

Faculty for the Engaged Campus: Advancing Community-Engaged Careers in the Academy

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Abstract

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) is a national membership organization that promotes health equity and social justice through partnerships between communities and higher education institutions. In response to faculty concerns about the institutional barriers to community-engaged careers in the academy, CCPH embarked on a series of national initiatives centered on a two-pronged change strategy: (1) to support community-engaged faculty members going up for promotion and tenure in a system unlikely to change in time to benefit them, and (2) to work toward longer-term systems change. CCPH's initiative, Faculty for the Engaged Campus, aimed to strengthen community-engaged career paths in the academy by developing innovative competency-based models of faculty development, facilitating peer review and dissemination of products of community-engaged scholarship, and supporting community-engaged faculty members through the promotion and tenure process. In this article, the authors describe these challenges, the approaches taken to address them, lessons learned, and observations for the future. Subsequent articles in this thematic issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* report on the design and impact of the initiative's components.

Introduction

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) is a national membership organization that promotes health equity and social justice through partnerships between communities and higher education institutions. When CCPH first formed in 1996, faculty involved in the organization almost immediately began raising concerns about the institutional barriers to community-engaged careers in the academy (Connors, 2007). Many scholars and national organizations have noted the disconnect between calls for community-engaged universities that embrace service-learning and community-based research on the one hand and a predominant system for faculty review, promotion, and tenure that favors narrowly defined scholarship, results, and impact (Calleson, Jordan, & Seifer, 2005; Ellison & Eatman, 2008;

Gelmon & Agre-Kippenhan, 2002; Kellogg Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, 2005; Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 1999; Nyden, 2003; Task Force on the Institutionalization of Public Sociology, 2007).

Seeking to be responsive to our members and to contribute to supportive institutional changes, we commissioned a paper in spring 2000 to help frame the issues and recommend actions that needed to be taken (*Maurana, 2001*). The paper asserted that a more supportive academic environment for community-engaged teaching and research would significantly advance the ability of academic institutions and community partners to collaborate in educating future professionals, generating community-relevant knowledge, and building healthier communities. The paper's conclusions indicated that a two-pronged change strategy was needed: (1) to support community-engaged faculty members going up for promotion and tenure in a system unlikely to change in time to benefit them, and (2) to work toward longer-term systems change. Grant funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation helped us advance both strategies by developing an online toolkit for faculty to "make their best case" in documenting their work for promotion and tenure (*Calleson, Kauper-Brown, & Seifer, 2005*) and by establishing a Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions to provide national leadership for change (*Kellogg Commission 2005*).

The commission's definitions of community engagement and community-engaged scholarship (Figure 1), Venn diagram of community engagement (Figure 2), and recommendations (Figure 3) helped frame two consecutive 3-year change initiatives we undertook with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) in the U.S. Department of Education.

Community engagement is the application of institutional resources to address and solve challenges facing communities through collaboration with these communities.

Scholarship is teaching, discovery, integration, application and engagement that has clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique that is rigorous and peer-reviewed.

Community-engaged scholarship is scholarship that involves the scholar in a mutually beneficial partnership with the community.

Source: Kellogg Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, 2005.

Figure 1. Definitions



Source: Kellogg Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in Health Professions, 2005

Figure 2. Community-Engaged Teaching, Research, and Service

1. Health professional schools should adopt and promote a definition of scholarship that includes and values community-engaged scholarship.
2. Health professional schools should adopt review, promotion, and tenure policies and procedures that value community-engaged scholarship.
3. Health professional schools should ensure that community partners are meaningfully involved in review, promotion, and tenure processes for community-engaged faculty members.
4. Health professional schools should educate the members of review, promotion, and tenure committees about community-engaged scholarship and prepare them to understand and apply the review, promotion, and tenure guidelines in the review of community-engaged faculty.
5. Health professional schools should invest in the recruitment and retention of community-engaged faculty.
6. Health professional schools should advocate for increased extramural support for community-engaged scholarship.
7. Health professional schools should take a leadership role on their university campuses to initiate or further campus wide support for community-engaged scholarship.
8. National associations of health professional schools should:
 - a. Adopt and promote a definition of scholarship within the profession that explicitly includes community-engaged scholarship.
 - b. Support member schools that recognize and reward community-engaged scholarship.
 - c. Advocate for increased extramural support for community-engaged scholarship.
9. Recognizing that many products of community-engaged scholarship are not currently peer reviewed, a national board should be established to facilitate a peer review process.

Source: Kellogg Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, 2005.

Figure 3. Recommendations that Framed the Faculty for the Engaged Campus Initiative

The first, the Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative (*Collaborative; 2004–2007*), involved eight health professional schools that identified review, promotion, and tenure issues as significant impediments to sustaining and expanding community-engaged scholarship (*Seifer, Wong, Gelmon, & Lederer, 2009*). Through change efforts at each school, activities across the schools, and strategic relationships with national disciplinary associations, Collaborative members built their capacity for community-engaged scholarship and produced tools and resources that have helped to advance community-engaged scholarship nationally and internationally (*Gelmon et al., 2004; Gelmon, Lederer, Seifer, & Wong, 2009; Seifer et al., 2009; Wenger, Hawkins, & Seifer, 2011*).

The second FIPSE-funded initiative, Faculty for the Engaged Campus (2007–2010), sought to address significant, continuing challenges to community-engaged scholarship evident from the work of the Collaborative and others involved in similar efforts. In this article, we describe these challenges, the approaches we took to address them, our lessons learned, and observations for the future. Subsequent articles in this thematic issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* report on the design and impact of each of the initiative's components (*Blanchard, 2012; Gelmon, Ryan, Blanchard, & Seifer, 2012; Hamel-Lambert & Slovak, 2012; Jaeger & Clayton, 2012; Jordan, 2012; Jordan, Gelmon, Ryan, & Seifer, 2012*).

Persistent Challenges to Community-Engaged Scholarship in Higher Education

The challenge of supporting faculty.

Few established professional development mechanisms or pathways exist for graduate students, postdoctoral trainees, and faculty members who seek community-engaged careers in the academy. Unlike such groups as basic science research faculty, for whom well-developed and recognized mentoring and career development programs exist, community-engaged faculty members are often left to forge their own career path with little support (*Calleson, Jordan, et al., 2005*). Building a faculty portfolio for promotion and tenure review can be daunting for those focusing on community-engaged scholarship, particularly when review committees are not familiar with this form of scholarship (*Jordan, 2009*).

University-based faculty development efforts usually seek to build and enhance the scholarship of faculty members, typically

offering support in instructional methods, curriculum development, research, grant writing, career enhancement, and personal development (Blanchard *et al.*, 2009). Unfortunately, few faculty development programs explicitly support community-engaged faculty, and even fewer incorporate best practices characteristic of successful faculty development: That is, few are sustained, longitudinal, multi-disciplinary, experiential, and competency-based.

The challenge of ensuring appropriate peer review.

Peer reviewers in a given faculty member's discipline/profession who understand and can assess the rigor, quality, and impact of their community-engaged scholarship are often not readily identifiable (Kellogg Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions, 2005). Further, external reviewers who are not familiar with or are biased against community-engaged scholarship may not fairly review a community-engaged faculty member's portfolio. The consequences can be significant for both faculty members and their community partners (Freeman, Gust, & Alosheh, 2009).

The challenge of innovative products of scholarship.

Peer-reviewed journal articles are essential for communicating the results of scholarship to academic audiences, but they are not sufficient, and are often not the most important mechanism, for disseminating the results of community-engaged scholarship (Calleson, Jordan, *et al.*, 2005). They do little, for example, to reach community members, practitioners, policymakers, and other key audiences who could act on the findings. Community-engaged scholarship requires diverse pathways and products for dissemination, including those products that communities value most (e.g., applied products such as training videos, online toolkits and instructional manuals, and dissemination products such as photo-voice exhibits, public service announcements, and policy briefs).

With the exception of journal articles, these other products of community-engaged scholarship are not usually peer-reviewed, published, or disseminated widely. Peer review is the bedrock of the academic evaluative process and is used to ensure that the rigor and quality of scholarship meet the standards of the academic community. With no accepted method for peer reviewing diverse scholarly products and no recognized peer-reviewed outlet

for publishing and disseminating them, they are often perceived by review, promotion, and tenure committees as of less importance, quality, credibility, and value than peer-reviewed journal articles (O'Meara, 2011). Further, the "peer" in peer review of conventional forms of scholarship is limited to academic peers, whereas community-engaged scholarship by definition involves community peers (Freeman et al., 2009).

Responding to Challenges: Faculty for the Engaged Campus

Faculty for the Engaged Campus sought to institutionalize and sustain community-engaged scholarship as core values and practices in higher education by strategically addressing the challenges identified above. A national initiative of CCPH in partnership with the University of Minnesota and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Faculty for the Engaged Campus aimed to strengthen community-engaged career paths in the academy by developing innovative competency-based models of faculty development, facilitating peer review and dissemination of products of community-engaged scholarship, and supporting community-engaged faculty through the promotion and tenure process. The initiative had three major goals.

Goal I: To facilitate the development of innovative mechanisms for preparing faculty for community-engaged careers in the academy.

In the initiative's first year, we convened teams from 20 competitively selected campuses, project staff, and expert advisors to collaboratively design innovative models of community-engaged scholarship faculty development. Upon returning home, teams were eligible to apply for up to \$15,000 over 2 years to support the design, implementation, and evaluation of innovative community-engaged scholarship faculty development models. Six teams were selected for funding based on the strength of their proposed plans. The funded teams were supported through group conference calls, technical assistance site visits, and regular opportunities for feedback on their progress. Their varied approaches to faculty development components (Blanchard et al., 2012; Hamel-Lambert & Slovak, 2012; Jaeger & Clayton, 2012; Jordan, 2012) present an array of replicable options for other institutions to consider. The evaluation also found that the other 14 campuses involved in the faculty development component of the initiative benefited from their participation (Gelmon et al., 2012).

Goal 2: To facilitate high quality peer review, publication, and dissemination of products of community-engaged scholarship in forms other than journal articles.

The initiative developed and launched CES4Health.info, a unique online mechanism for peer-reviewed publication and dissemination of diverse products of community-engaged scholarship that are in forms other than journal manuscripts (Jordan, Seifer, Sandmann, & Gelmon, 2009). Between November 2009 and January 2012, 34 products of community-engaged scholarship were peer-reviewed and published through CES4Health.info, including videos, policy reports, digital stories, toolkits, instructional manuals, and a cookbook. More than 1,500 people have downloaded one or more products from CES4Health.info, and more than 250 community and academic experts serve as peer reviewers. Early evaluation findings suggest that authors, reviewers, and users value CES4Health.info. These findings also indicate that it is poised to fulfill a unique and important role in valuing community partners as peers in community-engaged scholarship as well as publishing high quality products that can “count” toward faculty promotion and tenure and can be used or adapted in other communities (Jordan, 2011; Jordan et al., 2012; Jordan, Pergament, & Tandon, 2011; Jordan, Seifer, Gelmon, Ryan, & McGinley, 2011).

Goal 3: To facilitate high quality peer review of community-engaged health professional faculty members being considered for promotion and/or tenure.

Faculty for the Engaged Campus also established a searchable online database of community-engaged faculty members who are tenured and/or full professors and able to serve as mentors and external reviewers of community-engaged faculty members being considered for promotion and/or tenure (<http://facultydatabase.info>). The database is designed to be used by community-engaged faculty members who are searching for faculty mentors, and by deans, department chairs, and others seeking external experts to review portfolios of community-engaged faculty members being considered for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. Faculty members apply to be included in the database and are selected based on their experience as community-engaged scholars and their commitment to mentoring and supporting junior colleagues. The database can be searched by keyword, faculty rank, tenure status, discipline/profession, gender, state, country, race/ethnicity,

methodological approach, and area of experience. In addition to demographic and biographical information, each entry includes career planning advice and tips for preparing a strong portfolio. Launched in 2010, the database includes 54 faculty members. An evaluation of the use and impact of the database is under way.

Lessons Learned About National Change Initiatives

We attribute the accomplishments of Faculty for the Engaged Campus to a number of strategic decisions made during the planning phase as well as actions taken once the initiative was under way.

Ensure That the Initiative Is Aligned With the Missions and Strategic Directions of the Organizations Leading It

CCPH, with its track record of over a decade of work to advance community-engaged scholarship nationally, was well positioned to facilitate the initiative and serve as its fiscal home. The University of Minnesota and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill were both active members of the Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative and designated “community-engaged institutions” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Assemble a Strong Leadership Team That Brings Complementary Knowledge and Skills and Enjoys Working Together

The initiative director (Sarena Seifer), co-directors (Lynn Blanchard and Cathy Jordan), evaluator (Sherril Gelmon), and deputy director (Piper McGinley) together brought the passion, commitment, and competence needed to carry out this project. Further, Seifer, Jordan, and Gelmon have been promoted and/or tenured with a portfolio that includes community-engaged scholarship, and Blanchard directs a campus-wide center that facilitates faculty involvement in community-engaged scholarship, thus bringing the “real world” experience of facing the challenges the project sought to address.

Involve Leaders of Past Attempts to Address Similar Challenges and of Related Efforts as Consultants and Advisors

We made a strategic decision early on that the project would be directly informed by key leaders of related efforts. For example, national experts in community-engaged scholarship faculty development helped shape that component of the initiative (Gelmon *et al.*, 2012). The principals involved in peer-reviewed outlets for publishing educational scholarship and community-based participatory research served on the CES4Health.info design team (Jordan, Seifer, *et al.*, 2009). As a result, we were quickly able to implement best practices and avert many of the challenges experienced by past efforts.

Design an Evaluation That Incorporates Mixed Methods and Allows for Flexibility Along the Way

An accomplished evaluator of multi-institutional change efforts, the evaluator (Gelmon) was an integral member of the initiative's leadership team. With input from all team members, she developed specific measurable and observable indicators, used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods for both formative and summative assessments, and relied upon a range of data collection methods (e.g., online surveys, focus groups, documentation review, site visits) as appropriate for various groups to answer key questions. This approach was valuable for tracking progress toward achieving goals, highlighting accomplishments, and identifying opportunities for improvement in real time.

View Dissemination and Knowledge Mobilization as Essential to Achieving a Project's Goals

Prior experience with national multi-site projects demonstrated that a broad audience was eager to learn from us throughout as well as at the completion of the project. Thus, we aimed to widely share the experiences, expertise, and lessons learned from Faculty for the Engaged Campus through presentations, webinars, and publications. Early on, we encouraged and supported development of papers and presentations that described the initiative and helped advance its goals. For example, anticipating that the rigor of the peer review criteria for CES4Health.info might be questioned, we published an article about the development of the criteria before the site was even launched (Jordan, Seifer, *et al.*, 2009). Later in the initiative, we offered practical, hands-on workshops for

community-engaged graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members, and individuals responsible for faculty development and for review, promotion, and tenure. Having had success with project-focused thematic journal issues in the past (*Seifer et al., 2009; Seifer & Vaughn, 2002*), we approached this journal about collaboration.

Always Overestimate the Amount of Time and Money It Will Take to Do Anything Technology-Related

The components of the initiative that were dependent on technology (e.g., CES4Health.info, faculty databases) proved to be the most challenging to the project timeline. CES4Health.info in particular involved multiple rounds of pilot testing, although these served us well in the long run by identifying problems that needed to be fixed (*Jordan, Seifer, et al., 2009*). Perhaps it is inevitable that despite this attention to testing the system before launching it, we have a fairly long list of previously unidentified “Phase 2” improvements to make.

Observations for the Future of Community-Engaged Scholarship

Reflecting on 6 years of FIPSE-funded work to advance community-engaged scholarship in higher education, we offer several observations that have implications for the future of the field.

We Need to Be Clear About How We Define Terms—and to Hold Each Other Accountable for the Terms We Use

Although the “doing” of community service and the teaching of a service-learning course are meaningful and worthwhile activities that should be recognized and rewarded, they are not in and of themselves scholarship. The definitions of scholarship and community-engaged scholarship adopted by the Kellogg Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions have helped frame our work and have helped people see what community-engaged scholarship is, and what it is not. These distinctions, however, remain an ongoing challenge. If we do not hold firmly to definitions, we will be unable to effectively respond to critics of community-engaged scholarship who allege that we are trying to redefine “service” as “scholarship.” At the same time, we will be unable to stimulate faculty members who are doing service and

service-learning to link their community engagement with scholarship to pursue community-engaged scholarship.

Faculty Development Does Not Start When a Faculty Member Is Preparing His or Her Portfolio for Promotion

Universities that are serious about building a cadre of community-engaged faculty members must invest in support mechanisms that span all phases of an academic career. These mechanisms include graduate and postdoctoral education and mentoring; faculty recruitment and hiring practices; new faculty orientation; ongoing faculty mentoring, skill building, and leadership development; and the training of academic administrators and review, promotion, and tenure committee members.

Meaningful Roles for Community Partners in Academic Faculty Development, Promotion, and Tenure Need to Be Developed Further

Although some community partners involved in our work have made a strong case for why their peers should care about these issues (*Freeman et al., 2009*), most community partners are focused on community building and advancing social justice, and not on changing university policies and practices. Some faculty development programs involve community partners as co-program directors (*Blanchard et al., 2012*). At least one university has carved out an explicit role for community partners in reviewing candidates for promotion and tenure (*Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver, 2009*). One cannot simply assume that community partners do not want to be involved; one must ask and then create opportunities for their participation.

Significant Attention Needs to Be Paid to Community Partner Capacity Building and Professional Development

Faculty for the Engaged Campus explicitly sought to support the development of university-based community-engaged faculty members. As more community organizations collaborate in academic partnerships, they need professional development, mentoring, funding, and advocacy for their roles in teaching, research, and service. Some universities are investing significantly in the development of community partners, and are creating new faculty categories to recognize the expertise of community-engaged

faculty (*Charles Drew University, 2009*). Community partners themselves are organizing to form supportive peer networks (*Community Partner Summit Group, 2011*).

Sustaining Institutional Commitment to Community-Engaged Scholarship Takes Top-Down, Bottom-Up, Inside-Out, and Outside-In Approaches

Finally, as with any change process, it is critical to engage a full range of stakeholders, including students, staff, faculty, administrators, community partners, funding agency officials, professional association leadership, and journal editors (*Kotter, 1996*). You never know where leadership for change and opportunities to accelerate change will emerge. Anchoring community-engaged scholarship in institutional strategic priorities, structures, policies, and practices is essential to it being supported and sustained (*Jaeger & Clayton, 2012; Ramaley, 2002*).

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