The Urban University in the Community: The Roles of Boards and Presidents

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Abstract

Universities cannot flee cities that are in crisis due to fiscal, social, and/or political problems made more critical by constrained local, state, and federal budgets, which threaten to exacerbate current problems. They are a permanent part of their communities and, as such, their boards, presidents, and faculty must lead their institutions into an appropriate level of community involvement, based on expanded notions of educational missions and purposes that are sustainable through fiscal cycles and political changes. University and community partnerships must be developed in a way that can result in gains for the community at large and help to turn the ivory tower into a bridge to the community.

Our colleges and universities have always been a source of hope for our nation's future. As repositories and conservators of knowledge, they pass on accumulated understanding and wisdom from one generation to the next. As centers of thought and research, they continually build on the work of previous generations, constantly expanding our horizons of understanding.

Colleges and universities are an invaluable resource for urban policy and planning. They conduct fundamental research, provide seminal analyses of urban problems and develop strategies for their solution, and support programs to train urban planners and scholars. Academic research has already made vital contributions to the understanding of urban issues, and, through that understanding, to the well-being of American cities. But as important as they are, research and understanding are not enough. Articles, books, and conferences are not enough, either. Political capital is not much use, unless it is spent on leadership and, by the same token, the value of intellectual capital is diminished if it is not invested in action.

This paper is about translating our understanding of the tough urban issues facing us into action. It is about partnerships for action between the public and the private sectors, between profit-making businesses and nonprofit organizations, between community based groups and public agencies, and, particularly, between the university and the community. Forging these partnerships is absolutely critical to the future of urban America.

Many American cities are in steep and steady decline, for both contemporary and historic reasons. Current economic pressures on cities arise from global competition and technological innovation, which are fundamentally restructuring the U.S. economy. Our cities can no longer generate robust economic opportunities that create good jobs for those with less than a college education. Businesses have fled to the suburbs or overseas, leaving behind brownfields and empty buildings on contaminated lots that no one wants to develop.

The Office of University Partnerships at HUD was developed to help universities realize and accomplish their urban mission. The goals of the office are to recognize, reward, and build upon successful examples of universities' activities in local revitalization projects; create the next generation of urban scholars and encourage them to focus their work on housing and community development policy and applied research; and create partnerships with other federal agencies. Now more than ever, universities are essential to helping the department achieve its mission of creating communities of opportunity.

The American institution of higher learning may be entering one of its most challenging and productive eras. Among its tasks will be to help reshape the city to become once again the driving force in the economic, social, and cultural life of this nation. American colleges and universities must join in this worthwhile effort. However, it is not HUD's role to pay for everything, regulate everything, or mandate everything. Its role is to marshal resources from all sectors of society and bring them to bear on the problems we face as a society; to catalyze, facilitate, mediate, and get out of the way and let people of goodwill and faith in their communities do their jobs. Their role is to build a system of support for their efforts to promote self-sustaining partnerships for community improvement.

Urban problems must be solved in communities, by communities, and through community partnerships. The theme of partnership—pooling skills, talents, and resources—with other federal agencies and state and local governments, with private industry, with community groups, and with college and universities must run like a strong, steady current through everything we are doing.

In the end, there are no words that can adequately describe how important the work as chancellor, president, provost, dean, trustee, or faculty is to the future of this country. They have the power to make the university more responsive to the immediate needs of the community, and they must.

Colleges and universities are increasingly important partners in urban revitalization programs. While much good can come of these university-community partnerships, results to date generally have been inconsistent and marked by distrust or lack of interest. While universities are seeking a role, they are unsure of what communities need or want. Moreover, despite a broad range of university-community involvement programs, there has been little agreement on who should be involved to ensure success, what the roles and responsibilities should be, and what the impact on the community

could and should be. In May 1995, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) hosted a roundtable discussion addressing these concerns. This paper summarizes the discussion.

Academics and community leaders alike are asking if the university can and should be a player in solving our most pressing urban problems. All too often, urban colleges and universities have grown and prospered by virtue of their academic reputation while their surrounding communities have suffered decline. It is as if the university and the city have been on separate tracks, their futures independent of each other. As the late Ernest Boyer documented, the university has too frequently turned inward, focusing on research that has little use for the urban community at large. Universities must now reverse their historically insular behavior by looking outward and developing a comprehensive strategy to address urban conditions. They must develop policies and practices in line with the mandate set by HUD Secretary Henry G. Cisneros in 1995:

> Our nation's institutions of higher education are critical to the fight to save our cities. Colleges and universities must join the effort to rebuild their communities, not just for moral reason but also out of enlightened self-interest. The long-term futures of both the city and the university in this country are so intertwined that one cannot or perhaps will not survive without the other. Universities cannot afford to become islands of affluence, self-importance, and horticultural beauty in seas of squalor, violence, and despair.

More attention should be placed on teaching partnership strategies, faculty teamwork, and community service. Students should have the opportunity for hands-on community service before they enter the job market. Young scholars should be encouraged to celebrate cultural diversity. When these types of actions are taken, universities can play important roles in partnership with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. As James J. Stukel, president of the University of Illinois System and former chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago, writes:

> The ideal of the urban university rolling up its sleeves and getting in urban affairs will spread because it is a tremendous opportunity to deal with real issues such as crime, taxes, the economy, and elementary and secondary education, the issues that are on people's minds every day of the year. This will generate public and political support, which will be increasingly necessary in this era of diminishing resources. And it will actually be doing some good for this country (Stukel 1994).

This is not to suggest that universities can, like super heroes, descend into disastrous circumstances and provide instant solutions. Rather, the coupling of fiscal austerity and increasing social challenges demands the creation of new paradigms. And a new paradigm of university involvement will hinge on the university's ability to ask how it can most effectively marshal its rich human resources and move from the ivory tower to

confront the harsh realities of the streets. From these questions appropriate and responsible actions can follow.

Historical Precedents for Community Partnerships

University involvement in addressing public issues is not a new idea. In the 1900s, Catholic and Jesuit schools played a role in serving the needs of the urban poor. Thirty years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson presented his vision of university-community partnerships in a speech at the opening of the University of California, Irvine. Recognizing that the twentieth century was witness to the transformation of the nation from a rural to an urban society, Johnson argued that universities should try to provide answers to the pressing problems of the cities: "Just as our colleges and universities changed the future of our farms a century ago…. Why not [create] an urban extension service, operated by universities across the country and similar to the Agricultural Extension Service that assists rural areas?" (Klotsche 1961). Six months later, Johnson again urged Congress and universities to replicate their success in helping farmers by addressing the needs of the city. Klotsche (1996) describes the vision underlying this initiative:

> The role of the university must extend beyond the ordinary extension
> type operation. Its research findings and talents must be made available
> to the community. Faculty must be called upon for consulting activi-
> ties. Pilot projects, seminars, conferences, TV programs, and task
> forces drawing on many departments of the university should be
> brought into play.

Similarly, in 1968, noted educational leader Clark Kerr, in an address to the New York City chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, asked those assembled:

> Cannot the intellectual resources that created the new age of science
> now tackle the equally explosive problem of our cities? The threat is as
> real and the obligation surely as great. The university can come in-
> creasingly to aid the renovation of our cities, and in return the univer-
> sity can be inspired by the opportunities and strengthened by the
> participation (Kerr 1968).

The ensuing period saw the development of many creative, bold, and innovative university-community partnerships. These efforts, however, had mixed results. Cities continued to be overwhelmed by a wide range of social, political, and economic forces, many of which remain to this day.

Writing of university-community partnerships, Charles Ruch, president of Boise State University in Idaho, notes that "the interaction should be mutually reinforcing, guided by institutional choice and strategy on the part of both parties, and viewed to be one of value and importance" (Ruch and Trani 1995). While this notion seems simple enough,

it is complicated by the fact that each party typically has different customers, agendas, timeframes, and motivations. Even within the confines of the university, the roles of the president, the board, and administrative and academic officers must be coordinated to produce a viable and realistic partnership between the urban university and the community in which it resides.

Discussions of university-community partnerships frequently fail to recognize distinctions among the many different types of post-secondary institutions. Large multi-campus universities, junior colleges, private colleges, and research institutions all have different missions and ways of operating. When viewed as separate entities, the partnerships that are feasible and desirable under each type of structural arrangement can be addressed. Similarly, it is important to realize that relationships between universities and the communities in which they are located vary considerably from one place to another. Each community has its own specific set of needs and a unique history and culture. In addition, universities have different amounts and kinds of resources and capacities. Without a clear vision that takes all of these factors into account, an urban mission will be fraught with ambiguity, and partnerships specifically tailored for a given community cannot be developed.

Each college and university first must address the nature of its own urban environment and determine how that environment relates to the campus. In so doing, it should not view cities as totally impaired or dysfunctional entities. Even with their multitude of problems, urban areas are still vibrant communities. They have much to offer as economic and cultural centers, and universities can benefit from their resources in very practical ways. As Wim Wiewel of the University of Illinois at Chicago writes in personal correspondence:

> If it is only from a sense of *noblesse oblige* that colleges and universities commence an urban agenda, their efforts will be viewed by their cities as condescending and will fall short. Communities, even poor ones, are places of ethnic pride and heritage, of culture and art, of safety and acculturation, of creativity and vitality, of political strength and resistance. If communities are only viewed as places of problems, what can they offer the university? In fact, problem definition, identification of solutions, implementation, and evaluation all have to be done jointly because there is knowledge in the community that is different from, but complementary to, the knowledge that universities have.

Recognition that the relationship is indeed a two-way street provides further rationale for the establishment of partnerships. One of the AGB roundtable participants, Michael Garanzini, Vice-President for Academic Affairs of St. Louis University, pointed out that the university is a permanent part of the city; its fate is tied to the fate of the city, and it does not have the option of leaving as a business or corporation might. Ruch and Frani note in *Metropolitan Universities: An Emerging Model in American Higher Education* (1995) that

"metropolitan universities are not simply in the city but of the city, and the importance of activities with their surrounding environment is central to the life of the institution."

Some universities have been forced into community partnerships purely out of a need for survival. Racial unrest, rioting, high crime, or a shocking murder in their surrounding community can devastate a university. These problems create the necessity for partnerships to help a community with innovative, responsive, and pragmatic programs. Without these vital partnerships, the fate of both the university and the community would be in peril. The issue of institutional survival also depends in part on where students come from and where they go after graduation. Urban universities that attract mostly local students who remain in the community may be more motivated by practical reasons to forge partnerships than universities without a largely local student body. In tightly knit communities, it may be possible to create a symbiotic relationship between university and community.

Institutional Leadership: The Roles of Presidents, Governing Boards, and Faculty

College and university presidents, their faculties, and their governing boards must be agents of change, establishing and implementing policies that enable institutions to develop and strengthen university-community partnerships. They must provide the resources and incentives to move in the desired direction if an urban mission is to be more than rhetoric.

Presidents. A president has the most visible role in a college or university in seeing that existing partnerships are continued, new ones are initiated, and success is rewarded. The role of the president is perhaps best addressed in the context of vision and leadership. Presidents set the direction in which their universities will change and grow. They do this through both their verbal messages and actions. As chief spokesperson for the institution, what a president says commands a great deal of attention. Speeches that are not backed up by commitment and substantive action, even when they are well intentioned, will make creating inroads into the community more difficult in the future. Unfulfilled promises undermine the element of trust that must be present if partnerships are to achieve their maximum potential. The transition from rhetoric to action, however, can be a difficult course to negotiate.

Fear of controversy may make some university presidents, governing boards, and faculties more reluctant to enter into new relationships and to assume new roles for themselves and the university. Presidents have many internal and external constituencies, and the risks associated with taking action on an issue may disrupt a base support resulting in a reluctance to act. Addressing a major social problem in the community carries the risk of being unsuccessful and the added risk of damaging relations with the community. Even if an initiative is successful, community groups and city leaders may feel their domain has been invaded. Universities also may have to contend with the criticism of community groups, if they are not brought into partnership roles.

In spite of these constraints, university presidents must persuade others—and be convinced themselves—that partnership efforts can strengthen their institutions. For example, the late Daniel H. Perlman, president of Suffolk University until 1989, suggested a range of symbolic and substantive functions that university presidents can undertake to help build solid relations with a predominately minority community:

> By inviting the leaders of the various ethnic and racial minority communities to visit the campus and speak to student groups, by encouraging the parents and families of current and prospective minority students to visit the campus and share in the celebration of special holidays and festivals, by meeting with minority business groups and hiring their members, by becoming personally visible in the minority communities, and by showing that cultural diversity is not only tolerated but actively encouraged and cherished, presidents of metropolitan universities can promote a climate that will enhance the effectiveness of their institutions both in their function as neighbor, employer, and consumer (Johnson and Bell 1995).

Presidents, boards, and faculties at successful urban institutions have built ongoing, trusting relationships with officials of city governments, community representatives, and business leaders by meeting frequently to discuss issues of mutual concern, such as community health care, crime, and job training. If such a forum did not exist, these universities took steps to initiate informal meetings with community leaders. As part of these discussions, the role of the university as a service provider and resource to the community was explored.

Within the institution, the president and trustees must first assess the institutional mission to determine if it clearly articulates the institution's desire to create urban partnerships. If it falls short or requires expansion, they must work together to see that it is revised. As the chief officer of the university, the president must persuade and encourage deans, department chairs, and the faculty to be responsive to community concerns. This may entail a change in the faculty reward structure, the encouragement of interdepartmental initiatives, and combinations of departments that might not otherwise communicate or cooperate with one another. This work is particularly important in dealing with multi-faceted urban issues that cut across a wide spectrum of disciplines. Affordable housing can and should involve, for example, law, sociology, social work, architecture, and planning.

Regardless of the level of formal partnerships, faculty at urban-based institutions, in departments such as education, business, social work, and community health, will have a number of points of contact and natural relationships with various elements of the community. Just as the board and faculty must support the president in his or her efforts to build partnerships with the community, the president (and other senior academic administrators) must show support for these faculty members by meeting with them periodically to understand the issues they face and the relationships they have devel-

oped through their research and public service. The president and the board must encourage continuous meaningful expansion or replication of their efforts.

The budget implications of new or potential partnerships should be determined, as well as whether external funding should be pursued (and if not, whether the need is so compelling that a request for a reallocation of existing dollars should be made). Presidents and boards of public, urban institutions must advocate the funding needs of their institutions to the governor, legislature, and other state boards and officials.

Effective leadership will result if the president and governing board work cooperatively with each other. It is critical that presidents bring before their boards the policy options related to the institutions' partnership programs and that the boards support the presidents in the realization of the program once a policy is established. When boards are clear about the meaning of an urban mission, the presidents will be better able to take meaningful action.

Governing Boards. If university-community partnerships are to last and succeed, governing boards must play an enhanced role. Governing boards, presidents, and the faculties shoulder the immense responsibility of shaping institutions and their values. They must do this while also maintaining fiscal discipline, raising funds, and fostering institutional growth and creativity. These various tasks serve to position boards between the demands of the public, their founders, elected leaders, or other institutional stakeholders and the needs and desires of university administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Boards must play pivotal roles in pushing the administration to articulate and pursue an urban mission; some assert, however, that trustees and regents may be insulated from the very issues that serve as the impetus for the creation of collaborative partnerships. This concern may be particularly true for large multi-campus system boards (and less true for community college boards) that may not focus on the issues confronting their urban campuses. It may also apply to institutions whose board members typically reside far from the city or outside the state and who come to campus only for board meetings. Such institutions are missing valuable opportunities. As Joseph Harris of the National Center for Urban Partnerships said at the roundtable:

> There's a gap in the knowledge base of trustees and very often [of] presidents in terms of what is their role, what is their responsibility, when it comes to responding to their environment.

Public multi-campus governing boards are a special topic. State boards must assess their own track records to see how they encourage or discourage college and university participation in community partnerships. There should be an explicit expectation of an urban mission for either the system or its urban institutions. The University of Houston System statement is exemplary; it is from an agreed-upon mission statement and strategic plan that all activities flow.

Multi-campus system boards must serve simultaneously as the governing board for the system as well as for each component institution, admittedly a difficult assignment—especially in a system that may have both a long established, well-regarded flagship university and a newer and less prestigious urban university vying for limited resources. System boards must strive to balance these tensions while seeking consistency in critical policy decisions, such as the distribution of academic programs and the allocation of dollars among institutions. The boards can accomplish this by educating themselves on the issues of their urban campuses so that they are in a position to support and advocate urban campus needs adequately. When the board has a meeting on the campus, it should devote some time to understanding the urban environment by visiting the site of a partnership activity. Also, if there is no urban university in the system or if urban areas are unserved, the board should ensure that one of its institution's missions extends (within reason) to major cities of the state.

A multi-campus board should consider the creation of a local governing or advisory board for its urban campus or campuses, especially if the system comprises institutions in various parts of the state. Local boards can help focus system board attention on local concerns while serving as a bridge to the community. Because local boards may serve many functions, institutional and system leaders must be careful that such boards never become captive to any local constituency. It is best if local boards are appointed with prescribed authority from the system board.

Multi-campus boards (and state coordinating boards as well) should set different and flexible expectations for faculty. Statewide faculty work load studies may not be designed to adequately measure the community service activities of urban college faculty members, or they may leave an impression on state policy makers that urban college faculty members who engage in many hours of service are not fulfilling traditional teaching or research duties. System boards should ensure that faculty reward structures at their urban campuses adequately recognize applied research and service to the community. Such guidelines may need to be different from those of other institutions in the system.

Similarly, expectations and performance evaluations of urban college presidents must take into consideration the job's unique requirements. Urban universities within multi-campus systems, or under statewide coordinating agencies with budget allocation authority, must be granted a level of flexibility in their budgeting process. Just as land-grant institutions need resources for outreach to rural communities, resource allocations that differ from preset funding formulas may be needed to establish or maintain incentives for community partnership activities.

Faculty. How do we assess the general nature of the urban environment around the campus? An occasional, perhaps yearly, board meeting in the community with community leaders as guests can give the board a better feel for the environment around the campus. If a number of students are from the community, the board could invite them to speak at a board meeting. However, faculty members are also likely to have a rela-

tionship with one or more community organizations, and they should be heard regularly by the president and the board. Individual board and faculty members may be able to use their contacts with city, state, and federal government leaders and community leaders for resources or to cut through red tape. Trustees who are members of the community can serve as individual bridges to that community, perhaps through service on other community boards or through business links with the community.

The board and the president are responsible for determining the priority given to the partnership initiative by approving and funding the partnership office. Some would argue that since the university is opening itself up to increased scrutiny when it enters into new relationships with the community, the partnership should be coordinated out of the offices of the president or senior administration. However, others would argue that those actually on the front line, such as faculty members, should direct the activities of the office. In any case, faculty expertise should be available to the person staffing a coordinated strategy, necessitating an ongoing dialog between president, board, and faculty.

Where are our students and faculty in terms of commitment to the community? Zelda Gamson (1995) of the University of Massachusetts at Boston, writing on the issue of community responsibilities of faculty, remarks that "for years, academic leaders have argued that higher education has to become more engaged with societal issues. Student service barely scratches the surface. We need the expertise and involvement of our faculties if we are to make a difference."

Issues of Partnership Support

In addition to a positive working relationship with the president, boards of trustees must be informed and aware of the policy issues involved in urban partnerships before they can develop a clear sense of how to proceed. What are the issues that board and president together must consider? What questions should boards ask?

Mission Statements

Surprisingly, only 12 percent of the urban universities have a mission statement that addresses urban needs (AASCU 1995). If fundamental change in the way universities relate to their communities is to occur, an appropriate place to begin is with institutional mission statements. With a mission statement that clearly articulates the institution's commitment to its host city, a college or university can begin to play a significant role in helping its community understand and combat urban problems. During a period of constrained resources and insistent demands for educational quality, many trustees may ask whether it is wise to expand the institutional mission to include the community, or if it would be better to concentrate on liberal arts education, teacher education, graduate education, or whatever the institution does—or should be doing—best.

Without question, institutions must be true to their primary mission. An urban mission can be an outgrowth of an institution's primary mission, but it can never drive it. Boards

must also ensure that institutional ideals, the education of their students, and the collection, dissemination, and advancement of knowledge, are not compromised.

Whether its mission or reputation is regional, national, or international, an institution cannot allow assistance to its host city to drain resources or divide the university's attention. By planning strategically, boards can develop a commitment to the city without jeopardizing their institution's ideals, primary mission, or reputation. The following examples of board-approved urban mission statements from the University of Louisville and the University of Houston System demonstrates such commitments.

The University of Louisville:

The University of Louisville shall serve as Kentucky's urban/metropolitan university. Located in the Commonwealth's largest metropolitan area, it shall serve the specific educational, intellectual, cultural, service, and research needs of the greater Louisville region. It has a special obligation to serve the needs of a diverse population, including many ethnic minorities and placebound, part-time, nontraditional students.

The University of Louisville shall be a research university that places special emphasis on the research and service needs of Kentucky's urban areas. Research shall be encouraged, in particular, as part of doctoral and high-priority programs. Through its research and service efforts, it shall contribute to economic development, educational reform, and problem-solving initiatives in the Commonwealth.

The University of Houston System:

The future of our state and nation depends as never before on the integrity of our cities, on their ability to forge a productive and integrated society, to provide an acceptable quality of life and standard of living, and to compete in global markets. As a consequence, a new imperative emerges for higher education, and the urban university takes on an unprecedented role in meeting the challenges of the future.

The four universities of the University of Houston System are driven by this imperative. We attribute much of our structure and character to the people, institutions, and energy of urban life. We define ourselves not in isolated academic terms but in terms of the social and economic complexity of the city, and we are committed to developing and sharing our intellectual resources with the communities from which we draw our strength and purpose. This does not mean that in any way we jeopardize the core values and freedoms of the academy or compromise exacting standards of excellence. We steadfastly refuse to reduce the pursuits of intellect to mere utility or the academy to a service organization whose agenda is set by others. Instead, our task is to

reawaken public consciousness in order to focus on pressing problems and challenges that we cannot solve alone, but equally truly, cannot be solved without us.

Liaisons Between University and Community

While clarification of the mission is a critical beginning, many other policy issues also require board consideration, such as the interaction between university and community leaders. The chair of the board (or other appropriate board members) could join with the president at some of the regular meetings with city government, community, and business leaders. These board members, along with the president, can play a useful role in communicating the discussions heard at these meetings to the full board. Since board members are frequently drawn from the ranks of community and business leaders, this is a natural relationship and an appropriate venue for liaison between university and community.

Retreats Board retreats are also valuable in terms of educating trustees and regents and creating a shared sense of vision. As William Maxwell, former president of Jersey City State College, suggested at the AGB roundtable, a reading list compiled by the president may be helpful in orienting board members and providing a platform for growth. While retreats and literature can assist board members in becoming familiar with urban issues and the role of the university, they are no substitute for physically entering the community and gaining firsthand exposure to it.

Costs What are the costs of developing partnerships? Are partnerships sustainable in the long run after initial funding or commitment declines? The board is responsible for ensuring adequate resources to carry out the institutional mission, including aspects that apply to community partnership programs. Revising or expanding the mission will be meaningless unless dollars are placed behind it. The board and the president must determine which partnerships must be initiated, sustained, or terminated. Government and private support can underwrite the university's involvement with the city, but such funding never is guaranteed. Various departments or faculty members involved in partnerships may vie for the board's attention, and the board may need to develop priorities to help determine which program deserves greater funding. For example, board priorities may reward those programs serving the city's neediest, those serving the surrounding neighborhood, or those where the institution may have the largest impact. Long-term commitments to the idea of partnerships also may require a reallocation of internal funds as external funding ends. Although it may be very difficult for the board, a budget reallocation is always an option.

Community Needs Linked to Research Agendas

An issue for many research-oriented institutions is to find a way to link community needs with research agendas. The downside of such research is that community leaders sometimes have viewed such research with skepticism as being research on the community rather than research for the community. University personnel must bear in mind that they are not dealing with experimental subjects that can be controlled, tested,

studied, and then later written about in a scientific journal. Rather, they must offer their expertise in diagnosing a particular problem and suggesting a range of solutions.

Faculty Incentives

One of the biggest obstacles to successful community partnerships is the lack of expectations, rewards, and incentives for faculty. Derek Bok (1996) writes, "Only if collaboration with the city is seen as part of one's professional development will such work survive and prosper. But even the most committed universities have often found this hard to do." Partnerships, community service, and applied research can be promoted by considering them more often when making tenure, promotion, and faculty contract decisions, and university presidents and governing boards can directly influence this process. To do so, however, requires an understanding of the issue.

The phrase "publish or perish" is all too familiar to those in and around academic circles. According to a national survey of faculty conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, granting of tenure has become increasingly dependent on publications over the last 25 years. The implications of this criterion for survival make applied research less attractive to researchers. Since applied research is not as clean as controlled, experimental research, it tends to be devalued by academic journals. In the worst-case scenario, meaningful research is sacrificed in the name of scientific excellence. Recent advances in the fields of research methods and policy evaluation have helped bring social research to more respectable levels in the academic community. Nevertheless, in university settings where tenure and promotion are dependent on publication, applied research is risky. Given the demanding and difficult nature of applied research, the most talented researchers should be engaged in it. Unless the reward structure is changed, however, many will be reluctant to spend their time doing applied research in the community.

Institutions also have been slow to develop criteria by which to rate community service. In a recent survey of 186 members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, more than a quarter of the respondents cited lack of recognition of community service as a scholarly activity as a significant barrier to meeting a metropolitan/urban mission (AASCU 1995).

In addition, the issue of the reward system as it applies to public service is complicated by the fact that some fields lend themselves to community service more readily than do others. Institutions that are primarily research-oriented may fear that changing the reward structure will drive away valuable researchers and weaken the organization's overall level of quality. Where to draw boundaries over what is acceptable public service is not always an easy call to make. Too often, faculty service is defined as internal department or committee work and not service to the surrounding community. While student community service and service-learning are encouraged and supported by the faculty and are important on many levels, the need to engage faculty as more

than just facilitators of students has never been greater, especially those who teach within communities with dire needs.

Boards and presidents of urban institutions have begun to see how university-wide expectations can be integrated into college and department expectations and the reward structure adjusted accordingly, so that applied research and community service become explicit requirements for contract renewal, tenure, promotion, and post-tenure review. Department reward structures need not be monolithic; rather, they should recognize the differences among academic fields and even among individual faculty members within disciplines. In such a flexible system, fields that lend themselves to partnerships, public service, and applied research on community problems can be identified, and fields needing more traditional reward structures can still attract quality faculty. Robert Diamond (1993) of Syracuse University and his associates have written extensively on the principles and practicalities of flexible faculty reward systems that urban institutions should examine.

Although the biggest incentive for involving faculty in appropriate community partnerships may be through reward structures for tenure and promotion, another way is to offer budgetary incentives. Such incentives can be created in keeping with institutional and board priorities within the university by the governing board. For an urban institution, this could be a competitive grant within departments of financial rewards for individual faculty. The University of Minnesota, for example, solicits requests for proposals from faculty members to conduct policy research on pressing needs of the Twin Cities area. Selected proposals offer two-months' salary plus a part-time graduate research assistant for the year as support for carrying out the project. Dennis Jones (1995), president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, has prescribed how governing boards can develop incentives within the budget through a process called "strategic budgeting." The principles and procedures of strategic budgeting are easily adaptable to urban institutions.

Such incentives can help alleviate another barrier to faculty involvement in the community: time constraints. Office hours and teaching load requirements, especially at liberal arts and comprehensive institutions, detract from the amount of time that can be devoted to off-campus activities. Quality instruction is more often than not dependent on a significant investment of time spent in class preparation. A lack of resources and time to get involved to the extent necessary to solve problems is often a barrier to meeting a metropolitan/urban mission.

Collaborations

Many universities engaged in successful partnerships have realized that no single institution can turn the inner city around by itself. Other entities must be equal partners with the university in this effort. In some instances, this may require the resources and coordination of others, forcing the university to limit its role to that of a facilitator or broker. This realization is perhaps a change from the idealism of the 1960s and 1970s,

when many felt universities could singlehandedly solve urban problems with the aid of targeted federal money.

Rather than collaborate, university leaders may find that some entities play political games because of power, status, money, or other concerns, and that it may be difficult to build bridges to particular groups. Universities must bring an honest and objective viewpoint to the table, and, in so doing, become an effective interface between community and government.

It is critical for boards and presidents to learn from the experiences of other institutions in other cities, taking care that other cities' approaches not be applied wholesale to their own communities and situations. Immediate and/or wholesale change, even if allowed by community leaders and institutions, may be a disaster in the community at hand, even though it was successful in another city. A comprehensive concept is imperative, but the actualization of all the elements of the concept may best be attempted a couple at a time. Often, many different projects must be begun at once in order to get mutually supporting agencies, activities, and individuals working toward the comprehensive goal and supporting each other's activities in the process. In this manner, a greater likelihood of success begins to emerge.

The most pressing problems of the inner city may appear overwhelming, the odds for meaningful change too remote, or the environment too unsafe to risk university money or personnel. Institutions seeking to engage in an urban mission may find that starting in incremental ways and building a more comprehensive program as the work progresses may be the most advisable route. They may wish to focus on one segment of the population, say inner-city youth, or they may wish to work with locally owned businesses, perhaps creating a "business incubator" that provides financing or consulting and technical assistance for economic development.

Collaborations will be determined by what activities are pursued and where a board feels its institution can make a difference. Boards should expect the administration to develop a plan that includes neighborhood groups (including organizations that represent the racial and ethnic diversity of the city), city government, the school system, local businesses and corporations, and possibly labor unions and not-for-profit organizations. Urban land-grant institutions may also seek to collaborate with the cooperative extension service. Joining or forming a consortium with other universities in the metropolitan area may be desirable and provide a greater range of expertise.

Individual board members and faculty may be helpful to the full board, using their own contacts with city, state, and federal government leaders, neighborhood leaders, and political interest groups either for identifying resources or to cut through red tape. Trustees who are members of the community can serve as individual bridges to that community, perhaps through service on other community boards or through business links with the community. Faculty may also have these contacts and, often of greater value, may also have links to smaller but effective neighborhood organizations whose

combined political strength may provide the impetus necessary to get government leaders to go along with the ideas proposed.

Planning and Assessment

The university must make certain that the partnerships in which they are presently engaged are all they could be. The president and the board must have a full understanding of the institution's academic departments and be aware of the activities in which they are currently engaged. To gain an understanding of the potential for partnerships, presidents and boards may want to seek information on departments with natural links to the community (through social work, education, or urban studies, for example) or other programs with required student internships and practicum experience. Not to be overlooked are professional schools such as business, law, and medicine which may be servicing hundreds of inner city clients every year.

An institution developing a comprehensive urban mission—or at least a mission active on many fronts—attempts to bring visibility and support to current activities and determines what can be learned from them. The intstitution determines what university-wide partnerships can be initiated. As former Harvard University President Derek Bok (1996) notes, "the problem is that the whole often fails to equal the sum of its parts. Because no one knows what others are doing, important opportunities for collaboration and synergy are lost."

A coordinated, institution-wide strategy must be developed. The decision where to locate partnerships within the university is more than just a question of logistics. Placement of an office can sometimes reflect stature; an office located within the president's office, for example, may connote that a particular function is of special importance to the administration, but it also has important implications for direction and control of the partnership.

Changing faculty contracts to delineate community service as a requirement and a basis for evaluation may be a means to achieve the goal of increased faculty participation in community partnerships. The reward and incentive structure is critical for institutions with an urban mission as has already been described.

The membership or structure of the board should reflect the needs of the institutions. It is usually a challenge for board members who reside out of state or outside the city to develop a full sense of the urban environment in which their institution is located, beyond quick impressions and anecdotes. At one extreme are boards of prestigious independent institutions whose members find it understandably difficult to devote time and effort to potential or existing university partnership opportunities. In these cases, it is incumbent upon the university's president and senior administration to educate the board and for board members themselves to commit time to staying in the city from time to time to learn of institutional initiatives or community needs. Such boards may be served best by appointing a board subcommittee or task force with members drawn

from faculty, staff, and community leadership as well as from the board itself to address the issues at hand. The board may also want to consider appointing one or two local community leaders as regular members of the board.

On the other extreme are boards that may be composed totally of members from the community. A community college president once warned that such a board must not become a "Trojan Horse" for the desires of the community. That is, the board must not imagine itself as a vehicle to carry all of the needs and concerns of the community to be suddenly unleashed on the president in the public forum of a board meeting. Even if chosen in a popular election, board members must understand that their duty is to balance equally the needs of the community with those of the institution.

The membership of most boards will fall between these two extremes, with a majority of local membership and the balance of statewide or national membership. Public boards appointed by the governor should appeal for an appropriate balance of community and state leaders.

In order to successfully measure success, evaluation of activities should not be an afterthought. Each partnership program should have goals and objectives that attempt to improve the quality of life for the community that the program is designed to serve. The board should expect data that document the results of such programs so it can determine which programs to continue to fund. Progress within programs that address major social issues will be incremental at best. In addition, the definition of success is more complicated in the field than in the laboratory. The definition of success often might depend more on the eye of the beholder than on any specific objective measure. One university, working with underachieving youth, reported for example, that test scores were raised considerably but not enough to be considered "passing." What must be determined in the beginning is whether this result is considered a success or a failure.

Conclusion

Difficult as the current economic, social, and political environment is for our cities, it may become more problematic in the future. New fiscal pressures on the cities are a certainty, due to constrained local, state, and federal budgets and from potential major restructuring of urban targeted federal programs. The added fiscal pressures may, in turn, exacerbate current social problems.

Universities cannot physically flee the cities. They are a permanent part of their communities. However, being a permanent part of the community carries an obligation to interact with the city and the surrounding neighborhoods. The faculty, boards, and presidents of urban universities and colleges must lead their institutions into an appropriate level of community involvement, an involvement based on expanded notions of traditional educational missions and purposes that will be sustained through fiscal cycles and political change.

Universities and colleges generally command great public respect. They can bring ideas framed in the context of objective truths and moral persuasion, and they can take risks that others might try to avoid. Governing boards at all urban colleges and universities need to engage in a full discussion of the policy issues involved in developing university-community partnerships to help clarify what may or may not work for their particular institution. These partnerships are risky undertakings that can result in symbolic or substantive gains for the community at large or in failure and controversy. By developing such partnerships, however, colleges and universities can turn the "ivory tower" into a bridge to the community.

Acknowledgment

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