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# Rewarding Community Engaged Scholarship

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### 3 Community-engaged colleges and universities are revising promotion and tenure policies to reward community-engaged scholarship.

## Rewarding Community-Engaged Scholarship

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Faculty members, in their roles as arbiters of the curriculum, teachers, knowledge producers, and citizens, hold a prominent role in realizing the goal of making higher education more responsive to community and public welfare. For faculty to claim, own, and foster institutional efforts to connect the campus more meaningfully with society calls for reward structures that clearly define and reward this type of work.

—K. Ward (2005)

Higher education leaders seeking to reshape institutional identity and establish community engagement as a core institutional value ultimately have to address how to embed the values of community engagement in the institutional reward policies that define the faculty roles of teaching, scholarship, and service (Lynton, 1995; Driscoll and Lynton, 1999; O'Meara, 2000, 2002, 2003; Ward, 2003, 2005; Ellison and Eatman, 2008). Furthermore, since the research university culture dominates the construction of faculty roles in higher education, community engagement must be recognized explicitly in the criteria for scholarly work if it is to reshape faculty culture. It cannot be relegated to either the faculty's teaching or service roles exclusively, but must be included as part of the faculty's scholarship and research role (Weerts and Sandmann, 2008).

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While the extent to which community-engaged scholarship is part of the research agenda of any given faculty member is shaped by "the type of institution, as well as the individual goals of the faculty member" (Ward, 2005, p. 224), campuses that want to create a culture supporting community-engaged faculty work, Ward explains, "must define in their promotion and tenure guidelines and faculty handbooks what this work looks like, and how it will be evaluated and rewarded" (p. 229). "No matter how clear the mission statement or presidential proclamation to connect the campus with the community," observes Ward, if community engagement is "unrewarded or seen by faculty as distracting from the pursuit of those kinds of things that count on a dossier, either those public service efforts will be set aside, or the faculty member will be. Either way community approaches to scholarship will not be strengthened" (p. 228).

Faculty scholarly work and its reward provide the context for the questions related to institutional reward policies that appear in the "optional questions" section of foundational indicators of the 2006 Carnegie community engagement framework. The questions on institutional reward policies are aimed at three aspects of rewarding community-engaged scholarship: what exists in current policy, which of the faculty roles are rewarded for community engagement, and if changes in the promotion and tenure guidelines to reward community-engaged scholarship have not been implemented, whether a process is under way to revise the current guidelines.

This chapter presents findings that are part of a larger qualitative study of the applications, faculty handbooks, and key informant interviews from Carnegie community-engaged campuses. For the purposes of this study, we focused on campuses that emerged as the most engaged: those that received the classification for curricular engagement and for outreach and partnerships. We surmised that these campuses would be more likely to have community engagement articulated in the institutional reward policies. Of the sixty-two campuses that received the classification for curricular engagement and for outreach and partnerships, thirty-three elected to answer the question on reward policies and provided documentation to support their answer. For five of the campuses, we were unable to gain permission to use the application for this study. Eight campuses from Carnegie's 2005 pilot cohort for the classification are also included in the final sample. Finally, it should be noted that of the thirty-three campuses that answered yes to the question of whether the institution has policies that reward the scholarship of engagement, two of the institutions do not grant tenure.

### What It Means to Reward Community-Engaged Scholarship

Our study of the Carnegie applications begins with a framing of what it means to reward community-engaged scholarship in the light of two key considerations: community partner relations and change in institutional culture.

Characteristics of the relationship between campus and community have an impact on policy formation, and changes in institutional reward policies for faculty are emblematic of changes in institutional culture and institutional identity.

**Community Partner Relations.** The 2006 elective Community Engagement Classification defines community engagement as "the collaboration between higher education institutions 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 quality of this engagement is defined such that engagement is equated with reciprocity. Reciprocity specifically signals a shift in campus-community partnerships toward relationships that are defined by a multidirectional flow of knowledge and expertise between campus and community in collaborative efforts to address community-based issues.

In *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990), Boyer identified one of four areas of scholarship as the "scholarship of application," which "moves toward engagement as the scholar asks, 'How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems?'" (p. 21). By 1996, Boyer emphasized higher education's "civic mandate" (1990, p. 16) more forcefully than he had in *Scholarship Reconsidered* across all forms of scholarship with what he called the "scholarship of engagement." One characteristic of the scholarship of engagement, according to Boyer, is that it "means creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other . . . enriching the quality of life for us all" (p. 20). That special climate is explicitly and intentionally inclusive, collaborative, and problem oriented, and it is one in which academics share knowledge-generating tasks with the public and involve community partners as participants in public problem solving.

Since Boyer's writings, scholars have drawn distinctions between the scholarship of application and the scholarship of engagement. The scholarship of application, write O'Meara and Rice, "builds on established academic epistemology, assumes that knowledge is generated in the university or college and then applied to external contexts with knowledge flowing in one direction, out of the academy." The scholarship of engagement, in contrast, is based on reciprocity and

requires going beyond the expert model that often gets in the way of constructive university-community collaboration . . . calls on faculty to move beyond "outreach," . . . asks scholars to go beyond "service," with its overtones of noblesse oblige. What it emphasizes is genuine *collaboration*: that the learning and teaching be multidirectional and the expertise shared. It represents a basic reconceptualization of faculty involvement in community-based work [p. 28].

The framework the Carnegie Foundation provides for community engagement is shaped by this reconceptualization and views community-engaged



scholarship as grounded in community partnership relations defined by reciprocity.

Reciprocity also implies that community-engaged scholarship is assessed differently than traditional scholarship is. Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) make the point in *Scholarship Assessed* that new forms of scholarship are "not always a peer-reviewed article or book" (p. 38). Community-engaged scholarship redefines what constitutes a "publication" and redefines who is a "peer" in the peer review process.

**Changes in Institutional Culture and Identity.** In their 1998 study of institutional culture and change in higher education, Eckel, Hill, and Green describe changes that "alter the culture of the institution" as those that require "major shifts in an institution's culture—the common set of beliefs and values that creates a shared interpretation and understanding of events and actions" (p. 3). It is the elements of institutional culture and identity that constitute the foundational indicators section of the community engagement framework. Central to the question of changing institutional culture is redefining faculty promotion and tenure guidelines.

Eckel, Hill, and Green conclude that efforts being made in higher education around "connecting institutions to their communities" offer the potential for fundamentally changing institutional identity. This could occur, they write, because "these connections can contribute to the reshaping of institutional practices and purposes . . . [Campuses] may reconsider the types of service rewarded through merit pay and promotion and tenure policies, and they may adopt wider definitions of scholarship" (p. 7).

Change in institutional identity occurs when shifts in the institution's culture have developed to the point where it is both pervasive across the institution and deeply embedded in practices throughout the institution. Analysis of the applications allowed us to better understand not only how community-engaged scholarship is being recognized in promotion and tenure policies, but also the degree to which changes in policies suggest change in institutional culture.

### How Community-Engaged Scholarship Is Being Rewarded

Analysis of the applications indicates the emergence of significant revision of institutional policies that rewards faculty for community-engaged scholarship. This emerging change has a number of dimensions. First, it is change that takes place over time; thus, there is a transitional quality to what is happening on campuses as they engage in a process of defining, implementing, and adjusting to the implications of change. These are campuses where institutional reward policies are in a process of transition to rewarding community-engaged scholarship. Many more campuses are involved in the difficult and often long process of revising their promotion

and tenure guidelines than there are campuses that have already revised and adopted new policies. For those that have revised their promotion and tenure guidelines to reward community-engaged scholarship, the policies exhibit a quality of establishing conceptual clarity around community engagement, address engagement across the faculty roles, and are grounded in reciprocity.

**Policies in a Process of Transition.** Nearly half of the campuses studied are in the process of revising their promotion and tenure policies. It was not uncommon to have a campus explain in its application, as this one did, that "at the institutional level, we are currently moving to revise Faculty Handbook tenure and promotion guidelines to reflect the importance of community engagement as a scholarly activity" and that "all departments have been asked to review tenure and promotion guidelines to ensure that engagement of students with community is part of the expectations for faculty."

The range of policy revision processes reveals a continuum. On one end of the continuum is new presidential leadership that pronounces a new vision for the campus and initiates a process of reexamining the academic culture around engagement but has not yet effected a change in policies. Along the continuum, campuses indicate an ongoing process with faculty committees involved in making recommendations to change criteria for promotion and tenure, and in some cases evidence reveals that some, if not all, of the proposed changes have been adopted in revised policies. On the other end of the continuum is evidence of campuses with fully revised promotion and tenure guidelines that incorporate specific criteria for community-engaged scholarship. The examples that we provide illustrate actual changes in campus promotion and tenure guidelines, not aspirations for policy revisions.

Most prominent in the revision process is the adoption of guidelines that broaden scholarly activity in Boyer's four realms: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of teaching, and the scholarship of application. As this adoption represents a transitional movement toward rewarding community-engaged scholarship, community engagement is less specifically written into policies than it is implied in their interpretation. For example, one campus explained its use of Boyer's categories of scholarship in this way:

The Scholarship category is broadly defined as "Scholarship and Related Professional Activities," and Boyer's four types of scholarship (discovery, integration, application, teaching) are made explicit. Given these broad definitions, faculty scholarship related to community engagement is rewarded in promotion and tenure decision . . . The point is that our scholarship criteria are broadly defined and community engagement activities are regularly key components of scholarship in successful P&T application . . . Community engagement scholarship fits logically as scholarship of integration, application or teaching.



As this example indicates, community-engaged scholarship “logically,” but without explanation, could be evaluated under integration, application, or teaching. In some cases, the campus application noted that “we don’t fit the community engagement scholarship into one of Boyer’s other categories; we recognize that engagement can cross-cut them all.”

More common was to have community-engaged scholarship specifically subsumed under the scholarship of application:

The Faculty Handbook uses the term “scholarship of application” in its standards for promotion and tenure. Summarizing Boyer, the handbook states, “This involves applying disciplinary expertise to the exploration or solution of individual, social, or institutional problems; it involves activities that are tied directly to one’s special field of knowledge and it demands the same level of rigor and accountability as is traditionally associated with research activities.”

Occasionally “application” referred specifically to community-related interactions, as in “scholarship encompasses . . . the application of knowledge in responsible ways to consequential problems of contemporary society, the larger community, so that one’s scholarly specialty informs and is informed by interactions with that community.” More often “application” was used as a broad category into which community engagement activity most logically fit: “Application involves asking how state-of-the-art knowledge can be responsibly applied to significant problems. Application primarily concerns assessing the efficacy of knowledge or creative activities within a particular context, refining its implications, assessing its generalizability, and using it to implement changes.”

Most of the campuses employing Boyer’s categories do so in ways that include a broader view of scholarly activity but maintain a traditional approach to evaluation through academic peer-reviewed publications as in the following example: “Scholarship of Application: This involves applying disciplinary expertise to the exploration or solution of individual, social, or institutional problems; it involves activities that are tied directly to one’s special field of knowledge and it demands the same level of rigor and accountability as is traditionally associated with research activities.” This formulation suggests that community-engaged scholarship must adhere to the criteria of traditional scholarship as judged by publication in disciplinary, peer-reviewed journals.

**Conceptual Clarity.** Campuses that have revised their promotion and tenure guidelines to explicitly reward the scholarship of community engagement tend to be clear and consistent in the use of terminology that reinforces engaged faculty work. When the reward of engaged scholarship is implied or unstated or when it is used to reward engagement as a service activity or in relation to teaching, the terminology used shapes the characteristics of engagement. Table 3.1 shows the wide variation in the language used to convey engagement activity. (For further discussion of language differences and the evolution of civic engagement terminology, see Sandmann, 2008, and Giles, 2008.)

**Table 3.1 Engagement Terms and Frequency of Use in the Carnegie Applications**

Term	Number of Times Used
Service to the Community/Public	10
Service-Learning	8
Community Engagement	7
Application-from Boyer	6
Outreach/Engagement (Extension)	5
Engaged Scholarship	2
Civic Engagement	2
Scholarship of Community Engagement	2
Scholarship Related to Public Engagement Mission	2
Community-Based Research	1
Scholarly Civic Engagement	1
Service-Related Publications	1
Scholarship Which Enhances Public Good	1
Civic Engagement Scholarship	1

Note: The terminology varied within and across institutions.

Regardless of the unique institutional culture that shapes the framework of engagement on a campus, clear policy formulation rewarding the scholarship of community engagement corresponds with concrete definition of scholarly engagement. For example, one campus explicitly identifies engagement as “the partnership of 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.”

As it continued to revise its tenure and promotion policies, another campus formulated a working definition of *engaged scholarship* as

scholarship that 1) engages faculty members and students in a collaborative and sustained manner with urban, regional, state, national and/or global communities; 2) conceptualizes “community groups” as all those outside of academe; (3) requires shared authority at all stages of the research process from defining the research problem, choosing theoretical and methodological approaches, conducting the research, developing the final product(s), to participating in peer evaluation; and 4) results in products such as conventional peer reviewed publications, collaborative reports, documentation of impact, and continuing external funding.

With this clarity of definition, the academic leadership encourages departments “to refine the definition as appropriate for diverse disciplines and to develop guidelines for evaluating such scholarship for the purposes



of tenure and promotion." The importance of clarity of definition reinforces Ward's findings (2005) and provides the basis for establishing criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship across the disciplines.

**Engagement Across Faculty Roles.** Our analysis confirms what Amy Driscoll observes of the 2006 applicants: that "most institutions continue to place community engagement and its scholarship in the traditional category of service and require other forms of scholarship for promotion and tenure" (2008, p. 41). Yet the applications also reveal examples of scholarly engagement across the faculty roles, especially when there is conceptual clarity and when scholarly engagement is clearly defined and delineated as scholarly work. One campus's policies state that "the University's strong commitment to public engagement may be reflected in any or all of these categories [teaching, research, and service]. Public engagement is defined as discipline-related collaborations between faculty members and communities, agencies, organizations, businesses, governments, or the general public that contribute significantly to the external constituency by sharing the University's intellectual and cultural assets." The way community engagement is defined determines its place in the work of faculty.

Ward (2005) notes that "the scholarship of engagement . . . is by definition integrated, and most promotion and tenure guidelines are compartmentalized" (p. 229). For one campus, the promotion and tenure guidelines state that "one should recognize that research, teaching, and community outreach often overlap. For example, a service learning project may reflect both teaching and community outreach. Some research projects may involve both research and community outreach. Pedagogical research may involve both research and teaching." At another campus, "a faculty member's community engagement activities may be defined and recognized by X College's faculty committee . . . in any of the three categories of expected and assessed performance for tenure-track and tenured faculty: 1) research/scholarship, 2) teaching, and/or 3) service. The Committee . . . is likely to recognize a faculty member's community engagement work as scholarship when it is part of his/her record of research and publication, as teaching when it involves [theory-practice] courses or community engagement or is part of a partnership or community project that enhances the College's service profile." These examples convey not only the seamlessness and integration across faculty roles but also a clear articulation of how community engagement is rewarded across all areas of faculty work.

**Reciprocity.** One of the significant challenges that emerged from the 2006 applications was in the area of establishing reciprocal campus-community relationships. As Driscoll (2008) reports, "Most institutions could only describe in vague generalities how they had achieved genuine reciprocity with their communities" (p. 41). This observation is consistent with our analysis. The discourse around community engagement that is done "to" or "in" the community is contrasted with applications that expressed collaborative, multidirectional relationships that define reciprocity.

One application indicates awareness of the distinction between engagement "in" the community and engagement "with" the community by "distinguishing between (a) community engagement, which is defined solely by the location of the activity (e.g., teaching, research, and service in the community), and (b) civic engagement, which is defined as teaching, research, and service that is both in and with the community." For another campus, reciprocity is found in policy documents that codify "accomplishments in extension and engagement [as] an ongoing two-way interchange of knowledge, information, understanding, and services between the university and the state, nation, and world."

Campuses that adopted Boyer's categories tended to frame community engagement as "application to" a community instead of engagement "with." Reciprocity was clearly apparent when a distinction was made between the scholarship of application and the scholarship of engagement, as well as a distinction made between partnership and reciprocity:

Engaged scholarship now subsumes the scholarship of application. It adds to existing knowledge in the process of applying intellectual expertise to collaborative problem-solving with urban, regional, state, national and/or global communities and results in a written work shared with others in the discipline or field of study. Engaged scholarship conceptualizes "community groups" as all those outside of academe and requires shared authority at all stages of the research process from defining the research problem, choosing theoretical and methodological approaches, conducting the research, developing the final product(s), to participating in peer evaluation.

This conceptualization of reciprocity implies that community-engaged scholarship is assessed differently from traditional scholarship. It redefines what constitutes a "publication" and redefines who is a "peer" in the peer review process. Other applications, although not as comprehensive, express some elements of reciprocity; one includes criteria for publications that specify "reports, including technical reports, reports prepared for a community partner or to be submitted by a community partner." In another, evidence of high-quality scholarship can be demonstrated through "letters from external colleagues, external agencies, or organizations attesting to the quality and value of the work." In both cases, reciprocity as an underlying value of engagement is potentially changing the institutional culture of the campus.

### The Future of Engaged Scholarship

For administrators and faculty who seek to create a supportive academic culture in which community-engaged scholarship can thrive, the evidence from the 2006 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification applications can provide useful guidance. Evidence from the applications indicates that shifting an institutional commitment to community engagement is an enormously



complex and difficult undertaking that fundamentally challenges the dominant operating system of higher education. The shift has implications that are broader than faculty research and scholarship; it has implications for how knowledge is constructed and legitimated, how knowledge is organized in the curriculum, how the curriculum is delivered through instruction, how knowledge is created and shared, and the kind of institutional culture that supports a change in all these educational dimensions. Because of this complexity, shifting institutional identity so that community engagement is both deep and pervasive across the institution is a long and difficult process. It requires long-term commitment, intentionality, and clear understanding of purpose and outcomes.

Evidence from the 2006 applications suggests that campuses intent on encouraging community-engaged scholarship through institutional reward policies should focus their attention in three areas:

- Clearly define the parameters of community-engaged scholarship as a precursor to creating clear and specific criteria for the kinds of evidence faculty need to provide to demonstrate community-engaged scholarship.
- Construct policies that reward community engagement across faculty roles so that research activity will be integrated with teaching and service as seamlessly connected scholarly activity.
- Operationalize the norms of reciprocity in criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship, reconceptualizing what is considered as a "publication" and who constitutes a "peer" in the peer review process.

Campuses that incorporate these three dimensions in their institutional reward policies have made a significant transition in transforming the institutional culture to reward community-engaged scholarship. This kind of institutional transformation supports engaged faculty work that contributes not only to the production of new knowledge but to providing a way for American colleges and universities to more effectively fulfill their academic and civic missions.

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