman and Pelco 2013) and to assess the differential impacts of service-learning on first-generation students (Pelco, Ball, and Lockeman 2014).

Community-Engaged Service: Student Volunteer Service

Background. The collaboration between the DCE, University of Student Commons and Activities (USCA), and Career Services has been central to the university-wide effort to encourage and document student service. The USCA promotes student volunteer opportunities and sponsors several signature volunteer events on campus (e.g., annual blood drive). They also manage student organizations, many of which also promote service and document their service through online self-report surveys. The career center promotes experiential learning (i.e., service, co-curricular experiences, and internships) as key to identifying and launching a career. The center is implementing a mechanism to track and assess these experiential learning opportunities and how they affect students' career trajectories and impact local partners.

One way that VCU tells the story of student service is through recognition by the US President's Higher Education Community Service (PHECS) Honor Roll (Honor Roll). The Honor Roll annually "highlights the role colleges and universities play in solving community problems and placing more students on a lifelong path of civic engagement by recognizing institutions that achieve meaningful, measurable outcomes in the communities they serve" (Corporation for National Community Service n.d.). VCU has successfully applied for recognition since 2007 and achieved "with distinction" recognition in 2013 and 2014.

Definition. VCU defines student volunteer service according to the definition used by the Honor Roll as "activities designed to improve the quality of life of off-campus community residents, particularly low- income individuals. Community service activities may include but are not limited to: academic service-learning, co-curricular service learning (not part of an academic course, but utilizing service-learning elements) and other co-curricular student volunteer activities as well as work-study community service and paid community service internships. Community service includes both direct service to citizens (e.g., serving food to the needy) and indirect service (e.g., assessing community nutrition needs or managing a food bank)" (Corporation for National Community Service n.d.).

Data Collection Mechanism. Each fall the DCE solicits aggregate student volunteer service data from key stakeholders across the university. Units are asked to provide: (a) number of students engaged in community service, (b) number of students who did twenty hours or more per semester, and (c) total number of service hours. Table 3 summarizes the service types and associated data sources.

Table 3. Summary of Student Service Data Sources

Service Type	Inclusion Criteria	Contact	Data Source	Data Source Characteristics
Service-learning	Approved designated service-learning courses	Division's Office of Service-Learning	Banner web-reports	University-wide
Internships/ practicums/ clinical education	Internships students engage in for academic credit	Various units across university	Internal database	Records maintained by individual units
Co-curricular activities	Service that is not associated with an academic course, but includes service-learning elements (e.g., reflection)	USCA & ASPiRE Director	Internal database	Records maintained by USCA & ASPiRE
Community Federal Work Study (FWS)	FWS located off-campus. Eligible on-campus FWS are positions in the library and recreation (service to students is allowable)	Federal Work Study Coordinator	Human Resources	University-wide
AmeriCorps	AmeriCorps program	AmeriCorps Director	Internal database	Records maintained by AmeriCorps
General community service	Service that benefits the community	USCA & miscellaneous	Internal database & sign-in sheets for miscellaneous unit service projects	Records maintained by USCA and miscellaneous units

Examples of Findings. For the 2013-2014 academic year, 18,236 students engaged in over one million hours of service (see Table 4 for more details). This was a 13 percent increase in the number of students who engaged in service and an 18 percent increase in the number of hours served compared with the prior academic year.

Table 4. Overview of Student Service Data

Student Service	2012-2013		2013-2014	
	# Students	# Hours	# Students	# Hours
For Academic Credit (service-learning, internships, co-curricular)	7,725	899,806	8,137	1,115,523
Not for Academic Credit	8,412	208,978	10,099	200,657
TOTAL	**16,137**	**1,108,784**	**18,236**	**1,316,180**

Summary. This mechanism allows for the tracking of unit-level, and some project-level, student community service. However, it is time consuming, likely underrepresents the number of hours, and only provides high-level information. In response to these limitations, representatives from the DCE, USCA, Career Services, OPDS, and VCU Technology Services are collaborating to develop RamServe, a data collection mechanism that will integrate data from various systems, and they also created a mobile application (and desktop version) for students to track and manage their service information. Data from this app will be integrated with existing data mechanisms (i.e., Banner and a newly-purchased internship database) to assess student impact and identify community partners. The app rolled this fall (2015). Ultimately, this mechanism will be able to provide data to explore the following questions:

- What is the impact of these activities on student learning outcomes (e.g., retention, GPA) and future employment?
- Does impact, if any, vary by type of service experience (e.g., service-learning, general community service), frequency, and quality?
- Who are the community partners engaging these students, and what community needs are being addressed?
- What is the quality of these relationships, and can VCU identify strategic university-level partnerships based on this information?

Community-Engaged Service: Twelve-Month Employee Community Service

Background. The university promotes community service and the use of state-sanctioned community-service leave to promote an institutional culture of service. VCU defines community-engaged service as "the application of one's professional expertise that addresses a community-identified need and supports the goals and mission of the university and the community. Community-engaged service may entail the delivery of expertise, resources, and services to the community."

Effective 2001, the Commonwealth of Virginia passed legislation that grants state employees up to sixteen hours of paid leave to provide volunteer services. At VCU, the Department of Human Resource Management (human resources) is responsible for interpreting and implementing this state policy. Community service leave (CSL) may only be used for volunteer activities provided to nonprofit organizations or for school assistance. VCU defines eligible agencies as public or private nonprofit organizations that are "engaged in meeting human, education, environmental, or public safety community needs." A maximum of sixteen hours is available to all full-time employees on an annual basis, and is pro-rated for part-time employees (Virginia Commonwealth University, Human Resources n.d.) The DCE promotes service opportunities and encourages the use of CSL.

Definition. VCU defines community-engaged service as the approved use of CSL as reported through the human resource department.

Data Collection Mechanism. Tracking and monitoring the use of CSL is managed through the VCU human resource department. Employees request the use of their leave in the same way they request the use of other types of leave (e.g., sick, vacation). Once supervisors provide approval, employees are able to received paid leave for volunteering during normal business hours. DCE works with the HR department to provide regular reporting of the use of CSL.

Examples of Findings. Information on the use of CSL is quantitative and collected on a calendar year basis. In 2014, 1,452 VCU twelve-month employees used their community service leave hours, an increase of 4 percent compared to 2013. These employees provided a total of 15,522 service hours which represents an increase of 5.4 percent compared to 2013.

Summary. This mechanism systematically collects data on employees who use CSL. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that this benefit is underutilized. The DCE, in partnership with a local organization that specializes in linking people with volunteer opportunities, develops and promotes service and the use of CSL.

Community-Engaged Research: Approved Human Subjects Research Protocols

Background. Prior to 2013, VCU had not systematically collected information on community-engaged research (CEnR). This created challenges in establishing a baseline of activity against which to measure progress in increasing high quality, high impact CEnR. Furthermore, it was becoming increasingly important to key external audiences that VCU identify and track CEnR. Of note were the impending 2014 CTSA renewal and Carnegie re-classification applications. In both applications, VCU wanted to highlight its commitment to CEnR through, in part, the institutionalization a data tracking system as well as data highlighting the degree of community partner involvement in research.

A team representing the DCE, Office of Research, and the federally-funded Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR), along with several established community-engaged research faculty developed a strategy to systematically identify CEnR across VCU. The university's institutional review board (IRB) held the only known university-wide mechanism for collecting data related to research projects that might involve community partners. Given that the main intent of the IRB process is to protect human subjects, the addition of CEnR-related questions had to be brief and align with the overall purpose of the review process (for more information, see Holton 2013).

Definition. VCU defines community-engaged research (CEnR) as "a collaborative process between the researcher and community partners that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community." It is operationalized as all human-subjects protocols approved by the Institutional Review Board involving a community partner.

Data Collection Mechanism. The IRB application asks the principle investigator (PI) to specify if community partners are involved in the proposed study, provide partner information, and indicate the degree of each partner's involvement by categorical levels (adapted from Khodyakov et al. 2013) (Table 5).

Table 5: CEnR Questions Included in the IRB Application

Is there at least one community partner* involved in the proposed study? (Yes/No)

If yes …

Please provide the following details about each community partner. If there are more than five community partners, please provide the following information on the five most significant community partners. If a community partner is a collaboration of multiple partners, please indicate the name of the larger collaboration and the zip code or country of the location where the majority of the research is taking place.

- Name of the organization
- Zip code or Country of the organization

Which of the three statements below best describes the role of the community partner in the study?

- Community partners only provide access to study subjects or project sites. They *are not involved* with study design, subject recruitment, data collection, or data analysis.
- Community partners do not make decisions about the study design or conduct, but *provide guidance to the researcher* about the study design, subject recruitment, data collection, or data analysis.
- Community partners *make decisions* with the researcher(s) about the study's research activities and/or help conduct those activities (i.e., study design, subject recruitment, data collection, and/or data analysis).

*A community partner is an individual or organization that is not affiliated with VCU or VCU Health Systems (e.g., Veterans' Administration Health Systems, a nonprofit or NGO, a business) but who is engaged with VCU or VCU Health Systems in this proposed study.

Examples of Findings. This mechanism revealed that fifty-nine CEnR projects were carried out by twenty-one academic units and departments from July 2014-June 2015. Sixty-five community partners were involved at different levels of engagement with the research project: 53% provided access to study participants or project sites; 22 percent provided guidance to the researcher about the study design, subject recruitment, data collection, or data analysis; 25 percent made decisions with the researchers about the study's research activities and/or helped conduct those activities. The projects were conducted internationally and nationally, with 69 percent occurring in Richmond, Virginia and the surrounding area. Thirty-seven percent of the CEnR projects received some form of external funding.

Summary. This mechanism provides population data on all the IRB approved (human subjects) community-engaged research across VCU. Reports pulled from the IRB application reveal information about the faculty who are conducting the research (e.g., name, home department), the partners involved (e.g., name, geographic location) and the research itself (e.g., title, intensity of community partner involvement, type of research). Differentiating levels of partner involvement was determined to be highly valuable because it provides greater sensitivity in the measurement of the changes in the level of stakeholder involvement, thereby providing an impact measurement for the efforts to increase the degree of involvement of the community partner. It also provides flexibility in reporting since it satisfies the varying operational definitions of community-engaged research, with some emphasizing more integral involvement of partners in the research activities (Stanton 2012). DCE and CCTR are developing a complimentary process for assessing CEnR that includes a broader range of process, product, and outcome measures (Calleson, Jordan, Seifer 2005; Maurana et al. 2001). Key assessment areas under consideration include evidence that community-identified priorities direct research activities, numbers of publications in peer-reviewed journals, innovative dissemination products, and improved community outcomes.

Discussion

In an atmosphere of increasing demand for data to guide planning, inform decisions, and conduct impact assessments, VCU has used internal collaborations to create opportunities to gather enterprise data on community-engaged teaching, research, and service. Through these collaborations, existing data mechanisms have been identified and, in some cases slightly adapted or paired with novel instruments to provide systematic data collection infrastructure on engagement efforts across the university. These efforts are part of the larger university effort to engage in university-wide integrated planning, data driven decision-making and continuous assessment, and allow VCU to take the next critical step in our assessments – incorporating the community perspective on and experiences with these efforts.

Data are critical to university-wide planning efforts around community-engagement and regional impact. Using the mechanisms described here, VCU can track key types of community-engaged teaching, research, and service across the university. This enables senior leaders to determine where additional resource investments or changes to organizational structure and administrative processes may be needed.

A key to enterprise data infrastructure is the ability to provide clear, relevant information in a timely manner to the stakeholders to support decision-making. For instance, the data gathered through the faculty service-learning surveys have influenced the development of additional resources and professional development opportunities for faculty. The CEnR data from the IRB mechanism are being used to inform conversations about the possible need to provide more research coordination in specific geographic regions.

To support decision-making, it is necessary to engage in continual evaluation of the mechanism to determine the quality and usefulness of the data. For instance, an evaluation is underway of the CEnR data collection mechanism linked to the IRB application. While a definition of community partner is included in the questions related to CEnR, anecdotal reports have indicated that there is confusion over who or what actually counts as a community partner. Some PIs have indicated their assumption is that a community partner can only be a nonprofit organization. This may result in inconsistent reporting of partner involvement and may also overlook the involvement of critical partners.

Continuous assessment efforts target students, faculty, staff, and community partners and inform the evaluation and improvement of engagement efforts. Data obtained from the service-learning mechanism informed recent dissertation research at VCU on the impact of service-learning on student retention, which has, in turn, begun the conversation about how to provide service-learning opportunities to those students who are at-risk of dropping out (Lockeman and Pelco 2013). Feedback and insights from community partners inform the focus of professional development for faculty and staff as well as needed educational trainings for students.

Community perspective. A critical area under development is the assessment of the impact of community-engaged teaching, research, and service on our community in general and on our community partners specifically. VCU continues to explore and develop ways to incorporate the perspectives of community partners into the information gathered about these activities. For instance, as the number of service-learning courses offered increases, it is important to understand the perspectives of our community partners who provide these experiential opportunities. Similarly, as more faculty members seek to initiate and engage in research partnerships, feedback from community partners will shape professional development offerings to support mutually beneficial partnerships. To that end, we have included requests for information on community partners in each of these mechanisms (where possible) and are developing mechanisms to collect their feedback and perspectives.

Lessons learned. Several general lessons emerge from VCU's experiences to date. One key consideration is the need to balance the constraints and purposes of existing data collection mechanisms with the information sought related to community-engaged activity. For example, the primary purpose of the IRB application is to support the protection of human subjects. Therefore, it was important to structure the additional questions in a way that both advance the reviewers ability to identify possible ethical risks while also providing information relevant to the efforts to advance high quality, high impact, community-engaged research.

A second lesson is that it is important to communicate the importance of engagement and engagement data to faculty, staff, and students. It is necessary to shape this message to convey the importance to their interests as well as to the university as a whole. This message is particularly important in promoting the use of the voluntary mechanisms such as RamServ. The DCE has developed several tools to promote awareness, including an infographic highlighting how community engagement data are used, a data dashboard on its website (www.community.vcu.edu), internal stories and blog posts that highlight community-engagement activities and data, and unit-level data reports. Another key message is to highlight the existence and appropriate use of available engagement opportunities and data systems. For instance, significant efforts have been made to promote the availability of CSL including a series of internal news stories to highlight how employees have used their time and an infographic outlining how to use the leave system.

Next steps. Because of these strategies to integrate community engagement data into ongoing enterprise data collection efforts, VCU has embarked on an intentional conversation to identify a limited number of thematic areas in which engaged activity would leverage strengths and existing resources within VCU to meet specific community-identified needs or opportunities. An analytical review of a wide array of community-generated reports and strategic plans has been recently completed and will be used to engage members of the VCU and regional community in a conversation about benefits and limitations of a more focused approach as well as to start identifying potential areas of focus (Holton and Jettner 2015). This approach has the potential to deepen VCU's impact on our students, faculty, staff, and broader community. It will also be an opportunity for the university to further refine its enterprise data infrastructure and processes to guide its ongoing planning, decision-making, and efforts to continually advance its community-engaged mission.

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Measuring Community-University Partnerships across a Complex Research University: Lessons and Findings from a Pilot Enterprise Data Collection Mechanism

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Abstract

As universities institutionalize a public mission, they seek strategies and opportunities to more deeply involve external stakeholders in all aspects of their work: teaching, research, and service. These partnerships support universities in their efforts to generate new knowledge, educate the citizenry, and to improve the well-being of communities. This case study reviews the development and implementation of a pilot enterprise data collection process to identify and describe partnerships across a large, complex, urban research university. It highlights findings from the pilot, how the information has been used, and recommendations for systematic data collection efforts.

Increasingly, colleges and universities are prioritizing a public mission that is grounded in the understanding that they are integrally connected to their community and are responsible to leverage their economic, cultural, human, and social capital to improve the overall health and well-being of individuals, families, and organizations within that community (Bacow, Kassim-Lakha, and Gill 2011; Dubb, McKinley, and Howard 2013; Dworkin and Curley 2011; Holland 2005; Weerts and Sandmann 2010). In pursuit of this mission, institutions of higher education are increasingly emphasizing partnerships with community members and organizations (Eddy 2010; Johnson Butterfield and Soska 2004). Mutually beneficial partnerships have the potential to enrich education opportunities for our citizenry and conduct and disseminate research that solves real-world problems while simultaneously enhancing the capacity of communities and community-based stakeholders to accomplish their goals (Bacow, Kassim-Lakha, and Gill 2011; Dubb, McKinley, and Howard 2013; Dworkin and Curley 2011; Weerts and Sandmann 2010).

As colleges and universities craft mission statements and strategic plans that highlight this commitment to working in partnership to achieve social good, they face a growing need to develop specific mechanisms to identify, track, and assess not only their involvement with their communities and partners but also their impact. Because most data collection processes focus mainly on instructional and academic aspects of the institution’s mission and work, existing enterprise data systems are being altered and new systems are being developed to capture this information (Furco and Miller 2009; Volkwein, Liu, and Woodell 2012). This article presents a case study of the development and implementation of a pilot process to identify and describe partnerships across a large, complex, urban, research university. Central to this effort was the use of a standardized definition of partnership. We also highlight findings from the pilot, describe how the findings and process have informed other initiatives, and offer recommendations for systematic data collection efforts.

Context of the Study

This pilot project was undertaken at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), a large, public research university in a mid-sized, southern city. As a major research university with a broad array of professional and academic disciplines and an academic medical center located in an urban environment, VCU has prioritized its public mission. This mission reflects a commitment to enhancing the economic vitality and health of the entire region. It is among fifty-four institutions to receive "very high research activity" and "community-engaged" designations by the Carnegie Foundation. In building on its commitment, the university's current strategic plan emphasizes community engagement as one of its top priorities and includes community engagement as a means to provide high quality learning experiences and advance excellence in research.

Role of Community-University Partnerships in the University

Partnerships expand the university's capacity to educate our citizenry, develop new knowledge, and have a positive impact in our communities (Boyer 1996). Specific strategies can leverage the power of partnerships in and across higher education's joint mission of education, discovery, and service while also contributing to progress and innovation from the community's perspective. This dynamic is at the heart of the principle that community-university partnerships should be mutually beneficial. A few examples serve as illustration. To foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills, faculty members are encouraged to use experiential learning as part of their approach to teaching (Berg-Weger et al. 2007; Buys and Bursnall 2007; Jarvis-Selinger et al. 2008). Many universities actively promote service-learning at the undergraduate and graduate levels and most professionally-oriented disciplines require students to complete supervised clinical placements or internships as a degree requirement. The provision of such experiential learning opportunities relies on sustained partnerships with community organizations. In addition to the benefits offered to the students, the partnering organizations can benefit through the partnerships. These benefits include enhanced organizational and community capacity, staff and organizational development, and improved client outcomes (Blouin and Perry 2009; Gazley, Littlepage, and Bennett 2012; Harris and Zhao 2004; Sandy and Holland 2006).

The involvement of stakeholders in the research process, broadly referred to as community-engaged research (CEnR), is an approach that advances knowledge generation and local or regional development (Andrews et. al. 2012; CTSA 2011; Ellison and Eatman 2008; Roche, Guta, and Flicker 2010; Stanton 2012). By partnering with community members throughout the research process – from project planning to dissemination – universities can better address community-identified needs and produce innovative research that has measurable, real-world applications and impacts (Berg-Weger et al. 2007). When done effectively, CEnR promotes an understanding of a community's unique circumstances and experiences that create a framework for translating research into best practices that maximize impact (CTSA 2011; Barge and Shockley-Zalabak 2008). In light of this, some prominent federal research funders such as NSF and NIH now require engagement in their grant-making (Israel et al. 2005).

Enterprise Data Collection Regarding Community-University Partnerships

As the size, mission, and complexity of the modern university has grown, so has the need for information to support its decision-making and to describe its efforts and impact. This dynamic store of information is commonly referred to as "enterprise data" (Chirikov 2013; Volkwein 1999). This pilot, described in detail below, was seen as an initial examination of how the university defined, tracked, and assessed partnerships, and to explore what, if any, additional resources were needed for future data collection efforts. At the time of the pilot there was a new strategic plan which created significant demand across the university for data. Consequently, while the pilot gathered data across the university, it focused on exploring a limited number of significant partnerships within each unit as a way to both test a novel approach to data collection within the university as well as to explore whether there were existing enterprise data systems that could be altered to include partnership information or to determine if a new system needed to be developed or purchased (Furco and Miller 2009; Holton, Jettner, Early and Shaw 2015). Furthermore, the pilot sought to explore how we could incorporate community partner perspectives into the assessment of partnerships.

Enterprise data on community-university partnerships can serve a variety of aims (Church et al. 2003; Scott and Jackson 2005; Volkwein, Liu, and Woodell 2012). The following were integral considerations to this pilot effort and are used later to frame how the findings have informed related efforts:

- Assessing the enactment of the university's engagement or public mission
- Studying and analyzing the institution and its policies as they relate to partnerships (e.g., risk management, resource allocation)
- Presenting a positive image of the university
- Creating and managing information repositories to encourage networking and collaboration
- Quality management of partnerships
- Applying for national awards and recognitions (e.g., Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Elective Classification)

Considerations for Operationalizing Community-University Partnerships

As with the development of any enterprise data mechanism, key concepts must be defined. In their review of benchmarks and measurements for institution-wide assessment of community engagement, Hart and Northmore (2011) assert that the diversity of partnerships and the "lack of precise definitions of important concepts" (p. 37) represent two significant barriers to systematic evaluation. We next highlight extant literature related to definitional issues considered in the development of this pilot project, including how these dimensions were operationalized in this pilot. The dimensions of purpose, process, and outcome, adapted from Stanton's (2012) consideration of community-engaged research, are used as the framework for the pilot.

The *purpose* of a partnership refers to its intention and focus (Stanton 2012). The intention of community-university partnerships can be considered both in terms of the specific aims of the work as well as the potential impact on larger-scale dynamics and issues in the community – that is, the partnership's public purpose. For this pilot, VCU was mainly interested in how partnerships across the university supported elements of the mission (research, teaching, service, patient care), aligned with focus areas of the strategic plan (education, access to health, economic development, sustainability), and targeted geographic areas (local, state-wide, nationwide, international).

An early suggestion was to restrict the focus of the pilot to include only partnerships that explicitly sought to achieve a larger public purpose. This proved to be a challenging criterion to define clearly because of the different ways each discipline views diverse research activities. For example, the distinction between basic and applied or translational activity often gives rise to the question of whether developing knowledge for its own sake or the sake of the discipline is sufficient to qualify as public purpose, or must the research also directly advance an additional aim such as improving social conditions. Questions regarding public purpose emerge, too, when research is conducted on behalf of or in collaboration with a corporate partner (e.g., a pharmaceutical company) where immediate, direct benefit to the community may be anciliary to profit creation. Similarly, some disciplines may elect to count only research partnerships that are conducted with and on behalf of struggling communities, schools, and nonprofits, while others include corporate-sponsored research as long as the overall intention is for the public good (e.g., life saving drugs) (Stanton 2012). We resolved this core tension by counting research partnerships as long as the research process involved community (non-academic) partners (Holton 2013b). More generally, therefore, we determined that inclusion of community partners in an activity advances a public purpose independent of the nature of the activity and its specific aims or impact.

Process refers to the type and extent of engagement between the partners (Stanton 2012). Some argue that the more collaborative and sustainable a partnership, the more effective the resulting scholarship and the benefits to society (Holland 2005; Minkler and Wallerstein 2008), and others assert that differences in collaboration may reflect the various needs of the partnering organizations (Himmelman 2002). Several measures of the engagement process have been developed. For instance, Himmelman (2002) provides a framework to describe the degree of involvement between the partners that includes networking (exchanging information for mutual benefit), coordinating (altering activities for a common purpose), cooperating (sharing resources for mutual benefit and a common purpose), and collaborating (willingness to enhance the capacity of another for mutual benefit and a common purpose). Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) offer a rigorous and comprehensive attempt at consolidating the empirical community collaboration literature. Through a review of the literature and a meta-analysis, they developed the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory, which includes forty items in six categories: environment, resources, memberships, purpose, communication, and process and structure. Each of these, however, require a depth of analyisis that was beyond the scope of the pilot. Consequently, in this pilot we used the presence of a Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) or Agreement (MOA) as indicator of the formalization of the partnership. MOUs/MOAs are often encouraged in partnerships as a way to outline many of the aspects related to process described above (Norris et al. 2007; Ross et al. 2010; Thomas et al. 2009).

Outcomes refers to the range of products and impacts resulting from the partnership (Stanton 2012). Outcomes can include the development and dissemination of new knowledge or creative expression, increased capacity and influence, enhanced performance in pursuing the mission, and increased satisfication of stakeholders (Brinkerhoff 2002; Stanton 2012). Outcome measures may also capture the resources leveraged through partnerships (e.g., people, physical space, equipment, funding), increased awareness and interest, or effects on project scope, efficiencies, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability (Partnerhips for Environmental Public Health 2012). The larger social impact can also be considered; however, existing literature about assessing the impact of community partnerships typically focuses on one specific partnership rather than the aggregrate effects of diverse partnerships involving an institution, reflecting the challenges of assessing large-scale and collective impact through diverse partnerships across complex institutions and communities. King and others (2010) present one of the few standardized measures for the impact of community-university partnerships – the Community Impacts of Research-Oriented Partnerships (CIROP) measure – designed to assess five community-university partnerships at a single insitution. This tool represents one of the few attempts at a standardized measure of the impact of partnerships, although it treats individual partnerships as the unit of analysis. In this pilot, we used the resources exchanged as an indicator of outcome, as well as included questions to explore how outcomes might be assessed in other ways.

Pilot Study Development

In support of VCU's commitment to sustained, mutually-beneficial engagement with the community, the Pilot Inventory of Community Partnerships (PICP) was envisioned as a first step determining how to systematically identify and document partnerships across the entire institution. Central to this pilot was the first university-wide application of the definition of partnership as “a sustained collaboration between institutions of higher education and communities for the mutually beneficial exchange, exploration, and application of knowledge, information, and resources. Examples are research, capacity building, or economic development.” This term was defined by the university’s Council on Community Engagement (CCE) which includes representatives from all academic and major support units and is charged with supporting and advancing community engagement across the university. The CCE undertook a year-long process to identify and define terms related to community engagement. These were completed and adopted by the university as official terms and definition, and subsequently used in this pilot (Holton, Jettner, Early, and Shaw 2015 for more details).

Several key units within the office of the provost and across the university collaborated to develop this pilot. This diverse project team brought a variety of perspectives on community-university partnerships and data collection to the planning and helped to increase the visibility of the effort as well as to garner the support of university leadership. The team had collaborated on prior data infrastructure-related efforts and included representatives from the Office for Planning and Decision Support (OPDS), Center on Society and Health (a research center housed in the School of Medicine with deep engagement with the community), Divison of Community Engagement (DCE), and the Center on Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR) (funded by NIH’s Clinical and Translational Science Award). It was determined that the Division of Community Engagement would assume leadership of the project with the support of OPDS. This decision was in close alignment with DCE’s mission and staff responsibilities and capacities.

Methodology

At a meeting of the deans and university senior leadership, representatives from the DCE and OPDS reviewed and discussed parameters for the pilot effort. Following the meeting, the provost sent an email to the deans and university research center and institute directors asking them to identify one person to respond to the pilot data collection on behalf their unit (n=54). An online survey was then sent to the point of contact for all academic units and research centers and institutes using REDCap (a secure, web-based survey application designed to support data capture for research studies), and follow-up semi-structured interviews were scheduled with all academic units and selected centers and institutes known to have a strong engagement focus. The purpose of the survey was to establish an estimate of the number of existing partnerships, describe strategic partnerships, and determine what processes units had in place, if any, for establishing and monitoring their partnerships. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to elicit unit perspectives on their capacity to monitor their partnerships (e.g., challenges, successes) and to obtain recommendations for evaluating the impact of their partnerships. Thirty-three unit representatives responded (61 percent) to the survey, which included all the academic units. Twenty follow-up interviews were conducted with academic units and research centers and institutes.

The Survey

The questions were developed by the project team based upon the key data and information needs of the university related to its strategic plan. An effort was made to minimize respondent burden while also capturing sufficient detail to guide future decision-making. To that end, the survey consisted of two brief sections with closed- and open-ended questions.

In the first section, respondents were asked to estimate the total number of partnerships within their unit based on the university's definition. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate in 'yes/no' questions whether their unit had formal processes for establishing and monitoring or evaluting their partnerships. Follow-up open-ended questions were used to elicit brief descriptions of these formal processes (Table 1).

Table 1. PICP Survey Section One: Unit Partnerships & Overall Processes

Questions	Response Items
1. Based on the definition above [VCU's partnership definition], estimate how many partnerships your unit has.	Open-ended
2. Does your unit have a formal process for establishing partnerships?	Yes/No
3. Please provide a brief description of how partnerships are established across your unit.	Open-ended
4. Does your unit have a formal process for monitoring or evaluating partnerships?	Yes/No
5. Please provide a brief description for how partnerships are monitored or evaluated across your unit.	Open-ended

In the second section, respondents were then asked to identify and provide more detailed information about five "significant" partnerships of their choosing. Similar to the approach of the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement in 2006, this was thought to provide enough information to inform future efforts while reducing response burden. Significant partnerships were defined as those that "enabled [their] unit to make significant contributions to strategic objectives that support the [university's strategic plan]." Respondents were also instructed to select significant partnerships that serve to meet at least one of each of the university's core missions: teaching, research, service, and – where applicable – patient care. When there was more than one community partner involved in the significant partnership, respondents were asked to provide the following details regarding the relationship with the "main" community partner.

Additional information was requested on the geographic focus of each significant partnership, connection to themes in the university's strategic plan, degree of partnership formalization (i.e., presence of MOUs/MOAs), and types and levels of resources exchanged. Resources included physical space, financial, human capital, infrastructure or supplies, communications assistance, access to key stakeholder groups, access to data or research assistance, and other.

Table 2 provides details about the questions and response items for the various description domains in section two of the PICP survey. These questions were repeated for the five significant partnerships selected by unit representatives. Additionally, respondents were asked to provide contact information for the community partners and for the faculty or staff member most involved with the community partner(s) (not shown in Table 2). Participants were instructed that community partners could be organizations or individuals.

Table 2. PICP Survey Section Two:
Unit Description Domain Items for their Significant Partnerships

Partnership Questions for Specific Description Domains

University Core Missions

1. Which elements of the university's mission does this partnership serve? (check all that apply)

☐ ☐ Service ☐ Research ☐ Teaching ☐ Patient Care

Partnership Focus & Alignment with Strategic University Goals

1. What key words best describe the focus of the partnership?

____

2. Which [university strategic plan] focus area best describes the focus of this partnership?

☐ ☐ Education ☐ Access to Health ☐ Economic Development ☐ Sustainability

3. (If Education) What grade levels does your educational partnership serve? (check all that apply)

☐ Pre-K ☐ K–5th ☐ 6th–8th ☐ 9th–12th ☐ Post High School

Geographic Area

1. What geographic area does this partnership serve?

☐ Metro Richmond ☐ Statewide ☐ Nationwide ☐ International ☐ Other

2. (If Metro Richmond) What geographic area in Metro Richmond does this partnership serve? (check all that apply)

☐ Downtown ☐ East End ☐ Far West ☐ Near West ☐ Northside
☐ Southside

3. Follow-up question to above asked respondents to identify specific neighborhoods in the geographic areas specified in Metro Richmond. Items not shown.

Partnership Formalization

1. Is there a current MOU/MOA between this community partner and your unit?

☐☐ Yes ☐ No

Resources Exchanged

1. Thinking about the past year, what types of resources did your unit provide/exchange with the main community partner? (check all that apply)

☐ Space (meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.)
☐ Financial (funds transferred from your unit to your partner)
☐ Human Capital (faculty/staff time commitment)
☐ Infrastructure/Supplies (office equipment, furniture, etc.)
☐ Communications Assistance (bulletins, photo lab, posters, e-mail support, other)

- ☐ Access to Faculty/ Staff/ Students/ Alumni
- ☐ Access to Data or other Research Resources
- ☐ Other

2. Thinking about the past year, what resources did the main community partner share/exchange with your unit? (check all that apply)
   - ☐ Space (meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.)
   - ☐ Financial (funds transferred from your unit to your partner)
   - ☐ Human Capital (faculty/staff time commitment)
   - ☐ Infrastructure/Supplies (office equipment, furniture, etc.)
   - ☐ Communications Assistance (bulletins, photo lab, posters, e-mail support, other)
   - ☐ Access to Community Members
   - ☐ Access to Data or other Research Resources
   - ☐ Other

Interview Questions

In order to obtain information that would inform future university-wide partnership data collection efforts, interview questions focused on unit-level infrastructure related to establishing and monitoring partnerships. In addition, unit representatives were asked to provide recommendations for evaluating the impact of partnerships at the university level.

The semi-structured interview included the following questions:

1. In the inventory, it was noted that your unit [does/does not] have a formal process for establishing partnerships, and that it [does/does not] have a formal process for monitoring or evaluating partnerships. Please tell us more about that.
2. Based on what we asked you to provide, did you have some of this information readily available? What did you have to do to collect this information?
3. The [university strategic plan] states that [the university] will "[c]ontribute to the economic, cultural and civic vitality of the region and the world through collaborative efforts …." How do you, and how might we, consider measuring impact of partnerships?
4. Does your unit have the infrastructure necessary to systematically identify and describe community-university partnerships? If yes, please describe. If no, what resources would you need? What steps would need to be taken?
5. As we make recommendations for how to systematically identify community-university partnerships, and ultimately tell the story of [the university]'s involvement with the community, what further thoughts or recommendations do you have?

The interviews were conducted by two members of the project team: the project team leader and another who took notes. Soon after the interviews were conducted, the notes were expanded or clarified as needed. The notes were then e-mailed to the respondents to check for accuracy. Because this was an effort to develop a data collection system and not intended to produce generalizable knowledge, IRB approval was not necessary.

Findings and Implications

Partnerships. In total, respondents estimated having more than 1,100 active partnerships with community organizations. Interviews revealed that this was a gross and generally conservative estimate of the number of partnerships. This was generally due to two factors: a lack of data infrasture and diverse assumptions about the definition. Most of the academic units did not have a centralized warehouse of data regarding partnerships; consequently, some used the number of internship locations as a proxy for the number of partnerships held within the unit. Others sought to estimate the number of partnerships through an internal survey of faculty. Interviews also revealed that respondents interpreted the definition of partnership differently. Some units assumed that partnerships were restricted only to those with a specific focus on improving social conditions (e.g., partnerships with nonprofits, schools, etc.), while others were more inclusive of various types of organizations and purposes.

Establishment and monitoring of partnerships. Of the thirty-three survey respondents, 36 percent indicated that their unit had a formal process for establishing partnerships, and 39 percent reported they had a formal process for monitoring or evaluating partnerships. Formal processes for establishing partnerships varied. One unit described a steering committee that made decisions about partnerships, but for others, the formalization of the partnership process was largely dependent on the individual project. For units whose partnerships included service-learning or internships/clinical placements, the process was formalized in order to ensure both student and community member safety (e.g., background checks and liability waivers) as well as that student learning needs and requirements for professional licensure after graduation are met.

None of the units reported that they had existing infrastructure to systemmatically collect and store information about all their partnerships. Several reported tracking internship sites using spreadsheets or databases. Furthermore, while most units included "service" as a part of their review of faculty, none of the units reported asking questions specific to partnerships in a way that would allow that information to be aggragated at the unit level. Similarly, none of the units reported having a unit-wide process for systematically evaluating their partnerships. It should be noted, however, that the interviews also revealed a desire for data infrastructure that could be used to support the establishment, monitoring, and evaluation of partnership activities.

Description of "significant" partnerships. Significant partnerships were defined as those that "enabled [their] unit to make significant contributions to strategic objectives that support the [university's strategic plan]." The data on signficiant partnerships provided insight into how units defined and worked in partnerships. As discussed above, the defintion of partnerships can be understood by using Stanton's (2012) framework of purpose, process, and outcome. In total, 180 partnerships were identified as significant partnerships and were described by respondents as follows.

University Core Missions (purpose). Respondents were asked to select which elements of the university's core mission (service, teaching, research, or patient care) the partnership addressed or served. Respondents could select more than one of these elements. Most of the significant partnerships focused on more than one element: 29% of partnerships focused on one element, 39% focused on two elements, 21% on three elements, and 11% on four elements.

Partnership Focus & Alignment with University Strategic Goals (purpose). Respondents were asked to identify the area in the university's strategic plan that best described the focus of the partnership (education, access to health, economic development, and sustainability). Approximately three-quarters (66%) of significant partnerships fell into a specified strategic plan area. Of the partnerships that aligned with strategic focus areas (n=119), education was the focus of the largest number of the partnerships (56%), followed by access to health (34%), economic development (6%), and sustainability (4%).

Geographic Area (purpose). Respondents were asked to identify the geographic focus of the partnership. The largest percentage of the significant partnerships focused on the metropolitan area in which the university is located (46%), followed by 29% that were statewide, 5% that were nationwide, and 8% international.

Partnership Formalization (process). Respondents were asked whether MOUs/MOAs existed for their significant partnerships. Approximately a quarter (29%) reported having an MOU/MOA for their partnerships. Interviews revealed that the use of MOUs/MOAs or similar legal agreements is common for internships and clinical placements (particularly those in healthcare settings) and less common for partnerships initiated and managed at the faculty-level.

Resources Exchanged (outcome). Lastly, respondents were asked about the kinds of resources they had provided to their significant partners and about the kinds of resources they had received from their sigificant partners. Table 3 presents university members' perspectives of the various resources exchanged in their significant partnerships. Overall, it appeared that similar types of resources were exchanged between partners with human capital and access to university/community members being the most exchanged, followed by access to research resources, communications assistance, space, financial, infrastructure/supplies, and other. The findings suggest that university members perceived that resources exchanged were approximately equal for the categories provided. In addition, the most frequently exchanged resources – human capital and access to university members – align with the literature as key benefits community partners cite as being valuable resources they receive from their academic partnerships (Cronley, Madden, and Davis 2015; Sandy and Holland 2006; Worrall 2007).

Table 3. University Perspectives on Resources Exchanged in Significant Partnerships (n=180)

Resources	Units Provided to Partners n (%)	Units Received from Partners n (%)
Human Capital	101 (56%)	90 (50%)
Access to VCU/Community Members	91 (51%)	76 (42%)
Access to Research Resources	52 (29%)	61 (39%)
Commuications Assistance	45 (25%)	47 (26%)
Space	37 (21%)	51 (28%)
Financial	36 (20%)	29 (16%)
Infrastructure/Supplies	23 (13%)	31 (17%)
Other	11 (6%)	7 (4%)

Assessing partnership impact. The interviews explored the existing means of assessing the impact of partnerships from the university's perspective and recommendations for university-wide impact assessment. As is common in other universities, respondents indicated an overall lack of systematic processes to assess the impact of the partnerships on students, faculty, and community partners (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2015). Many respondents noted that one of the main indicators of the success of a partnership is whether a community partner wants to continue the partnership, which has been suggested by Gelmon and others (2001). For those units whose partnerships are based around student learning as well as community engagement, it appeared that some evaluation of community impact occurs as part of student evaluations; however, these were primarily related to student learning goals and experiences.

A few common ideas and cautions emerged regarding how to assess the impact of partnerships at an enterprise level. The most frequent suggestion was to quantify the number of people served or the number of people who participated in or attended an event. However, it was frequently acknowledged that this would be a shallow impact measure and one that is difficult to interpret. Another suggestion was to use job placement after graduation as an indicator, especially in professions that currently have high vacancy rates, although, this would be a measure of the impact of workforce preparedness for students and not a measure of impact on the community or partnership. For partnerships where direct services are provided to community partners, many suggested accounting for the monetary value of the services rendered. For instance, several of the health-related disciplines assign a monetary value to each procedure completed by faculty and students. Similarly, a monetary value is often associated with volunteer hours (Corporation for National and Community Service 2014). However, it was thought some partners may resist requests for monetary value or value of hours because they see monetary value as a shallow measure that is of greater value to the university than the community partner (Gelmon et al. 2001; Sandy and Holland 2006).

It was also noted that providing community partners with an opportunity to evaluate the partnership would yield valuable data about the partnership's impact. Respondents noted that disseminating research resulting from partnerships in venues other than academic journals – for instance, a local newspaper or on a centrally located webpage – could serve as a key measure of partnership impact. Finally, a few units suggested that providing community partners with an opportunity to evaluate the partnership would yield valuable data about the impact of partnerships.

Overall, there was a general concern about the challenges and difficulties of measuring the wider impact of community-university partnerships. Most respondents saw impact measurement at an agency or partner level as feasible and valuable, but had difficulty conceptualizing a way to measure impact across the university. Some of the respondents suggested that partnerships should be designed with impact assessment in mind so that a pre- and post-evaluation design could be used. One respondent suggested using community-level data such as census data or city or health department data, but noted the difficulty of that unless university efforts were targeted.

Discussion

The pilot successfully tested the use of a standardized definition and instrumentation and enabled the university to develop a rough estimate of the total number of partnerships. It also provided a picture of how partnerships are defined across the university (i.e., their purpose, process, and outcome) and how units structure and engage in partnerships that support the university's strategic plan. The work revealed opportunities for the development of enterprise data collection mechanisms and increased an overall desire for this kind of information by senior leadership as well as leaders in the academic units and community-engaged centers and institutes.

An important consideration when reflecting on this pilot is whether its findings are useful to key constituencies. The pilot process and its findings have received attention and use within and beyond the university. An initial overview and report of findings were disseminated through a white paper that is publically available and was discussed at various university leadership meetings including the Council of Deans, VCU Board of Visitors, and the CCE (Holton 2013b). In addition, the pilot was presented at the annual meeting of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) (Holton and Agnelli 2013). As described below, the pilot process and findings also have been useful to various related efforts.

The pilot confirmed prior research showing that data infrastructure is an important prerequisite for effectively capturing, monitoring, and assessing partnerships. Respondents reported that information on partnership is considered valuable and could be used to enhance efforts to develop and support partnerships and to celebrate the work that is being accomplished. It also confirmed that a critical next step is to collect information from community partners about the experience and impact of these partnerships. Although respondents expressed an interest in gathering and using information on partnerships, no units were already doing so and none reported having existing infrastructure that could be easily adapted to collect this information.

The pilot data are the best available on university-community partnerships at VCU, but this effort revealed a number of difficulties in collecting systematic data on partnerships across the university. A significant challenge was associated with the definition of partnerships. As noted above, despite efforts to clarify the definition of partnership, respondents reported holding different perceptions of the term that guided their responses. For example, some assumed that they should only report partnerships with a focus on social service missions and involving nonprofits (i.e., a larger public purpose beyond the involvement of a community partner). Consequently, most of the data collected through the online survey focused on partnerships that addressed human and social needs in the surrounding community, particularly related to healthcare and K-12 education, and underrepresented workforce and economic development issues. These areas relate well to key foci in the university's strategic plan; however, the findings suggest that partnerships without an explicit emphasis on public purpose may be underrepresented.

Additionally, the interviews revealed the lack of clarity around two key terms in the definition of partnerships: "mutually-beneficial" and "sustained." One partner (i.e., the university representative) cannot solely describe whether mutual benefit exists. In considering future data collection efforts, it will be essential to gather input from representatives from all partnership members. This is feasible when gathering data at the partnership level but more challenging when aggregating responses at the unit or university level. Since data collection mechanisms rely on individual faculty, staff, and administrators to respond, additional, separate, and distinctive data collection mechanisms would have to be created to solicit feedback from community partners and to ensure that the questions used to determine mutual benefit could be interpreted in the context of each partnership and also aggregated at higher levels.

Operationalizing the degree to which a partnership is "sustained" is similarly complicated. Here, too, the interviews highlighted several considerations. For instance, can a partnership be considered "sustained" if it relies on time-limited funding? Can a partnership between a faculty member and an employee of another organization that relies on their individual efforts, even if long-standing, be sustained, or must there be evidence that the partnership is formalized and adequately resourced to withstand personnel changes? Does the work of the partnership need to continue uninterrupted, and if not, is it sustained if the activities occur only once or perhaps occasionally over a period of time?

These and other definitional issues are important to consider and resolve in order to maximize the benefits of having enterprise data on community-engagement, such as partnerships. As illustrated below, we already have seen the power of having aggregate information on partnerships – even with the limitations noted earlier. In addition to serving the intended purposes of the pilot, the information gathered has been folded into existing key institutional discussions and sparked others. The value of the data lies in the following: 1) they were collected university-wide, 2) they are the first available standardized data on partnerships, and 3) they were collected to meet the needs and interests of multiple university stakeholders.

Applying for national awards and recognitions. The data and the collection process were described in the recent re-classification application for the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Elective Classification both to illustrate partnerships across the university and also the efforts to develop enterprise data infrastructure. The data have also been used in a number of grants to illustrate the university's engagement with our community, particularly in the strategic plan focus areas and geographic areas.

Telling VCU's Story. The DCE has used existing resources and student interns to highlight the work being accomplished through specific partnerships identified in this pilot. These success stories have been shared through multiple outlets (e.g., the websites of the DCE and others; VCU publishing outlets). This has helped to elevate and celebrate engaged activities, illustrate high quality community-university partnerships, and tell VCU's story as an engaged institution.

Creating and managing information repositories to encourage networking and collaboration. An impetus for the collection of information about the geographic and focus of the partnerships was so that coordination and collaboration could be encouraged, particularly among the partnerships that focus on particular geographic areas. To that end, the DCE has hosted opportunities for collaboration (e.g., interest groups, brown bags) for partnerships focused on selected neighborhoods in Metro Richmond. Of particular note has been the use of this information to inform conversations about VCU's engagement with a local school system and a neighborhood in which VCU faculty and students have a significant presence.

As described in greater detail in Holton, Jettner, Early, and Shaw (2015), VCU's approach to collecting engagement related data is to use existing systems and leverage internal collaborations. To that end, the DCE has partnered with the university's federally-funded Center for Clinical and Translational Research (CCTR) to use VIVO to share information about the partnerships and partnering organizations in a publically searchable platform. VIVO is a publically searchable research-focused discovery tool that enables collaboration among researchers across disciplines. Through the collaboration with the DCE, VIVO includes information on partnerships (e.g., geographic focus areas, topic focus areas, VCU, and non-VCU contact information) and the partnering organizations (e.g., website, geographic location, contact information). Furthermore, the faculty profiles have been developed to allow researchers to indicate their interest in engaging stakeholders in their research. VIVO is populated with the significant partner organizations identified through the PICP and other efforts. The information included in VIVO regarding partnerships is visually displayed in the interactive partnership map (http://communitynetwork.vcu.edu/partnerMap).

The DCE, CCTR, and university relations have developed an interactive Google-based map that showcases community partnerships and service-learning sites in and around the region. Basic information on each organization and partnership is provided and visitors can search on key filters. The partnerships identified through this pilot are highlighted on the map, along with others that have been identified since then. Similarly, the data and the process for collecting it has informed an effort lead by the VCU Medical Center to collect information on partnerships and activities through the health system specifically.

Studying and analyzing the institution and its policies as they relate to partnerships. Approximately one year after the completion of the pilot, a presidential Task Force on VCU Partnerships was formed to 1) review and propose definitions of partnerships to provide greater clarity with respect to the scope and authority of these relationships, including those that involve broader university investment or may warrant Board of Visitors (BOV) awareness, review, or approval; 2) propose and recommend policy and processes for establishing, monitoring, and reviewing partnerships and MOUs that support alignment with VCU's mission, reduce risks and opportunity costs, and identify strategic opportunities for greater investment; and 3) establish a dashboard and reporting mechanism that could be used with the BOV committee to review and monitor VCU partnerships. The task force reports to the Board of Visitor's Governance and Evaluation Committee and included membership from leadership in the DCE, Office of Development and Alumni Relations, Athletics, Office of Research, Global Education Office, University Council, Faculty Affairs, and Assurance Services. While the work of the task force is on-going, the PICP helped to start the conversation and provided crucial data in the early phases of its work.

The pilot project revealed the use of MOUs/MOAs was inconsistent for partnerships across the university. Given the potential for legal issues to arise, guidance documents were needed to clarify processes for review and approval as well as use of terms such as "partnership" that often have legal implications that may not be appreciated by faculty and community members. The DCE has been in consultation with the Office of University Counsel to develop these guidance documents. The aim is to create a partnership agreement template for use by individual faculty that supports community-university partnerships specifically. This will become part of a larger toolkit that includes guidance on the compensation of community partners in research and how to assess the quality of partnerships and its impact on students, faculty, and community (George, Holton, and Haley 2014).

Assessing the enactment of the university's engagement or public mission. While the pilot accomplished its stated goals, it was only a first step in the overall goal of assessing the enactment of VCU's public mission. Given the size and complexity of institution, this is difficult to do across the university. The DCE and the presidential Task Force on Partnerships continue to explore how best to focus our partnership work, thereby allowing for strategic application of resources and evaluation of the quality and impact of these collaborations. One possibility explored was to focus on identifying key partnerships, much like the process through which VCU's Global

Education Office (GEO) underwent. Housed in the provost office, GEO serves as the centralized support to coordinate the establishment, review, and reporting of all international academic partnerships. Based upon review of annual reports, major funding awards, and careful deliberation, three university strategic partners have been identified. These include relationships that involve multiple units on both campuses, support a variety of activities, and coincide with strategic directions of the university. Academic unit strategic partnerships are those partnerships that are largely involved in one or two academic units. While this remains as a consideration, the focus has shifted to selecting a few focus areas.

This year VCU has embarked on an intentional conversation about the possibility of identifying a few focus areas that would leverage strengths and existing resources within VCU while also meeting a community-identified need or opportunity (Holton and Jettner 2015; Holton, Jettner, and Shaw 2015). This conversation has begun with two convenings designed to engage members of the VCU and regional community in a shared conversation about benefits and costs of this approach as well as to start identifying potential areas of focus.

As a result of this pilot, the university has engaged in critical conversations about the role of partnerships in our efforts to generate new knowledge and educate our students as well as how we interact with and impact our communities. The process of and findings from the pilot have informed key conversations and sparked others. However, this conversation and the specific process to develop ways to identify and assess community-university partnerships must continue to develop to ensure consistency and inclusion of internal and external perspectives. This process is supported by several key factors within the university. Primarily, it aligns with and supports key institutional commitments to VCU's engaged mission. It also reflects the engaged teaching and research of faculty, staff, and students as well as their passions and interests.

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A Centralized Strategy to Collect Comprehensive Institution-wide Data from Faculty and Staff about Community Engagement and Public Service

Emily M. Janke and Kristin D. Medlin

Abstract

"How do I get faculty and staff to record information about their community engagement and public service activities, partnerships, and contributions?" This article describes one institution's strategies to collect comprehensive community engagement and public service data through a centralized system. Beyond what metrics to collect, we present insights about who to talk with, questions to prepare, and conversations that will increase participation from faculty and staff to report their activities annually.

The past decade has witnessed an increase in the number of requests of higher education institutions to report information about community engagement and public service activities, ranging from mandatory to elective. Mandatory pressures include the university regional accreditations and requests from legislative or governing bodies for accounts of how the university is interfacing and partnering with and, thus, contributing to the public. For example, "community/public service" is a core measure of "institutional effectiveness" (Requirement/Standard 3.3.1.5) by the Southern Accreditation of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, similar to other regional accreditations that require institutions to document the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the programs and public services provided by the institution (see North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission, Core Component 1.B).

Some states and state systems are increasing requirements for information about institutional involvement with and contributions to communities. For example, in 2013, the University of North Carolina (UNC) system established annual reporting requirements across its sixteen campuses to "track progress in community engagement and economic development"; these indicators are published annually in a UNC Engagement Report (see Janke 2014 for a complete description of the criteria established for choosing metric areas). In Massachusetts, the Board of Higher Education has named civic education and engagement as the sixth goal of the state's Vision Project in 2012, precipitating conversations about tracking and measuring students' civic activities and outcomes.

Increasingly, institutions are choosing to respond to elective opportunities to report community engagement and public service activities. Hundreds of colleges and universities have applied to Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification of Community Engagement, The President's National Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, and the Washington Center's Higher Education Civic Engagement Award. Hundreds of institutions complete Campus Compact's national survey, and increasing numbers are submitting to the Community-University Engagement Awards established by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC), with support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Further, offices internal to institutions of higher education are experiencing a greater need for comprehensive portraits of how faculty, staff, and students are collaborating with and serving the public. Telling the story of institutional engagement has become a key interest and activity within offices of university relations, development and advancement, and government relations (Weerts 2011; Weerts and Hudson 2009) to achieve fundraising, friend-raising, and public recognition and fiscal sustainability goals.

Campuses that have been required to or that have elected to respond to requests for data related to campus-wide community engagement and public service activities and outcomes are familiar with the costs incurred, particularly the faculty and staff time to communicate, record, review, synthesize, and formally report information as well as the expense (both time and money) of adapting, creating, or licensing software systems to facilitate the collection, storage, and analysis of data. Administrators tasked with developing the report also know the political costs associated: the cost-benefit analysis of asking faculty and staff to provide pieces of information not previously collected for what is often perceived as "administrative purposes." Given the increased demands for counting, accounting, and reporting on activities across nearly all areas of faculty work, which have increased the administrative portion of faculty workloads, administrators are asking, *"How am I to add this to their load? What will be the cost in asking for this data?"*

A Strategy to Collect Data Centrally and Comprehensively: A Case Example

Accounting and accountability across all mission areas of higher education, including public service and community engagement, are likely to continue to increase (Holland 2013). Therefore, it is essential to take a scholarly approach to developing a strategy to collect data if one is to gain adequate participation (or compliance, if mandated) in ways that minimize confusion, frustration, or contestation. It is also useful to learn from others who have attempted this work previously to identify strategies as well as challenges experienced.

The authors of this article have been working to establish a strategy to collect comprehensive, institution-wide data on members' engagements with and service to external communities since 2010 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

(UNCG). While increased accounting pressures described above have certainly played a role in catalyzing institutional investment in data collection, UNCG has experienced an acute and immediate need for quick, accurate, and precise data due to increased scrutiny and oversight of the UNC system board of governors and decreased state appropriations for the UNC system campuses. In particular, UNC campuses have needed to quickly fill information gaps about who is doing what, where, when, and with whom across university-wide centers and institutes, but also increasingly in the curriculum as well. Previously, UNCG had no central system to track the full scope of institutional contributions offered by faculty and staff members' activities and work with and for external constituents. Tracking community engagement and public service is especially challenging at large, urban metropolitan universities, as is true for UNCG which serves over 18,000 undergraduate and graduate students across seven academic units in over fifty academic departments.

As context, it is useful to note that beyond the economic and political pressures described above, UNCG had already committed itself to increasing support for community engagement and public service in a variety of ways. Several key indicators of this commitment include the 2009-2014 UNCG Strategic Plan, which explicitly supported community-engaged scholarship, civic responsibility, and community service as key goals. In 2010, the faculty had voted to incorporate explicit recognition for community-engaged scholarship in promotion and tenure policies throughout the teaching, research/creative activities, and service profiles. UNCG was classified as a "community engagement institution" by the Carnegie Foundation in 2008, and was reclassified in 2015.

In 2010, UNCG appointed Emily M. Janke (author) to lead the Community Engagement Initiative to establish a vision and plan for supporting excellence in community engagement. As a result of the process which included a thirty-member advisory panel with faculty, staff, students, and administrative and community leadership, the Institute for Community and Economic Engagement (ICEE) was established in 2012 with a full-time director (author Janke) and graduate student (author Medlin).

One specific element of the 2009-2014 university strategic plan activated by ICEE was "to embed into existing [data documentation methods], and where necessary, establish new, systems for tracking and assessing the broad range of community-engaged activities, programs, and initiatives across the university" (ICEE 2013, 3). A second related element was to serve as the central communication hub for community engagement activities, relationships, resources, scholarship, best practices, and outcomes. This work included communications with academic affairs, student affairs, and administrative offices campus-wide to deepen, to make more pervasive, and to integrate community engagement into core academic work and systems for the purpose of advancing strategic institutional and community missions and goals. In recognition of the important and essential interconnections between scholarship, teaching, and economic, cultural, and community engagement, the director of ICEE reports to the vice chancellor for research and economic development in the Office of Research and Economic Development.

The strategies shared here were developed and have continued to be refined since 2010 by ICEE's director and graduate student, who later served as a full-time staff member for two-and-a-half years. Today, data collection continues under the direction of the lead author (now serving as part-time director and tenure-track faculty member with teaching and department responsibilities) and a twenty-hour graduate assistant. Administration of campus-wide data collection has become more streamlined, though it still requires informed and proactive attention from administrative leadership, as described later in this chapter. While each institution will need to develop an approach that attends to its own unique context, structures, and dynamics, we discuss some key lessons learned, especially the value of creating person-to-person meetings that attend to the questions of why, what, and how as they relate to reporting community engagement and public service activities.

Insight #1: Collect Everything at One Time

To increase the feasibility of reporting data, the institute was committed to creating a single "ask" for data, compiling the various requests for data into a single form. To make the collection and reporting of community engagement and public service data most efficient, the institute staff reviewed all past, future, and likely requests for data about the university's connections with external communities, including data needs for institutional accreditation, Carnegie's Elective Classification of Community Engagement, the President's National Honor Roll for Community Service, and the University of North Carolina system's annual metric requirement.

In tandem with this review, we also spoke with a number of units across campus that have responsibility for collecting and/or reporting information about various aspects of community engagement and public service, including the Office of Leadership and Service-Learning (President's National Honor Roll for Community Service), the Office of Institutional Research (UNC System Engagement Report), and the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (Southern Accreditation of Colleges and Schools). We also spoke with the Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creativity Office to ensure that we were tracking relevant community-based undergraduate research opportunities. We reviewed existing surveys and databases used by offices internally to collect data to determine what systems we could adopt to make comprehensive university-wide data collection most feasible. Over the years, faculty had experienced increasing requests for data from multiple offices that, while distinct from each other, seemed to many faculty as redundant of previous requests.

Because the full scope of an institution's contribution to the public is the combination of community engagement partnerships and public service activities – and various requests and reports often require specific data that are often slightly different from each other (for example, whether to report student hours, faculty participation numbers, or location of the service by county) – the institute staff cast a wide net, collecting both community engagement and public service data. We used the term *community engagement*, using the definition provided by the Carnegie Foundation: "community-university reciprocal partnerships that build the capacity of university and community partners for mutually beneficial outcomes" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching n.d.). This term was defined and adopted at UNCG as a result of conversations about promotion and tenure in 2010. Likewise, we used the term *public service* to describe activities that were relatively more unilateral and unidirectional in the sense that the university provides services to the public, such as access to library services, lectures and other special events, community service opportunities, and access to facilities (Kellogg Commission 2001). The key distinction, we pointed out in all communications, is that community engagement requires the reciprocal exchange of knowledge enacted through partnership, whereas public service does not.

Collecting data about both community engagement and public service proved to be essential. It was critical to collect both types of activities if we were to tell the full scope of the institution's contributions to the wider community. Both forms of service and engagement provide significantly and meaningfully to the health, safety, and vibrancy of our communities. Further, accreditations, awards, recognitions, and annual reports request information about activities that are done in partnership with communities, as well as those in which activities are provided to the community by the university.

Not least of all, it was important to demonstrate that each of these activities was valued at the university. In the earlier conversations we had with faculty related to the documentation and evaluation of community engagement in promotion and tenure policies and practices, we had identified the tendency for individuals to assign relative and dichotomous value between the two ("community engagement is more valuable than public service"). It was important that we collected both at the same time to indicate the importance of both as meaningful contributions to communities, even though each has different processes, outputs, and outcomes. Partnerships may have elements of both public service and community engagement at different times and for different goals; and, the whole may be greater than the sum of its parts.

Insight #2: In-Person Meetings to Create Awareness and Buy-In

In our experience, we found that we needed to create an intentional plan – a plan that, in many ways, is reminiscent of community organizing practices. We needed to gain awareness, recruit allies, and encourage participation to our "cause." We found that successful implementation of such strategies and data collection efforts required active leadership and constant and consistent communication from the top-down (e.g., provost to faculty) and "middle-out" (e.g., ICEE to administrative assistants and faculty). We started with senior academic leadership, and then moved to direct communication with department and program chairs and faculty.

At the "top," the provost provided key support to the data collection initiative in several ways. First, the provost invited the ICEE director to present the request and requirements for community engagement data reporting at the bi-weekly meeting of deans. At this meeting, the director presented requirements for the data collection (accreditation, recognitions) as well as opportunities to inform strategic connections and directions for the university – what could this data tell them, and how might it be an asset to their own agenda? This meeting was important because it established awareness of the data collection initiative, as well as an opportunity to share the uses of the data – or why data matters. This top-down approach helped the deans to understand the importance of the data collection as a university initiative and provided important recognition of the context in which the provost later sent out an email request inviting all faculty and staff to participate in the data collection initiative.

Enacting a middle-out approach, the ICEE director authored an email that the provost sent as a formal university-wide request for faculty and staff to contribute community engagement and public service data. Deans were instructed to share the request with department chairs and center directors and other staff whose participation would be required. In the letter, ICEE also requested working meetings with those individuals who would most likely be reporting or coordinating reporting efforts within the unit such as the associate dean of research, department chairs, and internship and placement coordinators. Following this request from the provost, ICEE staff initiated direct contact with a key administrative leader within each academic unit asking for support to convene a meeting for their unit. The purpose of the meetings within each unit was to create a single and unified conversation about why the data was needed, what data was to be reported, and how to report data into the online mechanism.

If one were to expect that a mandate sent by the provost (or even, the president or chancellor) were to be sufficient for generating widespread participation in a data collection initiative, one would be sorely disappointed and quickly disillusioned. Meeting with each unit to discuss the content and process for data reporting was essential to recruit participation in this comprehensive data collection effort across the university. First, they were necessary for communication and information dissemination, given the variable responses of the deans with regards to coordinating conversations with key people within their units. For example, one dean sent an email with the request to key individuals within the unit and helped to launch the process by identifying a point person to help collect information unit-wide. In most other cases, ICEE staff members initiated contact with unit administrators directly (typically the associated dean of research and the internship coordinators) to prompt the meetings. This was essential as there were many cases in which department chairs were unaware of the request from the provost, although it is not clear whether the message was not sent by the dean or if the department chair had missed or misinterpreted the email request. Regardless of the cause, direct and proactive communication between ICEE staff and academic departments was crucial. Just as community organizers emphasize face-to-face meetings to generate awareness, understanding, and buy-in, we found that we needed to spend considerable time in conversation with those we hoped to participate in the data collection initiative.

Insight #3: Prepare for the Three Essential Questions: Why, What, and How

In our analysis of the first few meetings with executive leadership, as well as with faculty and staff who were to directly report or coordinate the reporting of community engagement and public service data, we found that they followed similar arcs with regard to the questions and topics raised. These can be summarized into three questions: [1] *Why* is this data being collected?; [2] *What* data is to be reported?; and [3] *How* are we to report this in a way that is accurate and feasible given limited time of the faculty and staff who do this work and know the data to report? We discovered that predicting and planning for these three overarching questions was key to introducing faculty and staff to the data collection initiative and to "convert" them from being unwilling skeptics who challenged the utility and reasonableness of the effort to willing participants who understood the value of their contributions – or why the "juice (data) was worth the squeeze (effort)" (Janke 2014).

Answering the Why

"Why do we/I need to report this information?" was the most frequent question we heard. Before we discuss the various answers we provided to this question, it is important to understand the meaning- making and motives behind this question "Why?" in the first place.

First, individuals who were asking "Why?" wondered about who the audience was for receiving information, and more importantly, what assumptions that audience would make about this information – How might they use it? What aspects of this work will be most valued, least valued, or undervalued? Our experience and scholarship on organizational management demonstrates that requests for information, whether they are ad hoc or integrated into ongoing reporting structures, are experienced as value-laden: individuals interpret information requests as indicators of what is valued by the entity asking for them (Price, Gioia, and Corley 2008). Thus, seemingly simple requests are interpreted by institutional members to be indicators of what they ought to be doing (or what someone else thinks they ought to be doing). For these reasons, data collection is important strategic work and must be handled carefully to minimize confusion, or worse, contestation, among those who are expected to provide the data. Administration of data collection initiatives must attend to various dynamics, including how messages are sent, received, and interpreted by those whose participation is critical.

Second, understanding "Why?" allows one to calculate an individual cost/benefit analysis. This will take my time, so what is the payoff? Will this help me directly, or will this help the institution more generally? These questions relate to one's individual identity and image within the institutional context: Is my work valued as a member of this organization? How do I ensure that I present myself in the most positive way?

As demonstrated here, data collection and reporting prompts meaning-making (Price, Gioia, and Corley 2008). More specifically, asking faculty and staff to report information about their community engagement and public service activities encourages them to think deeply about this request in the context of other institutional initiatives and current events and leads them to consider questions about the value of this type of work. Therefore, being aware of and proactively designing a strategy to address these questions is critical if faculty and staff are to be convinced of the value of their participation. Although each conversation was unique given the characteristics, motivations, and priorities of the unit, each tended to touch on several of the points described by Janke and Holland (2013) in “Data Matters!,” a two-sided flier developed to summarize the strategic benefits and uses of engagement and service data.

In these meetings with key administrative, faculty, and staff stakeholders, we addressed the “Why?” question drawing on various institutional priorities that might be of particular relevance to specific audiences. In this way, there was an element of improvisation, choosing what aspects would resonate with a group of people, while drawing on previously rehearsed ideas. Other institutions may find alternative or additional touchstones that are effective with their various stakeholders.

Accountability. We reminded faculty and staff that while we have become accustomed to, and even accepted as necessary and as good practice, rigorous reporting, evaluation, and monitoring of teaching and research, recently increased attention and accountability has extended to the public service part of the university’s mission. In the past, institutions of higher education did not have to report on their contributions to the state, and therefore, annual reporting mechanisms do not routinely ask about these activities. An emphasis on engagement and service accountability has been reinforced as external recognitions such as the Carnegie Elective Classification of Community Engagement, and the President’s National Community Service Honor Roll require reporting and monitoring of engagement and service data. Accreditation changes, as well as expectations from the public and the UNC system, have changed that for us as well.

Claiming the Recognition We Deserve. The phrase, “UNCG is a best kept secret,” is heard commonly across campus from faculty, students, staff, administrator, and alumni. In our conversations, we point to the importance of this initiative as it collects immediately accessible and real stories to assist in claiming and receiving the recognition that institutional members believe is deserved but not yet realized.

We remind faculty and staff that the data they report does not go into a filing cabinet in a locked room, never to be seen again, but instead, that we would ensure it was accessible by those allies on campus who were committed to helping tell their story. University relations staff are grateful to be kept up to speed on where innovative and exciting community-university projects are taking place, so that they can publicize them when and where it is appropriate. Government relations staff are able to advocate on behalf of activities that are working to affect policy or systems at the local, state, or federal levels.

Generating Revenue. Claiming recognition for community contributions is especially important, we point out, to development and advancement officers to fundraise for teaching, research, and service. Development and advancement officers have described to us the difficulty and frustrations they experience trying to keep a “pulse” on what exciting things are happening within the classrooms, the labs, communities, and other venues in which faculty, staff, and students are contributing meaningful work – work that others would want to know about and potentially fund. A central system that collects information university-wide creates a conduit between faculty and staff to development officers that would not otherwise exist. As one colleague in development noted, “In university advancement, we create little ‘cheat sheets’ within the various units so that we know who to talk about or bring with us when we meet with potential donors who want to support a particular cause or activity.”

Further, demonstrating the contributions to the community has been an important tool in capital campaigns as universities must pursue increasing proportions of their budgets from non-state funds. Other institutions, such as Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and Tulane University have both yielded successful capital campaigns drawing on their communities and regions as funders, beyond their alumni.

Likewise, comprehensive and accurate understanding of community engagement and public service activities helps faculty and professional staff to identify opportunities for interdisciplinary and cross-sector funding – an increasingly common and sometimes required component of grants, contracts, and awards.

Facilitating Connections and Collaboration. Creating a “central mind” about the services and resources that are available from across the institution to the broader community is essential if we are to become more accessible to communities. UNCG has always received calls from the community asking for help or for information, and too often those inquirers found themselves at a dead end, frustrated at the lack of care taken to help them, and giving up on working with UNCG forever. We share this story with colleagues to emphasize that by collecting engagement and service data, we are better equipped to respond to requests for information or collaboration from the community. We are able to more quickly pull together interdisciplinary teams of faculty, staff, and students who may be able to inform a particular community topic or concern.

Further, we realized that while various units across campus were committed to many events or activities (such as camps, school workshops, etc.) that were open to the public, there was no central directory for community members to access quickly. We worked to centralize and curate this list of publicly accessible resources online (http://communityengagement.uncg.edu/referral-desk), so that members of the community do not have to look across all websites to find information. At UNCG, a referral desk was established in ICEE and has been used to receive and address over 150 inquiries from the community since it was first launched nearly two years ago. The community engagement and public service data provided by faculty and staff provides the essential foundation of information required to offer such a service.

Recruiting and Retaining Students, Faculty, and Staff. We found that in talking with prospective faculty and staff, they were considering the possible community organizations they could work with as part of their decision to choose UNCG. Collecting and showcasing engagement and service data allowed prospective employees the ability to examine the current activities that were taking place between faculty, staff, and students and the community and imagine what relationships they could build or what existing projects they could easily join. One prospective faculty member shared that she had viewed The Collaboratory® [online database of community engagement and public service activities] prior to her on-campus interview for a tenure-track faculty position. She shared that she identified specific people and partners that she was interested in speaking to, and potentially, working with, should she come to UNCG. The Collaboratory® thus helped her to develop very clear and specific questions about what could be possible at UNCG and to envision a future for herself as a community-engaged scholar at UNCG. This message resonated during our conversations requesting information, as it helped department chairs and other leaders understand how they could proactively shape the message being sent by their unit about both the rich relationships that are developed at the personal level with community and the supportive and inclusive culture fostered by the unit.

Similarly, students are increasingly viewing UNCG as a place they can come to make a real difference in the world. UNCG's recent marketing campaign touted the tagline "Do Something Bigger Altogether" and frequently highlighted the unique experiences students could have at UNCG and the work they could accomplish by partnering with and serving the community throughout their entire college career.

Strategic Planning. Related to recruiting and retaining faculty, staff, and students is the potential for engagement and service data to inform strategic planning initiatives. Particularly, this data informs and clarifies goals for community engagement as a teaching pedagogy as well as an approach to research, creative activities, and public service, all of which serve to achieve key, institutional strategic goals.

For example, what impact areas do we want to specialize in; be known for; and attract, recruit, and retain students, faculty, and staff in? Do we want to establish a few deep, long-term, multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder partnerships, or continue to maintain a lot of smaller and individual partnerships? How do our projects in community align (or not) with larger university strategic priorities and initiatives? How do faculty and staff activities and scholarly strengths align with community priority areas? How many of our students are being reached by the community, and vice versa? What are our targets for engagement? What forms of activity do we want our community engaged in with our students?

Research, Assessment, and Benchmarking. One clarification we routinely had to make during our conversations was that collecting engagement and service data was the important first step of an involved and longitudinal scholarly process. Identifying the landscape of UNCG's activities in the community laid a solid foundation for more sophisticated research, assessment, and benchmarking strategies that would allow us to track progress toward some of the goals identified above. By knowing more about what community-university activities existed, we would then be able to establish some key common indicators across activities that would let us begin to talk about impact on a variety of stakeholders, asking questions such as: Does community-engaged learning positively impact students' academic, personal, professional, and civic development? Do community-engaged research and other strategic initiatives improve faculty and staff productivity and retention?

Having access to this data allowed UNCG to begin to examine its role as a member of the community, contributing to shared initiatives as just one member at a larger community table. We hope to begin to understand how, if at all, UNCG contributes to “moving the needle” on community priorities. For us to achieve this, we must move, as Holland suggests, from collections of individual and coincidental activities to collective and intentional partnerships (Janke 2014). Having this engagement and service data allows UNCG to begin examining questions such as: Do community-university partnerships improve the quality of life across a number of key community indicators like education, health, safety, or economic development?

In almost all meetings, our response to the “Why?” questions almost always includes a careful selection of the reasons addressed above. The order in which these uses are presented depends on the audience and the motivations that are likely to drive their willingness to enter records of their community engagement and public service activities.

Answering the What

The “Why?” questions were typically followed by the “What?” questions: What specific data are you asking me/us to report? What are your definitions of this work? As described earlier, ICEE was committed, to the extent possible, to creating a unified request within a single mechanism to collect information about community engagement and public service. This was done by identifying existing, as well as anticipated, reports, awards, accreditations, and other requests for data that are collected annually and regularly, or were fairly predictable given previous requests. Therefore, the surveys and (later) database included descriptions of:

- Basic project details such as description, dates, locations, and primary contacts
- Information on the faculty or staff person submitting the data (department, appointment, demographic information)
- Partner/participant information (at the organizational and individual levels)
- Areas of impact and forms of activity
- Forms of student involvement
- Assessment efforts related to the activity
- Current funding
- Resulting outcomes for the institution and for the community

The biggest challenge across our conversations was to convince faculty, staff, and administrators that this level of detail was necessary and that by only asking for this data one time (and then sharing with all the other offices that needed the data) we were actually increasing efficiencies. We argued that while the time taken to input this data at one time may be significant, they were actually saving time and reducing redundancies in the long run. These requests for data will not go away, and we are doing our best to curate these into a single “ask.”

Curating Frequently Asked Questions. Throughout the meetings with faculty and staff we heard a number of questions that were asked repeatedly. For the sake of consistency, as well as efficiency, ICEE staff collected these questions asked at meetings and via email correspondences, wrote answers, and posted them as FAQs (frequently asked questions) on the institute's webpage dedicated to the annual data collection initiative.

From a technical perspective, there were a number of frequently asked questions about either content or process. Intentionally collecting and posting these technical-related FAQS online helped to streamline questions, thereby minimizing inquiries and time spent by the institute staff responding to them. The Frequently Asked Questions website has been visited over two hundred times since its creation in March 2015, and visitors spent an average of five minutes on the webpage, suggesting that they found value in the content provided (ICEE 2015). These included data collection basics such as:

- Who should report data?
- Can I ask my administrative assistant to complete the information on my behalf?
- What if I have a lot of different activities to report?
- How is the data being collected?
- What office is leading the data collection effort?
- I worked with someone else on campus – how do I avoid duplication of reporting?
- I'm having trouble with the survey or database– who can I call for assistance?
- Can I save a copy of my survey for my own records?
- Who will have access to the data I report?
- What years of activity should I report?

Other questions were related to terminology and guidelines for what kinds of activities to report and how. These frequently asked questions included:

- What is community engagement?
- What is public service?
- Who is "community?"
- Who is a "partner?"
- Should I report service on a community board, media interviews, or invited talk?
- Should I report music, theater, dance, or other kinds of performances?
- Should I report camps, public lectures, and other events made available to the public?
- Should I report professional development or continuing education?
- Should I report internships or practicums?

Establishing responses to these types of questions were more challenging as they necessitated a degree of interpretation to categorize community engagement and public service activities as discrete, though often times related, activities. It was helpful, if not necessary, to our efforts that the director of the institute had previously been tasked by the provost to help establish definitional guidelines for community engagement and public service for the university in 2011. Though never formally adopted by the faculty senate, they have operationally served as the university's guidelines to define community-engaged teaching, community-engaged research/creative activity, community-engaged service, and public service. They are posted on the provost's university-wide promotion and tenure policy and documents site (UNCG 2010). They also explain the operational definition of "community" and "partner."

Whether institutions choose to collect data on internships, performances, camps, and community board service will depend on how the data will be used and by which units and offices. In all cases, we emphasized that the service must have been done as a UNCG representative and not as an individual citizen. We have included the FAQs and some of the responses at the end of this article (see Appendix) to make transparent our choices. Institutions may be well served by reviewing these, predicting additional questions, and generating and posting their own responses.

Answering the How

Once faculty and staff understood why and what information they were being asked to report, they tended to be much more amenable to the "How?" discussion: How do I report or oversee the reporting of data? What is the mechanism by which I record and share this information? Therefore, our meetings with faculty and staff typically concluded by addressing the technical aspects of reporting data: timelines, mechanisms, etc.

A sub-question was often attached to the initial technical question, which was: How do I report in a way that is feasible given the limited time and energy of faculty and staff? Although faculty and staff tentatively, if not wholly, agreed to the importance of the data, they worried that the requirements of the comprehensive report would be too onerous, subsequently overwhelming faculty and staff time. Therefore, a final point of discussion was to reiterate the institute's commitment to making reporting easier in future years by adopting a single database system that will allow faculty and staff to duplicate and update existing activity records. Survey systems do not retain information, thereby requiring re-entry of same or similar data each year.

While it is beyond the purpose of this article to describe specifics with regards to administering the online tools used to collect data campus-wide, it is helpful to know that to facilitate a single, comprehensive, and feasible request for community engagement and public service activities, the institute has benefited from the use of two online systems at different times. First, we used a survey form using Qualtrics software. This software has been useful because it allows for highly customized survey designs (such as branching - using if/then logic to decide what series of questions to reveal, such as for community engagement versus public service data, or data from an individual project, versus data provided across projects in aggregate), and advanced reporting and analysis features.

ICEE staff (authors) also have designed and used a relational database called The Community Engagement Collaboratory® (licensed to TreeTop Commons, LLC in 2013). This system was designed and successfully used to collect data for several years. (It is currently under development by TreeTop Commons with an expected 2016 release date). The Collaboratory provided additional features and functions to those possible through use of a survey system, such as the ability to create a database in which projects and partnerships could be updated annually, and to provide a public, web-based platform to showcase community engagement project activities and partners. Both Qualtrics and the Collaboratory database were designed to capture all data required to identify and describe community engagement and public service activities at UNCG, and serves as the basis for establishing more focused evaluation and assessment efforts.

Conclusion

Although attention to and pressure for information about community engagement activities and outcomes has increased over the past decade, there remains a high level of unawareness and, in some cases, resistance to providing information about community-university partnerships and public service activities. Resistance to reporting is not simply a community-engagement issue, but a common faculty response to many external requests for data. Increased monitoring and measuring, particularly when requested or required by external entities such as state governments, can be interpreted as challenges to institutional autonomy and academic freedom (Dugan 2006). Ultimately, collecting comprehensive campus-wide data requires support and buy-in from all levels of the university.

In his scholarship on peace building, Lederach (1997) describes the importance of a "middle-range leadership," leaders who occupy the space between formal leadership and the grassroots activities of ordinary citizens. As administrators in a university-wide institute positioned with the Office of Research and Economic Development and reporting directly to the vice chancellor for research and economic engagement, we had access to individuals with formal positions of authority (namely, the vice chancellor, provost and chancellor), as well as to faculty and staff colleagues. Applying Lererach's work to our approach, we found our middle-range leadership and middle-out approach (connecting to top and bottom) to be important for building a positive and sustainable system. Lederach (1997, 41) states that such positions are effective because they connect the top and bottom levels; they are part of a broader network that links together various groups, academic institutions, associations or organizations; and they are "typically well recognized and respected within this broader network, and also enjoy the respect of the people from their own region."

Our experience suggests that tracking community engagement and public service, and using the data to tell an accurate and comprehensive story of the institutions' engagement, requires dedicated staff at the middle-range who are capable of providing clear and informed answers to the why, what, and how questions addressed above. This is particularly true in the early phases of establishing the system, as faculty and staff encounter these requests for the first time, making meaning of what is being asked, why it is being asked, and what it requires of them. Our experience also suggests that establishing the mechanisms and protocols for collecting the data (e.g., survey, database) is time intensive, but once the system is in place, the amount of time required is greatly reduced.

Establishing new or refining existing strategies for comprehensive tracking and reporting – on any topic or metric – is a resource-intensive undertaking. In our experience, it required dedicated leadership from someone with administrative authority and a connection to executive leadership, faculty leaders, and rank and file faculty in both tenure and non-tenure tracks. It also required day-to-day attention to technical and procedural details of the survey and database tools, the ability to update the FAQs online, and the availability to serve as the first point of contact for questions related to the data initiative. Though data collection conversations and reporting occurred year round, the spring semesters were the most time intensive for data collection as the annual deadline established by ICEE for submitting data was June 1 (to be sure to capture information before faculty left for the summer). Throughout the year, ICEE staff curated a list and then later a database with details about partnerships that were not directly reported by faculty, but instead, discovered in conversations or via online announcements and publications posted in various venues including, research and alumni magazines, faculty and staff newsletters, on-campus research expo pamphlets, and UNCG public and media relations sites. Over time, we have incorporated work-study students to help serve in data capture and entry, which has produced the unintended consequence of raising their awareness and pride of the community-engaged and public service work contributed by their faculty, staff, and peers. This too is a significant outcome to consider as we continue to establish ways to involve students in data-tracking efforts.

As we look to the future, we have identified the need to continually raise awareness, clarify, and update conversations about community engagement and public service (why, what, how) – across all stakeholders. This is particularly pressing in light of rapid turnover of administrators and faculty as the baby boomer generation continues to retire in large numbers (Sugar et al. 2005). We also expect to continue to build and draw upon relationships with other offices including university relations, institutional research, enrollment management, development and advancement, and alumni relations, to facilitate updates and efficiencies across systems and activities. This is already happening at UNCG and other campuses; capital campaigns (for example, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis), student enrollment initiatives (for example, Tulane University), and alumni relations (for example, the Citizen Alum network) have been effectively advanced as a result of connecting to the university's commitment to and activity in and with the community. At UNCG, much of our early work has focused on working with university relations and creating systems to publicly showcase institutional engagement, particularly on the university's website as a way to claim the identity and image of an engaged university through large numbers of projects and partnerships showcased (Janke, Medlin, and Holland 2015).

As a direct result of data collection efforts, UNCG is now able to track and report community engagement and public service data more effectively and systematically. Data collection efforts at UNCG over the last four years have resulted in the identification of hundreds of community engagement and public service activities across every academic unit at the university as well as within the divisions of student affairs, athletics, and continual learning. Analysis of the data showed that UNCG has considerable strengths in four key areas: arts and culture for a vibrant community, education across the lifespan, economic engagement, and healthy communities (encompassing health, safety). As a direct result of this analysis, the vice chancellor of research and economic development ultimately established a new statement to succinctly describe the value of UNCG: “supporting healthy lives and vibrant communities.” At the start of faculty meetings, whether at the unit or department level, the ICEE director has presented summaries of the faculty members’ engagement to “hold up the mirror” to show them how engaged their faculty colleagues really are – and to own and build further on that engagement identity. Faculty members are seeing their data used, and they are becoming better participants and partners in the data collection initiative.

In addition to these quantitative outputs, the relationships built through this process have strengthened every aspect of the institute’s programming. Each conversation about metrics provided an opportunity for staff to raise awareness around the institute’s other initiatives, and to speak with groups of faculty and staff to which we would not have otherwise had access. As a result, we have been able to gather feedback on current and future programming from diverse audiences, and have been included in more core administrative conversations than previous years, allowing us to continue to embed engagement as a core institutional strategy.

This article moves beyond the conversation of what data to collect (see Janke 2014 for an example of system-wide institutional-level metrics) to address the issue of strategies to collect data once the items have been identified. We illuminate the critical questions and sub-questions that are likely to be raised as a campus begins this effort, regardless of the specific data points requested or systems used to collect data. Being able to foreshadow the questions allows the administrators collecting the information to create successful strategies to motivate participation, create a shared understanding, and avoid likely challenges as well as to proactively craft alliances and connections that can increase strategic use of the data provided by faculty and staff regarding their community-university relations and contributions.

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Appendix

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Posted on the Institute for Community and Economic Engagement's website (2015). See more at: http://communityengagement.uncg.edu/2015datafaqs/.

Data Collection Basics

- Who should report data?
- Can I ask my administrative assistant to complete this information on my behalf?
- What if I have a lot of different activities to report?
- How is the data being collected?
- What is the deadline for providing data?
- Who is leading the data collection effort?
- I'm having trouble with the Qualtrics survey – who can I call for assistance?
- Can I save a copy of my survey results for my own records?
- What about the Collaboratory?
- How will the data I report be used by UNCG?
- What "Counts" and What Doesn't?
- What is Community Engagement?
- What is Public Service?
- Who "counts" as community?
- Who "counts" as a partner?
- For my activity, I worked with someone else on campus – should I be worried about them redundantly reporting the same activity?
- We have an activity that happens between May 30th – June 30th, 2015 – should we report this data?
- What *kinds* of activities should be reported?
- I oversee student co-curricular community service activities, events, or programs – should these be reported?
- Should I report my service on a community board, media interviews, or invited talks?
- Should I report music, theatre, dance, or other kinds of performances? What about public lectures, camps, or other events available to the public?
- I jury exhibitions for other institutions - should this be reported?
- I host a professional development/continuing education event available to the community – should this be reported?
- I supervise student placements – should these be reported?
- I teach a project-based course in which my students complete projects in community settings or in collaboration with community organizations – should these be reported?
- I'm worried about asking my students to report data directly – will I be able to review it?
- Are there any FERPA or HIPPA concerns with student-reported data?

Select FAQ Responses

- WHO SHOULD REPORT DATA?
  - All UNCG faculty and staff who have community engagement and/or public service activities. These activities may occur as part of your teaching, scholarship, community outreach, or professional programming work roles at UNCG.
  - Students MAY report data in special cases – please see the question on *student placements* and *course projects* below for more details.
- CAN I ASK MY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO COMPLETE THIS INFORMATION ON MY BEHALF?
  - We have made it possible for others in your unit to provide information about your community engagement and public service on your behalf. This could include administrative assistants, graduate students, etc. Please keep in mind that it will be difficult for these individuals to complete the survey on your behalf, as there are a number of required fields – and nobody knows your projects better than YOU!
- WHAT IF I HAVE A LOT OF DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES TO REPORT?
  - This survey collects data on an activity-by-activity basis. Please complete one survey per activity. Each "activity" describes the key elements – who, what, where, when, and to what end – of a project, course, program, or other type of community-based or -engaged initiative.
- HOW IS THE DATA BEING COLLECTED?
  - Data is collected via an online Qualtrics survey that is available online here.
- WHO IS LEADING THE DATA COLLECTION EFFORT?
  - Provost Dana Dunn has asked the Institute for Community and Economic Engagement (ICEE) to lead the effort to capture descriptions of activities university-wide that are provided to, for, or with individuals, groups, and organizations outside of UNCG through public service or community engagement efforts.
- HOW WILL THE DATA I REPORT BE USED BY UNCG?
  - We'll be sure to share your great work with others. Your data will help inform work not only with reporting, assessment, and accreditation, but also with university relations, development/advancement, university strategic planning, professional development planning, and convenings and referrals. By knowing who is doing what, where, and with whom, we'll be able to connect people and organizations to each other who are doing similar work.
- WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?
  - Community engagement is a process by which UNCG works *with* community partners through mutually beneficial partnerships to co-create activities guided by collaborative, reciprocal co–planning and co–implementation. The exchange of expertise and ideas between academic and external community partners leads to co-creation of knowledge and activities that generate benefits for the academic institution, as well as benefits articulated by community partners.
  - Visit http://communityengagement.uncg.edu/definitions/ for more detailed definitions of community-engaged teaching, community-engaged scholarship, and more!

- WHAT IS PUBLIC SERVICE?
  - Public service is an activity through which UNCG provides expertise, resources, and services *to* or *for* community individuals, groups, organizations, and the general public. External entities may invite, host, attend, participate, and even benefit from the activity, but the primary responsibility for the design, delivery, and assessment of the activity is shaped by the academic institution. It is important to note that personal volunteerism and professional service/service to the discipline, department, and institution should not be recorded as part of this request.
- WHO “COUNTS” AS COMMUNITY?
  - Although UNCG is certainly a member of the community, we use community to mean individuals, groups, and organizations external to campus. Our community extends beyond the local to include regional, state, national, and global partners and may come from a variety of sectors, including, but not limited to, nonprofits, businesses, civic agencies, and schools.
- WHO “COUNTS” AS A PARTNER?
  - We know that it can sometimes be difficult to determine who should be listed as a partner on your activity. Consider these guidelines:
  - Do not consider academic/disciplinary associations.
  - Do not consider funding entities here, UNLESS they are involved in the activity beyond providing dollars (e.g., planning, design, implementation, evaluation). You can identify funding entities in a different section of the survey.
  - Do not consider patients, teachers, students or other participating individuals or sites as partners.
  - Other universities and colleges can be involved, but should not be the sole participants or partners in this activity.
- WE HAVE AN ACTIVITY THAT HAPPENS BETWEEN MAY 30TH – JUNE 30TH, 2015 – SHOULD WE REPORT THIS DATA?
  - Yes! We expect that there will be a few summer programs/camps that will take place during the last month of the 2014-15AY. While we are requesting that data be provided prior to May 30th for most activities (we need time to process and analyze all that data!), we will leave the survey open for those few individuals/groups who need to report data on activities that happen in June.
- WHAT KINDS OF ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE REPORTED?
  - Keep in mind that the data reported here should ONLY reflect work you conduct/coordinate/represent as part of your professional role with UNCG. While many faculty and staff serve in a number of engagement/service roles as a public citizen (e.g., coaching their child’s soccer team, volunteering at church, or involvement with philanthropic groups), UNCG cannot share those activities as part of its overall impact.
- I OVERSEE STUDENT CO-CURRICULAR COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, OR PROGRAMS - SHOULD THESE BE REPORTED?
  - Yes! This data is critical for UNCG’s application to the President’s Honor Roll. For the purposes of this request, only student co-curricular activities that take place as part of an *official UNCG program or initiative* should be reported (i.e., students’ personal volunteerism, or volunteerism that is not part of a UNCG program or event, should not be included). Co-curricular service information

should be reported by faculty or staff supervisors, advisors, or mentors as this ensures the veracity of the data.

- SHOULD I REPORT MY SERVICE ON A COMMUNITY BOARD, MEDIA INTERVIEWS, OR INVITED TALKS?
    - This initiative collects institutionally offered programs, courses, and initiatives. While individual activities connected to serving on community boards, media interviews, invited talks, and expert testimony provide essential contributions to the community, we are not collecting this level of detail at this time (this data may be reported in faculty/staff annual reports). If these roles are connected to one of these institutionally offered programs, they may be identified within the activity record.
- SHOULD I REPORT MUSIC, THEATRE, DANCE, OR OTHER KINDS OF PERFORMANCES? WHAT ABOUT PUBLIC LECTURES, CAMPS, OR OTHER EVENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC?
    - Yes! Rather than identifying each event individually, you may choose to report this data in the aggregate. Examples include music, theatre, or dance performances; book readings; athletic events; speaker series/public lectures; or other recurring outreach events. For example, the University Performing Arts Series is made up of fifteen events that are offered over the course of the year. You may choose to report each performance as a separate activity, or you may choose to complete ONE activity that summarizes the details of the entire series in aggregate.
- I TEACH A PROJECT-BASED COURSE IN WHICH MY STUDENTS COMPLETE PROJECTS IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS OR IN COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS - SHOULD THESE BE REPORTED?
    - Yes! We believe that supervised student work in community is important to capture as it is a direct reflection of your teaching role at UNCG. These courses vary in style – in some courses students focus on just one activity/partner, while in other courses, students split into teams and work with multiple partners on multiple projects. However, it is up to you to decide how meaningful this data is and how feasible it is to report. You might consider one of the three reporting options outlined in the question above.

Tracking Culture: The Meanings of Community Engagement Data Collection in Higher Education

Howard Rosing

Abstract

The essay briefly outlines the history of community engagement at DePaul University in order to explore how and why universities and colleges are increasingly adopting data collections systems for tracking community engagement. I explore the question of why there is a growing interest in tracking engagement within the academy and suggest that dominant meanings attached to tracking behavior (e.g., recognition, marketing, budget legitimation) overshadow more critical and political rationales for documenting engagement, such as those that emerge out of aspiration to understand how higher education can play a role in promoting social justice and transforming communities. I argue that the latter requires a critical, self-reflexive, ethnographic approach to tracking that illuminates not only positive outcomes of engagement but also the inevitable challenges or failures of engagement that can limit student learning, faculty scholarship, and, perhaps most importantly, community benefit.

The premise of this article is that higher education is moving through a cultural shift in respect to community engagement as a characteristic and practice that increasingly defines the identity of the academy and academic institutions. Since the early twentieth century, ethnographers have shown that culture can be elusive unless one undertakes systematic ethnographic analysis through long-term empirical research in the field. The "field" is a social space with boundaries defined by those considered to be among the research population. The field is also a political and economic arena usually, but not always, outside the academy and on rare occasions within the walls of academic institutions – a kind of space for critical institutional self-reflection. The ethnography of higher education is an emerging scholarship that for the most part has not focused a lens on community engagement as a practice or form of higher education institutional identity-making.

In what follows, I do not intend to produce an ethnographic study of community engagement in higher education. In a more limited sense, I call for further inquiry into what seems to me to be an evolving phenomenon centered on how we in the academy think about community engagement holistically in respect to its various meanings among faculty, staff, and students. This involves, I shall argue, detaching community engagement from its typical epistemological framework as a practice that supposedly involves institutions doing good for others who are constructed as underserved, needy, and vulnerable. My pursuit involves understanding community engagement beyond its strategic positioning for institutional marketing – one form of meaning production –

and into the realm of serious critical ethnographic analysis. As a starting point, the article begins to take up the issue of how and why universities and colleges have started value tracking community engagement, a phenomena that I suggest is part of a broader shift toward understanding and valuing community engagement, especially integrated into curriculum and research, across academia.

To pursue the above proposition over the long term will require understanding the meanings attributed to the concept of community engagement within the academy: that is, how it implies certain defined practices (e.g., service-learning pedagogy, community-based research, community internships, and other forms of engaged scholarship and forms of capacity building with agents typically constructed as external to institutions), all of which will need to be separately analyzed as components of the whole. Moreover, as I shall illustrate here for my own university, each higher education institution uniquely presents its own cultural expression of community engagement relative to its geography, history, and, perhaps most importantly, its social and political agenda (or "mission") at any given moment. If the field site for the ethnography of community engagement in higher education begins with the institution of higher learning itself as a cultural creation, then one key topic of study is the myriad of meanings behind how and why universities and colleges seek to engage with external communities and, as this article begins to pursue, why there is a growing interest in tracking such engagement. How, when, and why each institution chooses to develop, track, and analyze community engagement activities, I submit, says a lot about its positioning within the social, economic, and political landscape more broadly.

The article begins to take up the project of understanding the meanings associated with community engagement tracking as a practice in higher education. Part one explores why tracking community engagement matters in higher education. This realm of inquiry is vast, given the range of types of academic institutions and the missions they supposedly engender. Yet there are certain dominant discourses (e.g., institutional recognition, enrollment marketing, budget legitimation) that are articulated across universities and colleges and that emerge within dialogue at community engagement conferences, seminars, and workshops. The overarching question I grapple with is, "Why community engagement tracking now?" Even with the rapid expansion of community engagement in higher education in recent decades, up until this journal edition, there has been sparse scholarly activity exploring why institutions are developing community engagement tracking systems. Very little is understood about the diversity of meanings attributed to community engagement tracking by those like myself who are in a sense "trackers." As a consequence, the more dominant discourses on why institutions track or should track engagement overshadow more critical and overtly political rationales for tracking, such as those that emerge out of aspirations to understand how higher education can play a role in promoting social justice and transforming communities.

The second section draws on the history of community engagement tracking at my institution, DePaul University. This self-analysis is not presented for the purpose of marketing, though admittedly that may be an unavoidable, but rather to establish a framework for developing a critical analysis of community engagement tracking in higher education. The ultimate goal is to spur further ethnographic inquiry into the rationales for why, when, and how universities and colleges seek to understand comprehensively – through tracking – their own behavior in communities they seek to serve. A critical, self-reflexive, ethnographic analysis of community engagement in higher education, I contend, will produce greater transparency about the outcomes of engagement, that is, both the positive and negative or challenging results of institutionalized community engagement. I also suggest the need to incorporate community partners into tracking processes as a means to further illuminate avenues for understanding how academia can have a positive effect on the social, economic, political, and ecological issues that we seek to impact.

Why Tracking Matters

The development of higher education community engagement in the United States during the 1990s and early 2000s reflected broader changes in the academy nationally and globally. The opening of university community engagement centers was symbolic of a cultural transformation whereby administrators, faculty, and students increasingly placed value on community engagement within curriculum, co-curricular programs, and research (Welch and Saltmarsh 2013). Many such centers were endowed and named, illustrating unprecedented higher education material investments in community engagement locally and internationally. Higher education community engagement had a social value: improving town-gown relations, new venues for faculty scholarship, and a marketing tool for recruiting students to participate in a different kind of college experience infused with social meaning and the building of character. In business and leadership terms, community engagement and community engagement centers were a value-added component of educational institutions, part of rejuvenating identities as "engaged institutions" (Sandmann and Plater 2009; Holland 2001). Centers varied by institution but shared a common role in the institutionalization of community engagement often becoming the community engagement assessors or repository for assessment materials (Furco and Miller 2009). Those of us who joined such centers during this time period watched as financial and symbolic investments in community engagement produced institutional behavioral changes that redefined for many the purpose of a college degree and careers in teaching, research, and scholarship.

Higher education community engagement was not new to the late twentieth century, but certainly became more formalized and bureaucratized. An emerging engagement tracking culture was undoubtedly spurred by national recognition awards or rankings such as those published by the *U.S. News & World Report*, the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, and the Presidents Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, among others. More and more institutions created, or in some cases purchased, instruments to track community engagement behaviors – quantitatively and qualitatively. The value placed on tracking is perhaps indicative of the maturing state of community engagement in higher education and the rapidly developing need for data to legitimate institutional investments in reimagining and reimaging institutional identities. Community engagement, as I have suggested, has given new meaning to what it means to obtain a degree from, teach for, or conduct research from particular colleges or universities. Such cultural transformation, as we shall see from the case of my own institution, generally occurred slowly in small increments as institutions realized the social, economic, and political value of engagement. The technologies of tracking engagement are the most recent material culture or tools produced through institutional investment in community engagement and reflect a desire to understand the complete landscape of community-based student learning and faculty research and scholarship, among other forms of engagement. The meanings attached to data collected and the reasons for collecting it require further analysis if we are to come to some sense of truth – beyond our marketing efforts – about why and how institutions structure engagement activities.

The culture of tracking community engagement can be seen within the context of a wider set of economic factors that drive higher education. These are linked to competition for enrollment, research funding, faculty hires, and, perhaps most importantly, fundraising. Undoubtedly, community engagement tracking cannot be detached from inter-institutional competition and the broader forces pushing the marketization of higher education (Rhoades and Slaughter 2006). From the standpoint of my work, for example, the vast majority of tracking data goes toward institutional recognition applications, marketing-style publications, and grant narratives. The economic pressures of the academy help to form the meanings placed on tracking data within specific geographic contexts. More and more, engagement initiatives in higher education can be understood as distinctly place-based and embedded in localization, regionalization, and/or internationalization agendas that illustrate how particular higher education institutions are responding to, and the products of, changes in the broader political economy. The recent large institutional investment in community engagement initiatives at places such as Cornell and Duke, for example, illustrates the value for institutions of pedagogies such as service-learning and of approaches such as community-based research. Tracking validates such investments and can translate into further fundraising and marketing efforts as universities and colleges compete in an increasingly market-driven higher education landscape. Given how important community engagement has become as a fundraising and marketing strategy, it no longer a question of whether to include it as an institutional strategic goal but rather of how to do so and how to demonstrate outcomes.

While fundraising, marketing, and the desire for recognition drive much of the value placed on community engagement tracking, practitioners like myself often assign alternative meanings to tracking behavior. That is, tracking as a cultural practice is not always driven by purely utilitarian motives. There are ideologically diverse politics of community engagement across the academy that produces alternative lenses from which to view institutional community engagement data. To this end, engagement activities in higher education may appear to be politically benign forms of serving when in fact such behaviors are intricately tied to, for example, labor and immigration issues and to education and healthcare debates. A university that is partnered with an organization that supports undocumented immigrants through English (ESL) courses, childcare, and youth programming is embedded in the politics of immigration. Does the university track its partnership with the idea in mind that the institution is contributing to the well-being of undocumented immigrants? Tracking in this manner can matter for different reasons; it says something about the politics of that institution and more broadly about the explicit social, political, and economic agendas of higher education institutions in relation to local and global issues. To be sure, as scholarship begins to explore and fully illuminate how politically embedded and diverse higher education community engagement initiatives have become, new forms of meaning will be placed on obtaining a degree from, teaching for, or conducting research at particular institutions. Most importantly, tracking engagement publically in this manner could, in fact, leverage the support of higher education institutions for certain marginalized populations.

So why does tracking community engagement matter now more than ever in higher education? Clearly a desire for institutional recognition is an important rationale that is at the foundation for how we celebrate and affirm material investments in community engagement programs, offices, and centers. This rationale alone, however, misses a great deal of the values-oriented motivations for community engagement shared by many higher education engagement professionals. Many of us understand the work as channeling institutional resources toward building greater capacity for our community partners to challenge injustice. In this regard, the importance of tracking has more to do with the radical transformation of higher education institutions into vehicles for positive social change (Brukardt et al. 2004). This emerging cultural framework within the academy measures the central importance of community engagement by the impact universities and colleges have on communities. Community impact is the goal and purpose of the work; student learning and faculty scholarship is absolutely essential and highly valued but a subsidiary outcome. Tracking community engagement in the form of community impact is part of a desire to transform the purpose of higher education.

Given the academy's colonial heritage and reputation for fostering a sense of elitism, those of us orchestrating community-university partnerships are sensitive to our work being perceived off-campus as another tool for universities to "use" communities to build academic careers and prestige. This is regardless of our self-prescribed values of respect for community voice and knowledge and rhetorical commitment to social justice. Because we are in this liminal space between the academy and communities, we can see the explicit tendency for academics to perceive themselves as the most important producers of knowledge – knowledge that they then purvey to the world as self-prescribed experts. In a context like Chicago, home to my institution and a city with a long history of community organizing and activism, higher education community engagement can receive overt pushback from communities. Carelessly deploying tracked community engagement data without respecting the knowledge produced by communities with which we seek to engage can inflame such resistance and hinder future community partnerships. An institutional tendency toward self-interest in promoting how much we are "doing good" for others neglects how much community partners do to support engagement programming. In this sense, a greater focus on what the community sees as useful and relevant in tracking data could actually strengthen engagement practice and positively impact both campus and community.

Only in recent years have institutions begun to take seriously the act of documenting or tracking activities as they relate to community impact, and involving the community in such tracking is very much at an infancy stage. Furthermore, it could be argued that we have yet to debate the value of tracking higher education community engagement for the purposes of truly auditing actual behavior. We have not, I would contend, critically analyzed the ethical obligation to tell the full story of our historical or contemporary institutional behaviors as it relates to communities impacted by the academy. Instead, we generally track community engagement to illustrate what we perceive as our positive impact, ignoring concerns or complaints of our community partners or the damage our institutions may cause intentionally or unintentionally. This perspective introduces the question as to what a genuine higher education community engagement tracking process looks like. I do not address this question here, but I believe it is one that needs to be pursued rigorously if we are to be honest about the role of the academy in communities and especially if the former is making institutional claims of contributing to social justice or positive social change.

Tracking therefore matters for a variety of reasons outside of institutional marketing, recognition, and budgets. How the academy documents community engagement in ways that move beyond institutional self-interest is of significant importance and there is a need, for example, to factor into data collection on forms of dissatisfaction. Such research is especially salient in geographic spaces where universities and colleges are embedded in urban and regional economic development processes that can marginalize populations that are ironically often the target of community engagement initiatives. In this regard, there may be an ethnical relationality and responsibility that binds institutions to the task of understanding holistically the impact – good and bad – of engagement. Carefully tracking how we behave in our community engagement activities, through a self-critical ethnographic lens can support a foundational value of the academy: seeking truth through knowledge. The first task may be to consider how our own university or college has established engagement tracking and to see how or whether involving community partners in creating and using tracking data can become a reality. In the long term, if higher education institutions are truly interested in authentic community-university partnerships that involve co-planning and co-implementation, tracking must become a part of our engagement, not just a product of it.

Community Engagement Tracking at DePaul University: A Tracker's Perspective

I have been involved in higher education community engagement since the late-1990s when I began teaching courses that incorporated experiential learning. Higher education community engagement was coming of age and during a time of unprecedented economic restructuring in the United States and globally. Since the 1980s, the United States had embarked upon a neoliberal policy agenda embraced at varying levels by the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations through policies that led to austerity measures, deregulation, and privatization. As I experimented with service-learning pedagogy in introductory social sciences courses, literature emerged offering a critical perspective on community engagement and its apparent complicity with the policies of government cost-cutting in the social sector (e.g., Petras 1997). To critics, retraction of public funding through reform of social programs, for example, and the concomitant promotion of community service, including service-learning pedagogy, were not coincidental (Hyatt 2001). The political agenda, they would argue, was suppression of labor through austerity measures and the privatization of public resources while promoting service by individuals as a viable response to social problems. We were in higher education, Hyatt argues, producing "neoliberal citizens" (2001). Along with unfettered expansion of financial markets, spurred partly by electronic trading and growth in speculation and trade in derivatives, national policies supported skewing of capital accumulation toward a small percentage of the population, thereby increasing social inequality. The theoretical foundations for this political agenda were concretized in the academy in my hometown of Chicago by the Chicago school of economics and then tested internationally under the Chilean dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Eventually, these policies were applied across US federal, state, and local governments (Harvey 2005). This was the political context within which I was trained as a critical anthropologist and within which I explored the pedagogy of service learning at DePaul University in Chicago.

In the United States, economic restructuring during the 1980s and 1990s led to significant investment in redevelopment of the aging core of cities like Chicago. Since the 1970s there had been a channeling of capital – guided by municipal urban planning policies and through assistance from banks and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development – into neighborhood revitalization schemes. Enormous wealth entered cities in the form of investments in residential and commercial property, and entire neighborhoods were cleared. Working class households and the businesses that served them were replaced with higher income residents and a commercial sector that reflected their interests. Many urban higher education institutions were situated geographically within such gentrifying spaces where they took part in neighborhood transformation by acquiring property to expand campuses. Concurrently, new forms of community engagement practice were developing such as service-learning pedagogy. An interesting irony emerged in relation to the role of metropolitan higher education institutions within the context of an urban redevelopment environment that removed the very people who were the target population that many universities and colleges sought to support through community engagement.

When in 2001 I embarked upon a career in support of higher education community engagement at DePaul, numerous Chicago communities were in the midst of neighborhood changes; multiple battles were being fought over gentrification and decreasing access to affordable housing. The university, with campuses in the Northside Lincoln Park neighborhood and in downtown Chicago, was immersed in the transformation of the city. During the 1970s and 1980s, DePaul faced the challenge of both watching and participating in the redevelopment of its surrounding neighborhood, a process that meant displacement of many of those who demographically fit the profile of those the university sought to educate and serve. By the 1990s, both Lincoln

Park and Loop campuses were in the midst of redevelopment. Lincoln Park in particular had been a dense working class mix of Puerto Rican, black, and white residents who increasingly found housing unaffordable. Since the 1970s, DePaul had expanded its physical footprint in the neighborhood, purchasing tracks of housing and redeveloping them into classrooms, student housing, and offices. As the university's enrollment increased along with its physical size, Lincoln Park became even more gentrified along with most of Chicago's Northside neighborhoods. The ramification of this process was the pushing of lower income populations to the west and south. Within this context, I dived into building an academic community engagement program, connecting faculty and students to community partners in a city ripe with dynamic and, in some cases, volatile socioeconomic contexts.

DePaul was a unique place to build community engagement programming. Founded in 1898 by the Catholic Vincentian order, the university's central purpose was to educate those with the least access to higher education in the city. One of three Vincentian universities in the United States that models itself after the life's work of the seventeenth century priest Vincent de Paul, the university consistently prides itself on its mission which "places highest priority on programs of instruction and learning." The mission statement also includes a succinct statement about community engagement:

> As an urban university, DePaul is deeply involved in the life of a community which is rapidly becoming global, and is interconnected with it. DePaul both draws from the cultural and professional riches of this community and responds to its needs through educational and public service programs, by providing leadership in various professions, the performing arts, and civic endeavors and in assisting the community in finding solutions to its problems. (DePaul University Office of Mission and Values)

Of particular note was the university's openness during the early twentieth century to enrolling women (1911) and Jews when quotas at other Chicago area universities limited their access. Most recently, the university's leadership, including the president himself, has been active in supporting campaigns for the education of immigrants and their children. Equally important, DePaul consistently seeks to ensure a balance of economically and racially diverse students through enrollment and attainment strategies. These are only a few examples among an array of past and current university policies and practices where the university seeks to realize its mission.

During my early days at DePaul, I noticed how the institution's mission was regularly spoken about among faculty, staff, and students, especially in relation to first-generation students and community service but also as a tool to hold the university accountable to principles of social justice and fairness. Notwithstanding DePaul's rapid growth during the 1990s and early 2000s, eventually reaching 25,000 students and becoming the largest Catholic university in the United States, community engagement remained an important institutional focus. Ironically, new investments brought the university into neighborhoods where displaced Lincoln Park residents relocated in search of affordable housing. In 1994, DePaul opened the Monsignor John

J. Egan Urban Center (EUC) with grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust. According to its mission, EUC was to "extend opportunities for DePaul, in collaboration with Chicago communities, to address critical urban problems, alleviate poverty, and promote social justice through teaching, service, and scholarship." The Center's namesake, John Egan, a priest whose years of activism in Chicago during the 1960s largely focused on affordable housing, reflected DePaul's commitment to social justice, notwithstanding the transformations in Lincoln Park. Well known for his early work in Chicago, Egan returned to the city from a position at Notre Dame in 1982 and in 1987 took on leadership of DePaul's Office of Community Affairs until his death in 2001 just a few months before my arrival (Steinfels 2001).

Under the leadership of Elizabeth Hollander, former director of planning for Mayor Harold Washington (Chicago's first and only African American mayor), the Egan Urban Center flourished through federal and foundation grants. The university partnered with community groups in ways that leveraged DePaul's educational resources to directly support community development projects in housing, education, technology, and job creation within low-income communities. The center developed into two vibrant offices, one on each DePaul campus, filled with community researchers, organizers, and engagement practitioners whose work became a vehicle for the university's engagement with grassroots community organizers and development professionals. Drawing on the work of the Asset-based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University, the EUC incubated programs and organizations that focused heavily on assisting communities to build capacity to address critical urban problems. By the time I arrived in 2001, EUC had become the university's force for supporting positive social change throughout many communities on the south, west, and near northwest sides of the city. Until his death, Egan himself continued to push forward on social justice campaigns (Steinfels 2001). Three years later, in 2004, an enormous statue of Egan was erected in front of DePaul's Lincoln Park student center with the inscription, "What are You Doing for Justice?"

Ten years following the establishment of EUC, DePaul had not yet considered systematically documenting its own contributions to social justice by way of well-institutionalized community engagement programming. In truth, the statue of Monsignor Egan reflected decades of service and activism at DePaul. Unquestionably, there has been a strong ethos of community engagement among faculty, staff, and students since the university's beginnings. Indeed, the original purpose of the institution was to provide access to higher education to those least served. Not surprisingly, the institution attracted and helped to form faculty and students that pushed for deeper institutionalization of social justice initiatives both on and off campus. During the 1960s, for example, African American students hosted a sit-in resulting in the creation of the Black Student Union, and during the 1990s, Latino students agitated for a center that resulted in the opening of the university's Cultural Center to provide a safe meeting space for students of color and other underrepresented groups (now the Center for Intercultural Programs). By the 2000s, strategic planning and increasing enrollment led the university to make additional institutional investments in co-curricular community engagement. This occurred through the University Ministry Office in student affairs that supported weekly student-led service groups, service days, and domestic and international service immersion trips among other programs. DePaul's largest financial investment in community engagement occurred just prior to my arrival in 2001 with the establishment of the Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and Community Service Studies.

The idea of the Steans Center partly emerged out of EUC strategic planning to engage students in their community-based projects. Institutional strategic planning during the mid-1990s also included development of an experiential learning course requirement in the undergraduate liberal studies curriculum (Meister and Strain 2004). One primary way to fulfill the requirement was for students to complete an approved course that integrated service-learning pedagogy, and in 1998, the Office for Community-based Service Learning (CbSL) was established with seed funding from the Steans family. The office's founding director, Laurie Worrall, who had been on the staff of EUC, was charged with the goal of integrating service-learning pedagogy into DePaul's curriculum with a special emphasis on supporting the experiential learning requirement. Worrall and her small staff proceeded to build DePaul's infrastructure to support service-learning course development. The office proceeded to build a momentum that would prove worthy of a five-million-dollar endowment from the Steans family in 2001 and renaming of the office as the Steans Center. The endowment leveraged DePaul to deeply invest in curriculum-based community engagement. Just before I arrived, the university's internal newspaper published its May edition announcing both the passing of John Egan and the Steans endowment.

When I arrived at DePaul, the Steans Center was just months old, and we temporarily shared space with the University Ministry Office's co-curricular community engagement staff. Although collaboration existed across EUC, the Steans Center, and the University Ministry Office, the university's three main community engagement units, comprehensive tracking of the institution's engagement activities had yet to evolve. The work of all three units expanded rapidly and somewhat independently: EUC building contracts for research, capacity-building, technical assistances, and evaluation with nonprofit partners; the University Ministry Office building opportunities for co-curricular service activities; and the Steans Center expanding the use of service-learning pedagogy. A need to build effective programming took priority over development of cross-unit collaboration that could theoretically improve impact on communities. We were not ready to think collaboratively about our institutional commitment to community engagement, let alone track it.

I had not considered tracking DePaul's community engagement work until 2005 when Laurie Worrall, then appointed to the provost's office as associate vice president for community engagement, began collecting engagement data for the first Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement application. Worrall had recently completed a dissertation that would soon become a journal article on community-partner perspectives on service-learning relationships (Worrall 2007). Given that this was one of the first such studies to listen to community partners in this manner, I can see in retrospect how and why my early work in service-learning was not concerned with understanding community impact. The following year in 2006, I was appointed director of the Steans Center and charged with completing the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, a process that, unbeknownst to me at the time, would install me into the role of DePaul's primary community engagement tracker. My starting point for DePaul's community engagement tracking was patching together what university staff perceived as community service successes.

The roll out of the Carnegie Classification in 2006, which Worrall had successfully attained for DePaul, coincided with the university's new six-year strategic plan, Vision 2012. I was asked by the provost's office to align the Steans Center's goals with those of the university's strategic plan. The plan specifically embraced community engagement with language such as "engage the City of Chicago to extend classroom learning," "prepare students to be socially responsible future leaders and engaged alumni," "promote leadership, civic engagement, cultural awareness, and personal and spiritual development," and "become a university known for its students' lifelong commitment to social justice and civic engagement." The plan led to additional budgetary allocations to the Steans Center and community engagement in general, further expanding DePaul's reach throughout Chicago neighborhoods. I completed the first President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll application in collaboration with colleagues in the University Ministry Office. We collected data and stories from across the university using emails and spreadsheets, a process repeated for several years. I also submitted applications to a variety of organizations to receive recognition awards from, for example, the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Award for Campus-Community Collaboration and the Washington Center Higher Education Civic Engagement Award. Vision 2012 had fostered university-wide collaboration to promote community engagement externally and internally and the associate vice president of student affairs established DePaul Engage, a network of staff and faculty from across the university who were involved in community engagement activities. Through quarterly meetings of DePaul Engage and informal discussions across units, DePaul began formalizing approaches to tracking community engagement.

Historically, it is often recounted by veteran university staff and faculty, DePaul quietly engaged in a variety of community-based initiatives; these activities were seen as simply what the institution does; why it exists in the first place. This intrinsic sense of institutional character suggests why the university had not coordinated its community engagement efforts in a more comprehensive fashion. Vision 2012 challenged DePaul folklore and called for the university to "become a university known for its students' lifelong commitment to social justice and civic engagement." This objective was emblematic of how far the university had come in institutionalization of community engagement, provoking deeper questions about how much, where, and to what ends DePaul was engaged with communities. As Vision 2012 came to a close, these questions reemerged within a task force I co-chaired charged with making recommendations for the subsequent plan. The goal of the task force was to explore how DePaul could further "Engagement with Chicago."

Though Vision 2012 spurred significant growth in community engagement at DePaul, tracking activities remained at the unit level, and then a few others and myself collected data annually. In time, I began working with a representative from the president's office who assisted in collecting the data. Information was managed in a database at the Steans Center and distributed to other units upon request, typically for grant writing, marketing, and internal and external communications. The final version of Vision 2018 (Goal II) would include language that called for the university to "deepen DePaul's connection with Chicago, enriching students' educational experiences," to "strengthen partnerships with the city and the region, expanding our influence as an urban partner," and to "achieve recognition as the city's higher education anchor institution and the premier institution for Chicago civic engagement." Even more than Vision 2012, Vision 2018 suggested DePaul could no longer afford to quietly engage with communities for such a central component of its mission. Tracking engagement seemed imperative.

In the summer of 2013, the associate vice president of student affairs and I began coordinating the DePaul Committee on Community Engagement, an ad hoc group that brought together leadership of units, many of which facilitated community engagement activities. The group was asked to assist in improving upon cross-unit collaboration on community engagement initiatives and tracking the institution's engagement was our top priority. The committee discussed moving toward an online platform where units would submit relevant data and information to a system that could efficiently build a profile of the university's community engagement efforts. Goal II of the strategic plan, "Engagement with the City of Chicago," and the pending call for Community Engagement Reclassification by the Carnegie Foundation provided an impetus for our work. I began meeting with vendors of community-engagement-tracking software, attending sessions at conference on tracking engagement, and initiating discussions with DePaul's information services about developing an in-house system. Outside of our 2006 Carnegie Classification application, DePaul had never comprehensively tracked community engagement activities, let alone their impact on faculty, staff, students, or community partners.

During 2012-2013, a group from DePaul participated in the American Association of Colleges and Universities Civic Learning & Democratic Engagement Collaborative with Chicago Area Colleges and Universities. The group produced a report that established a set of recommendations, including to "establish and oversee effective processes for data and story collection related to DePaul's community engagement work for the purposes of documenting, reporting, and public relations needs" (Chaden et al. 2013). Completed in December 2013 and submitted to the provost, the report noted that the university was "under-utilizing and under-promoting significant university strengths and a unique and distinguishing mark of who we are"; and that a lack of a tracking system made it challenging not only for marketing, communication, and public relations, but also "for those within the university to collaborate with others in communities and with organizations where an established relationship already exists." The latter reflected other DePaul folklore stories about faculty, students, and staff from distinct units partnering with the same community organizations without even knowing it. As a result, the report concluded that "we are less effective than we might be (in our community engagement) if there existed a more transparent mechanism for sharing this information publicly." The sentiment of this conclusion became clear to me as I completed the Carnegie reclassification application and had to speak honestly about our need to better track engagement activities. After completing the application in spring 2014, I charged the Steans Center's technology coordinator with creating a prototype for a university tracking system.

The goal of the prototype was to allow us to begin to think through what was necessary to track university community engagement and to document the impact of the institution on communities. The starting point remained tracking activities or "projects" and not on incorporating an actual assessment of our impact on communities. By early 2015, I began using the system to prepare for the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll application and quickly learned that the value of this first iteration was limited. Essentially, we produced a calculator that made it easier to generate community service numbers needed for the honor roll application. The system's limitation clearly illustrated the need for larger institutional investment in tracking technology. In spring 2015, the university received the community engagement reclassification from the Carnegie Foundation, and shortly after, I worked with student affairs to submit a formal proposal to information services to produce a university tracking system. By the summer of 2015, the proposal was accepted and comprehensive community engagement tracking became a DePaul priority.

Conclusion

What will become of our emerging community engagement tracking culture at DePaul? As we build, test, and implement a new system, how we choose to track engagement will certainly be discussed and debated, and the outcome will reflect where we position ourselves with the social and political landscape of higher education. Discussions about the design of the DePaul tracking system will be filled with meaning-making: What to include? How and why to include it? The verdict remains out as to whether future community engagement tracking and trackers at the university will holistically document and assess our successes as well as the quarks and blemishes that could build an authentic culture of tracking both in scope and content. The system under development will not only allow for tracking engagement activities across campus but also will include an application for maintaining a historical record of engagement outcomes that could in theory include achievements and challenges. There is also a proposal to formally recognize a DePaul Council on Community Engagement and part of the Council's charge will be to guide future development and usage of the new community engagement tracking system and how data is employed for assessment purposes rather than solely for institutional promotion and marketing.

At the Steans Center, I intend to continue pursuing assessment and scholarship focused on dissatisfaction with community engagement as a means to improve our work. In 2010, we published an assessment project analyzing student dissatisfaction with service-learning pedagogy (Rosing et al. 2010), and in 2014, we embarked upon a similar analysis of community-partner dissatisfaction (Rosing et al. 2014). During the fall of 2015, we held focus groups with community partners, both to attain deeper feedback on engagement activities and also to produce new tools for collecting data on partnerships and determine the impact they are having on community organizations and peoples' lives. The focus groups solicited the cooperation of community partners in developing tracking and evaluation resources to further their interests and the interests of DePaul from the standpoint of its educational and community engagement mission. Through such efforts, I hope to build new forms of meaning from data that values accomplishments but also illuminates the realities we face as we struggle to understand what works best with various engagement efforts. I intend to draw on the product of the new community partner evaluation tools to tell stories about our work that incorporate all aspects, including when things go wrong or fail, and to publicize this data in a fashion that helps us to build a greater sense of trust with our community partners. To this end, planning is also underway at the center to incorporate evaluation data throughout our website and to include dissatisfaction results (complaints) from community partners, students, and faculty.

As higher education institutions increasingly value community engagement as a characteristic and practice, there remains a question as to whether there will be truthful and transparent tracking and assessment of engagement; whether tracking systems will allow for self-reflexivity and critical analysis of engagement behaviors, and include perspectives from community partners. There is a need, as I have suggested, for deeper ethnographic inquiry into how those in the academy think about higher education community engagement and to move beyond tracking systems that only allow for easier promotion of how institutions do good for others. Geography, history, and social and political agendas will surely continue to inform the meanings behind how and why institutions engage with external communities, as they have at DePaul. Why and how we in higher education choose to track such engagement within our respective sociopolitical contexts will say a lot about our motives and intentions. Why tracking matters at DePaul evolved on its own timeline for reasons that related to but existed beyond institutional recognition, marketing, and budget legitimation. Collecting community engagement tracking data has become increasingly useful for understanding and deepening our role in Chicago as a university that asks its students, faculty, and staff, "What are we doing for justice?"

Inquiry into rationales for why universities and colleges seek to comprehensively track community engagement remains in its infancy. Future ethnographic analysis of community engagement in higher education will surely include a critique of institutional practices. In the end, I am convinced that such scholarship will produce greater transparency about the motivations and values that drive institutional engagement with communities. The longer term question persists as to whether the academy will move beyond the "who is the best" syndrome that seems to pervade through much of higher education community engagement tracking behavior; whether institutions will take up the challenge of documenting and publishing findings from engagement activities that build an authentic picture of impact on communities. This type of tracking will have to ask to what extent our practices in the community are hegemonic: for example, to what extent are we proliferating ethnocentrism among students and affirming notions of privilege in how we track and publicize our community engagement work; to what extent do we present our engagement outcomes as ahistorical and detached from current social, economic, and political issues, depoliticizing engagement in ways that mystify the complicity of the academy in producing structural inequality; and to what extent is our work impaired by tendencies to solve problems in communities rather than to deploy resources to honestly and transparently assist in building the capacity with our community partners.

As I have sought to articulate, there is a value in telling personal stories that lead to deeper inquiry into our emerging community engagement tracking practice in higher education. An authentic tracking practice will require a different kind of data analytics; one where the conclusions drawn will allow for better decision-making, for verification of models or theories of engagement at the institutional level, and for comparative analysis across institutions about successful and challenging engagement practices. As we pursue development of a critical community engagement tracking practice, telling stories that unpack the good news as well as the challenges and controversial baggage of the past and present, we will likely produce new meanings and a sense of humility and increased integrity attached to our institutional engagement profiles. Perhaps the new meanings that emerge from this type of tracking culture will serve as some of the most effective institutional promotion that we can ask for.

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Supporting University-Community Partnerships through Shared Governance and Assessment

Kelsey Beckett

Abstract

University-community partnerships have always been an important part of Towson University's mission and charge as an anchor institution in the Baltimore metropolitan region. After the recent unrest in Baltimore, these partnerships are more important than ever. This paper will explore Towson's institutional partnership governance and new partnership support system, as well as how both helped the university respond after the riots in Baltimore City. The future of partnerships at Towson University will also be discussed.

Partnerships and relationships with the community are a major part of many universities' missions and strategic plans, though that has not always been the case. As Martin, Smith, and Phillips note, "historically, partnerships between universities and community organizations have either been non-existent or unconstructive; this state of affairs being the result of opposing philosophies and practices," (2005, 2). They go on to note that despite this, the last ten years has seen an increase in the number and scope of university-community partnerships (Martin, Smith, and Phillips 2005).

This renaissance is likely due in part to the Kellogg Commission Report, *Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution*. This report calls on public and land-grant institutions "to go beyond outreach and service to what the Kellogg Commission defines as 'engagement.' By engagement, we refer to institutions that have redesigned their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities…" (Kellogg 1999, 9). The Kellogg Commission notes that universities and communities should work together to address social and economic concerns (1999).

Since that report, others have echoed the importance of university-community partnerships in tackling the "wicked problems" of today. Rittel and Webber state that "now that these relatively easy problems have been dealt with, we have been turning our attention to others that are much more stubborn," (1973, 156). They say, of the term wicked problems, "We use the term 'wicked' in a meaning akin to that of 'malignant' (in contrast to 'benign') or 'vicious' (like a circle) or 'tricky' (like a leprechaun) or 'aggressive' (like a lion, in contrast to the docility of a lamb)," (1973, 160). They go on to state that the characteristics of wicked problems are difficult to define and that the problems themselves are difficult to solve (Rittel and Webber 1973). There are several ways to approach these problems, however, and many possible solutions.

Judith Ramaley writes that higher education is approaching these wicked problems, saying, “The role of higher education is changing in today’s world because the world itself is changing, and complex problems confront us daily,” (2014, 7). She outlines an approach to addressing wicked problems that includes various disciplines, greater collaboration, and the involvement of new people who can bring fresh perspectives (Ramaley 2014). Ramaley also says, “The university must create new forms of infrastructure to support and sustain these new working relationships while encouraging faculty and students to seek out integrative and collaborative opportunities that address today’s complex problems,” (2014, 18).

Martin, Smith, and Phillips advocate moving toward a governance approach that involves the community to solve problems and uses new tools to achieve success (2005). Bringle and Hatcher also note how imperative it is to develop campus-community partnerships to address critical issues in the community (2002). These partnerships can “grow out of crises (e.g., natural disaster), be arranged through third parties (e.g., city government connects the campus and a community organization to work on a project), or occur through coincidence (e.g., both parties attend a meeting with a common interest),” (Bringle and Hatcher 2002, 506).

Morrell, Sorensen, and Howarth note that finding solutions to wicked problems works best if representatives from the university and the community work together to identify contributing factors and propose solutions (2015). Partnerships aimed at helping to address these problems should be action-oriented, as well as research-oriented (Morrell, Sorensen, and Howarth 2015).

Towson University (TU) understands the importance of university-community partnerships as well as anyone. TU was founded as the Maryland State Normal School, a teacher’s college, and partnerships have been an integral part of its mission and charge as an anchor institution in the Baltimore metropolitan region ever since. TU recognizes that as a public university, major employer, and economic driver, it is our duty and responsibility to be truly connected and responsive to our community. After the recent unrest in Baltimore in April 2015, this responsibility became even greater.

Background

The sense of duty and the realization that Towson could play a critical role in tackling pressing issues led the late President Maravene Loeschke to call for a more standardized way of tracking and evaluating the institution’s partnerships. Prior to this, partnerships were being measured haphazardly, and faculty and staff were often asked for the same information from several different offices which caused frustration and pushback. This led to faculty and staff members feeling as though the information was not being used effectively and that their time providing this information was not valued.

Different types of partnerships were also (and still are) managed by different offices. The Office of Civic Engagement and Leadership focuses on service-learning, civic engagement, leadership, and sustainability initiatives. The Office of Community

Service organizes and manages community service opportunities for students on campus. The Office of Partnerships and Outreach works to connect community members with university resources, while also leading assessment efforts. This decentralized approach meant that each office was not always aware of what the others were doing, which meant that the university did not have a good grasp on what partnerships were happening, who was participating, what organizations faculty and staff were working with, the number of students involved, etc.

Under this charge, the university developed definitions for university-community partnerships and relationships, as well as a system of evaluation and support for faculty and staff members leading these partnerships and relationships. These new mechanisms have already helped TU quickly pull information about the institution's work in Baltimore City to provide to the governor's office and the University System of Maryland.

Defining University-Community Partnerships and Relationships for Towson University

In order to determine the best way to manage and support partnerships and relationships at Towson University, it was important to understand the role of partnerships, how they are defined, and the guiding principles behind them. Towson's mission statement highlights outreach to businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, schools, and health care organizations, while also emphasizing the role of applied research, community service, and student experiences outside of the classroom – characteristics found in the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement for which the university has received recognition (in 2008 and 2015).

Towson University's current strategic plan, "TU 2020: A Focused Vision for Towson University," also emphasizes university-community partnerships and relationships. One of its main underlying principles is community outreach. There are ten priorities for the institution, several of which are focused on partnership activities:

- Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Applied Research,
- Internships and Experiential Learning Opportunities,
- A Model for Leadership Development, and
- Student, Faculty, and Staff Well-Being.

To build on the charge laid out in the mission statement and strategic plan, the university worked to define what university-community partnerships and relationships are and what they mean to Towson University. The working definition of partnerships that is used by the institution states, "Partnerships at Towson University focus on the collaboration and exchange of knowledge, expertise, and resources. Our partnerships support the mission of the university, enhance the student learning experience, and are central to our identity as a community-engaged institution." Relationships, though they still include a university entity and an external organization, differ from partnerships in that they likely have a single purpose or goal and are often one-way. This distinction is important because partnerships, in contrast to relationships, require more and different kinds of support from the university.

Towson highly values these relationships and partnerships and purposely seeks out relationships and partnerships that enhance student learning and the research and scholarship of our faculty, while dually having a positive impact on the education, economic vitality, and social well-being of our community.

Within these university-community partnerships and relationships are community engagement activities, community outreach activities, or both. TU adheres to the Carnegie Foundation definition of community engagement, which says, "Community engagement describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources," (Carnegie 2012). The university's definition for community outreach states, "Community outreach describes services that are carried out by the University for/in the community, rather than with the community."

Institutional Partnership Governance

To understand how partnerships are currently managed at Towson, an explanation of the institutional governance structure must be provided. Figure 1 shows an overview of the primary offices involved in managing community engagement partnerships and work.

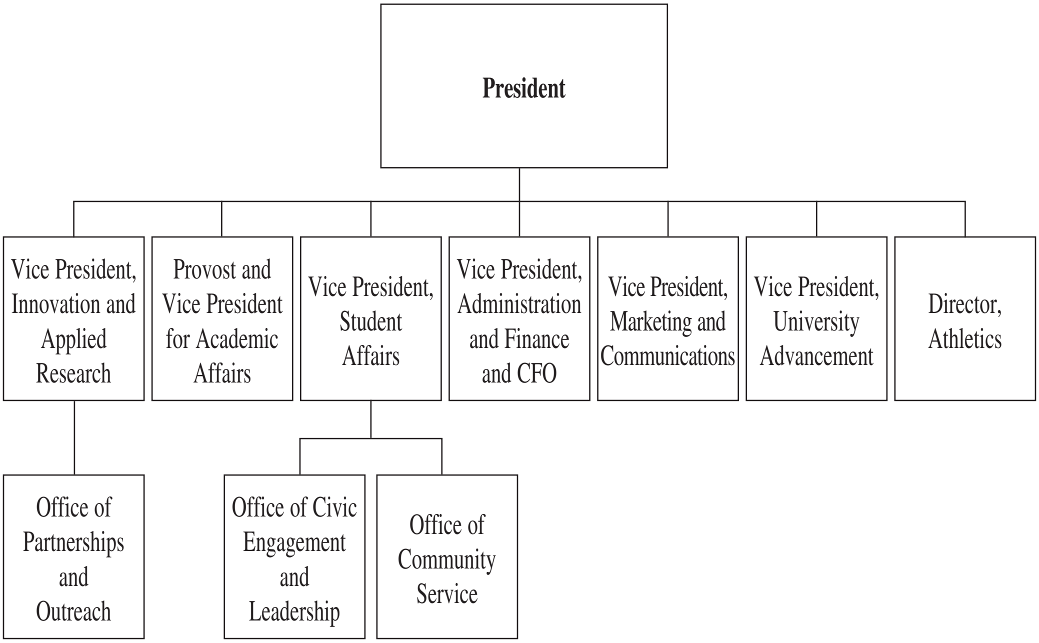
TU intentionally applies a decentralized strategy to support partnerships across campus. Community engagement and partnerships are encouraged and supported by individual deans and vice presidents, but there are offices that were created to specifically manage and support different types of partnership work.

The Office of Partnerships and Outreach, in the Division of Innovation and Applied Research, was created to strengthen the ties between the university and community by supporting partnerships and serving as a point of contact for the community. This office has been allocated two full-time staff members and a student employee whose work is directly related to supporting partnerships.

The Office of Civic Engagement and Leadership is in the Division of Student Affairs. Its responsibilities are in the areas of political engagement, environmental/ sustainability initiatives, and service-learning. There are three full-time staff members and numerous student interns and graduate assistants in this office.

The Office of Community Service within the student activities area of the Division of Student Affairs focuses on identifying and organizing community service opportunities for TU students. Community service has a full-time coordinator, as well as a graduate assistant.

Figure 1. Organizational Structure – Partnership Management



In addition to the aforementioned structures, a Partnership Working Group was formed in fall 2014 at the behest of the President's Council. This group is made up of fifteen individuals from across campus, representing every academic college and administrative division. This group has three main purposes:

1. Identify potential partnerships for consideration as university signature partnerships
2. Review current partnerships across campus in order to identify opportunities to expand them or to connect them with other projects to create more extensive and expansive partnerships
3. Review and evaluate approved university signature partnerships to ensure that progress is being made, that goals are being met, and that new goals are being set at specified intervals

The Partnership Working Group serves, in general, as a support and governing body for university-community partnerships. Since there are members from all areas of campus, this group is able to identify where information is missing, where gaps exist, and what faculty and staff members may need in terms of support. The Partnership Working Group also serves as a forum to discuss questions that arise from campus regarding partnerships.

Towson University-Community Relationships and Partnerships Support System

Getting to the point of developing and implementing a stronger support system for university-community partnerships has been a natural build for Towson University. Towson earned the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement and Outreach in both 2008 and 2015. Improvement areas were identified by the Carnegie Foundation and included tracking and assessment of partnerships.

To prepare for the 2015 re-application, a Carnegie Taskforce and Evaluation Subgroup were created to assess Towson's status with regards to evaluation of partnerships and what improvements could be made. These groups collected information from across campus about what faculty, staff, and students were doing and how different offices and units were measuring and assessing these activities. These groups were a precursor to the Partnership Working Group. They were larger, to encourage more input from many different areas on campus. The Partnership Working Group, in contrast, was convened as a smaller, more focused group.

The university president, seeing that there were deficiencies in how the institution was tracking and assessing partnerships, called for one centralized data collection and support system. Using a tool that was developed by the Carnegie Evaluation Subgroup, baseline data about partnerships happening across the university were collected in spring 2014. The data revealed a number of partnerships that were not previously visible, further highlighting the need for a new system. The Partnership Working Group was then convened in fall 2014 to further address some of the issues and challenges that the university faced regarding partnerships.

The working group spent six months developing a support system for university-community partnerships. The purposes of the system are to enhance the recognition of faculty- and staff-led partnerships, identify Towson's partnerships and relationships, determine their scope, coordinate campus resources, and evaluate impacts and outcomes.

The Partnership Working Group reviewed the baseline data about TU's partnerships to determine what partnerships were happening, what their characteristics were, and how they were currently being supported by the institution. From that information, the group recognized that there are different types of partnerships that range in size, scope, and purpose and that different types of partnerships require different levels and types of support. The purpose of defining different types of partnerships and relationships is not to place value on one type over another, but rather to group similar partnerships and relationships together in order to systematically determine how best to support them.

The group outlined four types of partnerships, their characteristics, evaluation expectations, and the support that is needed for each type. A full chart of the partnership types appears below in Figure 2.

It was important to the group to recognize both partnerships, as well as relationships. Many activities done by faculty and staff fall into the "relationship" category, meaning that they may not be as robust as partnerships and may be more one-way, such as a community service project or working on a contract basis with an organization. However, the group felt that these interactions were just as important to collect information about and that to leave out relationships would be to ignore a whole set of partners and range of activities that are still central to the mission of the university.

Figure 2. Partnership and Relationship Types

Type	Characteristics	Information Collected and Evaluation Expectations	Support Provided
Early Stage Collaboration	• An Early Stage Collaboration is an idea, conversation, or developing concept for a new community outreach relationship or partnership. The faculty or staff member may already be informally working with a community partner in hopes of developing a more defined relationship or partnership.	• As an Early Stage Collaboration is developed, basic information is collected from the lead such as the number of people involved (students, faculty, staff, external), the desired partnering organization, and the general purpose and goals of the eventual partnership or relationship. This information will be stored offline. • Once the idea has progressed to a community outreach relationship or community engagement partnership, it will be added to the Community Partnerships Database.	• Identifying additional potential collaborators both on and off campus • Resources for how to get the partnership off the ground

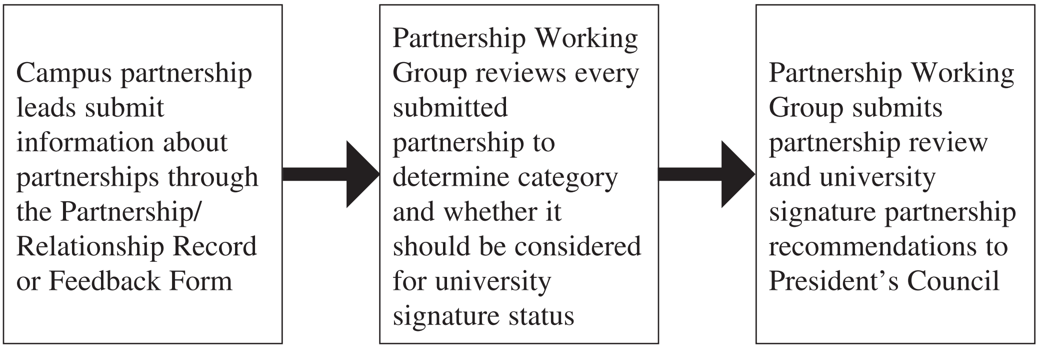
Community Outreach Relationship	***Partners*** • Relationship between a university entity (department, division, individual faculty or staff member) and an external organization in business, government, nonprofit, education, or the community. ***Purpose*** • Most likely has a single purpose or goal, including but not limited to grants, contracts, research, community service, or service-learning, internships. • May or may not directly involve students. ***Timeframe*** • May be a limited amount of time or more sustainable.	• As new relationship is formed, basic information is collected through the Community Partnerships Database, such as number of people involved (students, faculty, staff, external), who the partnering organization is, timeframe, and the general purpose of the relationship. • Annually submit outcomes and impacts.	• Identifying additional potential collaborators both on and off campus • Raising awareness of the relationship both internally and externally • Assistance with reporting the outcomes of the relationship

Community Engagement Partnership	***Partners*** • Partnership between a university entity (department, division, individual faculty or staff member) and an external organization in business, government, nonprofit, education, or the community. ***Purpose*** • Can be for a singular purpose or goal or have multiple goals/ purposes and addresses student learning outcomes. • There is mutuality and reciprocity among all partners. ***Timeframe*** • Timeframe will be determined based on the purpose and goals of the partnership and may range from one semester to several years.	• Once a new partnership is formed, information about the partnership will be collected through the Community Partnerships Database, such as number of people involved (students, faculty, staff, external), who the partnering organization is, timeframe, general purpose of the relationship, intended impacts and outcomes, and the intended student learning outcomes. • In order to ensure clear goals and roles within the partnership, a written agreement between the partners is recommended. • Annually submit outcomes and impacts • Feedback from community partners will be collected annually to determine their perceptions on the partnership and how it is progressing.	• Identifying additional potential collaborators both on and off campus • Raising awareness of the partnership both internally and externally. • Assistance with reporting the outcomes and impacts of the partnership. • Review of partnership goals and progress • Inclusion in events and publications such as annual reports and the TU Showcase. • Partnership information is collected and compiled into an annual report for the personal and professional use by the faculty and staff members involved.

University Signature Partnership	***Partners*** • Partnership is formed between the university (including stakeholders from more than one unit, department, college, or division) and one or more external organizations in business, government, nonprofit, education, or the community ***Purpose*** • Partnership has multiple goals/ purposes and addresses student learning outcomes. • There is mutuality and reciprocity among all partners. • Partnership includes many types of activities, including community engagement and community outreach. • Partnership may bring together several existing relationships and partnerships. • Partnership strives to be a replicable model regionally, nationally, and/or internationally. ***Timeframe*** • Partnership is long-term and sustainable over time	• Once a new university signature partnership is formed, information about the partnership will be collected through the Community Partnerships Database, such as number of people involved (students, faculty, staff, external), who the partnering organization is, timeframe, general purpose of the relationship, intended impacts and outcomes, and the intended student learning outcomes • Partnership must include a written memorandum of understanding of each partner's goals and expectations • Annually submit outcomes and impacts • Feedback from community partners will be collected annually to determine their perceptions on the partnership and how it is progressing • These partnerships will be presented to the vice presidents of the university, along with an in-depth review of goals related to the partnership, in order to update them on progress and alignment with university priorities	• Identifying additional potential collaborators both on and off campus • Raising awareness of the partnership both internally and externally • Assistance with reporting the outcomes and impacts of the partnership • Review of partnership goals and progress. • Partnership information collected and compiled into an annual report for the personal and professional use by the faculty and staff members involved. • Inclusion in events and publications such as annual reports and the TU Showcase. • Partnership centrally supported by the Office of Partnerships and Outreach and the Partnership Working Group.

The system was approved by the vice presidents in February 2015. The workflow of the Partnership Working Group with regards to this new system and how the group relates to the President's Council is represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Partnership Working Group Workflow



The new system of defining partnerships was then introduced to the campus in a variety of ways. Targeted presentations were given to the councils of each academic college as well as the leadership teams of each administrative division. These presentations outlined the background of partnerships at Towson, how the system will help faculty and staff members with their own partnerships, and what the future of partnerships at the university looks like. Communication was also sent via email and TU's daily newsletter, which is sent to the entire campus.

Assessing and Supporting Partnerships

Along with the system which outlines partnership types, the role of the Partnership Working Group, and how partnerships will be supported, the working group developed assessment tools. The assessment tools were created from the baseline partnership survey, using many of the same questions with some changes based on feedback from the campus. Two surveys were created – a Partnership/Relationship Record Form and a Partnership/Relationship Feedback Form. The record form is filled out by faculty and staff members who are either starting a new partnership/relationship or who have not previously provided information about their partnership or relationship. The feedback form is an annual evaluation that is used to collect updated information about each partnership or relationship from the past year. The forms are currently administered through an online survey system which is maintained by the Office of Partnerships and Outreach and then analyzed by the Partnership Working Group. Both forms are used for relationships and for partnerships.

The record form is intended to be the more static information about a relationship or partnership and is completed only once. Data collected through this form include who the partners are, the impact areas, what the intended outcomes are, and what the student learning goals are. The feedback form is administered annually and includes information such as the actual outcomes of the partnership or relationship, how many hours were dedicated to it, how many students were involved, and questions about how the individuals felt about their experiences in the past year.

The main goal of the data collection process is to evaluate impacts and outcomes. In the record form, the individual providing information is asked to identify the impact areas of the partnership or relationship from a pre-set list. Since the list is pre-set, there may be instances where a faculty or staff member may not be able to perfectly match impacts, and in such instances, there is an option for the individual to specify the unique impacts of the partnership or relationship being recorded. In addition to measuring impacts, faculty and staff members are asked annually to choose the outcomes of their partnership or relationship from a pre-set list and to provide more in-depth detail about those partnerships or relationships. Again, this list is not exhaustive, so there may not always be an exact match for the faculty or staff member to choose, but he or she can always specify their own outcomes and explain them in detail in the next question.

The surveys are completed by the partnership or relationship lead. In the last collection cycle, the university received information about 169 partnerships and relationships. Information will continue to be collected annually.

This system has already helped to provide assessment and support for partnerships across the university. One of these partnerships is the Northern Map Turtle Partnership that Towson has with the Town of Port Deposit in Cecil County, Maryland. This partnership, which has existed for over seven years, focuses on four main areas: conservation, education, research, and economic development. It brings together resources and expertise to support the conservation of the Northern Map Turtle, a state endangered species, and in doing so, to improve the economic vitality of the community, provide experiential opportunities for TU students, and promote eco-tourism.

The Northern Map Turtle Partnership started with a TU biology professor’s research on the Northern Map Turtle in 2008. In 2012, the professor wanted to get other areas of the university involved in the partnership with Port Deposit in order to address additional challenges and opportunities in the town. The Office of Partnerships and Outreach met with him and the town to determine these needs and the best way to move forward.

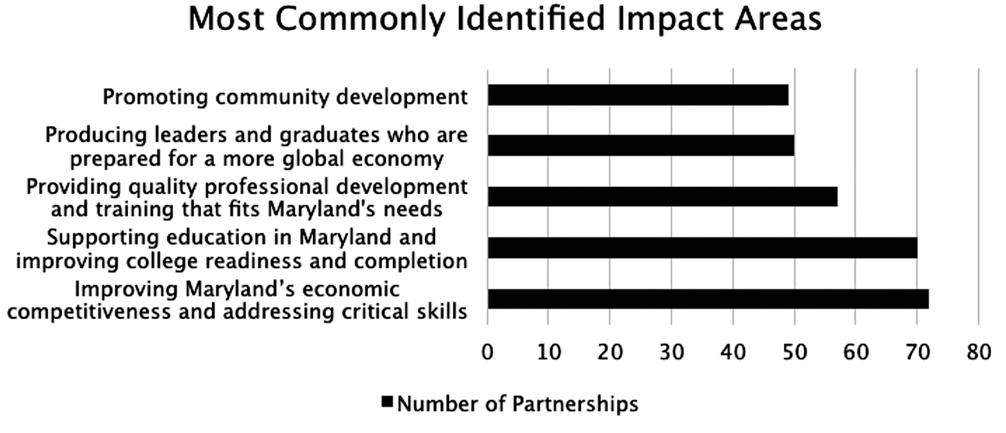
A memorandum of understanding was drafted and signed by both the town and the university. Since then, the partnership has grown tremendously. It now includes several departments and areas on campus, including Creative Services, Art Services, the Department of Marketing, and the College of Business and Economics. The town is also renovating the Jacob Tome Gas House, which will include a visitor’s center on the first floor and lab space for Towson on the second floor.

The Northern Map Turtle Partnership is a great example of a campus-wide partnership that has been supported by the structures and systems of Towson University. The Office of Partnerships and Outreach acts as the administrative contact for the partnership so that the faculty member can focus on his research and the students he works with. The partnership, like all others, is evaluated annually to determine outcomes, challenges in the past year, student involvement, and more. This information helps those involved in the partnership to see what the current needs are and how it can grow in the next year. The support system can also help the university determine what types of support could benefit the Northern Map Turtle Partnership.

Partnerships Today

The data collection period for 2015 was held between May and July. During that time, faculty and staff members submitted information about 169 partnerships and relationships, compared with 97 partnerships and relationships submitted in 2014. Eighty-five percent of these partnerships and relationships directly made a difference for the citizens of central Maryland. The information presented below includes both partnerships and relationships combined together.

These partnerships and relationships came from all academic colleges and administrative divisions and had a variety of impact areas and outcomes. The most common impact areas were:



These partnerships and relationships had a variety of outcomes, the breakdown of which are below:

Baltimore City Case Study

In the midst of the 2015 data collection, riots occurred in Baltimore in response to the death of Freddie Gray while he was in police custody. The unrest left certain areas of Baltimore in ruin, with the west side of the city being hit the hardest. Buildings were burned, stores were looted, and there was, in general, a great deal of destruction in those neighborhoods.

Governor Larry Hogan's office and the University System of Maryland (USM), seeing this violence and destruction, wanted to discern what USM schools in and around Baltimore were already doing in the city. This would help them see what types of programs are already happening and how institutions may be able to work together to expand the reach of these partnerships.

Towson was wrapping up its partnership evaluation period, so it was the perfect time to collect information about partnerships in Baltimore City. The president's office asked for a report about partnerships that TU's faculty and staff are leading in Baltimore City and what activities are included in those partnerships. Since faculty and staff members were already completing surveys about their partnerships and relationships, the Office of Partnerships and Outreach was able to easily review that information to determine which were taking place in Baltimore City. A question was even added to the Partnership/Relationship Record Form specifically asking whether the partnership did work in Baltimore City, which helped to identify those partnerships.

Compiling this report yielded over sixty partnerships that faculty and staff are leading within Baltimore City. That means that over 35 percent of TU's partnerships are happening within the city limits. These partnerships were separated into five categories: educational efforts, jobs and trainings, health initiatives, recreational activities, and miscellaneous efforts.

The educational efforts category was by far the largest. The partnerships in this category range from arts education to STEM initiatives to anthropology. The jobs and trainings category also includes a number of programs aimed at preparing students for the workforce, as well as providing training for individuals already established in their careers or interested in changing careers. A few examples of partnerships that Towson is leading in Baltimore City include:

- ***City Kids Art Program –*** The project goal is to bring at-risk urban youth from Baltimore City to the Towson University setting where they will have the opportunity to explore the arts in a teaching and learning partnership with art education and elementary education students. This is done through service learning in the "Media and Techniques" and "Art and the Child" classes. This program has an overarching goal to break down stereotypes and to encourage the urban youth to gain a vision for continuing their education at the college level. The program is in its twentieth year and continues to grow and expand. Currently, all pre-service teachers are placed in city schools for their field experiences, and because of a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the program was able to hold an after-school arts program in 2015.
- ***Sharp Leadenhall Community Partnership –*** This partnership aims to assist community members in the south Baltimore neighborhood of Sharp Leadenhall in its efforts to improve the community. It includes nonprofits, churches, and community groups. Activities associated with this partnership include a concession stand before Ravens home games to raise funds for local initiatives; a strategic community partnership with AME Ebenezer, one of the oldest AME churches in the country; community clean-up days; and a walking tour of this historically black community that helped it receive historical status.
- ***MSDE Construction Design & Management Curriculum –*** The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Career and College Readiness (DCCR) has charged Towson University (TU) and the Maryland Center for Construction Education and Innovation (MCCEI) to establish a standardized, project-based curriculum for teachers and students in Career and Technology Education (CTE) high schools in the field of Construction Design and Management (CDM). The project aims at developing a pipeline that would take students through high school and expose them to all aspects of the CDM industry with the purpose of developing skills that are transferrable to high level education as well as the Maryland workforce. Towson has enlisted faculty members, high school teachers, and industry professionals to develop this comprehensive, four-course curriculum. The curriculum exposes students to software that is already widely adopted by the industry, like AutoCAD and Revits.

These partnerships, as well as the others that were identified, show the diversity of programs that Towson is leading in Baltimore City. The university has been committed to developing partnerships across impact areas, not only in central Maryland, but in Baltimore City specifically. These partnerships have the potential to help the city bounce back from recent events by providing education and mentoring for children, professional development and training for adults, and health initiatives for citizens of the city's neighborhoods.

This information can also help the governor's office and the USM determine where there may be opportunities for institutions to combine efforts. Other universities in the Baltimore area have different resources, so combining USM resources with other area university resources will help everyone have a larger reach and will impact more people. These partnerships have the potential to address the most current and pressing problems facing the Baltimore City neighborhoods that were hardest hit by offering expanded educational opportunities and economic development.

The new partnership/relationship support system allowed Towson University to be especially responsive in a time of crisis. Since the university's partnerships were all contained in one database, the Office of Partnerships and Outreach was able to quickly pull information about partnerships in Baltimore City to provide to the governor's office and the University System of Maryland. This information is essential to the larger purpose of knowing how universities in and around Baltimore are doing work in and supporting the city.

There is a lot of work to be done to restore the parts of Baltimore City where the rioting and unrest occurred. Partnerships not only between the city and one university, but between the city and multiple universities, will be critical in helping to rebuild the city and provide opportunities for its citizens. As stated above, these partnerships cover everything from educational opportunities to economic development to health initiatives. By expanding these partnerships, Towson and the other USM schools will have greater impact across Baltimore City.

The partnership and relationship information could be used also in future disasters or emergencies. As the university community becomes better acquainted with all of these partnerships and relationships, it will be easier to identify resources to be deployed. Part of the problem in the past was the institution simply not knowing what faculty and staff members were doing. Now that this information is in a centralized place, it is easier to access.

Future of Towson's Partnership/Relationship Support System

The current support system relies on online surveys to collect information. The results are then exported into an Excel spreadsheet to be analyzed. The spreadsheet is large and unwieldy and requires a lot of work to compile a report based on the results. The results are also not currently kept online, so if someone from outside the Office of Partnerships and Outreach or the Partnership Working Group wants to see the results, he or she must request them, rather than being able to search them online.

To address these issues, a new Community Partnerships Database is being developed. This new database will allow faculty and staff members to submit information about their partnerships directly to the system. This will allow faculty and staff to log in at any time to see their partnerships and their annual progress. They will be able to easily see information about their partnerships rather than having to go through an intermediary.

In addition, general information about partnerships will be available online. Internal and external users will be able to see basic information, such as a brief description, who the partners are, impact areas, and types of activities. Users will also be able to search based on impact area and type of activity, making it easy to find partnerships that line up with their interests.

The new Community Partnerships Database will also make it easier to pull reports about TU's partnerships. These reports will include information at both the partnership and the university level. For faculty and staff members, the new database system will be able to generate two different types of reports: a snapshot partnership report and an annual partnership report. The snapshot report will be a report about one partnership at a particular point in time. The annual partnership report will include information about the individual's partnerships over time. Both will show the outcomes, impacts, and student involvement in the partnerships.

There will also be snapshot and annual reports at the university level. The snapshot report, like the single partnership snapshot, will provide information about TU's partnerships at that particular point in time. The university partnership annual report will contain information about TU's partnerships over time (number of partnerships this year vs. last year, etc.). Again, both of these reports will outline the outcomes, impacts, and student involvement of the university's partnerships.

These reports will help Towson University continue to get a better handle on the partnerships being led by its faculty and staff. Anyone inside or outside of the university will be able to see the far-reaching impacts of these partnerships and where they are happening. Towson was able to respond quickly to the request for information about activities in Baltimore City, and the new database will make responding to requests, especially in times of crisis, even easier and more efficient.

Additionally, the Partnership Working Group plans to develop a Community Feedback Form, hopefully in time for the next collection cycle. This will be a survey, much like the Partnership/Relationship Record Form and the Partnership/Relationship Feedback Form, that will evaluate the role of the community partner in each relationship or partnership and how the community partner felt about its participation. The inclusion of the community voice will help with evaluation of Towson's university-community partnerships and relationships not only from an institutional perspective, but from the community perspective as well. Since all of these partnerships and relationships are developed and implemented in collaboration with the community, measuring their input and thoughts is especially important.

Conclusion

Partnerships continue to be an integral part of Towson University's mission and strategic plan. The university is making strides in standardizing and centralizing the processes associated with tracking and assessing these partnerships through shared governance. The new partnership support system, as well as the Community Partnerships Database, will make it easier than ever to collect information about partnerships and generate reports. The system has already demonstrated its usefulness and responsiveness in the aftermath of the Baltimore riots. Towson was able to quickly compile information about its partnerships in Baltimore City to provide to the governor's office and the University System of Maryland. Moving forward, the system and database will allow the institution to easily pull reports about its partnerships at any time. Having more comprehensive information will help Towson have a larger reach and broader impacts through its partnerships and relationships.

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The Complexities of Community-Based Websites

Ann Bomberger and Michelle Homan

Abstract

This article describes the development and ongoing operations of the GreenEriePA.org project, a portal to all things environmental in Erie County, PA. Through regular input from community partners, GreenEriePA turned into a much larger, long-term project than the faculty coordinators at Gannon University, Erie, PA, originally anticipated. We utilize Eckerle Curwood and others' (2011) framework for planning long-term community-based learning projects to reflect upon community-based websites and to make recommendations.

The World Wide Web turned twenty-five in the United States in 2014. It is now possible for anyone with an Internet connection and basic computer literacy to make a website for free and post their content nearly immediately. Cell phones are owned by 90 percent of American adults and about two-thirds of them access the Internet through their phones (Pew Research Center 2014). Despite these changes in technological access, many people still have a conception of the web as a place to put information, pictures, or images up for others to consume (called Web 1.0), rather than as an interactive, dynamic experience between web creator(s) and users (called Web 2.0) or among users and their phones/apps (sometimes called Web 3.0). This was certainly the assumption that we had going in to the GreenEriePA project and that, occasionally, we still struggle with today.

Thousands of websites with broken links and outdated information exist. Nonprofits and universities may contribute to the creation of such sites. Small nonprofits sometimes do not prioritize updating web content or social media due to thinly stretched resources (Mansfield 2012; McMahon, Seaman, and Buckingham 2011; Greenberg and MacAulay 2009). Some may not have adequate search engine optimization, making their sites difficult to find. Additional reasons include lack of marketing professionals on staff (Bennett 2014), insufficient levels of technological literacy (Greenberg and MacAulay 2009), and staff turnover. Universities often use short-term grant funds to document and evaluate community-based learning projects (Vogel, Seifer, and Gelmon 2010) and often do not have resources to maintain projects for the long term.

Given how search engines work, for websites to be effective today, they need not only concise, clear, regularly updated content, but frequent social media posts, a time-consuming process for nonprofits and Community-Based Learning Project websites as well. This case study describes the collaborative experience of Gannon University faculty members with eleven local environmental nonprofit partners to create and sustain an environmental portal for Erie County, Pennsylvania – http://GreenEriePA.org – showcasing accomplishments and pitfalls of the project. The site launched in 2012 and received 40,237 hits last year.

Project History and Vision

Gannon University is located within the City of Erie, Pennsylvania, working in close partnership with the community to seek solutions to urban problems and to highlight community assets. In 2010, Gannon launched the Erie-Gannon Alliances to Improve Neighborhood Sustainability (Erie-GAINS) initiative to coordinate a series of projects aimed at improving the sustainability and viability of downtown Erie and the surrounding neighborhoods. Gannon is pursuing these projects by forming community partnerships and identifying community needs that align with strengths of the university.

One of the goals of Erie-GAINS is to enhance environmental awareness in downtown Erie, a task charged to the Erie-GAINS Environmental Sustainability subcommittee, comprised of a representative from the environmental nonprofit community, a large local business, the County Health Department, and various Gannon faculty, staff, and students. In 2011, the subcommittee recognized a need in the region for a "green guide" website that would offer a one-stop site for all things environmental in Erie such as information on recycling, parks/recreation, community gardens, green building resources, energy efficiency, and local businesses offering green products and services. Many large cities and regions have green guides that help map community environmental assets and point users to environmental resources (for example, http://www.growwny.org/ and http://www.seattle.gov/living-in-seattle/environment). Smaller cities and rural areas, however, often do not have the resources to develop such portal sites, and already thinly stretched green nonprofits do not always have the infrastructure to get their own message to the public let alone bring together the messages of a variety of community stakeholders (McMahon, Seaman, and Buckingham 2011).

In order to meet the community need for an online green guide, GreenEriePA.org was created. The site contains how-to articles (How to Protect Lake Erie, How to Compost) and profiles of community groups and projects (like the Mending Place, a project that teaches refugees how to sew and repair clothes while giving them a living wage). Faculty members from the English and the environmental science and engineering departments, both a part of the Erie-GAINS sustainability committee, applied for and received a grant from the Erie Community Foundation to develop and launch the website.

The scholarship of Darby and her colleagues (Darby et al. 2013) as well as others such as Bell, Carlson, Martin, SeBlonka, Tryon, Vernon, Foster, and Worral that studies community partner perspectives notes the importance of long-term projects, greater faculty involvement, and greater student accountability.

The GreenEriePA project has included substantial faculty involvement, both in community partner interaction and in student supervision and has been undertaken with an understanding of its long-term nature.

The GreenEriePA faculty viewed the creation of the site to be important not only for increased environmental literacy among the community but also for the impact on student learning. Service-learning scholars have long touted the value of the "ill-structured problem" that students in service-learning courses encounter. Most of the world's issues are very complicated and messy and require long-term, multi-pronged courses of action. Long-term, community-based learning courses help students see themselves as part of a much larger team working on a complex issue. As Michelle Simmons notes (2010), "Balancing civic engagement for students, useful documents for a community, literacy research for students and professors, and sustainability for our programs requires thinking of community writing projects in broader terms than a single course." We also viewed this project as a valuable endeavor for student interns because of its interdisciplinary, "real world" communication challenge, and in its further development of technological, organizational, and writing skills. Simmons further notes, "Sometimes learning and understanding occurs between courses – in the spaces where students make connections among the work in one class with the work in other classes to form their understanding of literacy, writing, and communication."

Site Content and Operations

An important component of this project includes regular input, evaluation, and feedback from community partners. As Tryon, Hilgendorf, and Scott (2009), Sandy and Holland (2006), and Malm and others (2012) have noted, relationships, communication, and reciprocity are key to successful long-term university-community partnerships. Once the first grant was received, an entire year was devoted to seeking feedback, organizing, and drafting the first phase of the site. Three formal meetings were held with all community partners before and after the site launch along with numerous one-on-one meetings with specific partners. Initial input was obtained at a meeting with eleven community partners. At this meeting, the goal of the project was discussed and community partners were asked to describe what features and content they would like to see on the website. This initial meeting was very helpful in identifying priorities and providing an opportunity for the community partners to become involved in various aspects of the project. A second meeting with the same group was held approximately six months after the website launch. This provided the opportunity for the group to review the site and offer interim feedback. Much of the feedback was incorporated after this second meeting. One of the recommendations from the community partners was that it would be helpful to know when new material was added to the website. This resulted in the development and distribution of a monthly e-newsletter that focuses on a particular issue, drawn from the website content, and which highlights upcoming events, providing a direct link to the events calendar. Due to community partner input, the site has other features that make it more dynamic and user friendly. In addition to the e-newsletter, we created a Facebook site, events calendar, videos, maps, and a Twitter account, none of which were initially envisioned by the faculty spearheading the project.

Many of these features are run by student interns with supervision from faculty and community partners, resulting in some periods with a lot of social media activity and engagement and others with less social media engagement. We currently have 400 Facebook “Likes,” 211 e-newsletter subscribers, and 130 Twitter “Followers.” While those numbers are respectable, they are not as large as might be anticipated for our region. Outreach and marketing must be a long-term part of any such project and has been one of our key struggles. Our number of site visits has grown over time, but making this happen was much more involved than we initially anticipated. We have noticed in the last six months that we have gained more Likes and Followers even when we didn’t particularly try to reach out to the public in additional ways, a result that can occur with time and consistency.

Some of the articles and videos are created by students as service-learning projects in various writing classes, while other articles are written by paid interns or by community partners themselves. The faculty member teaching the writing class contacts the community partner in advance of the assignment to see if the partner would be willing to be interviewed and to critique the draft on a short time line. The professor also critiques drafts of articles and videos to ensure accuracy and quality (see assignment in Appendix A for further details). In-class oral and written reflections are done at several steps of the process to help students think through the service-learning experience. At least once a year, the site is reviewed in its entirety to see which articles need to be updated.

To ensure consistency across the website, a style guide was created outlining the number of words per article, approximate number of links in each article, content for each article, number of photos, etc. Photos were used from either our community stakeholders, our interns, some volunteers, or Creative Commons, storing extras in a group Flickr.com account.

Another key factor to increasing visitors to the site was to ensure that GreenEriePA would be visible within search results related to environmental topics in Erie, PA through search engine optimization (SEO). However, just because a site exists and has good SEO, does not mean that it will be found in searches. While the formulas Google uses to rank search results change over time, currently some factors include the frequency with which a site is updated, number of dead links, how often other organizations link to it, and the frequency of its social media. Having keywords not only in the SEO but also early in the stories also increases web traffic. Recently Google has announced that will also take into account how mobile-friendly a site is in its ranking, and other changes to Google’s search formulas will no doubt continue to be made.

Factors to Consider When Embarking on a Long-Term, Community-Based Project

There are many factors to take into account when considering the development and operation of an ambitious community-based project. Universities, unfortunately, sometimes assume that they have the capacity to fill a community need before doing a thorough assessment of the institutional, departmental, and individual will for the project (Eckerle Curwood et al. (2011). In this section we apply some of the questions developed by Eckerle Curwood and others (2011) to assess collaboration readiness for universities and academics embarking on community-based learning. We have quoted their chart in its entirety here, but only apply those most relevant to our project in the body of this article. We did not have this set of questions until we were years into the project, and it raises some challenging questions for us. Would we have embarked on the project if we had realized all of the implications? We are not sure of the answer to that question. Yet we do not mean these questions to dissuade future ambitious projects like GreenEriePA; we just offer them because we think they would be useful in thinking through some of the complexities of community-based websites.

Collaboration Readiness Questions for Universities and Academics from Eckerle Curwood et al. (2011, 23)

Contextual Factors

1. What is the current university commitment to community-engaged scholarship?
   a. University– Does the university mission have a focus on community? How is community-engaged scholarship recognized in promotion and tenure processes? Are appropriate vehicles for risk management in place?
   b. Department– Is a commitment to community-engaged scholarship central or peripheral to curriculum development and faculty time allocation?
   c. Individual faculty members– What is the level of commitment individual faculty members have to community engagement? Do faculty teaching the associated courses have the appropriate pedagogical background?
2. What type of resources are available for partnership formation and for the work of the partnership? Has appropriate attention been paid to financial, space, and human resources?
3. What type of data management infrastructure is in place? Does the data management infrastructure facilitate or impede the full participation of community partners in the research?

Between-Group Factors

1. Are there congruent visions and values between the university and community partners? Is there a common language, or do you need to work to develop a common understanding and language?
2. Have you identified communication processes appropriate to all partners?
3. Do you have appropriate mechanisms for sharing power, responsibility, and authority with a community partner? What benefits will the community partner realize from the partnership?
4. What will collaboration look like for your groups? Is there trust and mutual respect between the partners? Is there a clear understanding of the resources and constraints that each partner brings to the table? Is a Memorandum of Understanding in place? How will the success of the partnership be evaluated?

Within-Group Factors

1. How will you address resistance for community-engaged practice among students and faculty?
2. What mechanisms are in place for sharing power, responsibility, and authority among students?
3. How will you manage continuity of the partnership and the research project as students and faculty change? What is the anticipated level of turnover, and what effect might this have on the partnership?

Contextual Factors: University Commitment to Community-Based Learning

The GreenEriePA project has had a fair amount of institutional support from Gannon University. The university's strategic plan lists in its vision statement, "innovative academic programs that are connected to community needs and focused on creating public impact" and "promoting student learning such that graduates embrace their roles and responsibilities as world citizens." The GreenEriePA project fits squarely with those goals, and so some funding and support from the university has been received. The offices of community and governmental relations, marketing, service-learning along with the English, environmental science and engineering, and communications departments have all helped by allocating substantial time and/or funding toward the project. Two work-study positions have been allocated to the project, and we have received three mini-grants from Erie-GAINS and the provost's office. We have not always received the kind of help that would be desirable in our ongoing marketing efforts, however; something that no doubt many institutions face when a project is no longer new.

The support for community-engaged scholarship has been more mixed. Gannon has long employed the Boyer model in its evaluation of faculty, but only recently updated its Institutional Policy Manual to include "scholarship of engagement." As Hoyt (2013) notes, scholarship of engagement "is an integrated view of scholarly activity where research, teaching, service, and professional practice overlap and are mutually reinforcing. . . .Instead of seeing ourselves as experts who produce knowledge for laypersons, we aim to generate and discover knowledge by way of collaboration" (Hoyt 2013, 7). As a result, it challenges some of the assumptions of academic review processes. Guest speakers and consultants like community-based research scholars Barbara Holland and Cathy Jordan have met with our faculty, provost, and tenure and promotion committees. This is an issue many campuses are struggling with, yet one that is making inroads in faculty review processes across the country.

Between-Group Factors: Communication with Partners

As we mentioned earlier, community partners were and are regularly consulted in the formation and evaluation of the website. One of the challenges when working with many community partners – each with their own specific interests and agendas – is to keep them engaged and connected. Developing relationships, a key to successful long-term service-learning projects, are more challenging when working with multiple organizations rather than a single group. GreenEriePA faculty and students staff outreach booths at various environmental events to pass out brochures and promotional products (i.e., refrigerator magnets, pens) with the website logo and address. By participating in these outreach activities, faculty and students became better acquainted with environmental partners during down times. As a result we attended various partner activities and meetings to support and promote their initiatives. Bringing an e-newsletter sign-up sheet also increased the number of visitors to the site, both from community partners and from the public at large, thereby increasing, in an admittedly one-sided way, communication.

A user survey was created in SurveyGismo (http://bit.ly/GEPASurvey) and emailed to partners, posted on the website, e-newsletter, Facebook, and Twitter pages about one year after the website launch. After repeated posts, a total of only twenty-two surveys were completed. Approximately 55 percent of respondents reported visiting the website once per week or several times per month. All of the respondents indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the statements, "I would recommend GreenEriePA to others" and "The information on the website is useful to me in my personal life." Some of the most helpful information came from the open-ended questions such as, "What do you like most about GreenEriePA?" Several respondents mentioned that they liked having all the environmental information available through one website. One respondent answered, "Helped me compile a residential calendar on green tips and practices. I used both verbiage, ideas, and organizations within the calendar for our residents to reference. This was mailed to 28,500 households!" In response to, "What would you like to see improved?" a number of individuals reported that they would like to see improvement in the navigation and look of the website.

Over time, the faculty worked regularly with the staff at Environment Erie to request story ideas and names of contacts. Environment Erie is a well-established nonprofit in the area that provides environmental outreach and education and provides resources to develop and promote environmental restoration projects. In 2014, Environment Erie and GreenEriePA have been collaborating closely on a merger between the two sites, with organizers and interns meeting every other week. These regular meetings have increased collaboration on the e-newsletter as well.

Sharing Power and Responsibility with Community Partners

Initially, this was primarily a Gannon initiative with a lot of feedback from a variety of community partners. Over time, it has shifted more toward being a true collaboration between Environment Erie and Gannon, although it is still an uneven relationship.

How to allocate funds has raised some issues related to this new merger. Since Gannon initially was spearheading the project with feedback from community partners, external grant funds went to Gannon resources, primarily in the form of student interns. A considerable portion of the GreenEriePA project consisted of in-kind funding through volunteer hours and, later, two work-study positions. The first two external grants that we received went almost entirely to student intern wages to get the site up and running (one from the Erie Community Foundation in 2011 and another from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection in 2014). Graduate students fact checked, researched, proofread, and posted the articles, teaching themselves the web development software, Google Analytics, Hootsuite and other programs. In 2013, a work-study student position was dedicated to the site, and in 2014, a second work-study position was added.

Faculty have been heavily involved in mentoring, organizing, and reviewing drafts throughout the process. Faculty stipends had been built into one of the grants, but the faculty decided to divert the funds to student wages to help keep the project going. This lack of faculty stipend may dissuade some faculty from embarking on such an undertaking, but as others have noted, sometimes community-based learning faculty are motivated by things other than money. Wade and Demb (2009), for example, suggest factors for community-based learning can be institutional, professional, and/or personal. Russell-Stamp's research at a teaching university (2015) further explored motivations for faculty involvement in community-based learning.

While some grant recipients spend the money on professional website companies, we wanted to emphasize content and the development of our students' skills. We used the website development tool Weebly Pro, which we were able to use for under $125 a year (there are free versions as well). There are a variety of such web development tools by different companies (Wix, Squarespace, etc.) and each platform has its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the initial iteration of the site looked more "home grown" (Figure 1) than the current website. The choice of a more visually centered platform, like Wix, or the involvement of graphic design faculty, might have strengthened the aesthetics and formatting from the beginning.

Figure 1. GreenEriePA version created on Weeby Pro.

With the merger of the two sites, Environment Erie wanted the GreenEriePA site to match the Environment Erie site, requiring a move from the nearly free Weebly Pro site to a company that runs the Environment Erie site, at a substantial cost. This cost was paid by Gannon University, the Nonprofit Partnership of Erie, and Environment Erie. Initially the idea of the cost for the site redesign gave the GreenEriePA creators pause, but ultimately we agreed that this would be an important way to merge the sites and deepen collaboration. It also allowed us to have a calendar that can be filtered, a feature long requested by community partners, but which is not available in Google Calendar. Finally, the redesign put money into a small local business. The financial contribution of all parties has been a testament to their faith in the value of the collaboration over the project.

Another financial point with differing opinions has been regarding whether there will be ads on the site. This was raised as a possibility from the beginning by community partners, yet it is something the involved faculty has resisted to avoid having to make calls about whether a business is truly "green" or not based on its willingness to advertise. This has been a luxury that we have long avoided and one that we will likely have to face again in the future to help sustain the site. We have considered incorporating faculty from the school of business to help us chart a feasible, ethical financial plan, yet no decisions have been made at this point.

Within-Group Factors: Collaboration within the Gannon Community

We did not encounter much resistance from students and faculty about community-engaged practice, but we did have some challenges related to within-group factors in a variety of ways. As we hinted at earlier, we did not always have – and still do not – have some of the disciplines that would have been useful at the table. Not only would it be useful to have school business faculty involved in the discussion, but the experts in graphics, public relations, and photography would also be valuable contributors. One of the challenges with large-scale projects is to figure out how much is do-able and what is not given the logistical challenges of passing multiple projects off, not only among community partners but among a variety of classes. At a small university such as Gannon, collaboration is, in some ways, easier than at larger universities because of the culture, but in others ways more difficult in the sense that there is typically only one expert in a particular field, and if he or she is not interested in community-based learning, the collaboration is not going to happen.

We also faced some internal challenges regarding emphasis on assessment by the university and community foundation. We were asked to define project outcomes that were measurable beyond numbers of website hits, something that is very challenging to do given the nature of our project. To illustrate, one of the initial project outcomes was that the website would increase recycling rates within the City of Erie. We were hesitant to enact this as an outcome to begin with and as the project progressed it became obvious that this outcome was not realistic since recycling rates are difficult to measure over time, influenced by multiple factors, and even more difficult to associate with one activity. Even an outcome such as "increasing the public's awareness of recycling" is difficult to measure quantitatively. Certainly a survey that queries website users about their knowledge can be conducted, but the difficulty lies in specifically linking someone's change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors directly to website content. Google Analytics can track how many times one of our recycling pages was looked at (7,899 page views in the past year), but these are indirect measures.

Turnover Issues

Student interns have also done a good job of mentoring one another, teaching each other skills and processes. So far there has been a relatively smooth transition from one student intern to another. The issue of staff turnover is more complex. The site almost completely collapsed when one of the faculty had to withdraw from the project, and shortly, thereafter, the main Environment Erie contact left his job. High staff turnover is not uncommon in the nonprofit world, and while faculty turnover in academia is less prevalent, "life happens," and creating plans to provide for a change in project coordinators is important to do (Eckerle Curwood et al. 2011). This is an issue we are making steps to remedy, but building capacity takes a lot of time.

Conclusion

Overall the website project has been a very positive experience on a number of fronts, including student learning and engagement, university-community partnerships, increased environmental literacy, and professional development of faculty. It has also been challenging in terms of the time commitment and resources necessary to maintain it for the long term. The framework developed by Eckerle Curwood and others (2011) allowed us to conduct a qualitative retrospective assessment of our project. We have refined this framework in order to develop a set of recommendations when developing a community-based website as noted below.

Factors to Consider When Developing a Community-Based Website

- Assess institutional support including financial resources and personnel necessary to develop and maintain website on a long-term basis.
- Assess faculty interest and ability to maintain the site on a long-term basis including promotion/tenure issues.
- Involve community partners early on in and throughout the development process.
- Involve personnel who understand how websites and search engines work.
- Develop a long-term marketing plan to promote and increase awareness about the site.
- Social media is an important component of websites.
- Conduct periodic evaluation which may include website analytics, user surveys, and community partner feedback.
- Regularly update website content and ensure site and links are working properly.
- Involve students in developing website content by incorporating components into course assignments and through internships and/or work-study.

Appendix A

GreenEriePA.org Assignment

"Real world" writing projects often teach audience, situation, and purpose more effectively because they have genuine, hybrid audiences and because people and situations are complicated. This assignment provides you with an opportunity to develop a document for your professional portfolio while teaching you about Erie's environmental assets and challenges. If published, as most of your pieces will be, you will also be taking part in a long-term project that helps Erie residents learn more about the environment in their community.

Task: You will write a profile of a local environmental organization or issue. Most of these pieces will be published on GreenEriePA.org. which serves as a green guide to

Erie individuals and businesses. GreenEriePA highlights successful green initiatives in Erie County while serving as a portal to local green organizations and opportunities. It provides how-to's for individuals and businesses wanting to save money while helping the environment.

Due dates

- Contact your interviewee **today** to set up an appointment (in person or by phone) to discuss the topic. Do research to prepare for the interview and prepare questions.
- Have an appointment set up by Friday, Feb. 6.
- Read your contact person's website, and be prepared to give a brief, informal presentation about it in class. Read your assigned articles from Environment Erie and GreenEriePA. 2/10
- Thursday, February 12: Rough draft due by class time.
  - Email a copy to your contact person and cc Prof. Bomberger.
  - Post in Blackboard
  - Bring in a hard copy to class.
- Thursday, Feb. 19: Bring one hard copy to class for session on proofreading. Fix any errors found, and post in Blackboard by 5 p.m. Please hand in peer reviews in class and make sure I have the feedback from your community partner.

Grading criteria for profile

- All feedback from community partner was handed in and followed.
- Engaging, relevant hook and conclusion.
- Precisely focused on your topic, no extra material or words.
- Shows a clear consideration of audience.
- Engaging, precise prose.
- Helps us understand what the organization does and why it is important.
- Links to relevant other sources (their website and/or other).
- Grammatically perfect.
- 500-600 words.

Topics available for you to choose from:

1. Destination Erie updated article with an environmental focus: http://www.planerieregion.com/ Contact person's name, email, and phone number
2. Pennsylvania's Energy Loans – mainly web research, but some calling to verify if information is current. http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/grants_loans_tax_credits/10395 http://www.greeneriepa.org/pennsylvanias-energy-loans-and-incentives-programs.html
3. Update the Jr. PLEWA article on Environment Erie site (it's from 2011). Contact person's name, email, and phone number
4. Environmental Programming of Erie Zoo. Contact person's name, email, and phone number
5. This area's chapter of the Sierra Club. http://www.lakeeriegroup.webs.com/Contact person's name, email, and phone number
6. Presque Isle Audubon Society. Contact person's name, email, and phone number

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