Documenting Community Engagement Practices and Outcomes: Insights From Recipients of the 2010 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

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Abstract

This study was performed to document the strategies and methods used by successful applicants for the 2010 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and to document the cultural shifts connected with the application process and receipt of the Classification. Four major findings emerged: (1) Applicants benefited from a team approach; (2) Evidence of community engagement often already exists within an institution, but additional data will likely need to be gathered; (3) Successful applicants encountered obstacles or challenges related to data collection structures and resources, institution-wide understanding and involvement, and matching data to the application itself; and (4) Both performing the application process and receiving the Classification yielded institutional and cultural shifts: new or improved collaborations, greater institutionalization of community engagement, new or improved data-reporting structures, and better alignment of the institution's mission with the goals of community engagement. This article also offers respondents' recommendations to future Classification applicants.

Introduction

Since Ernest Boyer addressed reconsidering the purpose of scholarship, proposing "the scholarship of application" in 1990, and later "the scholarship of engagement," institutions of higher education have reconsidered their purpose. In his 1996 article, Boyer proclaimed that American colleges and universities are "one of the greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress in this country" *(p. 19)*. Former University of California president Clark Kerr (1958–1967) proposed a similar purpose for higher education, noting that the key challenge is "to help find a new set of urgent priorities in service to society" (*Kerr & Munitz, 1998, p. 10*). This perspective built on Kerr's (*1991*) earlier writings regarding the role of the "multiversity" in society and his belief, based on the pursuit of rankings by most universities but especially research institutions, that extensive turnover within the professoriate and

changing national and regional demographics would lead universities to consider new models of interaction with stakeholders.

Describing the long-term response to these calls for reconsidering higher education's purpose, Sandmann, Thornton, and Jaeger (*2009a*) wrote:

> As institutions of higher education entered the twenty-first century, they moved to respond to this challenge. Colleges and universities in the United States increasingly turned to community engagement as a natural evolution of their traditional missions of service to recognize ties to their communities along with their commitments to the social contract between society and higher education. *(p. 1)*

There is some question as to the discretionary (voluntary) or mandatory nature of institutional engagement, given that it can be seen as both a component of institutional mission and a means of raising the university's profile in the eyes and opinions of a critical stakeholder, whether that stakeholder is an external funding or oversight agency, a prospective donor, or another organization with the capacity to affect the campus or its operational environment. However, echoing arguments in Dewey's (*1916*) *Democracy and Education*, Ehrlich (*2000*) noted that civic engagement can be seen in the context of individual or institutional activities oriented toward making "a difference in the civic life of…communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes" *(p. vi)*. Brukardt, Holland, Percy, and Zimpher (*2004*) went so far as to pronounce that "engagement is higher education's larger purpose" *(p. iii)*.

Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

As community engagement became a more valued, or at least more recognized, component of higher education's mission, momentum built toward developing a system to recognize institutions that included community engagement as part of their core. Several major national groups and organizations led in the early development of such a system, including National Campus Compact, the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, Community–Campus Partnerships for Health, the Defining and Benchmarking Engagement Project of

the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges' Committee on Engagement, and the Wingspread Conference in 2004 (*Brukardt et al., 2004; Driscoll, 2009; Weerts & Hudson, 2009*). With this increasing focus on community engagement, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching developed its first entirely elective classification—the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (hereafter the Classification)—beginning with a pilot of 14 institutions and eventually resulting in rounds in 2006, 2008, and 2010. After the first two rounds, 195 institutions of higher education had received the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. In the 2010 round, 121 additional institutions received the Classification. Since this research, there has been an additional classification round in 2015; however, this research focused on data from the 2010 round.

The literature is largely silent on the perspectives of those applying for and receiving the Carnegie Classification, in particular with regard to lessons learned from and benefits of the application process. This work was undertaken in part to address that gap in the literature and also to respond to a request by affiliates of the Carnegie Foundation to provide guidance from past applicants for those considering a future Classification submission.

Application Process: Documenting Community Engagement

The Carnegie Foundation defines the purpose of community engagement as

> 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. (*Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, 2015, p. 2)

The Classification is intended to capture the wide-ranging set of practices that fulfill these purposes of community engagement across diverse types of institutions (*Weerts & Hudson, 2009*). Applicants are required to submit evidence of community engagement within institutional foundational indicators (mission, public speeches, strategic planning, funding, promotion and tenure poli-

cies), curriculum, partnerships, and outreach. Clearly, no single database or data warehouse captures these wide-ranging components of community engagement (*Noel & Earwicker, 2014*). Therefore, the application allows for multiple self-identified methods of gathering this documentation.

The Classification is "intended to provide flexibility, closer match of data with purpose, and a multidimensional approach for better representing institutional identity" (*Sandmann, Thornton, & Jaeger, 2009b, p. 5)*. Furco and Miller (*2009*) explained that "[the] process offers both a universal framework for assessing community engagement that can be applied across institutions and a flexibility to be adapted to different kinds of institutions in ways that capture their individual contexts" *(p. 51)*. They also noted that preparing to submit an application to receive the Community Engagement Classification

> provides the means to conduct a status check of the campus's overall current level of community engagement institutionalization by offering a structure and framework for collecting and reviewing information so that informed decisions can be made about an institution's engagement strengths and weaknesses. *(Furco & Miller, 2009, p. 48)*

The key is that "campuses that pursue the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification will in some form take full inventory of their engagement efforts in order to address the range of questions posed by the Carnegie Foundation" (*Thornton & Zuiches*, *2009, p. 75)*.

The "first wave" of institutions that received the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification was studied as part of a larger project examining the classification itself as well as 56 of the institutions that received the Classification in 2006. The entire Autumn 2009 issue of *New Directions for Higher Education* was devoted to the findings in a special issue titled *Institutionalizing Community Engagement in Higher Education: The First Wave of Carnegie Classified Institutions*. Additional sources' research related to the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification are published throughout the higher education literature.

Methods

This mixed methods two-part study sought to discover how institutions that received the Carnegie Classification in 2010 went about their application process, and what the results were. How did

Carnegie Classified institutions undertake a "full inventory" of their community engagement efforts, and what were the outcomes of undertaking such an inventory? The study had two purposes: (a) to document the strategies and methods used by successful applicants for the 2010 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and (b) to document the cultural shifts experienced by institutions as they developed their successful applications for this Classification. The authors' IRB determined this study to be exempt.

Phase I

Using a list of the 121 institutions that received the Classification in 2010, the first author undertook Phase I of the study as a pilot phase to refine the survey approach and instrument. The pilot was undertaken by interviewing a sampling of applicants regarding their experiences in applying for the Classification. The interview sample was a purposively selected set of nine applicants, representing a range of student body size, Carnegie institution type, and geographic area. In order to be assured of representation from the multiple types and sizes of institutions receiving the Classification, certain geographic regions were more heavily sampled in the interviews. The 30-minute, semistructured, 11-question interviews focused on strategies for data collection, involvement of various stakeholder groups in the application process, support received for the process, challenges or obstacles, and recommendations for future applicants. The interviews also gathered information on whether the applicants' institutions had previously considered applying for the Classification and if so, what changes needed to be made before commencing the 2010 application process. Finally, applicants were asked to describe any changes in institutional culture that resulted from applying for and receiving the Classification. In this study, institutional culture includes the commitments of the institution as a whole—administration, faculty, staff, students— that define and shape the institution's actions, in this case actions involving community engagement. An analysis of the interview responses led to the fine-tuning of a survey instrument that was distributed to the full set of 2010 Classified institutions.

Phase II

In Phase II of the study, the authors prepared a more robust survey with both structured and semistructured elements in order to more effectively map institutional characteristics against the processes, participants, and motivations discovered through

the interviews. The survey instrument is available upon request of the authors. The authors e-mailed the entire set of 121 newly Classified institution applicants, and 52 agreed to participate (a 43% response rate). The 21-question survey was conducted through SurveyMonkey, and the 52 institutions completing the survey represented a balanced cross-section and diversity of institutional types and sizes.

The authors used basic statistical analysis, tabulating numbers and calculating percentages. They analyzed patterns in both the quantitative and qualitative results. Using a grounded theory framework (*Glaser & Strauss, 1967*), they applied an iterative method of testing their initial understanding of motivation and process against what the analysis of coded interview transcripts revealed, then used the data and patterns to further refine their theory of institutional intent and motivation. Further, influenced by Strauss and Corbin *(1990)*, they sought to infuse issues of context, institutional interactional strategies, and consequences into the analytic process via open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Institutions participating in the study represented a full range of Carnegie Classifications and institution types: 64% were public and 36% were private. Nearly half were classified as master's level (42%), 20% of the institutions were research (high/very high level of research), 16% were doctoral/research institutions, 16% were at the baccalaureate level, and 6% were classified as associate's. Finally, in examining student enrollment at participating institutions, 33% had fewer than 5,000 students, 20% had 5,001-10,000 students, 27% had 10,001-20,000 students, and 20% had more than 20,000 students.

Limitations

The study design allowed a self-selected sampling. Although all 121 institutions that received the Classification in 2010 were invited to participate, each also had the option of declining to complete the survey. This design resulted in an oversampling of certain types of institutions—that is, the percentage of applicants from each category (master's, research, associate's, etc.) did not equal the actual percentage of institutions from that category that received the 2010 Classification.

This study focused entirely on the application process and perceptions of institutional change that occurred as a result of applying for the 2010 Classification. Since the study was conducted through interviews and surveys, all data were self-reported. No attempts

were made to verify or confirm the applicants' responses, and the results do not demonstrate the quality of community engagement at these institutions. Further, although the study gives a snapshot of the 2010 Classified institutions, it does not chart the institutions' longitudinal community engagement. Finally, due to the brevity required by a survey process of this nature, the type of in-depth answers and explorations that would have broadened and enriched the fundamental conclusions in this article were necessarily limited.

Results of Phase I: Interviews

With the initial coding of interviews, a chronological pattern emerged in which themes and subthemes occurred in each of the three main chronological activities: (a) preapplication preparation; (b) application process; and (c) postclassification, or "Now what?" The responses were coded into thematic components following both the linear process pursued for the application and the broad contextual data that described or captured the rationale behind the pursuit. The results from these interviews helped to shape and fine-tune the survey used in Phase II of the study. Table 1 lays out the themes and subthemes found in the analysis.

Table 1. *Interviews: Themes and Subthemes*

Chronological Layout	Major Themes	Subthemes
Preapplication preparation	Conversion of Already Operating Systems	
	Intentional Development of Systems	
Appplication process	Who Involved	*Active or Passive Involvement*
		Who Selected the Team
Chronological Layout	Major Themes	*Subthemes*
	Steps in Process	
	Length of Time to Prepare Application	
	Support Received for Work	
	Challenges or Obstacles Faced	*Data Collection or Documentation Strategy Not in Place*
		Ensuring Institution-Wide Involvement
Postclassification, or Now What?	Changes in Institutional Culture	*Alignment of Community Engagement with Mission*
		Learned More About Institution and Colleages

Chronological Layout	Major Themes	Subthemes
	Identification of What More Needs to be Done	
	Difficulties in Utilizing Classification	
Recommendation to Future Classification Applicants	Start Early	
	Formalize the Data Collection Process	
	Use the Application Itself as a Guide to Gathering Data	
	Use a Team Approach	
	Make a Plan for What Will be Done with the Information Upon Completion	

Results of Phase II: Surveys

Leadership of Community Engagement: Lead Applicants

The literature does not evidence any published study focusing on the authors of Carnegie Community Engagement Classification applications, or their motivations, in any of the three cycles of the Classification. As a proxy of sorts, however, there is research on who leads community engagement in institutions of higher education, and the survey respondents who authored the applications were often campus leaders in community engagement practices.

Leadership is multilayered and often consists of four types of leaders: champions, appointed designees, operational leaders, and executive leaders. Sandmann and Plater (*2009*) described, "Initially engagement was led by faculty champions, civic minded students, and strident community partners. However, now stakeholder numbers are increasing" *(p. 16)*. Sandmann and Plater also related that there is often "an appointed engagement designee" *(p. 17)* with a title such as Vice Provost for Community Engagement or Assistant to the President for Community Engagement. These titles provide weight to the institution's community engagement efforts, indicating buy-in from the highest administrative levels. The third type of community engagement leader is called an "operational leader" (*Sandmann & Plater, 2009, p. 17),* with a title such as a Director of the Center for Public and Community Service or Coordinator for the Office of Service-Learning and Community Outreach. These

leaders are most often the day-to-day managers of much of an institution's community engagement activities (*Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013*). Sandmann and Plater *(2009)* added the final piece to institutional community engagement: upper level administrative or executive leaders. They wrote, "The classification documentation indicates that leadership is multilayered and executive leadership, consisting of chancellors, presidents, and provosts, is the dominant layer" *(p. 16)*. Brukardt et al. (*2004*) agreed, explaining that although there must be "champions" across institutions and within communities; "[P]residents, chancellors and provosts have an important role in championing engagement" *(p. 14)*. This requirement for both horizontal and vertical integration of the engagement mission, whether interpreted through the lens of engagement within the research mission or through the service-learning aspects of teaching and the pedagogical process, underscores the criticality of institutional coherence on the importance of engagement and its role in interpreting the university's mission. Moore and Ward (*2010*) noted that "a culture of good work may emerge under the influence of a single champion, but ultimately depends on wider commitments across the institution" *(p. 55)*.

This study confirmed that these champions, appointed designees, and operational leaders indeed served as leaders by acting as lead applicants in the Carnegie Classification effort. In the 52 institutions included in the study, applicants held 28 different positions/titles. There were 21 directors/coordinators at the institutional level (e.g., Director of Outreach and Engagement): 16 were directors of centers, and the remainder were faculty, project directors, and so on.

The term *community engagement* is not the only acceptable and popularly used term to describe how an institution engages with its community. In fact, there are unique histories to terms such as *service-learning* or *civic engagement*, which the term *community engagement* tries to encompass, and service-learning can be seen as a bridge to extend the teaching and research models of the institution into the community. Indeed, in the 28 different positions/titles held by applicants in this study, a number of terms were repeated across multiple positions/titles:

- civic engagement,
- community engagement,
- community partnerships,
- community-based learning,

- institutional effectiveness,

- outreach and engagement, and

- service-learning.

Adding to this complexity, 28% of application authors held a different position or title 3 years following the 2010 Classification application cycle. Some of the changes came from retirement; some reflected movement into different positions. In other cases, the application author held a new title while performing the same work. A 28% turnover rate could be seen as high—imagine an entire institution having a 28% turnover in staff. Conversely, it could be seen as low, indicating that the majority of these positions do not serve as springboards for moving into new positions at an institution. This fits the champion model, which describes a group of people who champion the usage of community involvement, regardless of their position or title.

Sandmann and Plater *(2009)* also discussed various types of "organizational structures to support engagement" *(p. 20)*. They suggested that community engagement leadership tends to come from three different divisions within an institution: academic affairs, public or government relations or institutional advancement, and student affairs. However, the results of this study challenge these findings regarding which divisions usually contain community engagement leadership. The study found that the unit in which the application authors are housed is primarily academic affairs (53.2%), with student affairs second (10.6%). Nearly one quarter of applicant authors indicated that they were part of a center or institute, and it is not possible to determine to which (if any) units those centers and institutes are attached. However, none of the 52 applicants who responded to the survey came from public affairs. Further, despite the need to gather a wide array of data from across multiple institutional and community contexts, only 4.3% of the application authors indicated an affiliation with institutional research. The 4.3% of application authors who identified as part of a president's office most likely fall into the category of "appointed" community engagement expert.

In summary, the study found that leadership of community engagement is complex and multilayered. Findings common across many institutions indicated that applicants mainly held positions in academic affairs, at a center or institute, or in student affairs. Applicants can be described as champions, appointed designees, and operational leaders, confirming the importance of institutional

commitment across the spectrum of organizational structures within higher education. The study found that Classified institutions have multiple ways of recognizing the role of community engagement advocates, as there were 28 different titles to identify the positions and roles of the lead applicants. Finally, with 28% of the lead applicants moving to different positions within 3 years of the application, institutions may need to reconsider how community engagement can be maintained over time.
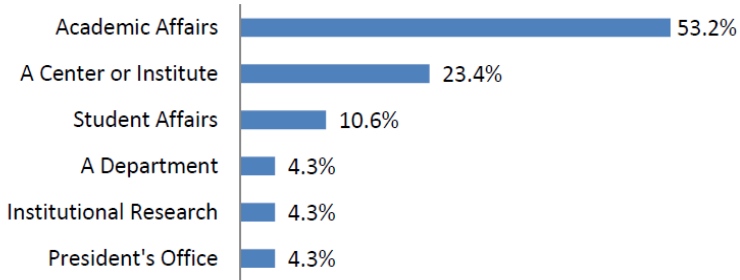

Figure 1. Institutional unit of application lead authors.

Application Teams

Individual lead applicants were not the only ones involved in the application process. Sandmann et al. *(2009a)* explained, "The documentation process is intensive and requires the collaboration of many institutional and community participants" *(p. 7)*. Application authors often worked with a team of varying numbers of staff, faculty, administrators, students, and community members. The average number of application team members was 6.1. Again confirming the champion and appointed designee models, the application teams were developed by a campus champion, appointed by administration, or composed of already operational teams.
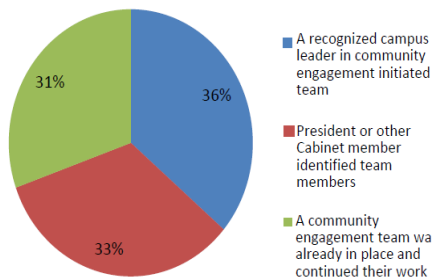

Figure 2. Selection of application team.

Roles of Institutional and Community Stakeholders

Clearly, leadership of community engagement within institutions of higher education is wide-ranging and complex. When working to document such a cross-institutional practice as community engagement, the perspectives of many groups must be considered. The survey asked applicants to indicate which group of stakeholders was involved in the four key steps of the application process: (a) completed surveys or served as interviewees or members of focus groups, (b) served as part of data-gathering team, (c) helped write the application, and (d) provided feedback on drafts of application.

Although most groups participated in multiple steps of the application process, certain roles were prominent for each group:

- Completed surveys or served as interviewees or focus group members
    - Primary role for faculty, students, department chairs, deans, and community partners
- Served as part of data-gathering team
    - Primary role for staff
- Helped write the application
    - No group had this as its primary role, although several stakeholders participated in this writing process.
    - Secondary role for staff
- Provided feedback on drafts of application
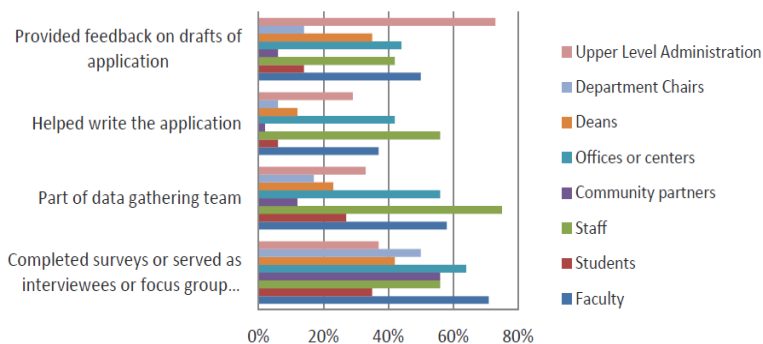   - Primary role for upper level administrators

Figure 3. Roles of stakeholders.

Staff members were the most commonly identified as members of data-gathering teams (75% of the responses) and as helping to write the application (56% of responses). Faculty members were the group most commonly identified as completing surveys or serving as interviewees or focus group members (71% of responses). Upper level administrators were the most commonly identified group to provide feedback on drafts of the applications (73% of responses).

It should be noted that although many of the efforts in community engagement revolve around connecting with community and increasing student engagement, participants from these two groups were the least likely to assist in writing the application. The issue of student involvement in the organizational patterns of community engagement has been addressed since 1999, when Holland wrote that the students "were often an afterthought in the coordination process, with few institutions having explicitly defined expectations and roles for students in terms of engagement" (*Thornton & Zuiches*, *2009, p. 76).*

Interview responses gathered in Phase I of the study help to explain the low level of involvement of students in the application effort. One respondent explained that he did not talk with students themselves but did speak with the faculty advisors for student clubs and organizations. This respondent posited a reason for the lack of active student participation, stating that students who are involved in community engagement are often scattered throughout a city or region, making it difficult to contact them.

Community members were reported as having varied involvement in the application process, from active participation to passive involvement to reports of difficulties getting community members involved. Three interviewees described gathering information from community partners through surveys or by talking to them. One institution involved community members on the application team. Another brought community partners onto campus for a meeting, provided lunch, and asked for input on the institution's community engagement efforts. Another respondent stated that he did not need to call community partners since he already knew the required information. One respondent explained that there was not strong involvement from community members, and another described difficulty in getting community members involved, stating, "We tried."

Data Sources Used to Prepare Applications

The application for the Classification requires a wide range of data regarding community engagement across multiple units and constituencies. In some cases, the data needed to complete the Carnegie application already exist, having been gathered previously for other purposes. However, new data sometimes need to be gathered to complete all of the questions on the application. Applicants indicated that, on average, 62% of the data required to complete the application were found already existing on their campuses. The remaining 38% of the data were newly gathered specifically for the application process.

Previously gathered data. Respondents described 22 sources of data that they drew upon to complete the Classification application, including data gathered prior to the time of application. Some was directly related to community engagement; for other data, applicants referred to larger institutional datasets containing only pieces of information about the institution's community engagement.

Institutional self-studies were the most commonly utilized preexisting source of data, mentioned by three times as many respondents as any other data sets ($n = 9$). Multiple respondents also described using information from their institution's websites ($n = 3$), their center or office of community or civic engagement ($n = 2$), lists of faculty publications ($n = 2$), and National Survey of Student Engagement/Faculty Survey of Student Engagement reports ($n = 2$). Several respondents described the use of preexisting data that had at least some relevance to the Classification application. One respondent described, "Much of the data called for already existed in the institution; it needed to be gathered from various sources and on some occasions, separated from larger data sets."

Newly gathered data. Respondents described 17 sources or methods of gathering new data for the Classification application. Overall, the newly gathered data involved having conversations or conducting surveys with a variety of participants, as opposed to analyzing previously prepared written documents. Two thirds of the respondents who indicated that they gathered new data conducted interviews ($n = 30$), and approximately half conducted surveys ($n = 24$). Interviews and surveys were conducted with faculty, students, staff, administrators, department chairs, center directors, office directors, and community members. Additionally, the need to gather new data allowed the strategies to be aimed very directly, or "targeted" as expressed by two respondents, at completing the

Classification application.

As noted above, some data was described as already existing by some respondents and newly gathered by others (e.g., websites). This confirms the flexible nature behind the Classification process, which allows for multiple self-identified methods of gathering this documentation in an organic manner that best meets applicants' structure and capacity as well as their organizational patterns of community engagement.

Table 2. *Data Sources: Existing and Newly Collected*

Existing Data Sources Utilized (62% of application data)	Newly Collected Data Sources (38% of application data)
Reported by Multiple Applicants	*Reported by Multiple Applicants*
• Self-studies • Colleges (including their web sites) • Center or Office for Community or Civic Engagement • Faculty publications • NSSE/FSSE reports	• Interviews and one-on-one conversations • Surveys • E-mail request • University web sites • Community members • Created new database (i.e., Banner) • Existing data recollected • Focus groups
Reported by Single Applicants	*Reported by Single Applicants*
• Advisory groups and councils • Annual reports • Campus Compact surveys • Cooperative Extension • Departments • Extended university data • Fact Books • Grand-funded programs • Historical documents • Institutional Research • Library database • Main student service adn volunterrism unit • Previous applications for awards and grants • Previous application for President's Honor Rolls • Registrar data • Student services administrative offices • "Researched and gathered information on existing commitments, policies, procedures, and documented philosophy."	• Annual Reports • Data base (new data gathered) • Departments and units - personal contact • Financial records • Focus groups • Handbooks and policy manuals • Institutional Research • Press releases • University publications

Length of Time to Prepare Application

The survey allowed respondents to indicate the length of time it took to prepare the application in months, years, and/or percentage of time spent on the process. Most respondents completed this question in terms of months spent on the application process. Responses in the form of years were recalculated into months. Some respondents included both months and percentage of time spent during those months, and both approaches were incorporated in the methodology. Overall, the average amount of time reported as spent on the application was 6.6 months. For those who did report percentage of their time on the application process, the average was 29%.

As seen in Table 3, there appears to be a direct correlation between institutional size, measured in number of students, and months spent on the application. Two interviewees from Phase I of the study posited that the smaller the institution, the less time is needed to complete the application. One interviewee stated that it is easier at a small institution because "[w]e know who does what, who is motivated." The other indicated that at the smaller institution, they "know everyone who does this work," and the institution is "compact enough to keep track of." Alternative explanations for the length of time needed at different-sized institutions may be availability of resources for the task or robustness of an institution's designated community engagement center. Further research is needed to advance our understanding of this particular issue.

Table 3. *Length of Time to Prepare Application*

Months Spent on Application (M = 6.6)	# of Students
5.8	Fewer than 5,000
7	5,001 - 10,000
7.5	10,000-20,000
9.1	More than 20,000

Additional Support Received for Work

As previously discussed, the applicants described leading a team of individuals representing multiple institutional and community stakeholders, over an average of 6.6 months, in the data-gathering and application process. To undertake such an effort, support in various forms is critical. Applicants were asked to indicate the types of support they received to facilitate the application process. The majority of respondents received support from already existing

units, documents, or workshops. In particular, respondents indicated the benefits of seeing the applications of previously successful Carnegie Classified institutions as well as attending webinars or workshops provided by the Carnegie Foundation. A very small percentage received support in the form of additional funding, such as additional staff, students, payment, or release time. A few respondents expressed concern over a lack of support for the work:

- "We pretty much did this out of hide [no additional resources]."

- "Much of the writing took place after completion of the academic year; while no additional compensation was provided, the amount of work involved during 'off contract time' would have warranted a stipend or compensation of some sort."
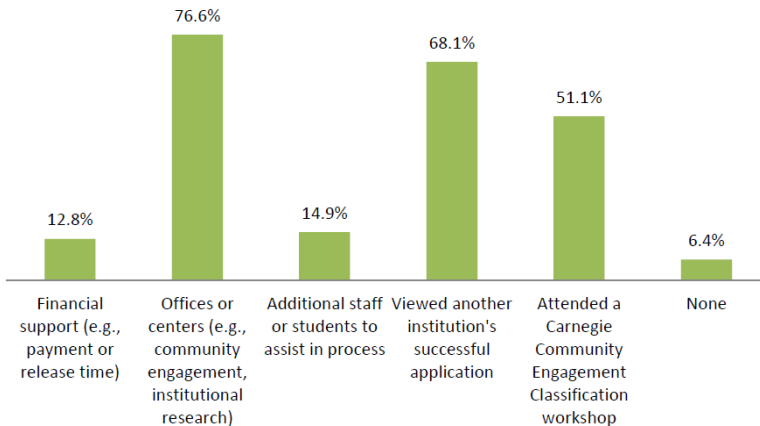

Figure 4. Additional support received for work on application.

Upper-Level Administrator Involvement

Although every respondent indicated involvement from upper-level administration, involvement from administrators tended to be focused on two tasks: communicating and planning. A large majority of respondents indicated that their upper-level administration was involved in communicating about the Classification, either about the importance of participating in the process or about receiving the Classification. Just under half of the respondents indicated that the upper-level administration helped develop the plan for data gathering. Less than 15% responded that upper level administration either authored the application, provided monetary

or release time support for the author, or created a new position or filled a vacant position to facilitate completing the application. In their further written comments, some respondents credited a supportive administration, and others felt they had to push to initiate the process.

- "Upper level administration was very supportive of the application process.… They were also very congratulatory and supportive when we received the recognition."

- "To be honest, our application would not have happened if I had not pushed it."

- "In all honesty, I was the tail wagging the dog in trying to convince administrators that this application was worth pursuing."

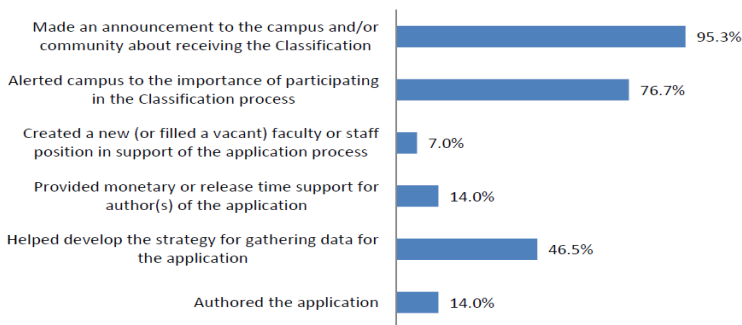|	
Made an announcement to the campus and/or community about receiving the Classification	95.3%
Alerted campus to the importance of participating in the Classification process	76.7%
Created a new (or filled a vacant) faculty or staff position in support of the application process	7.0%
Provided monetary or release time support for author(s) of the application	14.0%
Helped develop the strategy for gathering data for the application	46.5%
Authored the application	14.0%

Figure 5. Upper-level administrative support.

Based on the applicants' responses, upper-level administration seems to be most involved at the outset and conclusion of the application process. Nearly half of the administrators helped develop the data-gathering strategy while the application plan was being developed, and just over 75% helped initiate the process by alerting campus to the upcoming data-gathering and application efforts. At the conclusion of the process, 95% of upper level administrators made the celebratory announcement that the institution had received the Classification.

Challenges or Obstacles Faced

In their analysis of the 2006 Classification recipients, Sandmann et al. (*2009a*) found that "even the simple tracking and recording

of engagement activities appeared to be difficult to maintain with a systematic institution-wide process" *(p. 10)*. Respondents in this study would likely concur, as they encountered a number of challenges during application preparation, ranging from macro-level issues such as the need for new institutional leadership to difficulty with the application itself that "made it difficult to write responses that were clear and complete." Also reported were problems with writing time, minimal staff support, and "a short timeframe for completing the application."

More pervasive were issues concerning data and documentation required for the process and ensuring institution-wide involvement. As Furco and Miller (*2009*) highlighted, assessment of service-learning and community engagement efforts has long been a difficult process. Interviewees reported that data collection systems were not in place beyond department or program levels; there were definitional issues; "surrogate" information had to be identified when some data was not available; and one campus office of institutional research simply responded, "We don't collect any of that data."

The most commonly indicated challenge was "no structure for data collection prior to beginning application process." However, as five respondents elaborated, the problem confronting them was not *no* structure, but rather "minimal" structure; that is, data had been collected but not through a formalized structure. As one described, the institution's data collection was not "comprehensive" prior to the application process; another described relevant data collection as "spotty."

The second most commonly identified challenge confirms a problem documented in the literature, namely, "difficulty ensuring institution-wide involvement." Examples of this difficulty included reports that key administrators "grumbled" or showed "indifference" to the Classification itself. As one respondent described,

> It was a challenge to learn what was going on outside the Academic Affairs reporting line (i.e. units reporting to the Provost). Units reporting through other VP lines also do a great job of engaging the community (e.g. student affairs, athletics). Once we figured out who to talk to, people were very helpful. It was just a question of venturing beyond reporting lines to see what was going on across the entire campus.

The third most commonly marked challenge was "difficulty matching responses to wording on application." This included difficulties in aligning institutional characteristics with the questions on the application as well as technical issues such as adhering to the character limits on the application.

The remaining items listed in the survey as challenges were "insufficient resources/time" and "definition of community engagement unclear at my institution." One third of respondents indicated they needed more time, Classification training courses, and support to complete their application. One third of respondents addressed the definitional issues related to community engagement. Responses ranged from an interviewee who indicated that colleagues did not see how community engagement was part of the institution's mission to a survey respondent who explained that many units wanted to have their work counted as community engagement, even if that work did not fit the Carnegie definition.
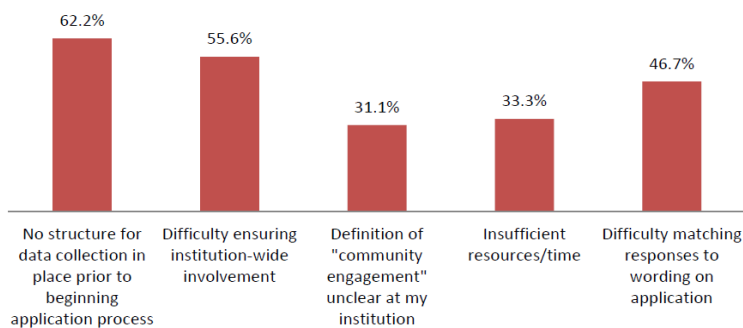

Figure 6. Challenges or obstacles reported.

With each challenge selected by 30% or more of the respondents, it is apparent that these are fairly common challenges faced by institutions applying for the Classification.

Considered Applying in Previous Round but Waited—and Why

Exactly one half (*n* = 26) of the respondents reported that their institution had considered applying for the Classification in a previous round (2006 or 2008) but had waited because the institution was not yet ready to apply. Several respondents reported multiple concerns driving the decision to wait, and the reasons for waiting can be grouped into eight categories, which are listed below.

1. Needed to institutionalize community engagement and/or obtain greater buy-in ($n = 8$). Example responses: (a) "[We were waiting until] new campus initiatives were in place to provide more support for the application." (b) "[I] was asked to institutionalize service learning."

2. Data collection procedures not ready ($n = 6$). Example responses: (a) "[We needed to work on] improving data gathering process." (b) "Developed a centralized database (repository) to collect and store necessary information."

3. Needed an individual or an office/center dedicated to community engagement ($n = 5$). Example responses: (a) "In 2008, there was a staffing change in the Center for Service Learning leaving it without a director for four months. This prevented us from applying for the classification at that time." (b) "Instituted a new office (Institutional and Community Engagement)."

4. No clear campus definition of community engagement ($n = 3$). Example response: "The definitions of community and the concept of engagement were broader than we recognized initially."

5. Needed more time ($n = 3$). Example response: "[We] just couldn't manage to get the information together for the previous cycle."

6. Could not commit the time due to other pressing initiatives ($n = 2$). Example response: "We were engaged in the 2008 self study process for the Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation. Needed to focus energy in that data collection process."

7. Needed new leadership that valued community engagement ($n = 2$). Example response: "We were helped by the arrival of a new provost in 2010 who was more eager than his predecessor to promote service, service-learning, and community engagement."

8. Needed to strengthen community partner connections ($n = 2$). Example response: "[We needed] growth in community partner and student participation."

Postclassification, or Now What?

Since one intended function of the Classification process is a better understanding of an institution's commitment to engagement, possible outcomes include changes in practice that either highlight or improve that level of commitment. One way to describe such changes is through shifts in institutional culture. As Thornton and Zuiches (*2009*) described, "Research shows that institutional culture plays a significant role in a university's commitment to public service and engagement" *(p. 81).* Accordingly, the current study examined the changes in institutional culture reported by respondents. Interestingly, a number of changes were recorded during the process of applying for the Classification as well as upon receiving it. This means that merely the process of applying resulted in institutions' considering and implementing changes to their practices and/or philosophies of community engagement.

Changes in Institutional Culture as a Result of Applying for the Classification

Most respondents indicated progress on institutionalizing community engagement during the application process, ranging from improved collaborations and greater involvement of more groups to aligning mission with community engagement goals to improved data structures to increased support of community engagement. Respondents indicated attempts to align community engagement with the mission of the university and the converse, "trying to transform into the Engaged University." These findings are consistent with Sandmann et al. *(2009b)*, who noted that "[t]he Carnegie community engagement process and its data can also serve as a vehicle for institutionalizing engagement" *(p. 4).*

Overall, there was no clear, singular change in institutional culture as a result of applying for the Classification. Rather, the following four changes were shared by over 50% of respondents:

1. New, increased, or improved cross-campus collaborations (61%)

2. Greater involvement by administration/faculty/staff/students/community in institutionalizing community engagement (58%)

3. Better alignment of institution's mission with goals of community engagement (58%)

4. New or improved data-reporting structures for community engagement (56%)

These changes are in line with and address the concerns and challenges previously identified by respondents. In particular, responses to previously identified needs—for better data-collection structures and for greater institutionalization of community engagement—were reflected in changes reported by over half of respondents. The changes occurred during the application process, suggesting that the mere act of preparing an application can result in institutional-level improvements.

Another key cultural shift reported by participants was "better alignment of institution's mission with goals of community engagement" as a result of applying for the Classification. In order to complete the application, 58% of the institutions made at least some shift in institutional mission to incorporate community engagement. This is clear evidence of institutional change as a result of applying for the Classification.

Additional areas of change were also noted: new, increased, or improved partnership with community (41%) and structural changes in university to support community engagement (i.e., new positions or assignments of faculty/staff/administration in order to support campuswide community engagement; 32%). These institutional, cultural changes address the challenges identified in previous questions.

Changes in Institutional Culture as a Result of Receiving the Classification

The survey data revealed that, in general, more respondents felt there was change in the aspects of institutional culture addressed in the survey as a result of receiving the Classification than of applying for it. Several items reflected an increase of approximately 10 percentage points, including the following:

- New, increased, or improved cross-campus collaborations (71% on receiving vs. 61% on applying)

- Greater involvement by administration/faculty/staff/ students/community in institutionalizing community engagement (69% on receiving vs. 58% on applying)

- new, increased, or improved partnership with community (52% on receiving vs. 41% on applying)

The percentage of respondents who marked change in the following two items is nearly identical for applying for and receiving the Classification:

- New or improved data-reporting structures for community engagement (56%)

- Structural changes in university to support community engagement (i.e., new positions or assignments of faculty/staff/administration in order to support campuswide community engagement; 36% on receiving vs. 32% on applying)

Curiously, there was a decrease of 10 percentage points in the number of respondents who marked "better alignment of institution's mission with goals of community engagement," from 58% on applying for the Classification to 48% on receiving the Classification. We surmise that once the institution's mission had been aligned during the application process, that change was viewed as sufficient or complete and therefore did not need to be shifted again upon receiving the Classification.

Plan for Announcing the Classification

Forty-four percent of survey respondents indicated that they had planned how to announce and celebrate the receipt of the Classification. Responses from interviewees in Phase I of the study testify to the sense of energy felt by those who had developed such a plan. One respondent related being "catalyzed by this process," and another stated, "We never miss the opportunity to tell people we got it." On the other hand, over half of the survey respondents (56%) indicated that they had no plan for the announcement. Several interviewees in Phase I of the study described difficulties in utilizing the Classification for change, noting a lackluster response to receiving the Classification, with statements indicating that it "didn't really make much of a difference for us" and that "you just get shrugged shoulders."

Seven of the respondents who did have a plan described the particular marketing unit within their institution that developed the announcement, typically an office of communications, public relations, or marketing. A number of platforms were put forward for announcing the news of the Classification:

- announcements in local media

- announcements to various stakeholder groups

- award-related events

- banner on website

- campus announcements

- campus celebration

- Facebook

- internal publications (university magazine, etc.)

- newspaper articles

- president's newsletter

- press releases

- websites

Respondents commented on the variety of ways the Classification award process was communicated and/or celebrated within their campus communities:

- "We held a reception in which community partners, faculty, students, and the college community was invited to celebrate with us. There was media attention as well."

- "We printed announcements and sent them out to colleagues, peer institutions, and sister institutions."

- "Sent mailers to *US News and World Report* rankers."

- "Banners placed on campus and at campus entrances."

- "We were ready to send press releases to media outlets and to announce it to campus."

- "Our Chancellor made the announcement."

Respondent Recommendations to Future Classification Applicants

Respondents offered many recommendations for future applicants, with most respondents offering three to five recommendations. These recommendations can be loosely grouped into 13 categories, with the number of respondents noting each option in parentheses:

1. Form a team ($n = 25$).

2. Utilize or develop a data-gathering structure ($n = 12$).

3. Obtain administrator involvement and/or support ($n = 11$).

4. Institutionalize or centralize service-learning, community engagement, or research ($n = 9$).

5. Generate awareness of the Classification ($n = 8$).

6. Use multiple sources of data and resources ($n = 8$).

7. Start early ($n = 7$).

8. Obtain agreement on a campuswide definition of community engagement and service-learning ($n = 5$).

9. Identify a single lead author ($n = 4$).

10. Tie data gathering directly to application ($n = 4$).

11. Use previously gathered data or tie to other initiatives ($n = 4$).

12. Attend workshops or work with successfully Classified institutions ($n = 3$).

13. Tie mission to service ($n = 3$).

In addition, applicants held in common a number of key observations and strategies related to the application process. Specifically, the respondent data revealed these commonalities:

- Successful applicants utilized a team approach to gathering the data and completing the application.

- Evidence of community engagement often already exists within an institution (62% of the data needed for Classification applications came from preexisting sources), but some new data will likely need to be gathered (38% of data utilized was newly gathered).

- Successful applicants encountered a number of obstacles or challenges related to data collection structures and resources, institution-wide understanding and involvement, and matching data to the application itself.

- Institutional and cultural shifts were identified by over half of the applicants, not only upon receipt of the Classification, but also from engaging in the application process. Cultural shifts included new or improved collaborations, greater institutionalization of community engagement, new or improved data-reporting structures, and better alignment of the institution's mission with the goals of community engagement.

Conclusions and Recommended Future Research

Community engagement has become a valued practice in higher education, but it remains diffuse, with evidence of the practice and its impacts often spread throughout an institution in varied ways that reflect no strategy or coordination. The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification provides a convenient and compelling opportunity for institutions to gather data and present evidence of their institutional commitment to community engagement. In this study of 52 U.S. institutions that applied for and received the 2010 Classification, many of the fundamental conclusions in the literature regarding the importance of community engagement to the core academic mission were confirmed. There are community engagement champions that come from a wide range of partici-pating groups, and there are appointed or designated community engagement experts across the nation, including many at Carnegie Classified institutions. What is clear from the data, however, is an institutional paradox of community engagement: Students and community members, the groups that are often at the heart of the learning environment within community engagement, had a rela-tively low level of involvement as the teams gathered their data to apply for the Classification.

Community engagement as a campus practice overall, and the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification specifically, are fruitful fields for study when considering the scope of impact a campus has on its surrounding community and vice versa. We sug-gest several avenues of future research: (a) a longitudinal study of any long-lasting effects of applying for or receiving the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification; (b) a study of the quality of community engagement at Carnegie-Classified institutions, using such measurement tools as self-reports on scales or rubrics; and (c) a comparison of successful and unsuccessful Classification applications with a focus on identifying any clear strategies that enable successful applications or notable gaps that frequently lead to an unsuccessful submission.

Applicants at the 52 institutions in this study reported a number of institutional and cultural shifts as a result of applying for and receiving the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. Cultural shifts included new or improved collaborations, greater institutionalization of community engagement, new or improved data-reporting structures, and better alignment of the institution's mission with the goals of community engagement. These changes represent the types of institutional and cultural shifts that can lead

higher education toward realizing the promise of its service mission through community engagement.

Acknowledgments

Note:

The authors have used the term *applicants* to describe the interviewees and respondents. Individuals identified as contacts on the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification applications sometimes are not the authors of the applications but rather administrators to whom general questions might be directed. For this study, each interviewee or respondent confirmed that he or she was indeed the author, a role that we termed *applicant*.

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