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"Universities as Anchor Institutions: Driving Change"
The 2014 CUMU National Conference

CONTENTS

"Universities as Anchor Institutions: Driving Change"

The 2014 CUMU National Conference in Syracuse, New York

Marilyn Higgins

Syracuse University was thrilled to host the twentieth annual Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Conference, October 5-7, 2014 on the Connective Corridor, a signature revitalization project that connects University Hill with downtown Syracuse. In keeping with the conference theme "Universities as Anchor Institutions: Driving Change," the Connective Corridor embodies strong working partnerships between Syracuse University and local government, sustainable urban design, and leading-edge faculty scholarship and student engagement. It was exciting to hear colleagues from cities around the United States react to the corridor and engage in dynamic conversations on place-based strategies for urban revival. Everyone seemed to enjoy those three beautiful autumn days in our newly flourishing post-industrial city.

Syracuse University's Chancellor Kent Syverud, then in his first year at Syracuse University, inspired discussion on the importance of research excellence in creating transformative change within cities that host urban universities. With the goal of inspiring unique presentations and papers, the conference organizers selected these four themes as examples of how urban and metropolitan universities contribute to progress and change:

- Social Entrepreneurs, A New Model for Urban Sustainability
- Healthy Neighborhoods by Design
- Place-based Reform of K-12 Public Education
- Creative Placemaking, Student Engagement, and Community Revitalization.

The resulting submissions depicted the diversity of anchor institution strategies that CUMU members are engaged in throughout the country. Keynote Speaker Jeff Speck challenged conference participants to consider the immense social and financial impact of "walkability" on students, faculty, and residents of cities that are home to colleges and universities. His recent book "Walkable City" quickly became the central topic of discussion among the presidents of member colleges and universities at the chancellor's residence on Sunday night. Many conference participants enjoyed a performance at Syracuse Stage that evening.

A panel discussion on "Literacy, Education Reform, and Urban Revitalization" the next morning focused on the "Say Yes to Education" program that has taken root in this area. "Say Yes to Education" president, Mary Anne Schmidt-Carey, Mayor

Stephanie Miner, and County Executive Joanie Mahoney were joined by other civic and business leaders in discussing the benefits of collaboration when attempting to achieve major changes in systems within communities.

The oversubscribed tour of Syracuse's near westside sparked the interest of most of the attendees and resulted in conversations centering on student engagement as a leadership opportunity. Walking tours and receptions at the Museum of Science and Technology and the Nancy Cantor Warehouse gave participants the opportunity to exchange knowledge and enjoy Syracuse's Armory Square District. The neighborhood-themed food stations featuring Central New York specialties such as salt potatoes and dinosaur barbeque were exceptionally well received.

Concurrent sessions supported the conference themes well, and gave conference participants new insights into innovative program strategies and research projects derived from diverse urban contexts.

Jomella Watson-Thompson, assistant professor in the Department of Applied Behavioral Science at the University of Kansas, was recognized at the conference as the 2014 recipient of the Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement for Early Career Faculty. Her conference paper opens this issue, and begins with her story of how her undergraduate experiences at Jackson State University shaped her interest in an academic career that would incorporate methods of community-engaged scholarship. She is now an associate director in the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas, and in that research role she is using community-based participatory action research and evaluation methods to involve community partners in community-based intervention and evaluation efforts in the areas of adolescent substance abuse prevention, community violence prevention, positive youth development, and community capacity-building. Her conference paper describes the exciting and effective, but also intensive efforts involved in the implementation of these research methods. Community-based research methods require considerable time to develop relationships and sustain trust. For example, the cultivation of relationships may require activities of public service (e.g., serving on community boards) that are essential to creating the foundational relationships for research, but such service is not recognized as part of the research process. The intensity of engaged research is often the most effective method for studying community questions, but the nature of the methodology may mean a more modest output of traditional publications that may not be understood by colleagues. Watson-Thompson describes the importance of faculty mentors and peer networks in supporting young, engaged scholars and in educating colleagues about engaged research methods and practices. Her article concludes with the presentation of a four-factor model to help address barriers to engaged scholarship: institutional examination of community context and conditions; design and implementation of principles and models of engaged scholarship; institutional commitment for engaged scholarship at every level; and clear mechanisms for documenting and measuring the contributions of partners to engaged scholarship and the resulting public impact.

Rebecca Tekula, Archana Shah, and Jordan Jhamb from Pace University describe how the university made "a strong commitment to the emerging field of social entrepreneurship by establishing the Helene and Grant Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship and positioning it uniquely at the university level, and not within a school or college." The decision to make social entrepreneurship an institution-wide education and research priority is traced back to the founding principles and values of the university itself, which considers its 'classroom' to include the entire New York City Metropolitan Area. The Wilson Center also reflects the university's recognition that 33 percent of arts and science graduates were taking jobs in the nonprofit sector. The authors provide readers with a useful analysis of the elements of social entrepreneurship as a field of study, including discussions of corollary concepts such as impact investing and the measurement of social impact. They offer a compelling case regarding the substantial opportunities this topical focus has generated in terms of innovation and effectiveness of teaching, learning, and research as well as community impact. The university's partnership with Impact America has positioned the institution as an innovative leader in engagement by turning the institution into a resource provider and incubator for the social sector.

A creative and very different approach to social entrepreneurship is the subject of Nic Custer's article. He describes the Innovation Incubator model developed at the University of Michigan-Flint which serves both businesses and nonprofit organizations. The aim of this integrated approach is to enhance these new enterprises to support the diverse and complex dimensions of social, environmental, and economic renewal. Especially intriguing is that the start-ups supported in the facility are a mix of students and community members, all working and learning together to build their enterprises and develop connections that address a variety of challenges and opportunities in the region. The article provides useful insights into how the Innovation Incubator was conceived and how important decisions were made about choice of location, areas of focus, design of spaces and policies to frame the pathway for tenants. Case studies illustrate the effects of the model as it begins to recruit a second generation of tenant organizations.

A team of campus deans and several endowed chairs have described the University of Nebraska at Omaha's (UNO) strategy to create endowed 'community chair' positions as a catalyst for campus collaborations in STEM. In exploring the unique opportunities for metropolitan universities as they seek to respond to the national call for greater production of STEM graduates, UNO recognized that they already had a strong history of partnership with P-16 education so they sought to create a new approach that would support new levels of collaboration and strategic innovation. First, UNO made STEM programming one of five strategic priorities, and then they decided to create a leadership team to lead the priority by establishing four 'community chairs' in different faculties with responsibility to initiate new work across departments. The paper describes the early effects of this strategy and some examples of the new interdisciplinary and community partnership initiatives that have arisen from the work of the community chairs. Already, the concept demonstrates success as new, large teams of interdisciplinary faculty and community partners are working in new directions.

Given the challenge of all metropolitan and urban universities to be involved in improving student success at every level of education, this article is a must read.

The robust presence of access to the arts is certainly a key element of community success. As public funding for higher education has been reduced, some campuses have made cuts to arts programming and facilities. The Tacoma Theater Project at the University of Washington—Tacoma (UWT) describes a creative university-community partnership that has developed new opportunities for campus and community audiences. Author Michael Kula reflects on the development of the relatively young UWT campus and its academic programs. At a time when others might be reducing theater programs, UWT faculty asked: Does our mission and community culture make it important to initiate one? “Despite the larger academic and societal trends perhaps suggesting the contrary, as UWT began to consider theater arts as an area of strategic growth, the question facing the university quickly turned from *if* to *how* the university should move forward. How could or should the institution build a vibrant, relevant, and sustainable program in theater that both respected the university’s resources during economically challenged times and, at the same time, held the university’s mission at its center?” This exciting article describes the emergence of an innovative solution: a campus-community partnership that recognized the need to create more affordable access to theater productions and a greater diversity in the perspective of productions without reducing audiences for existing fringe theater companies with similar aims. Since this is an article about theater, this introduction will not reveal the full plot of the creative solution UWT developed, but the title will give you a hint: “Zipcar Theater: The Tacoma Theater Project as an Anchor for Audience Development.”

Craig A. Talmage, Rosemarie Dombrowski, Mikulas Pstross, C. Bjørn Peterson, and Richard C. Knopf collaborated on an article describing their research project in Phoenix that asked three big questions: Where is downtown, what is downtown, and who is downtown? Arizona State University has created a successful downtown campus in recent years, and it has spurred growth and renewal. The research agenda, as described by the authors, explored “socio-cultural value in the heart of an urban downtown area through an applied community learning experience, which involved university students, faculty, and community members. The experience was spurred from a grant-funded initiative that sought to illuminate the stories of socio-cultural diversity in downtown Phoenix, Arizona.” The authors give a clear description of the importance of applied learning opportunities for large numbers of students, strategies for developing community partnerships, and framing the study project that became known as the “We are Downtown” initiative. To explore the three main questions about downtown, a highly diverse, multidisciplinary team of students, faculty, and partners conducted interviews with downtown workers, residents, and passers-by to learn about the characteristics of the respondents and their views and perceptions of the area. As many CUMU campuses are located in center city spaces, the article provides interesting reading about the deeper conversations and connections that developed during the project among diverse groups, and how that will inform the next stage of this innovative research and partnership project.

In their examination of town-gown relationships, Gavazzi and Fox (2014) drew on literature about marital relationships to analyze data gathered from a sample of community members living and working in three municipalities surrounding a Midwestern regional university. Using marriage relationships as metaphor, they developed a model of four types of relationships that can be used to describe the characteristics of typical campus-community interaction: harmonious, traditional, conflicted, and devitalized. The article provides useful insights into understanding, and perhaps anticipating, how good and difficult town-gown relationships can be understood, managed, and improved.

Toward the goal of greater success in student educational achievement, Staten Island's three institutions of higher education – College of Staten Island/City University of New York, St. John's University, and Wagner College – have brought together their high school and community partners to form the Staten Island Educational Partnership. This distinctive "all-in" partnership across the island's educational providers at every level has set a goal of 30,000 new college degrees awarded by 2025. The authors report that "college readiness for a stronger Staten Island is a direct outgrowth of Staten Island educational leaders' participation in the 2013 CUMU conference. The Staten Island Educational Partnership was formed in order to achieve the results sought by a similar coalition of business, government, higher education, pre-K-12 education, and community organizations in Louisville." The authors, representing dimensions of the partnership, share insights about the initial development of an organizing framework based on the principles of collective impact and provide useful insights to improve the educational partnerships of any metropolitan institution.

Finally, Nicholas Siewell, Stephanie Aguirre, and Madhavappallil Thomas describe their research on the extensive and unusually intentional community garden project in a neighborhood in Bakersfield, California. The authors (one a professor from California State University, Bakersfield and two community-based professionals who were also graduate students), recognized that while many universities launch partnerships to develop community gardens, there was a need for research that would seek to measure the impact on health and well-being of residents in the neighborhood beyond mere social activity and/or access to fresh food. Their study looked at physical and mental health, social capacities, and the spiritual health of individuals and neighborhoods. If you think you understood the value of community gardens, this study will expand your awareness of its deeper impact on residential well-being.

In summary, the 2014 CUMU Conference was a benefit to Syracuse University through the opportunity it created to develop new friends and key contacts as well as gaining access to the vast expertise this event brought to our city. The articles in this issue offer a sample of the wisdom and innovation that was exchanged throughout the event.

Author Information

Marilyn Higgins is vice president of Community Engagement and Economic Development, responsible for the Connective Corridor and Near Westside Initiative, two urban revitalization projects that have leveraged $94 million in investment and engaged fourteen hundred students and seventy faculty in the city of Syracuse. Formerly the vice president of economic development for National Grid Corporation, she has successfully attracted businesses and jobs to communities across Upstate New York and served on the boards of over twenty economic development and nonprofit organizations.

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Exploring Community-Engaged Scholarship as an Intervention to Change and Improve Communities

2014 Recipient of the Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement of Early Career Faculty

Jomella Watson-Thompson

Abstract

For most colleges and universities, community-engaged scholarship (CES) is a value that supports the public mission of academic institutions. However, shifting CES from a core value to a guiding principle requires demonstrable support and structural modifications to academic practices and policies. Through this reflective paper, I will propose some considerations for how academic institutions may develop and support a culture of community-engaged scholarship to collaboratively contribute to meaningful and lasting improvements with communities.

It is a great honor and blessing to be the recipient of the 2014 Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement of Early Career Faculty. Ernest A. Lynton proposed, "We need to think of knowledge in an ecological fashion, recognizing the complex, multi-faceted, and multiply-connected system by means of which discovery, aggregation, synthesis, dissemination, and application are all interconnected" (1994, 10). Community-engaged scholarship (CES) supports the integration of research, teaching, and service for community impact through mutually beneficial and reinforcing activities supported through community-academic partnerships. I am grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with knowledgeable, skilled, and committed community partners who meaningfully contribute to change and improvement in communities. The award process has occasioned the opportunity to reflect and further refine my approach to community-engaged scholarship as an early career tenure-track professor at the University of Kansas in the Department of Applied Behavioral Science. Through this paper, I will share my experience and distill what I have learned as a community-engaged scholar, as well as propose considerations for how to further advance the scholarship of engagement.

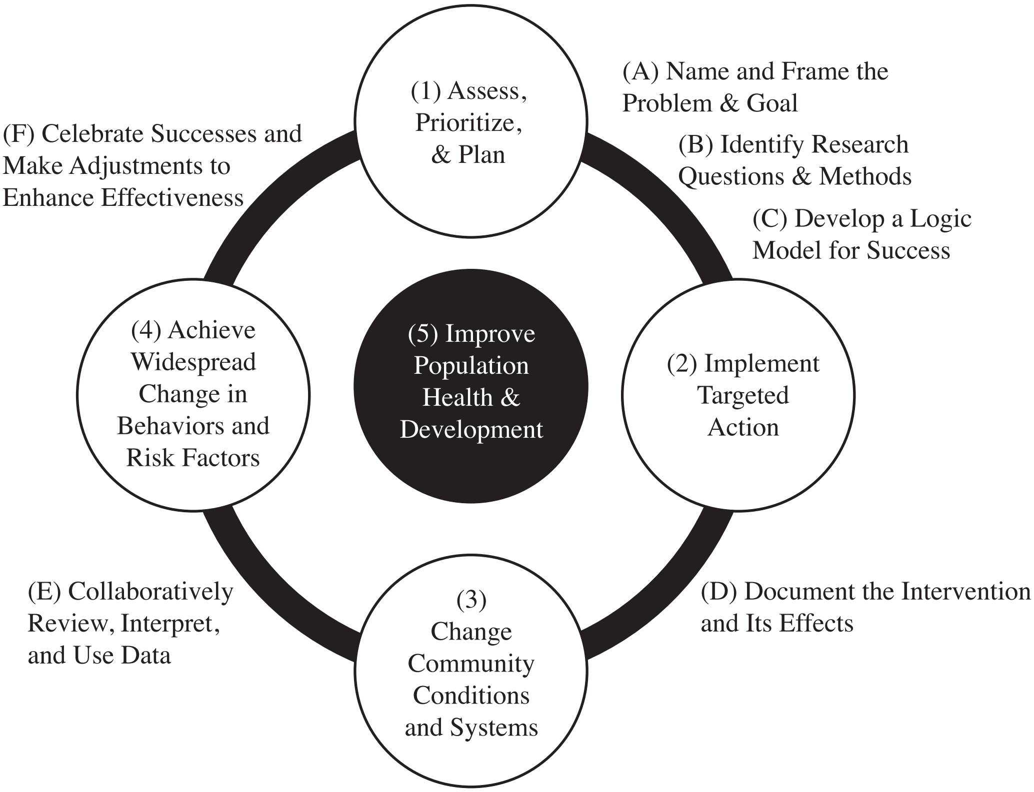
Supporting Community-Engaged Scholarship through Research, Teaching, and Service

Based on cross-disciplinary training in behavioral psychology, community psychology, and urban planning, I was exposed to community-engaged scholarship in both my undergraduate and graduate studies by my faculty mentors, Drs. Jacqueline Franklin at Jackson State University and Stephen Fawcett at the University of Kansas. As an urban affairs major at Jackson State University in Mississippi, I developed a strong commitment to supporting place-based efforts that involve and serve the community as the primary audience and benefactor of academic activities. Then, through graduate studies at the University of Kansas in urban planning and later in behavioral psychology (applied behavioral analysis), I began to understand the importance of involving the community in identifying and addressing community-validated problems of social significance. As a graduate student, I served as a graduate research assistant with Dr. Stephen Fawcett and the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas (KUWG), and I am now an associate director with the research center. The KUWG promotes change and improvement in community-determined outcomes by providing capacity-building supports to individuals and groups in the community. For example, colleagues at the KUWG have collaboratively supported the development of the Community Tool Box (www.ctb.ku.edu), a free online resource that provides more than 7,000 pages of practical community capacity-building tools available in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

Community-Engaged Research

With the KUWG, I collaborate with community partners to support community-based intervention and evaluation efforts in the areas of adolescent substance abuse prevention, community violence prevention, positive youth development, and community capacity-building. Through my affiliation with the KUWG, I was trained in community-based participatory research (CBPR) and evaluation (CBPE) methods as a graduate student, which now undergirds my approach as a community-engaged scholar. Community stakeholders are equitably engaged as participants in all phases of the research process, including in the assessment and identification of the community problem; development and implementation of the intervention; review and interpretation of data; and in the communication and dissemination of information to key audiences. Figure 1 presents an integrated framework that guides my approach to engaged scholarship based on the Framework for Collaborative Public Health Action in Communities (Fawcett et al. 2000, 82) and the Model for Participatory Evaluation (Fawcett et al. 2003, 24). Now, I train both undergraduate and graduate students in the use of these models to support the development and implementation of community-based initiatives. Through collaborations with community partners, I have empirically examined the implementation of both models in supporting community-based participatory research (Watson-Thompson et al. 2013b) and evaluation activities (Watson-Thompson et al. 2013a).

Figure 1. An integrated model presenting the Participatory Evaluation Framework for Collaborative Action that presents the five-phase framework for collaborative action and a six-step model for supporting participatory evaluation efforts with community partners.



Source: Adapted from Fawcett et al. 2000, 82; Institute of Medicine 2002, 186; Fawcett et al. 2003, 24, and Fawcett et al. 2010, 3.

In the first phase of the model, community and academic partners collaboratively assess and prioritize community-level problems and goals to be addressed. The community problems are framed in a manner that allows diverse participation in addressing the issue across community sectors and multiple academic disciplines. The community partners also are engaged with academic partners in shaping the research agenda by collectively developing the research and evaluation questions to be examined. In this phase of the framework, the agenda for the collaborative effort to be supported through engaged scholarship is further clarified through the development and use of a logic model and strategic action plans. The logic model provides a visual summary of the intervention approach that will be used by the academic and community partner to address the problem or goal area.

In the second phase, community and academic partners support targeted action in the community through community-based implementation of research interventions by community partners. In the third phase, targeted action leads to community and systems changes, defined as new or modified programs, policies, or practices. Community and system change serves as a key measure of how the environment is being modified to support improvements in community-level outcomes. As an ongoing part of the process, data are collected by community partners and collaboratively shared and reviewed with academic partners to understand how the initiative is contributing to improvements in prioritized community-level outcomes. Community partners are trained in the use of the Online Documentation and Support System (ODSS), a community-friendly web-based data collection portal developed by the KU Work Group to support participatory evaluation activities. The ODSS produces automated graphs and reports based on data collected in the system to enable community partners to easily access and use data to support a variety of research and practice activities (e.g., funder reports, board reports). The data are used by both community and academic partners to guide decision-making and adjustments in implementing community-based interventions.

As an example, I work collaboratively with community partners, such as the Aim4Peace Violence Prevention Initiative through the Kansas City, Missouri Health Department, to support community-participatory evaluation efforts to reduce homicides and firearm aggravated assaults in a priority neighborhood. Based on a community-led assessment process, unresolved arguments and conflicts were identified to substantially contribute to homicides and aggravated assaults in Kansas City, Missouri. After reviewing appropriate violence prevention initiatives, community partners identified the Cure Violence (formerly CeaseFire Chicago) model as appropriate to adapt and implement in Kansas City. The academic and community partners engaged jointly in developing a logic model and an evaluation plan to guide local implementation and adaptation of the intervention. The community partners regularly documented the implementation of community-level change activities facilitated by the initiative such as the implementation of conflict mediation trainings with youth in local schools or policy changes within the local government to support improved hiring processes for individuals with a criminal record. Based on the evaluation plan, community partners regularly recorded the implementation of community facilitated intervention activities in the ODSS. Between 2008 and 2013, the initiative collaboratively facilitated 186 program, policy, and practice changes in the community to support violence prevention efforts. The process and community-level outcome data recorded in the ODSS, including community change and behavioral outcome data, were regularly reviewed by both the community and academic partners to guide decision-making. The ongoing process of working jointly as community-academic partners to collect, review, and make sense of the data has resulted in program enhancements, which have contributed to improvements in community-level outcomes (i.e., reductions in homicides and aggravated assaults in priority area). After five years of program implementation, the two geographical areas prioritized by Aim4Peace, which historically experienced disproportionately higher rates of violence as compared to other areas in the city, experienced between a 42 to 50 percent decrease in the number of homicides. Through the collaboration with Aim4Peace, we have engaged in a variety of community-guided research activities, including the co-submission and award of grants, co-authorship on published articles

(Watson-Thompson et al. 2013a, 2013b), co-presentations at both academic and community-based meetings, as well as the engagement of service-learning students in supporting Aim4Peace activities.

Reflections and Challenges in Supporting Community-Engaged Research

Based on principles of community-based participatory research, it is critical to develop genuine and maintained relationships with community partners based on a shared agenda that is mutually beneficial. For many communities, particularly those in urban areas, it is necessary to develop relationships and research agendas that are not solely contingent on the researchers' needs or the availability of grant funding. Otherwise, short-term and sporadic community partnerships further contribute to community perceptions of academic mistrust. My mentor, Dr. Franklin, described this imbalance of academic-community relationships and power as "pimping the community." Fortunately, I had developed a core base of community partners and projects that were established prior to my tenure-track faculty appointment. However, even with already established community partnerships, ongoing dedicated time is required to support community-based research and evaluation processes, as well as to maintain trust and rapport. After community research partnerships are established, a substantial investment of time is required to maintain the relationships, which often takes the form of community-engaged service (e.g., serve on community boards, develop community reports). For faculty colleagues who evaluate community-engaged research activities for merit review or reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) processes, the types of challenges experienced that may result in more modest publication schedules may not always be well understood. Furthermore, there are often not departmental or more broad university models for how to evaluate community-engaged research activities to assess not only the scholarly, but as important, the public impact.

Although there are many benefits to community-based participatory research and evaluation, the advantages are often restricted by unparalleled university expectations and conditions for competing research obligations by faculty. One of the main benefits of community-engaged research is that it increases the likelihood for intervention effectiveness and sustainability by community partners. However, for many academic institutions, the primary indicator of research impact is based on traditional measures of the quantity of peer-reviewed journal articles, and scholarly impact based on article citations and journal impact factors. Although there are some progressive colleges and universities that have supported community-engaged scholarship as a component of RPT processes, many academic institutions, particularly research universities, have not implemented clear contingencies that promote and incentivize engaged scholarship (Saltmarsh et al. 2009, 29). Furthermore, the development of community-friendly materials (e.g., assessments, evaluation reports) valued by community partners and demonstrated to have public impact often competes with the production of publications for academic audiences. Although materials developed by community partners often can be converted to scholarly manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed journals, it can be a time-consuming process to adapt materials for multiple community and academic audiences. Saltmarsh et al. (2009, 28) suggests that "community-engaged scholarship redefines what constitutes a 'publication' and redefines who is a 'peer' in the peer review process." However, in my experience, many academic institutions and departments have not fully implemented this type of reciprocity in the assessment of community-engaged scholarship activities.

Additional challenges commonly experienced by community-engaged researchers are related to research methodologies, data collection measures and time periods. Based on a community-based participatory approach, stronger experimental (e.g., randomized control trials) and quasi-experimental (e.g., interrupted time series with switching replication) designs may not be deemed appropriate by community partners. The result of less rigorous research methods may limit publications in journal outlets with higher impact scores (Jacquez 2013, 19). For instance, in supporting violence prevention initiatives, randomization or delays in the implementation of the intervention with individuals or groups may be unethical. Relatedly, community-based research outcomes often are best supported through longitudinal studies (e.g., annual rates of substance use, rates of homicides) which may limit the ability to rapidly produce publications. As an example, I co-led the evaluation of a five-year federally funded underage drinking initiative for the state of Kansas through the Department on Aging and Disability Services (formerly Social Rehabilitation Services). The key outcome measure identified by community partners was annual rates of 30-day alcohol use. During the study period, our team supported the publication of articles related to the community process (Anderson-Carpenter et al. 2014); however, the evaluation questions of interest to community partners focused on community-level behavioral outcome data over the five-year grant period. In another experience, a community partner achieved significant outcomes in reducing rates of a problem behavior, however, due to political reasons the partner elected to not publish or more broadly disseminate the results of the study, but used the data internally to examine, validate, and improve the initiative.

Community-Engaged Teaching

As a faculty member in the Department of Applied Behavioral Science, the scholarship of teaching through service-learning and outreach activities is highly valued and commonly accepted. Faculty mentors in the department both provided guidance and set precedence for innovative ways to integrate service-learning and outreach into the course curriculum. Community-based teaching and learning are core components of all my courses including my community leadership, community health, and development competencies, practicum in community health and development, and community-based independent study courses. In each course, an array of service activities is offered that students can choose to support including direct service, indirect service, and/or participatory research activities. For instance, in my community development competencies course, students can engage in direct service through eight hours of service monthly for a total of 24 hours over the semester, or in indirect service by developing a grant proposal for a partner organization. Students often have varying histories and service experiences; therefore, meeting students where they are and allowing them to select from a menu of service opportunities within the course makes it more likely that they will maintain involvement in reinforcing types of community engagement longer-term. From my observations, a "one size fits all" approach to service-learning is ineffective (Longo 2007, 131). Students who complete the series of courses I instruct are provided with varied opportunities for diverse community-engaged learning experiences through repeated exposures and opportunities, which also contributes to establishing a behavior and history of reinforcement.

Through the course requirements, students are challenged to collaborate with diverse communities, groups, and populations. At the University of Kansas, my home campus is located in Lawrence, Kansas, which may be considered part of the regional metropolitan corridor, but is located approximately 45 minutes from the urban core of Kansas City. In several of my courses, students are challenged to participate in community efforts related to issues affecting diverse metropolitan communities and populations, which is often a novel experience for many students who are from rural and homogenous parts of the state. Through the application of knowledge, students are reinforced by meaningful and immediate application of course content, which thereby enhances their understanding and commitment to community engagement. For instance, a student from Kenya and another student from the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota both received awards from agencies to support youth development efforts in their home communities based on proposals developed through supports offered in the community health and development competencies course.

Through community-engaged learning, opportunities are occasioned to enhance the knowledge, skills, and ability of not only students, but also community members and partners. The Community Tool Box (http:// http://ctb.ku.edu/en) curriculum, developed by the KU Work Group and collaborative partners, is used to train both undergraduate and graduate students through community-based trainings and capacity-building technical supports with community partners. Both formal and informal opportunities are occasioned to engage community members in community-engaged teaching and training. For instance, a graduate certificate in community health and development is offered to non-degree seeking students and community members through the graduate school and the Department of Applied Behavioral Science. Furthermore, more informal community-based training and technical support often is provided to individuals and groups such as coalitions in the community often through not only teaching, but also community-engaged research or service activities. The training formats support product-based learning so that the students or community members trained contribute to developing materials such as a grant application, community project proposal, or community assessment, which further extend opportunities for community-engaged learning and service after the course is completed.

Engaged scholarship in teaching supports the involvement of practitioners in academia, which serves as a bridge for the university and the community. Several of my research partners engage students in service-learning activities, which helps to ensure that community partners are able to reap the multiple and simultaneous benefits of community-academic partnerships. Service-learning provides the opportunity for students to sample community-based settings, professions, and occupations, as well as establish meaningful contacts and connections in the community. Similarly, community engagement affords community partners the opportunity to informally influence student learning, as well as provides opportunities to access and train students who may be potential future employees. In some of my courses, community partners are also more formally integrated into the classroom experience as guest lecturers, panelists, and advisors or consultants on community-based course projects. For example, a community partner, who is a physician, has provided guest lectures on socioeconomic determinants of health and disparities. Similarly, for student grant and project proposals, student groups meet with partner organizations periodically throughout the semester during class using Skype to discuss project development. Also, in my practicum courses, students are co-supervised by an instructor and community supervisor, who collaboratively provide guidance to the student in developing a community-based product (e.g., assessment).

In my courses, community partners are provided multiple opportunities to evaluate student performance, as a component of a student's grade, through both written and oral feedback mechanisms. Furthermore, students are prompted to support ongoing critical reflection throughout the semester, which culminates through a service-learning and course reflection poster fair. Often, community-engaged teaching activities may result in additional requirements and time commitments of the faculty to support the community-academic partnerships and responsibilities. For example, it is necessary for faculty to establish and maintain community relationships, identify and coordinate appropriate service-learning activities, and ensure student development of high-quality community products and activities, which often necessitates a more intensive process for student review, feedback, and reflection.

Reflections and Challenges in Supporting Community-Engaged Teaching

From my observations, community-engaged teaching may be most immediately impactful on students who otherwise may be considered at risk for achieving academic success. It has been evidenced that service-learning can increase self-efficacy (Knapp, Bradley, and Levesque-Bristol 2010, 238). For potentially at-risk students, community-engaged learning serves as a reinforcer and provides more immediate meaning and purpose to their coursework and academic experiences. For instance, in my community leadership course, there was a student who took the course the first semester after returning to the university from academic probation. The student indicated that upon returning she felt overwhelmed and had decided to leave college, but through course-engaged learning opportunities afforded through the course she found value and utility in her academic experience, which reaffirmed her purpose for completing college. Although service-learning is an important learning goal for all students, community-engaged learning may be particularly important in the retention of racial and ethnic minority students (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2000, 272). Service-learning may also provide a dual-purpose as a student marketing and retention tool, in addition to supporting student learning outcomes. Therefore, it is important to consider how to communicate and promote the importance of service-learning from the integrated perspective of other academic departments such as admissions, academic advising, multicultural affairs offices, and college/university career centers.

Although the basic concept of service-learning, as compared to community-engaged research or service, is more commonly understood and valued among university faculty and administrators, there is less consensus about how to assess the impact of service-learning courses on community and student outcomes. The majority of students are appreciative of the opportunity to engage in more applied learning formats. However, for some students, service-learning often requires a shift in the student paradigm for learning in a way that is not always immediately appreciated by all students, particularly for those for whom community engagement is novel or for those who have had prior adverse experiences. There are some students who do not embrace the challenge service-learning offers to move from the classroom to application in the community. Each semester, there is always a subset of students who become intimidated by the fluidity in the course that allows for moving project deadlines if a community process such as collecting data or facilitating community-engaged processes takes longer than originally anticipated. When I first began teaching, this tension often frustrated me. After seeking consultation from colleagues in the Center for Teaching Excellence, it became more apparent that student perceptions of their course and service-learning experiences should not be the primary indicator of instructor or course effectiveness. The director of the KU Center for Teaching Excellence challenged me to identify other complementary mechanisms for assessing the purpose of the courses as it related to both student outcomes and community impact.

Community-Engaged Service

As a community-engaged scholar, community-based service is often integrated into both research and teaching activities. The traditional distribution of research, teaching, and service as discrete activities is not often realistic as the faculty role and responsibilities are reinforced through interdependent and synergistic community-academic engagements. For instance, I serve on the executive and advisory boards for several community and faith-based organizations in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Through affiliation with the boards, I am able to broker just-in-time community-academic relationships and supports for partners, as well as provide community capacity-building expertise. Furthermore, in several courses, I provide community partners with indirect consultation by guiding students in the development of grant applications, community assessments, and program evaluations. Additionally, I often serve as a resource for academic colleagues who seek community credibility to connect or engage with different communities and groups. In general, community-engaged scholarship enhances the social capital of community and academic partners by facilitating the bi-directional exchange of information and resources for community benefit.

Over the past couple of years, I have worked closely with community-based partners and students to develop a couple of service-based youth development initiatives which have supported the scholarship of integration and application. One initiative is LEAD UP (Leadership, Education, and Adolescent Development for Unlimited Possibilities), which focuses on providing youth leadership and college prep training and support to racial and ethnic minority youth in eighth through twelfth grades. The initiative began to address immediate needs observed working with youth in the Kansas City metro area who had very limited knowledge and guidance for how to prepare for life after high school. Interestingly, it was noted that academic institutions were not accessible to many youth. Even though the institutions were geographically available or within close proximity, many youth had still not visited an academic institution. Furthermore, neither the youth nor the majority of parents had access to individuals in college settings or were knowledgeable of how to select an appropriate postsecondary option. LEAD UP provides youth with biannual college visits, ongoing undergraduate student contact and coaching, positive youth peer networks, and parent supports. Through the initiative, we partnered with multiple KU offices including the Admissions Department, McNair Scholars Program, Student Money Management Services, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Department of Applied Behavioral Science, and the KU Work Group for Community Health and Development.

The development of the initiative has provided rich undergraduate leadership and training opportunities, as well as research experience. Based on the initial pilot of the program with a small group of African American youth from the Kansas City metro area, the program was expanded to also include youth from the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in South Dakota based on the initiative and securement of a small grant by an undergraduate student, Jordyn Gunville. She thought the program could greatly benefit the youth from her home community and reservation, and she began to develop a proposal in the community health and development competencies course to expand the approach and population served through the program. After developing the proposal in the course, she submitted and received funding for the proposal. Then, through a series of independent study courses, she and another undergraduate student supported the development and implementation of the initiative. The program approach is now being refined in partnership with community and faith-based partners both in the KC metro area including Tabernacle Community Development Center, Inc., and Made-Men, Inc., as well as with the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe Title 1 program. Ultimately, the goal is to develop and pilot an effective approach to support community-based college access programs.

Reflections and Lessons Learned in Supporting Community-Engaged Service

Although community-engaged service may seemingly be the most apparent form of engaged scholarship, at times there are misconceptions regarding its merit. From my experience, community-engaged service may be minimized and discredited as an appropriate form of scholarly service by those who are unable to distinguish it from general community service. Boyer (1996) indicates that “a sharp distinction must be drawn between citizenship activities and projects that relate to scholarship itself….To be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this activity (22)." Based on my work, I serve on executive and advisory boards and offer pro bono consultation for several community and faith-based organizations. Generally, I provide capacity-building training and technical supports in community assessment, logic model development, strategic planning, and evaluation. Often, students are also involved with me in providing the community and capacity-building supports, which allows them to begin gaining practical experience in applying community health and development competencies. In this way, community-engaged service supports the scholarship of application.

Although I still engage in more traditional forms of academic service, there are often competing time demands between community-based and traditional academic service activities. I generally participate in broader university service activities that may influence institutional practices and policies related to community-engaged scholarship. As examples of university-level service, I have served on the Community Engagement and Equality Working Group to guide university sustainability activities, the Leadership Studies Steering Committee to inform curriculum development, as a departmental ambassador for the Center for Teaching Excellence, and as a departmental representative for the KU Advocacy Corp, which pairs community agencies with academic departments to support advocacy and outreach.

Structural Challenges and Opportunities to Support Community-Engaged Scholarship

Although I am fortunate to work in a supportive academic environment, I have experienced some tensions in facilitating community-engaged scholarship as an early-career tenure track professor. Initially, when I received my faculty appointment, I was guided by more senior faculty to create some dissonance in my community and academic activities. I received multiple cautions from a variety of colleagues to reduce community-engaged scholarship activities with the guidance of "do what you have to do now, so that you can do what you want to do later." The subtle message being communicated was to ensure that I was maintaining my publication record, and then post-tenure I could enjoy the benefits of academic freedom (i.e., community-engaged scholarship). The discouragement by senior colleagues to not pursue engaged scholarship activities until post-tenure is common advice for tenure-track faculty (Foster 2012, 22). The feedback from senior colleagues is not ill-intentioned but is rather an attempt to ensure the success and matriculation of tenure-track faculty in academia based on the structural system, which often may not have mechanisms to holistically evaluate CES as part of the RPT process. However, as a community-based participatory researcher with already established community partnerships and commitments, it was not appropriate to subdue community engagement activities.

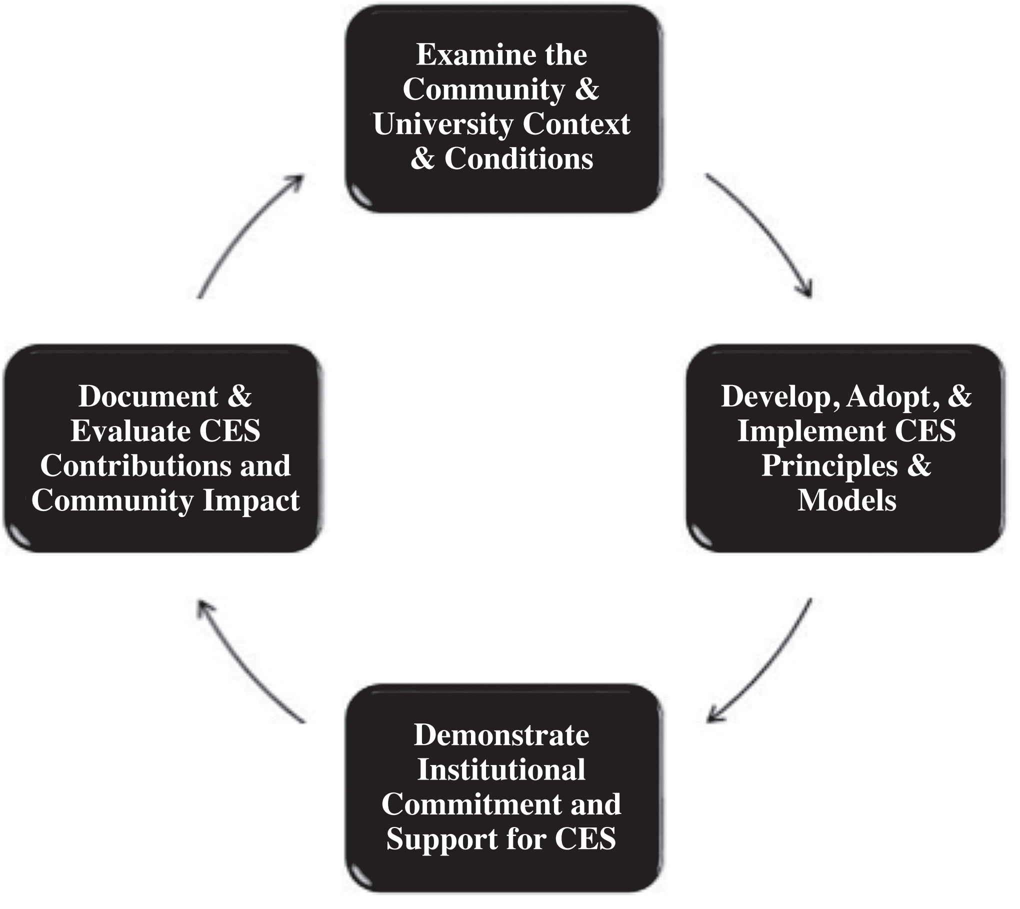
During my first couple of years as a tenure-track professor, the University of Kansas was beginning to engage in preliminary dialogues regarding engaged scholarship for public impact. Since this time, there have been intentional efforts at the University of Kansas to examine engaged scholarship as part of the institutional strategic planning process. For instance, at the University of Kansas there were forums, planning sessions, and funding mechanisms to support interdisciplinary strategic initiatives, which did enhance collaboration and activity in the scholarship of integration. However, although engaged scholarship was conceptually embraced by university administration, there was not necessarily a clear and consistent definition and a mutual understanding of engaged scholarship across multiple levels of the university. In general, the linear view of faculty responsibilities was maintained in the structural systems, which results in the independent assessment of research, teaching, and service as discrete activities, which may limit fully understanding the integrated contributions of community-engaged scholars (Saltmarsh et al. 2009, 32). I participated on several campus-based community engagement work groups that recommended strategies to translate and promote cultural practices within departments and units. The university has interest in supporting structural interventions and transformations, but it will take time to fully integrate various strategies for evaluating and promoting CES across multiple levels and systems.

As an early career tenure-track professor, I would have been less likely to have embraced community-engaged scholarship if I had not been previously reinforced by meaningful CES partnerships and experiences as a graduate student and early career researcher. At pivotal times in my career, I received critical supports from the KU Center for Civic and Social Responsibility and the Center for Teaching Excellence, which provided me with both collegial validation and a peer network of support as an engaged scholar. As an early career tenure-track professor, opportunities for external validation of CES, such as through the Campus Compact and Ernest A. Lynton awards, are also important in further recognizing efforts to advance the scholarship of engagement. The collaborative efforts supported by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE), the Center for Engaged Democracy, and the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities has provided opportunities to extend my network of engaged scholars and supported an enhanced and renewed commitment to contributing to advancing CES. The Lynton award also provided opportunities to broker communications with university leaders at KU, including Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little and Dean Danny Anderson, regarding the continued value of CES on campus, which also helped to further validate the merit of community engagement as part of the university mission.

Recommendations to Further Advance Community-Engaged Scholarship

Based on my experience, I will propose some considerations for how academic institutions may further support a culture of community-engaged scholarship. Figure 2 presents four factors or enabling conditions that may be helpful in addressing potential barriers to engaged scholarship. As shown in the model, first it is important for academic institutions to collectively examine the community context and conditions that may promote or impede community engagement at academic institutions and in communities. Next, colleges and universities should be proactive in developing, adopting, and implementing both principles and models of community-engaged scholarship. Then, it is critical to demonstrate institutional commitment and support for community engagement at multiple levels of the university including within schools, departments, and other academic units. Lastly, academic institutions should ensure clear mechanisms for documenting, measuring, and evaluating the collective contributions of university partners in facilitating engaged scholarship for community impact.

Figure 2. Enabling factors or conditions that academic institutions can support in advancing community-engaged scholarship



Examine the Community and University Context and Conditions

For disenfranchised communities and groups, particularly in urban areas, it is critical that academic institutions support conditions to sustain academic engagement and commitment in a place, over time, and across people. Many urban areas have been characterized by historical disinvestment, which has resulted in inequities and disparities in outcomes including education, income, employment, housing, health, and safety. Years of systemic inequities in conditions and communities cannot be ameliorated without a commitment of strategic investment in concentrated places over time. Colleges and universities have the opportunity to be anchor institutions that "persist in communities over generations, serving as social glue, economic engines, or both" (Cantor, Englot, and Higgins 2013, 20). Universities are strategically positioned to serve as anchor institutions that bring interdisciplinary collaborators together through public and private partnerships (Coalition of Urban Serving Universities 2010). As anchor institutions, university-based community-engagement efforts cannot be here today and gone tomorrow, or we further perpetuate the negative histories already experienced in many communities, particularly in urban settings.

For some academic institutions, such as regional major research institutions, there may be reluctance to commit to strategic investments in defined communities due to political constraints. However, the potential for community impact through interdisciplinary initiatives and community collaboration is minimized when there is a lack of university commitment and coordination of activities in prioritized communities. The prioritization of communities by academic institutions does not suggest that faculty, staff, and administrators cannot continue to engage in a variety of community settings, but rather that intentional opportunities are sought to coordinate commitment and investments in strategic places within and across communities. Often, there are multiple faculty or researchers engaged in the same communities and working with mutual community partners; however, the academic supports and resources provided in communities are often uncoordinated, which limits the ability of colleges and universities to understand their collective contribution in supporting change and improvement in communities. Urban communities provide rich opportunities for co-learning through CES because of the highly dense concentration of residents and organizations that can collaborate through university partnerships.

It is important that academic-based faculty and personnel engage in collaborative processes to understand the setting, context, and conditions of prioritized communities in which they work or endeavor to engage. Prior to involvement with prioritized communities and groups, academic partners should examine the community factors including the cultural, geographical, and political histories of the community. The academic partner should be immersed as the community learner with the endeavor to be "local," which provides an opportunity for academicians and administrators not only to learn the community, but also to take the role as learner first. According to Mark Smith (1994, 125),

> [Being local] involves learning in detail about the participants [the community], their lives, their histories, and their relationships to one another. It includes learning the characteristics that define a place [or group]: family, neighborhood, community culture . . . . Being local is a skill used for community connection, often between educational institutions and local communities.

Occasioning opportunities to learn about the community from and with community partners shifts the locus of expertise from the academic to the community partner(s) and will enhance the cultural knowledge and awareness of university personnel. However, such a learning process would require a commitment and investment of time from university faculty and administrators to permit the academician to be a learner first, which is not generally permitted by RPT and other constraints.

It is also important to examine and understand the history of engagement in the community, including prior and existing community-academic partnerships and activities. For instance, in my community leadership course, students develop digital stories, brief multimedia narratives with community-based partners to document and promote their collaborative community leadership efforts. For some community partners, the digital stories have been helpful in both recording community and organizational history and communicating their successes to others. Similarly, digital stories or brief informational videos developed with community partner groups through multidisciplinary service-learning collaborations could be components of new faculty, staff, and student orientations.

Developing and Implementing CES Principles and Models

For most colleges and universities, community-engaged scholarship is a value that supports their public mission. As a value, academic institutions recognize and communicate the importance of CES as important for supporting research, teaching, and service activities. However, for many campuses, shifting CES from a core value to a guiding principle requires demonstrable support and modifications to university practices and policies, particularly in regard to faculty reward systems. In 2014, the annual conference for the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities was held at Syracuse University. I was delighted to receive the Lynton award at a university that has institutionally prioritized and demonstrated the scholarship of engagement. However, for many institutions the scholarship of integration, which supports an interdisciplinary approach to engaged scholarship is yet evolving.

Ultimately, universities endeavor to contribute to improving population-level health and development outcomes such as poverty, violence, chronic disease, environmental justice, and a host of other issues. Effective problem-solving to address the confluence of urban issues requires a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach to address the interrelated factors that challenges health and development, particularly in urban settings. Many of the efforts singly addressed by academicians in departmental silos are synergistic with other research and service efforts also occurring in the same university and community. When university efforts in a community are uncoordinated, it poses a barrier to participation and collaboration by community partners. Therefore, it is important to ensure conditions that promote a coordination of resources, internal and external information sharing, and systematic examination of university-based efforts to better understand collective contributions and engagement in communities.

Academic institutions should develop, adopt, and implement a framework for community-engaged scholarship that validates and supports an institutional approach. The implementation of a CES framework may assist in guiding academic institutions in the process of engaged scholarship. Furthermore, the operationalization of CES activities may enhance understanding for both new and existing faculty for how to support, recognize, and evaluate CES activities. An institutional approach to CES, promotes intra-university collaboration across disciplines, faculty, and students, as well as with community partners. A university-level approach to CES promotes integrated and collaborative scholarship activities across disciplinary fields and units (e.g., student affairs, multicultural affairs, admissions) within the university.

Using the Participatory Evaluation Framework for Collaborative Action to Guide CES

The Participatory Evaluation Framework for Collaborative Action (see Figure 1) was presented earlier in this paper. Although this model has been used primarily to examine participatory evaluation and community change processes, it also may support community-engaged scholarship more broadly, particularly at the institutional level. According to Cantor, Englot, and Higgins (2013, 20), "an essential first step in making the work of universities as anchor institutions stick is creating a model of reciprocal, participatory engagement." The framework offers a process for systematically examining the collective contributions of CES in supporting improvements in prioritized community-level outcomes.

In the first phase of the model, university and community-based partners are collaboratively engaged in determining the prioritized goals and issues to be addressed through CES. Academic and community-based partners work jointly to assess the assets as well as needs or issues present in the community. As a part of the assessment process, multiple academic disciplines and community sectors are involved in the process of identifying, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information. The mission and type of academic institution will influence the parameters for how the community of place is defined, which may be as bounded as a neighborhood, or as expansive as a state or region. The aim of the assessment process is to engage both university and community partners in determining the socioeconomic priorities to be addressed through CES. Furthermore, the community needs and resources assessment can help to better ensure that faculty, staff, and students are meaningfully contributing to community-determined areas of support through engaged scholarship activities. Based on the collective prioritization of goals, community and university partners collaboratively name and frame the issues to be supported through CES. The way an issue is named and framed determines how it will be supported and by whom from the community and academic institution.

Based on a participatory approach, both community and academic partners contribute to identifying and examining appropriate research questions of mutual interest. The identification of institutional-level research interests is not intended to limit the autonomy of academic partners, but rather permits systematic examination of the collective impact of CES. Then, the development of a logic model and plan by academic and community partners supports a coordinated CES approach. Generally, a logic model summarizes the inputs including the resources and CES activities or strategies to be supported by both academic and community partners. Based on the activities, the logic model also specifies related outputs and results, as well as the intended impact outcomes of CES activities. The logic model may be more fully explicated through the development of a community engagement strategic plan. The CES approach summarized in the logic model and related plan should be guided by multiple levels of community and campus participation including from community stakeholders, particularly from underrepresented or often overlooked groups, as well as students, faculty, and staff.

In the second phase of the model, collaborative action is facilitated to support implementation of the activities and strategies identified through the logic model and plan. The activities supported in this phase by academic and community partners may include the implementation of research interventions, service-learning and outreach activities, and/or community-engaged service by faculty, staff, or students. Targeted action supports the implementation of community and systems changes, defined as new or modified programs, policies, or practices. It is important that methods are identified to systematically document and measure both the community-engagement process and the implementation of community-level interventions. The systematic documentation of community engagement activities (phase two) and contributions to community and system changes (phase three) permits examination of how the academic and community environment are contributing to improvements in community-level outcomes. As data are collected from both community and academic partners regarding community engagement activities and outcomes, it is important to collaboratively share and review the data. Then, the data should be used to guide adjustments and inform decision-making by both community and university partners. Ultimately, community engagement activities and interventions supported through community-university partnerships are elements of a comprehensive multicomponent intervention to change and improve community conditions. However, academic institutions often do not take advantage of the opportunity to systematically examine the collective contribution of community-academic efforts in a strategic place.

In the fourth and fifth phases, the implementation of community/system changes contributes to widespread changes in behaviors of individuals and groups (both in academia and the community), which results in improvements in community-level outcomes. The simplest, but possibly most commonly overlooked, aspect of the model is then to ensure opportunities for community and academic partners to jointly celebrate and communicate successes to audiences and key stakeholders. The collaborative celebration of shared community-academic successes through mechanisms that are mutually agreed upon and collaborative reinforcement builds a positive history for CES. Community-determined approaches for engaging community and academic partners through community-university collaborations have demonstrated effectiveness in improving urban conditions (Coalition of Urban Serving Universities 2010).

Demonstrate Institutional Commitment and Support for CES

The institutional history and commitment for investing in priority communities served by a college or university should transcend and endure past any individual administration, faculty, staff, or student. For example, when supporting service-learning student placements with community partners, as the instructor, I broker the student placements with community partners to ensure appropriateness of fit, support mechanisms for student and community partner feedback, as well as to maintain rapport with the community partners. Although it requires more upfront time by the instructors, this support ensures that the relationship with the community partner is not contingent on any individual student. Furthermore, I am also able to manage the placement of students with community sites to not inundate community partners with duplicative service-learning student requests. Similarly, community engagement at colleges and universities is enhanced by coordinated university supports. Then, the quality and value of community-academic partnerships and CES activities is not as contingent on funding mechanisms or individual relationships between academic and community partners.

Institutionalizing CES requires a university culture that supports and reinforces community engagement across multiple levels of the university system, including university administration, schools, colleges, and departments. Although many academic institutions seemingly value engaged scholarship, there is a clear and persistent disconnect in its merit based on the academic reward systems, particularly at research universities. At colleges and universities where CES is a principle, community engagement is an institutional expectation, rather than option, and is apparent by structural processes such as in the annual merit and RPT processes. Saltmarsh et al. (2009, 28) suggests that "community engaged scholarship redefines what constitutes a 'publication' and redefines who is a 'peer' in the peer review process." For instance, the submission of letters for RPT tenure dossiers from community partners as peer experts would be an indicator of institutional commitment to CES.

Colleges and universities should identify and commit to structural changes (i.e., programs, policies, and practices) that support CES. Foster (2012, 24) suggests that "structural interventions can come from campus units that value community-engaged scholarship, from scientific and academic leadership organizations, and from the federal government." It is paramount to identify incentives not just for individual scholars but also for mid-level administrators such as department chairs who often influence departmental practices and norms, including merit evaluation and RPT processes. For instance, group-based recognition and awards (e.g., honor rolls) for departments or units that support community engagement within academic settings may facilitate broader support and prioritization, particularly if the information were available to prospective students and majors. Also, institutional supports such as CES post-docs or fellows who could assist faculty in developing or coordinating CES activities may offer a critical support that may enhance CES activities of multiple faculty within a unit. Furthermore, permitting opportunities and supports for non-faculty staff to support community engagement activities may further permit a culture of engagement across multiple levels of personnel. For example, a campus that promotes a culture of community engagement may implement flex time policies that allow staff to engage in community advocacy and engagement activities. At the University of Kansas, the majority of advocates in the KU Advocacy Corp, coordinated by the Center for Civic and Social Responsibility, are staff-level personnel. The KU Advocacy Corp pairs community organizations with university faculty, staff, and students to broker community-university engagement and advocacy supports.

Another clear indicator of campus commitment to CES is through program degree requirements. Many four-year colleges and universities have successfully integrated requirements for community engagement, generally in the form of service-learning, as a core component of undergraduate training. Similarly, over the past couple of decades, community colleges have increasingly integrated service-learning in the curriculum requirements (Prentice and Robinson 2010). However, there are often less direct requirements for CES as a core component and requirement of graduate training programs. It is strategic to expose and train graduate students in the process and importance of community-engaged scholarship as the next generation of engaged scholars, tenure-track faculty, and administrators. A longer-term approach to shifting the campus culture and perception of CES is to train future academic leaders and scholars in this area. For example, at the University of Kansas, all doctoral students must fulfill research and responsible scholarship requirements as a part of the graduate program. Although departments specify the criteria for satisfactory completion of this requirement, common elements are generally demonstrating competency or the completion of courses in ethics and responsible scholarship in conducting research. An example of an institutional change supporting CES would be to expand options to fulfill the requirement that include courses or experiences in community-engaged scholarship as an additional option or explicit type of responsible scholarship.

Document and Evaluate CES Contributions and Community Impact

A common challenge experienced by many universities is how to systematically document and examine, across disciplines and interventions, the collective contributions of CES to support transformation in communities. Often times, there are multiple and simultaneous campus-supported research and service efforts occurring within a concentrated community. Although CES efforts may serve the same populations and contribute to similar or complementary community-level outcomes, there is often not a centralized process for documenting campus-based inputs, including the investment of academic resources and activities supported in communities. Therefore, academic institutions would benefit from regarding community-engaged scholarship activities as a comprehensive community intervention.

The development and implementation of community-based logic models and plans are important for identifying the short- and longer-term outcomes intended to be impacted by CES, including knowledge and skill attainment, attitudes and perception changes, and behavior changes occurring in both the community and on campus. Both the process and outcomes of community-academic partnerships are important to document and examine. For many academic institutions, CES-related activities such as service-learning are at least noted in strategic plans at some level. However, it is often less clear how CES contributions and impact on student learning and community outcomes is measured and evaluated.

Although many colleges and universities recognize the importance of community-university partnerships, it is less clear how to systematically evaluate the collective contributions and impact of community engagement. Often times, community-university partnerships are organic and develop incrementally over time based on individual faculty and/or staff interests, commitment, and resources. Aggregate efforts to improve communities are generally not well documented or examined within and across academic units. A need persists to refine approaches for systematically examining both the process and collective outcomes of community engagement. Systematic methods and measures of community engagement would allow both academic and community partners to understand the collective contribution of community-university partnerships in transforming communities.

The reflective process occasioned by the Lynton award application process and awardee presentations has provided me with the opportunity to reflect on how to enhance CES practice in my own work. An area that I am eager to further advance in promoting community-engaged scholarship at my academic institution, and more broadly in the field, is in the documentation and evaluation of CES activities. For example, in the courses I instruct, students complete service-learning activity logs and reflective processes through online discussion boards and poster presentations. However, I have not instituted a systematic data collection system to support the quantification and deeper analyses of student inputs and outcomes across courses and over semesters. Similarly, for the participatory research collaborations that I support, I work with partners to systematically document their efforts to facilitate community change and service activities, but have often overlooked also documenting the academic inputs provided to community partners such as through capacity-building training and technical support.

Based on my work with the KU Work Group for Community Health and Development, I am pretty well versed in developing community-level data collection and evaluation systems to document and measure the process and impact of community-based interventions. For instance, our research center has supported a community-academic partnership with the local public health department to facilitate the implementation of a community health assessment and plan that is being implemented in the community through multi-sector collaboration. Through this process, my colleagues have collaborated with the health department and community partners to implement a community-level data collection and reporting system to document community and system changes (i.e., program, policy and practice changes) and service activities being implemented across the community. The system provides a community accessible portal to record and analyze activities implemented by multiple partners, including the health department, public housing authority, and public schools, contributing to improving community-level health outcomes. Our primary focus has been on ensuring that the community story and contributions to change and improvement are systematically recorded. However, we had not yet considered how to also support systematic data collection of the academic-based inputs in the community that may also be supporting the community transformation and improvement process.

Now, in this semester, I will begin to work with both academic and community-based partners to align documentation practices to permit a more holistic examination of both the community and university-based activities contributing to implementing strategies to support community health improvement. For instance, as a pilot project, I will modify the reporting practices in my courses to support integration with the community data collection system. By supporting a practice change in student service and outreach reporting in my course, we will at least be able to better understand how nearly 100 students contribute to supporting community health strategies and outcomes through community-engaged service activities.

In the strongest form, CES can enhance the capacity, or collective skills, capabilities, and resources, of both academic and community partners. However, it is critical to continue to identify approaches to measure the community and academic impact of community capacity and change processes on both community and university (such as student learning) outcomes. Through intra-disciplinary collaboration, we have the potential to develop strong systems and approaches for examining the process and outcomes of community-academic partnerships. Many disciplines such as community psychology, public health, education, applied behavioral analysis, social work, urban planning, and many more are well-positioned to contribute to our collective understanding of how to measure CES process and outcomes. There are already established constructs and measures for concepts such as community capacity, community and self-efficacy, community-based participatory research, social validation of goal attainment, and community change and transformation processes and outcomes, which could be adapted for this context. However, what is absent is not the ability to measure and examine CES, but the integrated framework that guides what and how we should measure our collective efforts to demonstrate and evidence collective impact and contributions to improvements in communities.

Conclusion

In addressing the plethora of health and development issues that often plagues our communities, we must continue to advance CES through the scholarship of discovery, integration, teaching, and application (Boyer 1996, 17; Lynton 1994, 11). In many communities, a confluence of factors, often related to structural determinants including historical and social policies and socioeconomic disparities in education, employment, housing, and access to resources, including social capital, continues to challenge the collective health and development of communities. Despite the varied problems experienced in communities, there are many assets including human and institutional resources that are critical in addressing the social and physical ills that perplex our society. Colleges and universities are key institutions that are uniquely positioned to contribute to addressing some of the underlying factors of structural and socioeconomic determinants. However, community partners are best positioned to reify and validate the importance, utility, and effectiveness of our interventions, which is ultimately evidenced by community adoption, implementation, and sustainability. I am reminded of the quote by George Berkley that states, "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" In parallel, I now ask you, if we, as academicians, do good scholarly work that is published and academically reputable, but it is not shared, known, or implemented by practitioners in applied settings and in communities, then did our scholarly work ever really exist?

Based on an ecological perspective, the ability of colleges and universities to fulfill their research, teaching, and service missions is embedded within the process of supporting transformation and improvements in communities. Academic institutions offer a resource-rich environment, with a hub of individuals committed to addressing some of our most complex societal problems. As academicians, we are expected to contribute to advancing knowledge that is shared with students and scholars in our respective disciplines. However, it is as important that we ensure that we are good stewards of our knowledge and resources, which means ensuring that our academic institutions most directly and immediately contribute to improvements in the communities in which we work and live.

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Universities as Intermediaries: Impact Investing and Social Entrepreneurship

Rebecca Tekula, Archana Shah, and Jordan Jhamb

Abstract

Metropolitan universities are well poised in communities to be intermediaries among various actors involved in social innovation. Pace University established one of the first institutes on social entrepreneurship. Its unique position at the university level allows programming to transcend certain institutional challenges. The emerging field of impact investing is fertile ground for partnerships allowing the university to serve as resource provider, while benefiting from myriad opportunities for student and faculty engagement, experiential learning, and access.

The emergence of social entrepreneurship has planted the seeds for an increasing number and variety of educational activities related to the field. As the world of social ventures evolves, from traditional charity to social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, the academic pathways provided must advance accordingly. Careers in the social sector are growing, along with a clear demand for courses, programs, and learning experiences that equip students with the knowledge and hands-on experience needed to succeed in the field. A key learning outcome of social entrepreneurship education is the development of skills and acquisition of knowledge to mobilize resources from various institutional spheres (Seelos et al. 2011). Metropolitan universities are often well poised in their communities to act as intermediaries or hubs among the various domains and institutional actors involved in social innovation and to support the communities in which they reside.

The true arrival of social entrepreneurship education took place only in the very early twenty-first century when a small but growing number of universities had started to support the social enterprise movement and the use of business practices in the nonprofit sector. While the emergence of social entrepreneurship planted the seeds for an increasing number and variety of educational activities related to the field, the question remained: How could a metropolitan university, with limited resources, build upon its strengths and partners to contribute meaningfully to social innovation?

Pace University, as an early actor in the domain, decided to make a strong commitment to the emerging field of social entrepreneurship by establishing the Helene and Grant Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship and positioning it uniquely at the university level, and not within a school or college. With an aim to support and connect with faculty, students, and alumni from across the university, the center was created with an eye to the truly interdisciplinary aspects of social innovation. The relevance of this positional strategy is underscored by Pache and Chowdhury (2012) who emphasize that while social entrepreneurs engage in activities similar to all entrepreneurs, the context of their work is different and, therefore, requires an education that brings to bear distinctions and differences of three logics: social-welfare, commercial, and public-sector. However, in spite of this, the overwhelming majority of social-entrepreneurship/enterprise-education programs are based in business schools, with a core education program.

Background

Pace University evolved from thirteen students studying accounting in a rented classroom in 1906 to today's diverse university featuring more than 13,000 students in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs in six schools: College of Health Professions, Dyson College of Arts and Sciences, Lubin School of Business, School of Education, School of Law, and Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems.

Located on multiple campuses in New York City and Westchester County, Pace is a truly metropolitan university. The main New York City campus is located in the civic center of Lower Manhattan, an intellectual and cultural focal point for one of New York City's most dynamic and revitalized areas. This location benefits from exciting opportunities and interactions between the university community and the Lower Manhattan community at large. Pace New York City also includes a Midtown Center, located on Fifth Avenue just blocks away from Grand Central Station and Times Square. This location hosts the Masters in Publishing degree program due to its proximity to major publishing houses. It also offers a selection of weekday and evening classes and certificate programs; the location is convenient for many working professionals.

In mid-Westchester, Pace's Pleasantville campus and Briarcliff location are set on 200 acres of rolling countryside where the university is identified as a preeminent institution of higher education. The Pleasantville campus offers a broad range of undergraduate degree programs and graduate programs in nursing. In 1977, Pace acquired Briarcliff College, ten miles from Pleasantville in Briarcliff Manor. Residence halls, recreational facilities, and administrative offices are located here. Pace administers these locations together and provides shuttle bus service between the campuses.

Lastly, Pace's White Plains Campus, located diagonally across the street from the White Plains Railroad Station, is home to programs in business, public administration, and computer science. Since 1976, it has also housed the Pace University School of Law, the only law school between New York City and Albany.

Academic experiences at Pace emphasize teaching from both a practical and theoretical perspective, drawing on the expertise of full-time and adjunct faculty members who balance academic preparation with professional experience and capitalize on the advantages of the New York Metropolitan Area to bring a unique dynamic to the classroom. Additionally, civic engagement is deeply rooted in the fabric of Pace's culture. In 1956, the Pace College Board of Trustees and faculty expressed their philosophy of education when they wrote, "The educational offerings of the institution should be directed toward developing citizens who are able and willing to take leadership in business and related professions, and who are equipped to contribute to the larger community and of the nation." Today, at Pace, every school contributes community service courses to the core curriculum. During the 2012–2013 academic year, more than 2,200 students enrolled in 117 sections and spent more than 55,000 hours in community service. Pace students address issues in community service that often define their careers and our futures.

In a broader context, the need for thoughtful well-educated leaders in a variety of nonprofit sectors is growing. Nonprofits employ around 10 percent of the American workforce, and over 18 percent of the workforce in New York State (Salamon, Sokolowsi, and Geller 2012). There are more than 1.6 million registered nonprofits in the United States. In 2010 public charities reported $1.51 trillion in revenue and $2.71 trillion in total assets (Roeger, Blackwood, and Pettijohn 2012). Pace University represents a microcosmic example of the nonprofit sector's impact. In the last five years, 20 percent of all reported job and internship placements of Pace students have been in nonprofits and government. Furthermore, this data indicates that 40 percent of Pace University's Dyson College of Arts and Sciences graduates find full-time employment in nonprofits and government, and 33 percent in nonprofits alone.

What Is the Wilson Center?

In 2005, the Helene and Grant Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship was created to serve the nonprofit community and Pace University. Devoted to honing the risk-taking spirit and managerial skills of nonprofit organizations, the center was launched with a pledge from Helene and Grant Wilson, Boston-area entrepreneurs and philanthropists whose charitable endeavors convinced them that entrepreneurial management can help social ventures increase their impact. The mission of the center is "to promote social change through entrepreneurship." Working across all disciplines, the center has endeavored to further this mission by serving the Pace University community, social enterprises, and nonprofit organizations with education, research, communication, and advisory service.

What Is Social Entrepreneurship?

Social entrepreneurship is the process of pursuing innovative solutions to social problems (Dees 2001). These novel solutions are "better than existing approaches (i.e., more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just) and the value created (benefits) accrues primarily to society as a whole, rather than private individuals" (Phills, Deiglmeier, and Miller 2008, 36). For example, social concerns such as financial access for disenfranchised populations at the base of the pyramid have been addressed with innovations like microfinance.

For social enterprises to form, these innovative solutions need to be scalable and sustainable. They need to create social impact in a financially sustainable way, by applying commercial strategies. Furthermore, real social impact comes with scale—the ability to affect large populations with the social innovation is also critical and plays into the viability of the social enterprise. Social enterprises are typically hybrid organizations that can be structured as for-profit or nonprofits, with the mixed motives of balancing social and economic value creation (Dees 2001).

Funding Social Innovation

Traditionally, social problems have been addressed by government funding or by charitable giving through foundation grants, individual giving, and corporate giving. While this pool of capital is substantial, it dwarfs the potential capital that could be harnessed toward investing in innovative solutions to persistent problems in our society. As of 2010, private contributions and government grants together made up less than 25 percent of revenue sources for reporting public charities (Blackwood, Roeger, and Pettijohn 2012). If we examine the foundation data further, in the United States collectively, foundations have approximately $600 billion in assets (Roeger, Blackwood, and Pettijohn 2012), however, only fifty billion dollars are spent on social problems in the form of grants to nonprofits. This amount meets the 5 percent qualified distribution (Chen 2012) required by law, however, the other $550 billion in investment capital is largely dormant with respect to mission. We are seeing small changes; innovative foundations have started making program-related investments (PRIs) and mission-related investments (MRIs) to deploy more capital toward social impact. These instruments, while not formally defined, have the characteristics of a loan. PRIs are zero percent to below-market interest rate loans that must primarily serve a charitable purpose (i.e., social impact) (Levitt 2011). PRIs are counted within the 5 percent qualified distribution minimum, and as such do not affect the $550 billion in assets held by foundations. However, PRIs differ from grants in that they are investments, and the principle is expected to be paid back. MRIs are also loan-type investments for social impact; however, they differ from PRIs in that they demand a market-rate financial return. Like PRIs, the principle of an MRI is expected to be paid back at the end of the investment period. The catalytic aspect of MRIs is that they do not count toward the 5 percent qualified distribution minimum, and as such are sourced from the $550 billion foundation assets, thus unlocking more foundation capital for social impact.

While MRIs and PRIs remain marginal strategies amongst private foundations in the United States, there are some exceptions. One of these cases is the recent strategic shift of the F. B. Heron Foundation. In their 2011 Foundation Strategy, F. B. Heron declared a move to deploy *all* their assets toward mission. Over the past three years, F. B. Heron has evolved from a solely grant-making approach, to making a combination of grants, PRIs, and MRIs, depending on the need and capacity of the intended organization or investment. Through this progression, their goal is to have 100 percent of their assets deployed for mission. To quote the organization: *"We no longer believe that the legal requirement of using just 5 percent of endowment assets to make grants,* *while leaving the rest traditionally invested, is adequate to achieve the scale of social change we would like to see"* (The F. B. Heron Foundation 2014, 1). An increasing number of foundations in the United States are making their first MRIs, which will in effect test this process in each individual operating structure.

Changing the ecosystem of a foundation is challenging; it requires a complete overhaul in the skill set of the personnel from traditional grant makers to investment analysts. With more assets invested and at risk, it also requires a robust risk-management system; both pre-investment rigorous due diligence and on-going risk management becomes crucial.

From $550 Billion to $210 Trillion

Evolving foundation strategies have the potential to unlock over $550 billion in assets; however, private markets hold an estimated $210 trillion in assets (eighty trillion dollars in pension and institutional funds alone) (Rockefeller Foundation 2014). Needless to say, unlocking private capital for social change has the potential to be transformative. The lack of funding opportunities is one of the major disadvantages social enterprises face. A conventional business can use its balance sheet and business plan to offer different combinations of risk and return to many different types of investors: equity investors, banks, bond funds, venture capitalists, and so on. Not so for many social enterprises, but that is changing. An increasing number of social entrepreneurs and investors are realizing that social enterprises of all sorts also can generate financial returns attractive to investors. This realization can lead to a dramatic increase in the amount and diversity of capital available to these organizations. Essentially, the insight is that one can treat the funding of a social enterprise as a problem of financial structuring. One such social finance innovation is Social Impact Bonds (Goldman Sachs 2014).

The Evolution of Impact Investing

Social enterprises are increasingly tapping into this growing market of hybrid capital. In its early stages, a social enterprise can tap into more traditional philanthropic capital for grants and low-cost funding. These investors do not expect a financial return, but expect a social return. As the enterprise matures and is generating revenue, this will attract market-rate investors who expect both a financial and a social return. These hybrid investors, often referred to as impact investors, are typically crossover philanthropists, but increasingly include traditional investors seeking both measurable social and financial returns on their investments. According to the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), "Impact investments are investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate a measurable, beneficial social or environmental impact alongside a financial return" (Global Impact Investment Network 2014a, 1).

Measuring Social Impact

Today, in order to attract meaningful investment capital, social innovations must have measurable and reportable outputs and outcomes. Anecdotes are no longer a sufficient means of demonstrating program effectiveness. As GIIN explains, "Impact measurement is central to effective impact investing, as it demonstrates investor intent and legitimizes the industry with data on impact produced. Good impact measurement generates intrinsic value for all impact investment stakeholders, yields data to mobilize greater capital toward generating impact, and increases the transparency and accountability for the impact delivered" (Global Impact Investment Network 2014b, 1). GIIN has done some groundbreaking work on impact metrics, in particular the establishment of the Global Impact Investing Ratings System (GIIRS), a system for assessing the social and environmental impact of companies and funds with its ratings and analytics approach (Global Impact Investing Ratings System 2014). GIIRS is intended to be analogous to Morningstar investment rankings and Capital IQ financial analytics, and become the standard metric measurement tool. As it is adopted by more investors and social enterprises, it may catalyze the impact investment movement; this tool is intended to change investor behavior and unlock the potential of this new asset class.

The Wilson Center is based on Pace University's Lower Manhattan campus. Lower Manhattan is the fourth largest business district in the United States, one of the fastest growing residential neighborhoods in the city, a popular tourist destination, and one of the main transportation hubs of New York City. As a neighbor to city hall and several city, state, and federal agencies, Pace University has served as a community partner on a variety of important initiatives.

To fulfill its mission, the Wilson Center adopted a four-pronged strategy, outlined below:

Inspired Education

This program area focuses on cultivating the next generation of nonprofit and social enterprise leaders. This includes leading and facilitating the development of curriculum for both noncredit and degree-granting programs at the undergraduate and graduate level.

1. Leading up to fall 2013, the Wilson Center, in partnership with the Dyson College of Arts and Sciences, was integral in the development and establishment of a minor in nonprofit studies. By spring 2014, more than 200 undergraduate students were enrolled in minor-eligible undergraduate courses, reflecting their interest in the sector. As of fall 2014, students enrolled in the nonprofit studies minor have majors in advertising and integrated marketing, political science, psychology, theatre arts, English literature, and history, to name a few, truly reflecting the cross-disciplinary interest in the field. This academic credential allows Pace students to connect their passion for social impact into their career path and future planning.

2. Wilson Center advisors, fellows, and other faculty partners across several schools instruct a number of courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, including:

i. CS 643 Mobile Innovations for Global Challenges

ii. FIN 680/360 Microfinance and Small Business Financing in India

iii. MGT 349 Global Sustainable Development

iv. MGT 678 Advanced Topics in Management: Social Entrepreneurship

v. PAA 683 Seminar in Social Entrepreneurship

vi. PSJ 301 Humanitarianism and International Aid Work

vii. WS 305 Philanthropy on a Mission: Women and Change in the Nonprofit Sector

3. The Wilson Center supported the extension of the Master in Public Administration program from the White Plains Campus, where it resided for thirty years, to the Lower Manhattan campus in order to meet the growing demand from the local nonprofit community. This program attracted twenty-three new students in its first semester.

4. The Wilson Center has a long standing partnership with United Way of Westchester and Putnam Counties. Through this collaboration, Pace's Westchester County campus provided eighteen continuing education workshops to over 224 nonprofit managers in the county this past year. These workshops also serve as a pipeline into Pace's MBA and MPA degree programs.

Research to Practice

The goal of this program area is to support the creation of a diverse portfolio of recognized research projects related to social innovation, social finance, social entrepreneurship, and nonprofit management. Faculty fellows are funded and supported in: 1) initiating and developing research studies, 2) promoting their work at talks and conferences, 3) submitting their research to leading publications and peer-reviewed journals, and 4) applying for sponsored research grants from government agencies and private foundations.

1. *Sponsored Research*. Each year, the Wilson Center funds four faculty fellows. A faculty steering committee sets funding priorities and selects candidates through a blind review process. Selected fellows work on specific projects—generally case studies and academic research—related to the center's mission. Each recipient is awarded $5,000 and is supported by student research assistants. Since 2009, this program has produced twenty-five research papers.

2. *Brown Bag Lunch Research Seminars*. The Wilson Center hosts a series of brown bag lunch seminars which showcase past faculty fellow-funded research projects. For accessibility, the seminars are held during common hour and are webcast to the Pace online community.

3. *Nonprofit and Social Enterprise Research*. The Wilson Center is a research and data resource for both local and national organizations, including the Westchester County Executive and local congressional representatives. The center also offers research support in service of the university; the Economic Impact Report for Pace NYC and the Economic Impact Report for Pace Athletics were based on research by the center. Center-based faculty and staff also actively write and publish relevant research.

4. *Digital Commons Initiative*. The Wilson Center's Digital Commons Selected Works series serves to maximize the visibility and impact of its research. This repository is home to many online journals including the Pace Environmental Law Review, the Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law and Ethics, and Cornell University ILR Review. Works posted in the center's series have had 2,475 full-text downloads since 2013.

The leverage of these seed research grants is illustrated in the example of one past faculty fellow, Professor Christelle Scharff of Pace's Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems. She worked on innovative research exploring mobile technology for social change in Africa. In addition to the faculty fellowship, the Wilson Center sponsored her attendance at a conference to present her work, which was also showcased at a Student Leadership Forum on campus. Her paper was published in the *Journal of the Frontiers in Education Conference*. From this, Professor Scharff created a course and launched a mobile app contest for students. Consequently, Dr. Scharff received a Fulbright Fellowship for her work, and she is now Chair of the Computer Science Department.

Recognized Voice

The center aims to be a recognized center of excellence in the field of social enterprise, both internally at Pace University and externally in the community.

1. *External Visibility*. The Wilson Center is recognized by Ashoka, Echoing Green, and the U.S. Department of State as a thought leader in best practices in social enterprise and entrepreneurship. The center hosts a series of conferences and speaking events throughout the year as a platform to foster critical conversations with key stakeholders. These events are free and open to both the Pace and New York nonprofit and government communities. These events include:

    i. Pace-Hitachi Nonprofit Forum: This annual free educational forum held on the White Plains campus, hosts more than 150 attendees each year and is co-sponsored by Hitachi America, Ltd. A significant number of students attend this event, and a career networking luncheon is served for students, alumni, and employers.

    ii. Not-for-Profit Leadership Summit: The Wilson Center is a co-sponsor of this full-day annual gathering of more than 700 nonprofit leaders in Westchester. All Pace University students are invited to attend for free.

iii. U.S. Department of State Social Entrepreneurship Panels and Courses: The Wilson Center has an ongoing partnership with the U.S Department of State and leads a panel or course on social entrepreneurship for international delegates through the State Department Visitors Program; up to ninety delegates attend each year.

iv. True Partnerships Discussion: The Wilson Center sponsors an annual event on the Lower Manhattan campus bringing together social ventures and their partner organizations and sponsors to discuss best practices for collaboration toward social impact.

v. NYC Nonprofit Career Panel: Each year, the Wilson Center hosts a panel on social sector career opportunities. Recent Pace alumni working in the nonprofit, government, and social enterprise sectors return to campus and speak with students about their experiences in the sector thus far. Students benefit from engaging with practitioners in the field and have a chance to network and connect with the alumni speakers.

2. *Internal Visibility:* To be a further resource to the Pace community of faculty, staff, and students, the Wilson Center produces and publishes short ten-to-twelve minute teaching/learning modules on topics related to social entrepreneurship. These are made accessible to the Pace community through the Blackboard Learning System and encourage faculty to import relevant modules into their course syllabi. Wilson Center faculty and staff researchers also guest lecture on relevant topics in-person in the classroom by invitation.

3. *Communications*. The Wilson Center's website provides an important connection to members of the Pace University community and the social sector. The center's website, weekly online newspaper, and related social media tools are used to engage students and alumni in activities at Pace and in the community related to the center's mission.

4. *Public Relations*. The Wilson Center is featured in the local and national press, with coverage of both research and program activity. For example, at the request of a local reporter, the Wilson Center recently led an analysis on the trends and issues faced by the large and growing nonprofit sector in Westchester. The report served as two separate features in a local magazine and led to an invited presentation for Congresswoman Nita Lowey.

Energetic Community

The Wilson Center goal of fostering a collaborative community of faculty, students, alumni, and practitioners is realized through a suite of experiential learning opportunities for students to enhance their education. The center offers several experiential programs:

1. *Summer Funded Internships:* Since 2009, the center has placed and funded seventy-nine full-time summer internships at forty-seven unique and innovative nonprofits and social enterprises in the New York metro area. Interns in the program represent a wide variety of majors across Pace's six schools, with undergraduate and graduate students participating at nearly equal rates. Each intern receives $4,200 in income for the summer, resulting in $373,800 in funding over the last six years. This year, the Wilson Center was able to expand the scope of the program into Staten Island and Queens with restricted institutional funding. For the summer 2014 program, the Wilson Center received 216 applications for thirteen positions at hosts including the F. B. Heron Foundation, The National Museum of the American Indian, and the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation. In addition to a salary, these students benefit from professional development and mentorship opportunities provided by their host organizations.

2. *Student Run Fund Appropriations Committee:* Eight student leaders allocate up to $84,000 in funding each year—approximately twenty internships—by reviewing and selecting intern hosts and positions.

3. *Student Research Assistants:* The Wilson Center hosts two to three student research assistants each year who work on a variety of in-house research projects in collaboration with the staff. Wilson Center interns have a 100 percent graduation and job placement rate.

4. *Student Sponsorship* is offered for a variety of related and/or co-sponsored events and conferences off campus.

5. *Social Ventures:* The Wilson Center, in collaboration with the Entrepreneurship Lab at Pace University, has helped launch more than ten unique student social ventures; winners have been awarded more than $26,000 in prizes.

6. *A Conversation on . . . :* This speaker series has included leaders from SAP Corporate Social Responsibility, Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, First Access, the F. B. Heron Foundation, and Grameen America to name a few, on topics ranging from impact investing, technology, and social impact to conversations on best practices in nonprofit–corporate partnerships. These events are sometimes scheduled in partnership with faculty teaching a course on a specific, related topic, or as stand-alone events to foster interesting relevant conversation on the sector, sponsored by the Wilson Center.

7. *Social Enterprise in Residence:* Each year, the Wilson Center hosts a Social Enterprise in Residence. The current in-residence organization is Impact America Fund, an early-stage GIIRS-rated equity firm that invests $250,000 to $2,000,000 each in high growth companies generating real financial returns while improving the well-being of underserved communities. Their investments are focused on 1) health and well-being, 2) education, 3) essential services, and 4) financial security.

The Helene and Grant Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Pace University plays a critical role in raising awareness amongst the student population about this changing sector. As a truly interdisciplinary institute, the center can engage students from across the university in these innovative opportunities.

Spotlight on the Social Enterprise in Residence Concept at Pace University

To understand the concept and operation of a Social Enterprise in Residence program at Pace University, it is important to highlight the aforementioned civic engagement focus of the institution.

Strong collaborative partnerships are critical to the success of any university in its efforts to build social innovation programming and pedagogy. At Pace University, each year the Helene and Grant Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship brings a respected Social Enterprise in Residence into the Pace University community. The leadership of these organizations share experience and wisdom and help the Pace community to understand the challenges and opportunities facing social ventures. Leaders of social enterprises have shared how they started their organization, what they have accomplished, and how they plan to further their mission.

The Wilson family provided generous funds for the creation of the Wilson Center, and in the earlier years of operation, the center annually hosted Social Entrepreneurs in Residence. These individual leaders would visit campus to share experiences and wisdom, helping the Pace community to understand the challenges and opportunities facing nonprofit organizations and social change leaders in the community. The center launched the in-residence program in fall 2005, naming Susan Rodgerson as its first social entrepreneur in residence. Rodgerson was the first of several social entrepreneurs that visited campus to share how they started their organization, what they had accomplished, and how they planned to further their mission. Subsequent social entrepreneurs in residence include Charles Best, founder of DonorsChoose.org, and the MacArthur “Genius” award winner Majora Carter, founder of Sustainable South Bronx.

Busy as they were, these social entrepreneurs were able to visit campus for one or two days, and engage in, at most, two speaking engagements and some classroom time during their visit. While these engagements were met with enthusiasm, there was more demand than could be met for opportunities to learn from and interact with these individual leaders. Thus, in early 2009, the advisory committee discussed and agreed to shift from an individual entrepreneur-in-residence model, to an enterprise-in-residence model. The aim of this new direction was to continue to attract nonprofit and social enterprise leaders from the New York City metropolitan area, while growing the in-residence opportunity to a more holistic and multifaceted perspective of social innovation. By partnering with entire organizations, we could provide relevant and accessible models for students and faculty while supporting and partnering with the organization overall. While not restricted to an individual organizational leader's schedule, it would be possible to identify more presentation and meeting times, collaborative programs, research projects, and other partnership opportunities convenient for the social enterprise leadership team, students, faculty, and staff.

The Social Enterprise in Residence program essentially was structured to have three key elements that include organizational representatives 1) giving at least one public talk and leading one seminar session in their specialty, 2) making a small number of guest presentations to Pace University classes, and 3) hosting at least one Pace University student as a Wilson Center funded summer intern.

The process of selecting a social enterprise in residence was designed to be formal, requiring a nomination from an advisory committee member, a demonstrated existing partnership with the university or center, and a formal submission by the center directorship to the provost for approval. For stable partnership, the designation is designed to be renewed for one year, provided there was a successful track record in the initial year.

Current Social Enterprise in Residence

Based on an existing collaborative partnership, the Wilson Center selected Impact America as its Social Enterprise in Residence for the 2014–2015 academic year. Impact America is an early-stage GIIRS-rated equity firm that invests $250K – $2M in high growth companies generating real financial returns while improving the well-being of underserved communities and creating quality jobs in America. Impact America invests in diverse entrepreneurs who are directly improving the quality of life in underserved communities, scaling businesses focused on four major areas: 1) health and well-being, 2) education, 3) essential services, and 4) financial security.

Kesha Cash, founder and director of investments at Impact America, had been actively engaged with Pace University for several years prior to the nomination for Social Enterprise in Residence. She served as a guest lecturer in a graduate microfinance class and in the Encore career transitions program, and had met with and mentored several Pace University students one-on-one. These early meetings and collaborations led to a joint research project, *The State of Black Entrepreneurship in the United States*, and a funded speaking engagement on these findings by Rebecca Tekula, director of the Wilson Center, at the launch of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Venture Catalyst Program at the United Negro College Fund's annual capacity building conference.

University Role in Impact Investing

University centers typically focus on a particular industry or field, and generally have a goal related to thought leadership and knowledge creation in that area. Ideally, such centers also reflect a partnership of academia, government, and industry. Impact investing as an emerging field is a ripe ground for the academe to play an active role, offering resources and support during nascent development stages, whilst consequently developing opportunities for engagement, experiential learning, and access for students, faculty, and community. By positioning the university as incubator, whether formal or informal, centers can become a direct provider and intermediary of resources in an emerging field. Furthermore, as the field develops, there is an immediate need for data, research, and analysis, which faculty and researchers are able to provide. Conversely, impact investing is great fodder for case study development. Students, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, are also a key resource to new ventures as interns and part-time staff.

In the case of the Wilson Center's partnership with Impact America, a multitude of high-impact educational practices have emerged. From the earliest days of the partnership, an opportunity was presented to develop an undergraduate student co-authored research report related to the demand for minority entrepreneur access to capital. This led to a funded presentation at the aforementioned conference. In this more formalized in-residence relationship with the fund, which itself is only in its first academic semester, the center has placed students in funded internships with Impact America and the F. B. Heron Foundation, an important institutional funder making waves in the field.

The Wilson Center's growing presence in the field of impact investing in New York City has led to a number of new partnerships. The center recently engaged with the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), a neighbor in Lower Manhattan. GIIN's s Impact Reporting and Investment Standards (IRIS) manager was one of three judges at Pace's annual pitch contest, bringing a social impact lens to the ventures being pitched. Most recently the center hosted the Director of Clients and Partnerships at First Access, a New York-based social enterprise, to speak with graduate nonprofit management students and graduate computer science students.

Impact Investing on Campus

Impact investing has in effect become a theme of the Wilson Center programming in recent months. A social finance topic was selected for the center's annual nonprofit forum, co-sponsored by Hitachi America, Ltd., on the Westchester County campus. A panel event on impact investing was hosted on the New York City campus. Identifying speakers for these events has proven relatively easy. The marketplace for academic partnerships has not fully developed for impact investing, thus, as early actors, the university has had great success tapping into the network of practitioners in the field. Faculty and staff have used this access as a jumping off point to develop publications on impact investing and social finance. In response to the overwhelming demand to share this developing expertise with students and faculty, the center has begun to develop and test a series of teaching modules to share with faculty for import into their Blackboard course shells. These modules are created in the form of Echo360 recorded lectures paired with discussion-starter questions, discussion board postings, and even short writing assignment suggestions.

Impact investing and social finance in general, has proven an effective, contemporary, and refreshing vehicle through which to view and carry forward the university's community service and civic engagement roots. Acting as a catalyst and supportive partner in this emerging field has allowed learning opportunities, and real-time access and cases for research and teaching. The innovation inherent to this field has proven a natural fit for engaging across disciplines; partners and opportunities abound which are compelling, accessible, and relevant for students from departments and majors as diverse as women's studies, computer science, and finance.

Conclusion

The social sector is changing and growing rapidly, and as such universities are challenged to innovate and keep current both curriculum and co-curricular activities, as they serve students on their path in the field. Pace University was an early actor in this sphere, establishing one of the world's first funded, staffed institutes dedicated to social entrepreneurship. The Helene and Grant Wilson Center for Social Entrepreneurship, and its growth and impact, has benefited from a unique position at the university level, which allows programming to transcend certain institutional challenges. The center's geographic location in Lower Manhattan, which is the seat for many government agencies and social sector organizations, has further proven to be a great strength for building programs and partnerships in the field.

While neither social innovation institutes nor in-residence programs are unique to Pace University, the Wilson Center's truly interdisciplinary approach and distinctive partnership with the Impact America fund may well represent a new method and partnership pipeline. Ideally, university centers reflect a partnership of academia, government, and industry. The emerging field of impact investing and social finance has proven to be fertile ground for partnerships that allow the university to serve as resource provider and supporter, while conversely offering myriad opportunities for student and faculty engagement, experiential learning, and access. Positioning the university as incubator and supporter in emerging fields, and particularly areas of the social sector, which by nature are challenged to meet market failures, can prove duly rewarding: students and faculty are engaged in meaningful, relevant ways, and the university and curriculum are kept current on trends, challenges, and opportunities in the field.

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IN Like Flint: How the Innovation Incubator at UM–Flint Fosters Social Entrepreneurship in a City Remaking Itself

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Abstract

This paper focuses on how the University of Michigan–Flint's Innovation Incubator supports emerging for-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations through programming, business plan development, and ongoing mentorship. The Incubator is especially interested in supporting start-ups that address key social issues in the surrounding community, including economic vitality. This goal aligns with the university's mission, which emphasizes that engaged citizens can exercise some control over the social, environmental, and economic factors in the larger community.

When people discuss Flint, Michigan, the first thing that comes up probably isn't innovation, social entrepreneurship, and a growing economic ecosystem, but perhaps it should be. Although the city has been a poster child for rustbelt deindustrialization thanks to films like *Roger and Me* and a consistent top spot as one of Forbes' Most Miserable Cities in America, Flint is making a slow recovery from a decades' long recession.

As part of a growing group of economic service providers in the city, the University of Michigan–Flint's Innovation Incubator (IN) is a gateway to resources available to help entrepreneurs develop, sustain, and grow their businesses and nonprofit organizations.

IN helps students and community members employ entrepreneurial principles to address social issues, including economic vitality. Services include meeting spaces, Wi-Fi, business planning resources, a reference business library, workshops and conferences, mentoring, coaching, and referrals. Qualifying UM–Flint student-owned start-ups are offered office space in the Incubator. The co-working space is open to the public weekdays from 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. All services are offered at no charge.

Currently seven student-owned businesses are housed in the Incubator, while another thirty student and community members take advantage of IN services. For-profit tenants include a technology and software development company, a graphic design firm, a music producer, and a technical writing company. Nonprofit tenants include a theatre company, a homeless female veteran resource organization, and a micro-grant funder. Together the tenants employ eight people full-time and forty-six people part-time.

Essential to the University of Michigan–Flint's mission is the belief that engaged citizens can exercise a measure of control over the social, environmental, and economic factors in their community. The Office of University Outreach, which oversees the incubator program, supports this mission by connecting campus and the community to support learning, collaboration, and partnerships.

All projects and programs of the Office of University Outreach are considered against a series of values that exemplify the department's own mission. These include being in service, building healthy relationships, justice and fairness, community-building, and economic vitality. In terms of the value of economic vitality, University Outreach supports innovation and creativity and fosters a culture of entrepreneurship by working collectively to develop and retain talent that will contribute to a more vibrant local community. While other University Outreach programs focus on social or environmental projects in the community, IN is concerned with this notion of economic vitality and providing opportunities for individuals to rebuild the city's economic base.

IN remains the only business incubator in Flint focused on supporting social entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity.

Breakdown of Employment by Tenant
Nonprofit and For-profit Companies at the IN

Name	Status	Full-time	Part-time
DV Technical Writing, LLC	For-profit	3	5
Epic Technology Solutions, LLC	For-profit	3	2
Euro Effex	For-profit	0	2
Flint SOUP	Nonprofit	1	7
Moses Music Productions	For-profit	0	5
Our Home Transitional	Nonprofit	0	15
Shop Floor Theatre Company	Nonprofit	1	10

History of the Incubator

The Innovation Incubator is located downtown in a former office building owned by the university. The suite that houses IN was originally the site of the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center from 2000 to 2008, when it moved its facilities across town to Kettering University.

In 2008, the Office of University Outreach began the Incubator, which was originally called Launch to help micro-businesses and give local start-ups a "hand up." In 2009, Launch was renamed the Innovation Incubator to reflect the change in focus to include social entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity. The program satisfied the need for a gateway on campus for students and the community to receive business resources. It was also seen as a way for the students to better connect to the community and its available entrepreneurial resources.

The nonprofit incubator is funded by annual grants, primarily from the C. S. Mott Foundation. Financial support has also been provided by UM–Flint's College of Arts and Sciences, School of Management, and Office of the Provost. More than 55 percent of indirect costs are covered by the university including use of the Northbank Center office suites, utilities, phone lines, furniture, conference fees, mentoring costs, and staff time. The provost's office provides financial support for an outreach staff member to serve as the faculty mentorship coordinator for the Innovation Incubator. The academic units, School of Management, and the College of Arts and Sciences provide financial incentives to their faculty members to serve as mentors to entrepreneurs affiliated with the Innovation Incubator. As it investigates its own long term sustainability, IN is seeking out additional financial support from local and national foundations and philanthropists.

Since 2008, eighteen student-run tenant businesses have graduated out of the program. While some of the entrepreneurs decided not to continue their businesses beyond this point, several others outgrew the available space and continued their ventures elsewhere in Flint and places like Detroit and New York City.

The Changing Face of Flint

Flint, Michigan's population peaked in the 1960s at approximately 194,000 and has been declining ever since. This decline, along with the associated loss of high-paying manufacturing jobs, has led to many of the social problems facing Flint today. The 2010 census recorded the city's population at 102,000, and it is assumed the city now has less than 100,000 residents. The average income per household is $33,029, which is $35,000 less than the national average of $69,821 (Houseal Lavigne Associates 2013, 21).

In 2011, the city's unemployment rate was 25.6 percent and the city's poverty rate grew to 41.2 percent. Additionally, there were 2,337 violent crimes reported per 100,000 residents in 2012, and more than 1,600 separate structures have been damaged or destroyed by arson fires since 2008.

Despite these factors, the University of Michigan–Flint has seen consistent growth in its student population in the past decade. For the eighth consecutive year, fall enrollment has reached an all-time high. Enrollment for fall 2014 climbed to 8,574 students, an increase from 8,555 students attending in 2013 and 8,289 in 2012 (Schuch 2014). This means that there are now more University of Michigan–Flint students than autoworkers in the city.

Before the 1970s, many Flint residents were able to find high-paying jobs at GM without any need for advanced education beyond a high school diploma. The decline of the city's automotive industry over the past four decades has precipitated a need for a more educated and broadly skilled workforce. IN offers services to help build up the entrepreneurial skill sets of students and community members so they can positively contribute to local economic vitality.

Social Entrepreneurship

In their book, *Social Entrepreneurship: What Everyone Needs to Know*, David Bornstein and Susan Davis define social entrepreneurship as "a process by which citizens build or transform institutions to advance solutions to social problems such as poverty, illness, illiteracy, environmental destruction, human rights abuse, and corruption, in order to make life better for many" (2010, 1).

This principle is commonly defined in practice by a focus on the "triple bottom line," which considers not only a company's responsibility to make profits but also to the social and environmental impact its business practices have. It is seen as a way to "maximize some form of social impact, usually by addressing an urgent need that is being mishandled, overlooked, or ignored by other institutions" (Bornstein and Davis 2010, 30).

The university's outreach focus on a "sustainable communities" model means that it supports learning, collaboration, and partnerships that emphasize either a social, environmental, or economic connection between campus and community. This departmental mission helps to inform the philosophy of the incubator program and, in particular, its focus on supporting social entrepreneurship and the triple bottom-line concepts.

In the context of the Incubator, many of the businesses that receive coaching already have a social entrepreneurship element in their business idea or are responding to a community need they have identified. The nonprofits served by the Incubator also work to advocate for a social mission. While not all of the business owners would describe themselves as "social entrepreneurs," many of them demonstrate some level of social responsiveness or benefit in their business model.

How IN Supports Entrepreneurs

Many of the people who visit IN are at a conceptual or early stage in their business and are in need of basic assistance and space to work. The Incubator provides space to meet and do work, basic business coaching, programming to increase the community's knowledge base, and referrals to other service providers. Those who demonstrate the need for more advanced mentoring can find that within the university's School of Management professors and through outside experts.

These services provide a strong foundation for entrepreneurs to be successful by asking them to be responsible for accessing available resources as well as providing more direct free services such as coaching and mentorship to help them move their organization in the right direction.

The Incubator program doesn't provide grades to its tenant or associate businesses. The amount of educational benefit the individual entrepreneur receives depends on how much work he or she is willing to put into the business. This provides a low stress environment for entrepreneurs to focus on their venture. While some of the businesses end up failing, IN staff encourage clients to look at their failures as "productive failures" and valuable learning experiences for future endeavors. This personal reflection process can help potential serial entrepreneurs be more willing to start a new business after one idea has failed.

There are three staff offices located within the IN co-working space suite. The co-working space also includes a large classroom and lobby area available to the public weekdays from 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. with free Wi-Fi access. This casual drop-in environment allows individuals and teams to utilize a workspace downtown at no charge, unlike other options such as coffee shops and bars that create a barrier to entry for some community members by requiring the purchase of a refreshment or other item in order to use the establishment's Wi-Fi. The co-working space offers flexible seating arrangements that can accommodate groups of up to thirty-two people. Co-working resources available to the public include white boards, a projection screen, a flat screen TV available for Skype, social enterprise periodicals, and a reference library of business planning resource books. There are also mailboxes for tenant and many associate businesses in this main area. Faculty and students meet in the co-working space to plan projects, especially when they involve community stakeholders. Tenants also take advantage of the co-working area and frequently meet clients, funders, and board members in the space.

This Incubator's location in downtown Flint has successfully drawn community members to the campus and allowed university students to link up with a larger segment of non-student entrepreneurs. Faculty are invited to use the co-working space for on-topic classes that involve community engagement, creativity, and innovation. Faculty in education, visual arts, communications, and theatre routinely reserve the space for their classroom use, and often meet clients in the space. University Outreach staff who work with faculty in civic engagement and service-learning courses often offer use of the Incubator for the faculty's classes. Partners of University Outreach who work collaboratively with the community are given preference on use of the space.

There are four shared office suites next door to the co-working space. These offices are provided to student-owned tenant businesses that show a need for the space. The businesses, which are at least half owned by a UM–Flint student, sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which serves as a lease agreement for the office space. Depending on the business' needs, the office could be a desk or up to several workstations. This is based on availability of office space overall.

Currently, tenant businesses have realized a total net increase of fifteen full- and part-time employees compared to the previous year. During early 2014, one for-profit tenant business no longer needed the office space and changed status to an associate business. This year, two new businesses were also granted tenant status, one for-profit, and one nonprofit. The IN now boasts seven tenant organizations in total, and at least forty associate businesses.

In addition to physical resources, the Incubator offers a variety of programming each year to help foster a greater degree of entrepreneurship in the community. This includes workshops, conferences, and competitions as well as coaching for business owners.

Students and community members are offered free workshops by the Incubator, which are focused on important aspects of business such as organizational management, creativity, and innovation, and linking profitability, sustainability, and social entrepreneurship. The purpose of these workshops is to provide motivated clients with opportunities to gain additional knowledge that can advance their business or allow them to think about their company differently.

In the past year, IN has provided workshops in tax accounting, grant writing, intellectual property, and social entrepreneurship. Many times these workshops are geared toward the needs and desires of associate and tenant businesses in order to offer them additional business education services. Examples of social entrepreneurship-based workshops include one led by Tom Root, a managing partner in Zingerman's Mail Order and co-founder of Makerworks in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Root discussed his company's triple bottom-line business model. Other similarly purposed workshops have included a showing and discussion of the film, *Extreme by Design*, which documents how a Stanford design class applied design thinking to create products that tackled daily issues and directly benefitted citizens in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and other Third World countries. The Incubator also hosted a session last year with Dr. Robert Buckingham, a visiting professor, who developed eighty-one hospices in seven countries including the first hospice in the United States and a pediatric hospice for children suffering from AIDS. The Incubator demonstrates the value of these business models by allowing successful social entrepreneurs to talk about their work.

In addition to the workshops, IN has held four annual INspire Conferences on Creativity, Innovation, and Social Entrepreneurship. This conference is a way to both showcase local success stories and to also introduce larger ideas about the value of social entrepreneurship, and innovative and creative problem solving to participants. The most recent conference was held in October 2013. The INspire conference is offered at no cost to students and community members and includes panel discussions and a keynote address. The keynote speaker in 2013 was Professor Michael Gordon from the University of Michigan Ross School of Business and author of *Design Your Life, Change the World: Your Path as a Social Entrepreneur*. The conference also showcased local entrepreneurs, crowdfunding projects, and a panel discussion with representatives from St. Luke's North End Women (N.E.W.) Life Center. The center provides at-risk Flint women with training as seamstresses and offers jobs to women who complete the training program.

As a way to expand opportunities available to its clients, IN has helped promote business competitions locally. The Incubator partnered with Michigan Corps in March 2014 to announce two business plan competitions through the 2014 Social Entrepreneurship Challenge. In addition to the statewide Social Entrepreneurship Challenge, Flint area entrepreneurs had a chance to win more than $60,000 in prizes and business training. The Drive Flint Prize, Flint's first entrepreneurship prize for social innovation, awarded $2,500 to one local social entrepreneur as well as an Impact Investment Fellowship, a four-month business training to further develop the entrepreneur's ideas for investment. Several of the Incubator's affiliated businesses who were already pursuing a social entrepreneurship idea were encouraged to enter the competitions.

In 2014, the University of Michigan–Flint School of Management also launched its first annual Business Plan Competition. This competition is open to students who own for-profit businesses. The Innovation Incubator is partnering with event organizers to implement business pitch clinic workshops for competition participants. This will provide individuals with an understanding of the fundamentals of a good pitch as well as act as a sounding board for participants to get feedback on their ideas.

In 2015, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation funded the Green Light Business Model competition, hosted by Spartan Innovations. Finalists pitched their business idea at a local event in Flint in January to win up to $5,000. The top winner in Flint received automatic entry to a final competition in East Lansing. This final competition provided $25,000 to the winner. An additional $50,000 worth of prizes was awarded to other top competitors. The majority of the Innovation Incubator's tenant and associate businesses were unable to qualify for this competition because they needed to be a for-profit business that was incorporated on or after March 31, 2014.

Before IN staff begin to work with a prospective client, the business owner is required to fill out a "Tell Us About Your Bright Idea" pre-interview questionnaire online (which is less than twenty questions long) describing their business and its needs. Staff then review the business idea and schedule an in-person interview with the entrepreneur. Many start-ups need assistance with developing their business plans; the Innovation Incubator generally uses the business model canvas as a way to help them start that process. The canvas allows clients to put down on paper the elements of their business, such as value proposition, market segment, and revenue streams, and visually identify where the holes in their business might be. This technique is particularly useful when working with creativity-based businesses and other nonbusiness students. During these initial interviews, staff provide recommendations about aspects of the business' strategy that could be improved and refer the entrepreneur to available resources in the community. These resources include business or nonprofit development courses through the Michigan Small Business Development Center and B.E.S.T. (Building Excellence Sustainability Trust) Project. The B.E.S.T. Project is an organization that provides workshops and development courses for nonprofit board members, employees, consultants, and funders. These include fundraising, leadership development, financial management, and technology-related topics.

Some business owners have a social entrepreneurship focus for their start-up idea but don't recognize the potential value in it. As part of the business coaching process, staff members offer insights about how to better market or direct the business towards its social aspect. One example of this is the Gamerz Den, a gaming and social space being developed by a UM–Flint student. The business offers an arcade-style space that also serves as a safe space for less socially adept young people. The business was inspired by the owner's autistic brother who has trouble connecting with other people outside of video games.

Business owners who show a need for ongoing mentorship on specific aspects of the business such as marketing or financial plans can be paired with UM–Flint School of Management faculty. Several of the associate and tenant businesses are receiving more advanced mentoring with faculty about their business to prepare them for the next stage of development.

There are many student groups also involved in learning about entrepreneurial skills and thinking in their extracurricular activities. These student groups include organizations like the Entrepreneurs Society and the Engineering Club. They provide students opportunities to test and create prototypes for student products, services, or business plans. The Innovation Incubator coordinates with the faculty advisors for these student groups and provides support when appropriate.

As part of its outreach and marketing efforts, the Incubator has held Pop IN open houses, which allow students and community members to tour the offices and co-working space while staff members explain the potential services they can offer. These events have helped to attract more associate business clients to the Incubator for assistance on developing their for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

Strengthening the Ecosystem

The Innovation Incubator is also part of an informal countywide network of about seventeen entrepreneurial service providers known as the " eTEAM." The eTEAM, which stands for Entrepreneurship Team, allows nonprofit organizations that provide entrepreneurial support services to share information, referrals, and resources.

The eTEAM is chaired by staff from the Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce and the local Michigan Small Business Development Center. Member organizations include the Flint Area Reinvestment Office, Goodwill Industries, VetBiz Central, Metro Community Development, Mott Community College FabLab, Red Ink Studios, the Local Initiative Support Corporation, Flint Farmers' Market, Kettering University, Baker College, and others.

The network meets monthly and communicates virtually online on a weekly basis to share program information and updates. The greatest value for the Innovation Incubator of belonging to this group is the large referral network it facilitates and coordinates. All eTEAM members are aware of each other's programs and services and regularly refer local entrepreneurs to the appropriate service providers.

This referral network is transitioning from an informal group to a more coordinated network, which includes joint marketing and branding. The first eTEAM marketing document is called the "Flint City Start-Up Guide." This document provides a quick breakdown of where eTEAM members are located and what services they provide to the differing stages and types of businesses. This free and easy to use start-up guide is a way to break down barriers to discovering and accessing services in the Flint entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Two members of the eTEAM, including Flint SOUP, a nonprofit Incubator tenant, have expanded networking opportunities for local entrepreneurs. They have begun offering a pop-up co-working space, which is a temporary makerspace and co-working space at the Flint Farmers' Market that draws entrepreneurs from Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Lansing. Flint SOUP has begun offering bi-weekly innovation and entrepreneurship meet-ups hosted by various eTEAM member organizations.

In addition, the eTEAM organizes an annual event in February called the Jumpstart Conference for local entrepreneurs and start-ups. This event draws business owners, inventors, and aspiring entrepreneurs to learn about the fundamentals of starting and running a business. It also allows for the various service providers to share the benefits of their programs with potential clients. The Innovation Incubator pays conference fees for associate and tenant businesses and UM–Flint students to attend this day long conference each year.

The Incubator held INSPIRED Michigan, a symposium of Michigan business incubators in October 2014. This event allowed participating groups to re-establish a network of entrepreneurial service providers around the state and strengthen relationships. It also gave service providers the opportunity to share working knowledge and best practices including around issues of metrics and benchmarks.

Highlighted Business Case Studies

Between November 2013 and August 2014, the Incubator worked with more than thirty new community and student-owned associate businesses. These ranged from a prospective Jamaican food restaurant and educational video production company to an online mail order clothier and festival organizer. Several of the businesses and nonprofits affiliated with the Incubator have a socially-conscious element to their business model.

For-Profit Examples

There are a few key for-profit businesses the Incubator has worked with in the past year that deserve to be highlighted for their innovative approaches and social focus.

Charma's Organic Kitchen is an associate business owned by Charma Dompreh, a community member. Her business produces Sassy Green Chips, a healthy snack made from locally grown dehydrated kale and collard greens. She is a retired teacher who wanted to take on the issue of access to healthy food in "food deserts" or places where access to healthy, fresh food is extremely limited. She has been very successful in marketing her products through presentations and offering samples. She has consistently sold out of the Sassy Green Chips, which she sells in $3 and $5 snack sizes as an outdoor vendor at the Flint Farmers' Market every Saturday.

She would like to be able to sell her products in local stores around Flint to better address the problem of food deserts and increase the availability of low-cost healthy snacks. She has hired one part-time employee to help with sales. Charma, who is also a certified raw food chef, recently received her retail food license and won the January 2014 Flint SOUP micro-grant competition for her Sassy Green Chips. She has made contacts with urban hoop house farmers in the area to have a year-round supply of kale and collard greens for her business. A hoop house is an unheated greenhouse that allows food to be grown throughout the winter months.

UM–Flint student Stephan McBride's business, **Gamerz Den**, is a video gaming and social space, which he would like to also cater toward creating a safe space for less social and autistic gamers. Although the associate business was inspired by the student's autistic brother, who only felt comfortable socializing with other people around video games, this idea was not evident in the business concept. IN staff were able to show McBride the added benefit of marketing the safe space element of the business during his initial intake interview. As part of the services offered to him, the Innovation Incubator arranged for McBride to be mentored by a School of Management professor as he develops his financial plan. McBride plans to hire several local employees as the business expands. He entered the Drive Flint portion of the 2014 Social Entrepreneurship Challenge, a business plan competition for Michigan start-ups.

Linda Kachelski, **BFA Communication, LLC**, is developing a mobile application that translates English to American Sign Language and vice versa through video relay. The main use of this associate business' application is for general communication as well as 911 emergency services. As she develops her software, she will work with partners at the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and American Sign Language video relay services. Kachelski believes there is a large market for this software. There are approximately 837,000 deaf and hard-of-hearing residents in Michigan alone. She would like to charge at least a quarter of her users $15 to download and use the application. This would allow her to cover her costs and help subsidize lower rates for other users.

Another great social venture associated with the Incubator is a company being developed by UM–Flint student **Nick Looney**. The company will work with Habitat for Humanity to build and sell tiny houses, which are roughly defined as less than 200 square-feet. His company plans to hire homeless and at-risk individuals to build the houses and will contribute 10 percent equity in the company to the local Habitat for Humanity for use of their warehouse space and tools. He has completed his first test project, which is a shed built at the Habitat for Humanity warehouse. Looney is in talks with a local architect and construction manager about gaining their involvement in the project.

Moses Music Productions is a tenant business of the Innovation Incubator owned by UM–Flint Business Administration student Aleah Moses. Moses Music provides songwriting and music production services to artists, and commercial jingles to companies for use in advertising. The business was started in May 2012 after Moses attended the Incubator's workshop series the previous semester. Her clients primarily request pop songs, but the company can create hip hop, rap, R&B, alternative pop, and other types of music. Moses charges a standard overall product cost for the music and a percentage of the ownership rights.

A social aspect of her company's mission is to specifically inspire girls, who are underrepresented in the music industry, to realize that they can make it as producers and songwriters. She has produced more than fifty songs (full songs and instrumentals) mostly for out-of-state clients, many of whom she connects with online through her self-made website, www.lovemosesmusic.com. She recently launched Beatphoria.com, which provides original music available for online leasing and licensing. Her Northbank Center studio inside the Incubator's Creative Suite has served as her primary recording studio since it was renovated to provide soundproofing panels to improve recording quality. Although she originally wanted her company to be picked up by a major record label, she is now leaning toward starting her own independent recording label, MMP Records, in order to maintain more creative control. She also works as a contracted instructor for BangTown Productions, which provides after school music classes for grade school students throughout Flint and Kalamazoo. In addition, she teaches at Hamady High School, Twenty-First Century, and Flint Community Schools. After the Incubator was able to send her to a music industry conference in Los Angeles, Moses began working with a major recording artist and is producing for Flint's own Jon Connor, who is signed to Aftermath Records, alongside Dr. Dre (CEO of Aftermath records & Beats by Dre audio technology).

Epic Technology Solutions, LLC, began in 2008 by providing application hosting and Internet services for clients. This tenant business was started by brothers Paul and Eric Knific, and Paul's wife, Ashley, who are all UM–Flint students or alumni. They occupy an office suite at the Incubator and receive mentoring through the program.

One of Epic's more socially minded projects was to develop software and a card system for the Flint Farmers' Market Double-Up Food Bucks program. This program provides an incentive for low-income people to eat more local produce. The software allows vendors to offer up to an additional $20 per day worth of free Michigan-grown produce for customers using Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT). The Double-Up Food Bucks program has been subsidized by state and federal funds. Today, Epic has expanded operations and is increasing the efficiency of its computers by moving systems from individual dedicated servers to virtualization, which allows for more information to be hosted with less physical space. The company has five employees, and the owners have hired two interns.

NonProfit Examples

In addition to these for-profit companies, there are a number of nonprofit organizations affiliated with the Incubator that seek to solve social and environmental issues in the Flint community.

Shop Floor Theatre Company is a nonprofit organization that creates place-based arts and education programming "with and for people of all ages, experiences and backgrounds." The group is run by Kendrick Jones, a UM–Flint graduate student and lecturer. This organization's focus includes underserved and underrepresented communities in the Flint area. Shop Floor was formed, after the success of the 2011 play, *Embers: The Flint Fires Verbatim Theatre Project*. This play was constructed in a verbatim style from interviews with community members, firefighters, and government officials about Flint's rash of several hundred arsons in 2010. Shortly after this project, the group was awarded a $46,000 grant by the Ruth Mott Foundation. The company joined the Incubator as a tenant business in August 2012 and is headquartered in an Incubator office suite. Their next project was *State of Emergency*, which was a similarly constructed and performed verbatim play about Flint's fiscal emergency and takeover by the state of Michigan.

In addition, Shop Floor began working directly with underserved communities in the Flint area and training college-aged artists through an apprenticeship program. Shop Floor's yearlong Apprentice Artist program included an in-school residency teaching ninety students at Beecher Ninth Grade Academy. The Beecher school district is located in a low-income community, north of Flint city limits. The struggling district had its arts programming cut in an attempt to reduce costs and stay out of state receivership. The apprentice artists brought poetry, theatre, and dance workshops to the freshman classrooms, which culminated in a student performance of their original work at the end of the school year in a neighboring school district. The company was awarded a $58,000 grant from the Ruth Mott Foundation as well as funding from the Community Foundation of Greater Flint for its current 2014–2015 season. Shop Floor subsequently hired more college-aged artists and partnered with New York City-based the Groovy Projects to provide anti-bullying assemblies to Beecher's elementary and middle school students and work with high school students to create their own music video. There is one full-time employee and ten part-time contractors currently including writers, actors, musicians, and a choreographer. Shop Floor also raises funds outside of grants through speaking engagements, university performances, and other services.

Another tenant business of the Incubator, **Flint SOUP** is run by recent UM–Flint graduate, Adrian Montague. This group holds monthly micro-funding competitions to support various community projects. The organization, which is modeled after Detroit SOUP, charges audience members a $5 fee to attend the event. Participants receive a light meal of soup and bread and then hear three or four pitches for community projects or small businesses. The audience votes on which idea they want to support the most. The winning idea receives all of the door money collected throughout the evening.

By the time Flint SOUP joined the Incubator in May 2014, it had already hosted about eighteen months of competitions in the Flint area. Flint SOUP has generated $2,000 in individual donations, $30,000 from corporations, and 300 volunteer hours from members of the public since entering the Incubator. Flint SOUP fulfills a social role by supporting projects that benefit the city of Flint but might not be formally structured or large enough to seek out grant or private funding. It also allows local people to have a choice of what their money supports. In addition to these values, the soup event brings together a wide segment of the community who might not otherwise be in the same room together or aware of each other's work.

Our Home Transitional was founded by Carrie Miller, a UM–Flint student. Her nonprofit organization provides female veterans with housing assistance and connects them with social services including job training. Our Home is a tenant business at the Incubator and has received mentoring support from School of Management professors. Miller has enlisted a board of directors that includes several veterans and influential community members, including a team of grant writer volunteers.

Our Home Transitional is in the process of purchasing a three-story, ten-bedroom house north of campus. Miller and her board are working to raise $50,000 to purchase the home. Our Home is working directly with the Detroit Veterans Administration on the project. The group received a one-story, two-bedroom house as an initial project and made plans for occupancy in November 2014. Miller said once one home is fully operational, large funders will be more apt to donate to the nonprofit. Our Home Transitional recently has partnered with Single Veteran Mothers Assistance Program and Of Impact, LLC, two other Veteran Service Organizations. The three groups have opened an extension office to provide more outreach services as well as financial management workshops at no cost to veterans. Our Home Transitional also entered the Michigan Corps Flint Social Entrepreneurship Challenge for 2014.

Collecting Metrics/Evaluation of Program

In 2013, staff researched best practices of other incubators across the country to identify the most effective categories and methods of gathering data on the program. New methods were identified to better gauge the success of IN's clients.

Four primary areas of data are currently the sources for information gathered about Incubator clients: workshop and conference registrations, "Tell Us About Your Bright Idea" pre-interview questionnaires, walk-in questionnaires, and routine updates of student-owned tenant businesses. The purpose of each questionnaire varies slightly, not all registrants have or need business assistance, and tenants are held to a higher level of reporting than others. A core group of questions was determined necessary across the various programming, and the means of collection has been reviewed for standardization. The "Tell Us About Your Bright Idea" pre-interview questionnaire has been updated to ask that entrepreneurs better define their target customers as well as how their business will directly serve the community.

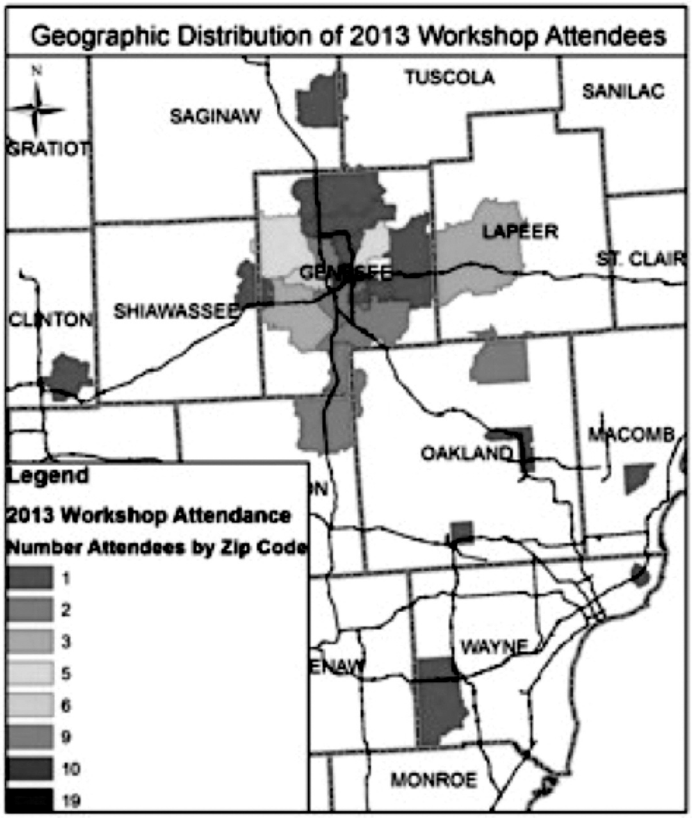
The MOU form for tenant businesses to lease office space has undergone changes during the last year. As part of the requirements for retaining the office space, business owners must participate in biannual meetings with IN staff to discuss their business' progress as well as attend specific workshops and training sessions.

Each tenant business owner is expected to attend at least half of the workshops offered by the Innovation Incubator each year and must participate in at least two of the following development opportunities: business training through the Michigan Small Business Development Center, networking events at the Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce, industry conferences, B.E.S.T. project training, or business mentoring through School of Management faculty. Also each tenant business has to submit a written self-evaluation report about operations and updated financial information. This includes what projects they are working on, if they have hired new staff, needs to maintain business operations, whether revenue has changed in the previous year, financial needs and financial statements including a balance sheet, statement of income, and expenses and budget projections.

Questions involving short- and long-term organizational goals have been added to the self-evaluation in order to determine how the Incubator can best assist businesses and nonprofits as they move forward. Also businesses are specifically asked how many full- and part-time employees each business claims instead of generally how many people does it employ (with no distinction between full- and part-time employment.)

Staff have included a question that requires tenants to consider potential criteria for their business' graduation from the IN. Tenant businesses are eligible to graduate out of the program if they have experienced sufficient growth to require more floor space than is available at the Incubator, if the business has shown a quarterly profit greater than the quarterly value of the office space, if the principal owner has graduated from University of Michigan–Flint more than one year earlier, or if they no longer need the services offered by the Incubator. Tenants may also graduate earlier than this if the company is acquired by another firm or legal entity.

This collected data is used in monthly reporting to the campus including the University Outreach faculty advisory board and in the yearly University Outreach annual report, as well as the yearly grant report to funders. The data is used in narratives about the program through the University Outreach blog and website and in other marketing methods. Results are used to refine the services offered by the Incubator.



At each workshop and conference session, participants submit evaluations of the event. These evaluate course content, instructional materials and methods, administration, the course leader's presentation, the venue's appropriateness, whether a participant would recommend the course to peers, weaknesses of the course, suggestions for improvement, other courses the individual would like to suggest for future sessions, what the participant plans to do with gained knowledge and skills, whether it will make a difference in her work, how she learned about the event, and any additional comments. The data and comments are used in reports to funders, in reports to campus, and to shape and refine the services offered by the Incubator to best fit its clients' needs.

Strategic Planning

The Innovation Incubator has been performing ongoing strategic planning this year to better identify how it can positively contribute to the growing entrepreneurial ecosystem in Flint and how it can best serve its clients' changing needs. Staff have engaged in a series of discussions about the future direction of the Incubator and have decided to offer more resources to local entrepreneurs on its website so that the potential client can begin researching next steps before the first meeting with Innovation Incubator staff. The Incubator is also investigating offering intake interviews online over Skype with potential clients that cannot make it downtown to discuss their business. This would expand the reach of the Incubator to a wider swath of Flint and Genesee County.

In addition, the Incubator is planning to pilot a start-up business boot camp in 2015 as a way to build up a cohort of local entrepreneurs. This multiple-week program would meet once a week to discuss business concepts including the triple bottom line, working with the business model canvas, banking and financing, legal structures for corporations, and a pitch clinic.

Conclusion

Over the past year, IN has increased its efforts to better serve entrepreneurs on campus and in the community. Increased data gathering and establishment of new metrics have allowed staff members to take a critical look at how they are supporting businesses' growth and how they can improve services.

The Incubator has maintained a strong programming focus around social entrepreneurship and related concepts and has seen an increase in the number of social entrepreneurship and community-driven ventures applying to receive services in the past year.

The Incubator is attempting to further reduce barriers to entry through working with community partners like the eTEAM to create new marketing materials and by hosting open houses and other events to increase awareness and use of the co-working space.

Staff expect that continued efforts to promote social entrepreneurship through workshops and conferences and encouraging socially-conscious elements in individual business models will assist clients in exercising some influence over the social, environmental, and economic factors in the larger community.

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Community Chairs as a Catalyst for Campus Collaborations in STEM

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Abstract

Strong collaborative partnerships are critical to the ongoing success of any urban or metropolitan university in its efforts to build the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) career pathways so critical to our nation. At the University of Nebraska at Omaha, we have established a faculty leadership structure of "community chairs" that work across colleges to support campus priorities. This paper describes UNO's STEM community chair model, including selected initiatives, impacts, and challenges to date.

Universities provide the intellectual fuel that drives innovation for a community, whether that community is a city, state, nation, or even a global one. Metropolitan universities need to be particularly attentive to the community in which they reside, and to the priorities of that community, to help both the community and the university itself to thrive. One growing priority that is being shared by metropolitan communities across the United States, and by the country at large, is that of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. There is a growing concern across the nation that we are not producing enough STEM professionals to meet our needs, especially as compared to many other countries around the world. National reports, such as the 2010 *Rising Above the Gathering Storm Revisited*, paint an alarming picture (National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and Institute of Medicine 2010), where the academic "pipelines" or pathways through universities to produce STEM professionals are in relatively bad shape, facing some of the most daunting challenges for student recruitment, retention, and graduation among all campus majors (Singer 2011). At the same time, STEM workforce needs are expected to grow substantially (Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl 2010). As careers in STEM fields themselves advance, there is an increasing need to focus both the process of learning and the content learned for such ever-changing workforce needs (Dostis 2013; National Science Board 2010). President Obama, in a previous State of the Union Address, called the need to attend to STEM education as a critical "Sputnik moment" for our country (Obama 2011).

Yet how does a metropolitan university, with limited resources but excellent community partners, synergize to contribute aggressively to both local and national needs in STEM education? The National Academy of Sciences has suggested two key elements, STEM pathway "innovation" and university collaboration with P-16 education (National Academy of Sciences 2010). Further, organizations such as the

National Governors Association reinforce the critical need for effective partnerships that engage a P-16 conversation on STEM pathways (National Governors Association 2011). Metropolitan universities, with their typically close P-16 relationships, strong community partners in business and industry, and willingness for trying new educational strategies, may well be the perfect environment for creating the innovations necessary to rise to the challenges of STEM education and to successfully recruit, retain, and graduate the needed STEM professionals (Barakos, Lujan, and Strang 2012; Tyson et al. 2007).

The University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) decided to aggressively embrace this national imperative for STEM education innovation by establishing a campus STEM priority (one of just five campus priorities) and creating a new faculty interdisciplinary leadership strategy, called "community chairs." The role of the community chairs is to work across colleges, lead initiatives, and build partnerships between the University and the community. Funding community chairs became a key objective of UNO's capital campaign, which ran from 2009 to 2014 and resulted in capturing the community's vision and passion for creating unique pathways to STEM excellence. This article describes how UNO approached this vision by establishing four community chairs to address the campus STEM priority, as well as the successes and challenges to date and the next steps for this new interdisciplinary leadership effort.

The Community Chair Concept at UNO

To fully understand the concept and operation of community chairs at UNO, it is important to first understand our metropolitan university and the community that we serve. This is important because, at its very heart, the community chair concept is about being responsive to the local community. At UNO, that community is Omaha, Nebraska, and the surrounding urban area, which includes Council Bluffs, Iowa, just across the Missouri River. UNO is the largest institution of higher education in this metropolitan area, which has a population of 865,000. UNO itself is based in the middle of the city of Omaha and offers 126 baccalaureate degrees, more than 60 graduate degree and certificate programs, as well as 9 doctoral degrees in a wide range of disciplines. UNO has a total undergraduate student enrollment of 11,554 and a graduate enrollment of 3,037 (as of Summer 2014). There is diversity at UNO in the student population; 18 percent of the students are minorities, while 44 percent are first-generation college students. Over the past five years, nearly 1 in 8 students were STEM majors, or nearly 1,500 UNO undergraduate students per year. Challenges in STEM education experienced across the United States are present here as well, and a review of UNO data shows that among first-year first-time students declaring a STEM major over the past five years, approximately 68 percent were retained at UNO. Retention rates for STEM majors at UNO are generally about 5 percent below campus-wide retention rates, mirroring national statistics (Gentile 2011; Ingersoll and Perda 2010), where nearly 40 percent of undergraduate students eventually leave engineering majors, 50 percent leave the physical and biological sciences, and 60 percent leave mathematics (Samueli 2010).

UNO shares important STEM interests with the city of Omaha and the area P-16 school districts and has a particularly unique partnership with the Omaha Public Schools (OPS). This important community partner is by far the largest and most diverse school district in Nebraska with a total enrollment of more than 50,000 students. Of these students, 66.4 percent are minorities and 74 percent receive free and reduced lunch (Omaha Public Schools 2012). The district represents approximately 30 percent of the state's overall student population. In OPS, there are more than ninety different languages and dialects spoken by students attending the district's seven high schools, eleven middle schools, and sixty-three elementary schools. More than two-thirds of all UNO students come from the Omaha metropolitan area, and of those, 34 percent are graduates of OPS. In addition, more than 60 percent of the STEM teachers in OPS (and across the metropolitan area) have received their degree from UNO. OPS is continually searching for and hiring secondary STEM teachers from UNO, so the University is a critical contributor to P-16 STEM instruction.

To strive for the strongest link possible among UNO STEM initiatives, P-16 districts, and community partners (such as the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses), the first community chair was established relatively quickly. The role of this community chair was conceptualized in 2010, building upon the vision and generosity of a very important university benefactor, Dr. George Haddix. UNO administrators and faculty, along with representatives from the University of Nebraska Foundation, collaborated with Dr. Haddix to define the Community Chair in STEM Education. As a former UNO mathematics professor himself, Dr. Haddix was instrumental in founding a series of highly successful STEM companies. Through his university and business experience, he realized that faculty leadership was critical to innovation and believed faculty leadership positions could be structured to synergize interdisciplinary efforts that crossed departmental, college, and university boundaries. Unique to this design was the collaboration of strong community-based partners that were essential to achieving the ambitious goals of community chairs.

Dr. Haddix provided a generous endowment for the first community chair position at UNO, with a focus on interdisciplinary STEM education, and Dr. Neal Grandgenett in the College of Education was the inaugural recipient. This first position recognized the important role that a College of Education, in direct collaboration with a College of Arts and Sciences, could provide in supporting educational innovations across a university campus. The name of the position also honored Dr. Haddix's late wife, Sally Haddix, who was a well-respected elementary teacher in the Omaha metropolitan area. The deans of the Colleges of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Information Science and Technology then stepped forward to help lead the campus STEM priority and to support the community chair in working across colleges on initiatives of significant interest to faculties in each of those three founding colleges.

Community chairs essentially establish groups of faculty and community partners willing to undertake bold and innovative initiatives to further a campus priority. A famous African proverb suggests that "if you want to go quickly then go alone, but if you want to go far, then go together." The overall vision of the community chair position is in many ways like that African proverb in that significant long-range interdisciplinary STEM pathway efforts must be done in a collaborative way, across multiple colleges and community organizations. Such efforts require bringing together the expertise of a number of faculty and community stakeholders. Thus, first and foremost, the community chair concept centers around the idea of "community building" and creating "conditions that matter" on a university campus (Kuh et al. 2005). In the role of community chair, the lead faculty member helps lead and synergize efforts that bring people together, helps people build a common vision for shared efforts, and mentors additional leaders to help the initiative grow and evolve. In so doing, the community chair essentially "chairs" collaborative efforts across colleges as an official university leader.

In the initial conceptualization of these important positions, it was realized that the support structures for the community chair positions would need to be carefully designed to allow the chairs to quickly accomplish tasks across departments and colleges and to collaborate closely and aggressively with community stakeholders. It was felt that having the chair reside in a single department, but with responsibilities to involve multiple departments and colleges in undertaking projects, was the best approach. This single base of support was also seen as more helpful to the community chairs themselves, since being hosted by two departments makes it difficult for a faculty member to focus on leading high level tasks and essentially requires them to attend primarily to the routine operational efforts of both departments, rather than innovative interdisciplinary efforts. Thus, the community chairs were designated to be a faculty member positioned in one department but empowered and tasked with the responsibility to build collaboration across departments in leading campus priority initiatives.

The community chair position was essentially structured to have four key support elements, which included: 1) a monthly stipend, 2) a yearly revolving budget, 3) a reduced teaching load, and 4) priority access to the dean in the host college as well as to the deans in other colleges. Community chairs are the highest-ranking chairs at UNO and are designed to provide a strong incentive for recruiting, retaining, and rewarding distinguished faculty. The operational budget has a signature authority assigned to the community chair, with a required authorization of the dean in the host college. The operational budget of the community chair is to be used to support the STEM initiatives facilitated by the position and directly support activities such as: hiring a student worker, covering meeting costs, supporting conference travel, funding receptions, hiring grant writers or similar consultants, holding mini-conferences, or bringing in STEM speakers. The reduced teaching load encourages the faculty member to design and to teach new and innovative interdisciplinary courses that could serve as a model for other faculty members engaged in instructional innovations, such as distance or blended learning, flipped classrooms, or inquiry-based learning. For priority access to the deans, it was seen as both the responsibility and opportunity for the community chair to meet with the deans regularly, to update them on tasks, to request any needed college resources and support, and to generally request leadership help in crossing boundaries and meeting administrative challenges. At UNO, three deans were officially designated to oversee the STEM community chairs (and the STEM campus priority), including the deans of the Colleges of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Information Science and Technology.

The application process to become a community chair was designed to be a formal process, similar to that followed for other campus positions, requiring an application for the position and a University-based selection or search committee. This selection committee would typically include at least: a dean or their designate, two to three STEM faculty members representing more than one college, and at least one STEM community partner, such as a P-16 school district, business, or other community stakeholder. The candidates would submit a letter of application, a full vita, and a two- to three-page statement on their personal vision for the community chair position. For stable leadership, the community chair position was also designated so that it could be renewed every three years, provided that there was a successful review and a resubmission of the application materials. In addition to the three-year reapplication process, the individual holding the community chair position would be expected to submit a brief annual report of progress to the supervising deans. For community chairs that were endowed by an external donor, the community chairs would also report yearly to that important benefactor.

Four key characteristics of a community chair were identified—successful applicants would be 1) effective communicators; 2) strong in all three areas of teaching, research, and service; 3) interested and experienced in interdisciplinary work, and most importantly, 4) energetic and willing leaders. To establish a strong foundation for the community chair structure, it was decided that the first community chair would serve as the lead community chair and would, therefore, need to be an internal candidate who was both tenured and already engaged in community efforts, which would also help this first position to be an advocate for newer community chairs. The ability to effectively launch the chair concept with a strong and well-respected STEM leader would create a foundation on which to build an outstanding team of community chairs across the STEM disciplines. The intent was that later community chairs could be tenured or nontenured. Each of the additional community chair searches would be designated as external searches, although internal candidates would also be welcomed.

The First STEM Community Chair: STEM Education

As mentioned previously, the first community chair position at UNO was to be filled by a College of Education faculty member, within the context of a strong and close partnership with the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as periodic collaborations with other UNO colleges, the University of Nebraska system, P-16 schools, and community stakeholders. This position, with an internal search process of tenured faculty members, was designated by the title of the Dr. George and Sally Haddix Community Chair of STEM Education to both honor Dr. Haddix and his wife and to specifically recognize that general “STEM Education” was the focus of the position. Dr. Neal Grandgenett, a mathematics education professor with twenty years of service to UNO and a strong teaching, research, and service record, was selected for the first community chair position. The following were set as the expectations of this important position, which was targeted to be a model and catalyst for future community chair positions:

Expectations of the Community Chair in STEM Education

- Help to conceptualize and to advance STEM education initiatives at UNO.
- Mentor, encourage, support, and advocate for UNO colleagues, including newer STEM community chairs, in undertaking their own STEM initiatives.
- Become a catalyst to STEM efforts that go across UNO colleges and departments.
- Help to build strong STEM partnerships between UNO and K12 districts.
- Lead a "STEM Leadership Team" of UNO/K12/community partners.
- Work on collaborative grant proposals to help fund STEM-related projects.
- Strive to integrate UNO STEM initiatives with other wider university efforts.
- Contribute to research on STEM assessment, evaluation, and program development.

It was expected that this first position would help to facilitate focused and strategically planned STEM education efforts across UNO that would lead to higher quality STEM teachers in the P-16 schools, as well as cross-campus partnerships. For example, one of the first initiatives that the community chair was encouraged to work on was a discipline-based pathway for teachers, particularly in the College of Arts and Sciences but with strong support from the College of Education. This *Math Degree Teaching Pathway* would offer students the opportunity to earn both a mathematics degree and a teaching endorsement. Students would graduate with a stronger, broader, and deeper understanding of mathematical content, and they would also be more likely to continue with graduate mathematics work that could support dual enrollment opportunities in the schools. This initiative, which was a priority goal of the funder, became the first signature work of the community chairs. The commitment to this initiative was essential to building trust and fostering the relationship with our funder. The success of this initiative was an important element that led to the funding of additional community chairs. Details of this success are described later in the article in the section on the accomplishments of the community chairs.

The Second STEM Community Chair: Mathematics

After the first STEM community chair had been successfully in place for about a year, including efforts to clearly define the campus STEM priority with a white paper that was later to become the foundation for a STEM Strategic Plan, we began to pursue a second community chair position. At this time, it seemed critical to place a community chair position within the College of Arts and Sciences to help to synergize efforts with the Community Chair of STEM Education. In particular, new efforts on a Mathematics Degree Teaching Pathway were underway that would allow a mathematics education major to receive a mathematics discipline degree with a concentration in education for state certification. This initiative not only supported the vision of the funder, but it appeared to have a growing potential for expanding the mathematics teacher pipeline in the local area and was of significant interest to OPS and the surrounding school districts. A community chair based in the mathematics department could be helpful in curriculum changes needed to align the Mathematics degree requirements with teacher certification requirements. The goal was for students interested in high school mathematics teaching to be able to get either a degree in mathematics, the current degree in education, or perhaps even create an opportunity for a double major.

The second community chair was designated the Dr. George Haddix Community Chair in Mathematics. An external search was conducted, including visits to conferences and postings to the American Mathematical Society, and eventually, the faculty search team selected an excellent external candidate, Dr. Angie Hodge, who started the position in August 2011.

This second community chair position, like the first, had a similar stipend, budget, reduced teaching load, and administrative access. This second position was designated to be either a tenured or non-tenured position, depending upon the applicant. Dr. Hodge's upward trajectory, teaching, research, and service accomplishments were very impressive to the search team, even with just four years in higher education as an assistant professor. Her former position at North Dakota State University was a joint appointment in both mathematics and mathematics education, so she had the experience needed to lead efforts that crossed colleges. She was offered and accepted the position as a nontenured assistant mathematics professor within a tenure-track line.

The designated requirements of this position included the following:

Expectations of the Community Chair in Mathematics

- Provide leadership in setting up an effective program to increase the quantity and quality of high school mathematics teachers in the metro Omaha area.
- Encourage, council, and support UNO undergraduate mathematics majors to consider a career as a secondary mathematics teacher.
- Develop new outreach programs to encourage nontraditional students, minority students, and other students with mathematically rich backgrounds to consider becoming a secondary mathematics teacher.
- Work closely with the UNO College of Education, specifically the Haddix Community Chair in STEM Education, to design an attractive and timely route for both mathematics majors and nontraditional returning students to become Nebraska certified for teaching at the secondary level.
- Serve as a professional mentor for mathematics majors who express interest in considering a career in secondary mathematics education.
- Work closely with UNO College of Education faculty to enhance the preparation of secondary education mathematics majors within the College of Education.

- Work closely with other Mathematics faculty in support of other departmental initiatives in mathematics education in pursuit of effective teaching of mathematics at all levels.
- Become a community resource for secondary mathematics by working with Omaha area education groups such as the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC).
- Pursue and acquire additional funding to help implement and expand the above program.
- Become an active member of the national mathematics education community by attending meetings, making presentations, serving on extramural boards and committees, and in general publicizing the efforts and successes of UNO to improve secondary education in mathematics.

The two community chairs then worked on numerous initiatives as the STEM priority continued to be synergized on campus, including a formal campus-wide STEM Strategic Plan that is described later in the accomplishment section. One of the first combined efforts of the two community chairs was to establish a formal STEM Leadership Team that included faculty representatives from each of the UNO colleges and that helped to plan, prioritize, and undertake STEM activities on campus. Today (2014), the leadership team includes seventeen faculty members on campus who routinely attend meetings, help to chair initiatives and grant proposals, and generally work to operationalize the UNO STEM priority as it is described later in the article.

The Third STEM Community Chair: Computer Science

During this last year, two additional community chairs have been added to the UNO STEM priority effort. These two additional community chairs were brought on board by having a matched funding process, where a Community Chair in Science was contributed by one donor, if another donor would step up to contribute a Community Chair in Computer Science, with the University contributing the two additional lines necessary to make the new positions. National searches were conducted, with internal candidates also encouraged to apply for the position. The first of these two chairs to be hired was Dr. Brian Dorn, who assumed the Union Pacific Community Chair of Computer Science Education in fall 2013. He was an experienced new faculty member coming from a tenure-track post at another institution, and he brought two existing NSF grants related to STEM education with him to the new position.

Following the existing community chair format, this position was structured to provide leadership in computer science and information technology education efforts, further supporting STEM education interests that were already surfacing in the Computer Science Department related to improving undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy, P-12 teacher training, and discipline-based education research in computing supported by external funding. The following expectations were established for this new community chair position:

Expectations of the Community Chair in Computer Science

- Build relationships related to computer science and technology education across UNO departments that improve STEM instruction and attract more STEM majors.
- Provide leadership in initiatives related to computer science education that might result in new computer science education courses, programs, and external funding initiatives.
- Work closely with the UNO College of Education in developing effective programs to increase the quantity and quality of elementary, middle, and high school computer science instruction.
- Build enthusiasm across the UNO faculty in the pursuit of initiatives and grants related to computer science education at UNO.
- Coordinate the vision of UNO computer science education initiatives that connect to local schools and that encourage students to consider being a STEM/STEM Education major at UNO.
- Serve as a professional contact, advocate, or mentor for teachers who express interests in a career in computer science education.
- Become a community resource for computer science education by working with Omaha-area education groups, such as the Omaha Public Schools, Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC), and other districts.
- Pursue an active teaching, research, and service agenda related to computer science education.
- Support synergy and potential collaborative efforts for statewide initiatives in computer science education by working with other NU campuses and faculty.

The third community chair, with his focus of building computer science education, has already been very successful in initiating some bold efforts in computer science education in the first year of the position. In particular, new initiatives have been established for a supplemental endorsement in computer science education for practicing teachers, new graduate courses in computer science education, as well as significant computer science education grant-related initiatives. We describe some of these efforts in more detail in the general accomplishment areas of this article.

The Fourth STEM Community Chair: Science

The fourth, and newest, community chair in UNO STEM Education was established as the Haddix Community Chair of Science and was funded within the match agreement with the funding of the Community Chair of Computer Science, as mentioned earlier. An extensive external search was undertaken, with internal candidates able to apply for the position, by a search committee involving six STEM faculty members and the Associate Vice Chancellor of Research. The selection process involved ads in national journals, personalized searches at national conferences, and a general review of rising stars in STEM education across the country.

An internal candidate who was already becoming well known nationally and locally for her science education initiatives, with numerous grants as well as some impressive scientific research, Dr. Christine Cutucache, was selected for the position. Dr. Cutucache completed all of her higher education across the Nebraska University system, thereby providing opportunities for strong cross-campus collaborations. Dr. Cutucache earned her Bachelor of Science at the University of Nebraska at Kearney and a doctorate from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. After completing her degrees, she taught at the instructor level in the Department of Biology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She was the first choice of the search committee and assumed her official status as the new Community Chair of Science at the end of the spring semester of 2014.

The expectations of the newest community chair position were established with wide input from leading STEM faculty across the campus and formalized within the position description. Those expectations now follow:

Expectations of the Community Chair in Science

- Build relationships related to science education across UNO departments that improve STEM instruction and that attract more STEM majors.
- Build a process synergizing undergraduate and graduate student enthusiasm, service, and outreach in the local schools and after school programs related to STEM education excellence and support.
- Serve as a professional contact or mentor for STEM majors who express an interest in a career in science and/or science education pathways.
- Work closely with the UNO College of Education faculty in developing effective programs to increase the quantity and quality of elementary, middle, and high school science teachers.
- Build enthusiasm and communication across the UNO STEM faculty in the pursuit of strengthening science-education-related initiatives and grants at UNO.
- Assist in the strategic planning for an effective vision of UNO outreach programs in science education that connect to local schools and that encourage students to consider being a STEM/STEM Education major.
- Become a community resource for science education by working with Omaha area education groups such as the Omaha Public Schools, Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC), and various private foundations interested in enhancing STEM education.
- Maintain a competitive research profile in discipline-based education research (DBER, a National Research Council priority).
- Pursue an active teaching, research, and service agenda related to science education within the context of the host science department at UNO.

The newest community chair, based in the Department of Biology, quickly welcomed the duties of the position. Due to her existing strong reputation and relationships with faculty across the UNO campus, the chair started very rapidly to synergize and lead efforts in science education, using a variety of objectives consistent with the UNO STEM Strategic Plan. These efforts included further building a UNO-based student outreach organization in STEM Education for local after school programs; developing a model "learning inventory" to investigate challenges with student recruitment, retention, and graduation refinements within a particular STEM department; and various funding efforts, including successful funding for student outreach that partnered aggressively with the Omaha Public Schools. These successes are described further in the accomplishments of the community chairs.

Establishing a Wider STEM Leadership Team

As the four community chairs were added over the duration of the four years that the UNO STEM priority has been in place, a faculty STEM Leadership Team was also steadily expanded and formalized. This team represents faculty leadership across the campus and includes faculty who are interested in leading STEM initiatives and expanding interdisciplinary STEM efforts, particularly in connection to STEM education. As an administrative structure and approval process, the three lead deans of the STEM priority (the deans of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Information Science and Technology) were established as an administrative oversight team, which works through the community chairs and regularly communicates with respective department chairs. In addition, the Vice Chancellor of Research, a long-time champion of the STEM concept on campus, is a frequent advocate, supporter, and mentor to the STEM community chairs, particularly related to STEM grant proposals.

The current members of the STEM Leadership Team are identified below (Table 1). The committee is chaired by the Community Chair of STEM Education. A faculty member who also has an Academic Affairs assignment serves as co-chair, which allows for direct coordination with the Office of Academic Affairs. An assistant chair status is also provided to each of the community chairs so they can easily coordinate among the faculty members both on the committee and leading initiatives across campus. Members are recommended by the community chairs, discussed with the existing membership of the committee, and appointed by the representative dean of a college to help to represent the college. The committee includes a core group of tenured faculty who are well experienced at UNO and who provide additional leadership when initiatives and committee decisions are particularly important or need to be made quickly. The function of the STEM Leadership Team is to advocate, plan for, and undertake bold and synergistic efforts to support the UNO STEM priority and to work closely with UNO colleagues and community partners to advance STEM Education at UNO, in the metropolitan Omaha area, in Nebraska, and across the nation.

Table 1. Members of the UNO STEM Leadership Team

Member	UNO Position	Collegea	Committee Role
Neal Grandgenett	Community Chair of STEM Education Core Leadership	COE	Lead Chair,
Neal Topp	Professor, UNO Academic Affairs	COE	Co-Chair, Core Leadership
Angie Hodge	Community Chair of Mathematics	A&S	Asst. Chair, Core Leadership
Brian Dorn	Community Chair of Computer Science	IS&T	Asst. Chair, Core Leadership
Christine Cutucahe	Community Chair of Science	A&S	Asst. Chair, Core Leadership
Bob Shuster	Department Chair of Geology/ Geography	A&S	Core Leadership
Mark Pauley	Senior Research Fellow, Bioinformatics	IS&T	Core Leadership
Scott Tarry	Professor, Aviation Institute	CPACS	Core Leadership
Dana Richter-Egger	Director MSLCb, Assistant Professor Chemistry	A&S	Core Leadership
Vicki Lentfer	Instructor, STEM Education	COE	Member
Lulia Podariu	Associate Professor, Physics	A&S	Member
Sandy Vlasnik	Lecturer, Info. Systems/ Quantitative Analysis	IS&T	Member
Scott Vlasek	Director, Aviation Institute	CPACS	Member
Michael O'Hara	Professor, Finance and Banking	CBA	Member
Carol Mitchell	Professor, Science Education	COE	Member
Amelia Squires	UNO STEM Outreach Coordinator	COE	Member
Rose Strasser	Associate Professor, Psychology	A&S	Member
Kris VanWyngarden	Graduate Assistant	COE	Student Member

Note: **Administrative oversight and various approvals (such as budgetary expenditures) are provided by the deans in the Colleges of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Information Science and Technology and, in some cases, by the Associate Vice Chancellor of Research.**

a A&S = College of Arts and Sciences; CBA = College of Business Administration; COE = College of Education; CPACS = College of Public Affairs and Community Service; IS&T = College of Information Science and Technology

b MSLC = Math-Science Learning Center

In addition to the STEM Leadership Team at UNO, there is also a group of about fifty faculty members across campus that collaborate regularly with the team on various efforts, such as grant proposals, outreach events, and various "STEMinars," in which faculty with areas of particular expertise—such as inquiry-based teaching strategies, discipline-based education research, or STEM outreach—deliver presentations to the UNO STEM community.

Selected Collaborative Accomplishments of the Community Chairs

As mentioned previously, once appointed, each of the four community chairs worked quickly and collaboratively to plan, organize, and provide leadership for the evolving STEM priority on campus. For almost all initiatives, subgroups of the STEM Leadership Team also contributed significantly and often shared leadership on particular objectives. Some of the key accomplishments of the community chairs and the STEM Leadership Team are described below.

STEM Strategic Plan

One of the most important accomplishments of the community chairs and the STEM Leadership Team, was the STEM Strategic Plan. This plan includes four goals, associated with efforts in teaching, research, service, and structures, that focus directly on the planning for an interdisciplinary STEM context that has been shown to be critical for STEM pathways in universities and within the context of the communities that universities serve (Lansiquot et al. 2011; Singer 2011). The goals associated with such pathway building and context were particularly structured in the plan to align well with faculty annual review categories (teaching, research, and service) as well as the need to build a STEM priority collaborative base (infrastructures), which included various targeted strategies to work together better (such as the need for a STEM Outreach Coordinator). Each of the goals had a series of specific objectives as well as tables that include current status, indicators, and targeted benchmarks. The plan was completed in September of 2013 and took about eighteen months to put into place. It was the result of focused dialogue, as facilitated by an outside strategic planning expert and with assistance in the writing process from a technical writing consultant. The plan is now routinely referenced at STEM Leadership Team meetings and is frequently used as the foundation for deciding which initiatives to move forward with and whether newly proposed initiatives align with that plan. It has also been a fundamental element in grant proposal submission and has been referenced in various grant proposals, as well as by faculty members in their annual reviews. The STEM Strategic Plan can be accessed at: http://www.unomaha.edu/stem/STEM_Strategic_Plan.pdf.

STEM Teaching Pathways

Trying to do our part to ramp up the production of high quality teachers in the STEM disciplines, the community chairs and STEM Leadership Team worked on program pathways that would allow UNO to graduate high school teachers that had a discipline-based degree in the content area and were still qualified to become a certified teacher. Until this initiative, all teacher education degrees were exclusively from the College of Education, regardless of the discipline. The new parallel pathways allow a student to graduate with a degree from the college of Arts and Sciences and to take each of the required teacher certification courses from the College of Education within a specialized area of emphasis or minor. The new parallel pathways, when investigated, made quite a bit of sense for bringing in new students, without reducing the number of students in the College of Education. In fact, as the courses were closely aligned, the majority of students are now able to easily get a double major. The parallel pathway for mathematics was the first program of this type; it has been very successful, graduating eight students over the two years since it was first approved, with nineteen students in the current pipeline (sixteen of whom will graduate with a double major). We have recently successfully added similar pathways in physics and chemistry, and we are now working on establishing similar pathways in biology and geology (Earth system science). The mathematics program has been seen as quite innovative nationally, and an article describing the program was recently accepted for publication in the internally distributed *Mathematics and Computer Education Journal* (Grandgenett, Matthews, and Adcock, forthcoming).

Supplemental Endorsement in Computer Science and Related Coursework

There is a well-documented critical shortage of computer science teachers (see Astrachan et al. 2011). In addition, P-12 students typically lack access to educational experiences that expose them to both core concepts and career opportunities related to computer science (eg., coding, computational thinking) and this situation has received considerable nationwide attention among the academic community (CSTA Certification Committee 2013; Wilson et al. 2010) and IT industry professionals (http://www.code.org).

As lead by the new Community Chair in Computer Science, UNO is working to meet this challenge by developing multiple pathways to earn a state-recognized supplemental teaching endorsement for computer science and information technology. The first of these is an eighteen-credit-hour undergraduate program integrating fifteen credits of computing coursework plus a disciplinary teaching methods capstone course offered through the Department of Teacher Education. This undergraduate pathway was approved by the Nebraska Department of Education and became official as of the fall 2014 academic term.

Concurrently, we are developing a graduate endorsement pathway and a new master's degree in Computer Science Education specifically targeting in-service teachers seeking to retrain or improve their foundations in computing. This effort requires new courses to be developed and proposed in the Computer Science Department and some significant assistance and the refinement of a STEM education methods course in the Department of Teacher Education. We were recently awarded an internal University of Nebraska System grant ($35,000) that will help plan for some of the courses to be offered online and to strategically plan additional graduate offerings for mathematics, science, and business teachers who want to cross-certify in computer science/information technology.

NSF STEM Grants

One of the more recent and exciting accomplishments of the community chairs and STEM Leadership Team is newfound success in NSF grants related to the STEM efforts and strategically planned initiatives for the STEM priority. All of the community chairs are experienced grant writers, and when a faculty member begins to conceptualize a grant proposal to NSF related to STEM, a community chair is quickly assigned to help mentor the faculty member and potentially to be on the senior-personnel team. This has resulted in the award of three recent NSF grants that grew directly out of strategically planned STEM initiatives. For example, UNO received in 2014 a $1.2 million student scholarship grant from the NSF's Noyce program that will now pay for 27 four-year scholarships for mathematics majors entering the program starting in the Fall of 2014. UNO's computer science education team was also recently awarded a $1.1 million dollar grant from NSF's Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) program to collaboratively train middle school teachers and develop interdisciplinary lessons that integrate core computing concepts into existing middle school curricula. Finally, UNO is sharing another $900,000 ITEST grant with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln related to helping middle school teachers and informal educators (in after school programs) to teach STEM topics using wearable technologies. In a climate of increasing competitiveness for securing federal grant funding, we feel these recent successes highlight the impact that a team/community-based approach can have on an institution.

Inquiry-Based Courses in STEM Disciplines

STEM courses are notorious, unfortunately, for problems with retention, as mentioned earlier. Inquiry-based learning (IBL) strategies have been identified as a possible way to deepen content understanding, while building student retention in STEM content courses (McLoughlin 2008; Zitarelli 2004). IBL is a teaching method that engages students in sense-making activities. Students are given tasks requiring them to solve problems, conjecture, experiment, explore, create, and communicate, which are skills STEM professionals engage in regularly (Dostis 2013; Hoachlander and Yanofsky

2011). One challenging and key STEM course on the UNO campus, as on many campuses, is introductory calculus. As lead by the Community Chair in Mathematics, the effort to revamp calculus courses was undertaken both aggressively and systematically. We are now offering several new sections that include a foundational inquiry-based approach, where students discuss the bigger concepts of calculus, engage in thoughtful questions and computations, and make presentations in class, rather than just sitting in a traditional lecture. These sections have been very successful and have modeled the following improvements and benefits, many of which are also now being integrated into the planning for Inquiry-Based Teaching courses:

- 42.2 percent of students in non-IBL calculus received grades of D/F/W versus 20.3 percent in IBL calculus.
- Students who have been in IBL calculus are doing generally better in Calculus II.
- Daily presentations give students a chance to teach each other.
- Several classrooms have been renovated to include tables for group seating and white boards.
- Undergraduate Learning Assistants have been added to the IBL calculus classrooms.
- Mathematics faculty conduct regular meetings with other UNO faculty about IBL techniques.
- Three UNO instructors are attending national IBL teaching workshops.
- A partnership has been established with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Colorado -Boulder and the University of Georgia to evaluate success of IBL.
- UNO faculty have had leadership roles at two national IBL workshops in the summer of 2014.
- The description of IBL calculus sections has been modified to highlight active learning.

The next inquiry-based learning course newly approved and underway is “Inquiry-Based Thinking in STEM” for pre-service elementary teachers. This new course is approved as a general education science course and is offered at UNO’s Glacier Creek Preserve. In this important course, students engage in inquiry-based thinking to examine STEM concepts related to prairie ecosystems, which is a major elementary-science focus in schools in the Omaha area. The course has nineteen students in this first offering and is going very well, with pre-service teachers conducting inquiry-based earth system science activities that align directly with the science concepts that they will be teaching in the elementary schools. This approach directly confronts the national problem of elementary teachers being less interested in science than in other areas of the curriculum, which is an attitude that is often passed inadvertently to their students (Brown et al. 2011; National Governors Association 2011). The STEM team working with the course is investigating the evolution of the science attitudes of the pre-service teachers in the course to see if there are any changes.

STEM Learning Inventories

In order to help STEM departments plan instructional reforms to improve STEM pipelines, the newest community chair (Science) has initiated a process to help guide the conversation within a particular department, starting with the Department of Biology. This process is described as a “Learning Inventory” in the STEM Strategic Plan. In brief, the objective is to initiate a guided reflection and discussion amongst faculty on how students are doing within the coursework and to identify clear objectives for students to meet across all courses, to take an inventory of current practices across courses, and to target practices for improvement. This process includes: 1) review of enrollment, retention, and graduation data; 2) a review of space utilization and infrastructure needs; 3) a self-reflection by faculty using a guided rubric; 4) a review of syllabi; 5) discussion meetings with all faculty; and 6) input from an external consultant from the discipline who has implemented this process at an institution of similar size, enrollment, etc. In biology, it is an excellent opportunity to use a new educational reform report, called *Vision and Change in Undergraduate Biology Education: A Call to Action*, which was produced by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2011). Quite a few follow-up materials to the Vision and Change report have been designed for use by biology departments in reflecting upon needed reforms, such as a set of rubrics designed by the Partnership for Undergraduate Life Sciences Education that can be used by departments to step through a reflective process on potential educational reforms that align with Vision and Change (Aguirre et al. 2013). These materials are currently being discussed with leadership from the Community Chair of Science, with full support from the lead Community Chair in Science Education, and with administrative support. The experienced faculty members engaged in educational reforms at other institutions are also making themselves available for conversations, and one of these external experts will soon be coming to UNO to help to further reflect on the learning inventory process.

The learning inventory effort has started very well in biology, and some of the materials are now also being shared with the UNO Department of Chemistry, which has expressed interest in a similar reflection process and has formed a UNO Community of Practice around chemistry education and supporting student success in introductory chemistry classes. The Community of Practice is a new faculty collaboration structure at UNO, where faculty members meet monthly around a common theme and try to help each other to be more effective in university teaching, research, and service. Another similar effort is being undertaken in computer science. The community chairs are well represented in several of these new campus communities of practice.

STEM Outreach Efforts

As mentioned previously, bringing young people into STEM pathways is critical for the health of the country (Gentile 2011; National Science Board 2010). So part of the STEM initiative at UNO has been to work closely with the community and to participate aggressively in bringing youth into STEM pathways, by contributing to both on-campus and off-campus STEM outreach efforts and by making STEM more "real" for students, which has been shown to be critical to students entering the STEM pathways (Hoachlander and Yanofsky 2011) and for helping students become comfortable with STEM content learning (Brown et al. 2011). The initiatives associated with STEM outreach are quite numerous, are led by various faculty teams, and are now coordinated by a new STEM Outreach Coordinator. Outreach events have included activities such as a four-week Girls Inc. Eureka STEM Camp, where 60 middle school girls, mostly from minority and low socioeconomic families, participate in some exciting STEM activities, including robotics, high-altitude ballooning, and digital media work. In addition, events and institutes have also been undertaken for P-12 teachers, such as the Kiewit Engineering Day, where 40 teachers who teach engineering in the local schools joined 40 Kiewit engineers as colleagues in professional development related to engineering instruction and outreach. In many ways, such outreach builds community partnerships, since the community often tends to synergize contributions around informal educational environments more easily than formal ones (Jehl, Blank, and McCloud 2001). UNO also has participated in many different city- and state-wide events, such as the Nebraska Science Festival, where nearly 600 students (including boy scouts and girl scouts) came to campus for a day of STEM mini-courses and field based activities; or the statewide River City Rodeo, where 300 students and teachers undertook rodeo themed robotics challenges; or the Lights On after School event, which involved 1,500 students in the after school programs with access to twenty tables of interactive STEM activities run by UNO faculty and students.

The Challenges of Establishing a Community Chair at a University

In addition to the benefits related to establishing a community-chair-led effort for building the STEM initiatives or other priorities on a university campus, there are also typically some challenges. First and foremost, there is the need to fund the community chair position or to modify an existing position to have the operational level and resources needed for establishing an effective community chair. At UNO, we had the significant benefit of the vision and generosity of a major benefactor, Dr. Haddix, who helped us to start the program and then to use it as a match for further community chair positions. The yearly stipend, operational budget, and reduced teaching load are all real costs to an institution, to be either covered internally by the college or university or externally by a foundation or private donor. At UNO, we had a mix of such contributions both externally and internally. As with any leader on a campus, it's essential that community chairs have the operational budget they need to implement their vision and related efforts to best serve campus priorities.

Additional challenges are related to identifying and hiring the correct faculty member for the position, either through an internal or external search. The person really needs to be a strong communicator, leader, and team builder who can have candid conversations with colleagues based on their own expertise. Such expertise needs to be relatively broad and should include accomplishments in each of the three areas of teaching, research, and service. Further, community chairs in many ways need to have both content (i.e., in-discipline) and pedagogical expertise, since their leadership may well be based in a specific content department, but they also will need to plan and build initiatives on new ways of teaching and learning in STEM courses. As with any faculty position, these leaders must remain aggressive in their performance in teaching, research, and service, so the candidate that can best balance these needs while helping faculty to achieve their goals is necessary.

Moreover, there is a challenge with the sheer quantity of contacts and communications that need to flow through a community chair. Those contacts, including e-mail, phone, and office visits, can be overwhelming, particularly for new faculty members, and colleagues need to assist that person by being fully aware of the challenges associated with leading initiatives that cross departments, colleges, and community partners. Everyone needs to help the community chair to build the team they need and to undertake true reforms. The community chair must balance a traditional faculty profile but also serve as a major leader—it's a balancing act. In addition, untenured community chairs may need to be helped to ensure that the initiatives that they choose to undertake will also help to steadily move them toward a tenure status.

Finally, the dean and department chairs working with the community chair need to support the chair's leadership with periodic help in providing additional resources when needed, including help from consultants such as technical writers, grant development specialists, and community outreach coordination. For example, the awareness of the expertise and talents in the area of STEM have resulted in UNO becoming the "go to" institution for community events. The ability to create awareness, engagement, and action around STEM initiatives has created tremendous momentum and activity in the Omaha community, which is certainly aligned with our strategic goals. This has resulted in extraordinary opportunities for faculty and students; however, the demands on faculty time became increasingly challenging. Therefore, UNO administration partnered with a community agency to fund a STEM Outreach Coordinator position.

The Next Steps for the STEM Community Chairs at UNO

The next steps for the STEM community chairs, as the academic year moves into 2015, is to support faculty members interested in undertaking efforts as aligned with the STEM strategic plan. STEM-related grants are particularly becoming of interest to other faculty members, and the community chairs are looking for ways to mentor new faculty in STEM-education-related grant writing. Often, discipline-based faculty need some mentoring to be able to submit STEM-education-oriented grants and to work through needed considerations, such as formal approvals by the Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects. The community chairs are already doing quite a bit of grant-related mentoring, and this will no doubt continue to increase as faculty become more interested and the campus becomes more experienced.

A major new priority for the STEM community chairs, thanks to the hires of the Community Chair of Computer Science and the Community Chair of Science, is to support efforts for discipline-based education research (DBER). Many faculty show interest in DBER, as it's a way for them to study their own best practices and to identify creative ways to best engage their students in the classroom. Some example efforts include faculty investigating innovation in the instructional environment or curriculum of their department or discipline or investigating different types of pedagogical interventions and research-based course structures (National Research Council 2012). To complement the ongoing fostering of these initiatives, the community chairs are striving to help departmental reappointment promotion and tenure committees to realize how valuable this type of research is both locally and nationally. Often this support includes a letter signed by the four community chairs to the faculty member acknowledging how critical improving STEM education is for our country and the important role that DBER is playing. It is becoming increasingly identified in the literature that DBER can help to change the culture of STEM departments to be more learning and student-success focused (Anderson et al. 2011), thanks to visionary leaders across the nation who devote their work to DBER.

In addition, the STEM community chairs are looking closely at campus outreach in STEM and trying to help the university outreach organizations to undertake their own strategic planning efforts. For example, UNO's Aim for the Stars program, based in the Department of Physics, is hosting nearly eighty week-long middle school camps on STEM topics and is now engaged with several of the community chairs to strategically plan for the future and to maximize the effectiveness of the curriculum for not only building student STEM interest and content knowledge but also for encouraging students to consider UNO as their institution of choice for later college enrollment.

As the STEM Leadership Team continues to expand its STEM leadership efforts and as other faculty step forward to conceptualize and lead initiatives, coordination by the community chairs and the active support of their deans and department chairs is becoming increasingly important. This support will be aided by a new effort being undertaken to create a short report template that can be used to periodically report on the progress in the STEM Strategic Plan and that can be shared with stakeholders in both UNO and the surrounding community.

Conclusion

The momentum and support for UNO STEM initiatives has continued to accelerate at a pace that has exceeded the expectations of all involved. The community chairs have been the key catalyst to this success. The development, implementation, and ongoing refinement of the strategic plan has resulted in varied collaborations, from simple to complex, that have engaged an extraordinary number of faculty, university administrators, community leaders, and philanthropists. Such collaborative efforts have helped to support evolving conversations about the potential for a new STEM building at UNO that would include innovative instructional facilities to help further support the evolution of STEM education at UNO and throughout our community.

The community chair concept is perhaps not new to institutions, but it may well be a new approach for focused leadership at an institution for expanding the STEM pipelines. Our experience supports the notion that this challenging task depends upon a close collaborative and interdisciplinary effort, which fully engages community partners. The community chair allows the university to provide STEM pipeline leadership and be in a position to build strong partnerships with local school districts, business and industry, the chamber of commerce, and the philanthropic community to accomplish what could not be accomplished without collaboration. Such strategic collaborations certainly take a much more flexible form of faculty-level leadership than what is often seen at universities. The ability to transcend the various institutional challenges and silos that have been embedded in the STEM educational pathways combined with community partnerships is a powerful recipe for transformational change. The opportunity to connect various units on campus has assisted us in attracting, supporting, challenging, and retaining students who are seeking an innovative educational model that offers various pathways to career opportunities.

Finally, at UNO, we have been fortunate to be able to steadily establish a focused team for leading the campus STEM priority that includes the four community chair positions, the seventeen-member STEM Leadership Team of faculty members, three lead deans, and the many other engaged faculty, staff, and department chairs that have been so supportive of these many different efforts. The STEM journey continues for us, and we are increasingly going together.

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Zipcar Theater: The Tacoma Theater Project as an Anchor for Audience Development

Michael Kula

Abstract

As theater audiences decline society-wide, university theater programs have felt the impact, with many being cut back as institutions face difficult economic decisions. The Tacoma Theater Project at the University of Washington–Tacoma is an innovative effort to resist this trend. By working with professional theater groups in a partnership inspired by a collective insourcing model, the university uses its resources to support fringe theater groups in order to diversify and grow the local audience.

In 2010, amid numerous institutional changes, Kutztown University in Pennsylvania elected to cut its theater major (Kelly 2010). In 2013, Anderson University in Indiana followed suit by announcing the elimination of its programs in theater and dance, while at the same time, across the border in Ohio, outside reviewers recommended that Akron University shut down its theater program by 2016 (Beyer 2013; Wall 2013). More recently, as part of a well-publicized set of larger university changes announced in the spring of 2014, the University of Southern Maine, a CUMU member, reduced its theater faculty by more than half, a move that left many wondering what the future might hold for the program as a whole (Hall 2014).

These moves are just a few examples of cuts and reductions to university theater programs that have taken place across the nation in the past five years, and they are, no doubt, just part of a larger set of changes occurring in higher education today. Whether they are part of a crisis of the humanities, as some have called it, is an issue that lies outside the scope of this paper. Regardless of that, one fact seems clear: as universities face difficult economic decisions, the relatively high operational costs of running a theater program, combined with the traditionally lower student demand for the discipline, makes theater programs a logical potential target for cutbacks or even elimination.

But is there another way? Is there a way that theater programs, particularly those at urban and metropolitan universities, might be able to adapt to the changing landscape of higher education and the changing role of performing arts society-wide in order to not only help stave off cuts, but also help develop new opportunities for the campus and the community audiences? The answer, we argue, is yes, and this paper presents one innovative approach to a university-community partnership in theater programming that seeks to do just that. By embracing the role of curator rather than creator of theater programming, the Tacoma Theater Project at the University of Washington–Tacoma (UWT) has sought to establish itself as a relevant and sustainable model for university theater. And while every institution and theater program is different, with their own sets of challenges and opportunities, the vision and the approach to the project can offer inspiration and insight for innovations within theater programs at similarly situated urban universities.

Founded in 1990, the University of Washington–Tacoma occupies a forty-six acre campus in the heart of downtown Tacoma, an area, which until the university's founding, was widely known for its abandoned buildings and its high crime rate and which today still borders some of the most economically depressed neighborhoods in the city. As part of the tri-campus University of Washington system, the university opened this autumn quarter with an enrollment just under 5,000 students, with a target of reaching 7,000 students within the next seven years. Given its recent growth rate at roughly 10 percent per year, there is no reason to believe it will not achieve that goal, and it is this state of rapid growth that perhaps most defines the working environment at the university today, as administrators seek and faculty are encouraged to explore areas for strategic growth in ways that simultaneously serve the university's current students, attract future students, and fulfill the institution's urban-serving mission of seeking to transform the greater-Tacoma region "by expanding boundaries of knowledge and discovery." (University of Washington–Tacoma 2014)

Until very recently, one boundary the university had yet to cross was into performing arts or, more specifically, into theater arts. Despite the fact that the interdisciplinary Arts, Media, and Culture program (AMC) was one of the central pillars of the school from its founding, now, twenty-five years into the university's history, there is still not a single course regularly offered in theater studies. The closest classes one could find at the university would be a course in performance art or courses focused on Shakespeare and dramatic literature offered by AMC, but beyond those, there have been no regular curricular offerings in theater or drama, and, not unsurprisingly given this university context, there have been no theater performances staged on campus.

Perhaps to some, this might not seem that unexpected or even that significant of a limitation. After all, during the past twenty-five years since the university was founded, higher education has been in the midst of a transition, with schools focusing more heavily on STEM and pre-vocational degree fields, and, as we've seen in recent years, many schools have even been cutting their theater programs, either in part or in whole. Furthermore, it has been during this same time period when the arts society-wide have been in decline, with traditional theater arguably being the most impacted area of all. A 2012 study by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) showed that only 8.3 percent of adults had attended a play in the previous year, which represented a 12 percent drop from just four years earlier and a remarkable 33 percent drop over the course of the previous decade (Cohen 2013; National Endowment for the Arts 2013). Both of these figures were the largest declines documented in the study, and so given all of this, yes, perhaps UWT's lack of theater programming, either in the classroom or on the stage, might be somewhat expected. If theater is in decline society-wide and peer institutions are cutting or cutting back on their theater programs, why should the school invest in a potentially withering field as it seeks to grow?

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to argue for the legitimacy or the importance for the discipline of theater arts in general (a complex debate facing much of the humanities today), now that the UWT is maturing, or is in its teenage years as some campus administrators like to characterize it, it is, in general, difficult to defend having such a hole in the curriculum of a comprehensive university of UWT's size, let alone one that was founded with the humanities at its core. For a comparison here, it's important to note that of the current CUMU member institutions, all but two schools, both of which have very different profiles than UWT's, offer coursework in theater arts and/or stage annual theater performances. However, a more compelling argument might be made for the importance of theater at the university and, by extension, at similar institutions, if we consider the urban setting of the university and its urban-serving mission that states that its "fundamental purpose (is) to educate (students) for life as global citizens" (University of Washington–Tacoma 2014). This mission speaks to two things: first, the idea of citizenship, of a person actively engaged in her community; and second, the idea of a global context, of being a part of a community larger than one's own immediate environment, and here we can assume the idea of diversity. Given this, we might rephrase the university's mission to say that its "fundamental purpose" is to educate students for lives in which they are *actively engaged within diverse communities*, and read in this light, there is good evidence to suggest that a theater program can be an effective part of accomplishing this mission.

In a recent study of theater and performing arts audiences conducted at the University of Illinois-Chicago, researchers found that "individuals who engage in higher levels of audience-based arts participation (like theater)" demonstrate "higher rates of civic engagement," "greater levels of social tolerance," and "greater levels of other-regarding behaviors (i.e., respect, tolerance, and acceptance of others)" (LeRoux and Bernadska 2014, 158). These three findings speak to the very heart of UWT's mission to educate "global citizens," and they show, if nothing else, that by continuing to neglect theater arts and other audience-based arts, UWT would potentially be missing out on a proven and effective means to engage its students, not to mention the community, in civic-minded and socially-conscious ways. Despite the larger academic and societal trends perhaps suggesting the contrary, as UWT began to consider theater arts as an area of strategic growth, the question facing the university quickly turned from *if* to *how* the university should move forward. How could or should the institution build a vibrant, relevant, and sustainable program in theater that both respected the university's resources during economically challenged times and, at the same time, held the university's mission at its center? What, in the most concrete sense, could such a program look like?

Of course at this point, the campus conversation started where we might have expected. The simplest way for UWT or any university to develop a theater program would be to go the conventional route: propose the classes, hire the appropriate faculty, and step by step build a traditional theater program from scratch, one that offered the expected curriculum and, in some annual way, produced a set of theater performances to augment the coursework. To do it this way, however, was a difficult proposition, since it potentially risked significant university resources on a program with both a relatively high start-up cost and a yet-unproven student demand.

Furthermore, given the recent trend of declining audiences for theater society-wide, it also seemed potentially to be counter to one of the central principles articulated for the university's vision for its continued growth, which states that the institution is committed to building "strong and mutually supportive relationship(s) between the campus and its surrounding communities" (University of Washington–Tacoma 2014).

Since a theater program, unlike many other disciplines, has by its very nature an outward-facing component (university-based theater performances would logically draw an audience in part made up of members of the more general Tacoma community), UWT's entrance into the local theater scene and any success that might accompany it, could potentially come at the expense of other local theater organizations, whose viabilities are already challenged given the shrinking audience base documented in the NEA study. In light of this, as the university moved to building its theater programming, it needed to be mindful that its efforts support the local theater scene by working to increase the audience in the community, rather than erode it by potentially siphoning off a portion of that audience from other groups and thereby potentially risk the sustainability of those organizations. With these concerns at the forefront, the central vision for the Tacoma Theater Project was born: to find a way to bring theater and all of its benefits to UWT's campus that was both fiscally responsible and mutually supportive within the community.

In order to begin to give shape to the project, it was essential to contextualize the university's efforts within the local Tacoma theater landscape and frame the project within the other stakeholders in the region. Like that of many cities, Tacoma's theater scene is structured something similar to a Broadway, an off-Broadway, and an off-off-Broadway model, with one major theater organization at the top, a handful of smaller but reasonably well established community theaters in the middle, and an ever changing mix of very small, more fringe-oriented theater groups at the bottom.

Starting at the top, the largest performing arts institution in the city is by far the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts, a four-venue theater complex that occupies a series of historic buildings ten blocks from UWT's campus. As a multi-venue organization with the largest theater complex between Seattle and Portland—with seating capacities ranging from 300–1200—the Broadway Center is the unrivalled leader for the performing arts in the South Puget Sound region. It hosts more than one hundred events each year, and it provides both logistical support and performance space to several of the city's smaller performing arts organizations like the Tacoma City Ballet, the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra, and the Tacoma Opera. On its own, the Broadway Center has only infrequently staged any in-house theater productions, and instead it focuses on booking large-scale travelling shows, such as touring Broadway musicals and concerts. In fact, a review of the past three seasons at the Broadway Center shows that only seven, less than 8 percent, have been full productions of plays, not including musicals.

On the smaller community theater level, Greater-Tacoma has three relatively well established theaters, along with one steadily producing university theater. Centrally located, the Tacoma Little Theater, founded in 1918, is the city's longest active theater, producing half a dozen easily recognizable shows each season for an audience capacity of a little more than two hundred. Moving farther afield from downtown, in a suburb just south of the city, is the Lakewood Playhouse, and in a retrofit strip-mall on the city's west side, is the Tacoma Musical Playhouse. These theaters produce annual seasons of six to eight different shows, all of which are mainstream, reliable audience draws. Between these theaters, during the past three years productions have included shows like *Little Women, Midsummer Night's Dream, Steel Magnolias, Cabaret, Little Shop of Horrors, Dial M for Murder, The Rainmaker,* and *The Odd Couple*. Lastly, of a similar size and scope to these community theaters, Tacoma also has the well-established theater at the University of Puget Sound, a liberal arts college in Tacoma's North End, which has a long-standing theater tradition that includes not only a bachelor's in theater arts, but also two faculty-directed productions each year, which, unlike the mainstream productions of the community houses, might best be characterized as more academic-minded plays. In recent years these have included plays like Charles Mee's *Iphigenia 2.0* and Sara Ruhl's *In the Next Room (or the Vibrator Play)*.

On the smallest level, below these established community theaters, there are usually three to four smaller fringe theater groups operating in the city at any given time. In recent years, these have included Assemblage Theatre, New Muses Theater Company, Toy Boat Theatre, Working Class Theatre Northwest, Gold from Straw, and Dukesbay Theater. In all but one case these groups are venue-less, their performances opportunistically being staged in an ever-changing variety of non-theatrically outfitted locations around Tacoma, which in the past have included the back of a bookstore, the upper sanctuary of a church, the curtained-off hallway of the historic post office building, and several vacant commercial storefronts in Tacoma's downtown. Their productions are tenuously supported by shoestring budgets (often Kickstarter and/or self-funded for the most part), and not unsurprisingly, if or when these organizations have continued to produce, they generally stage only one production per year. However, their presence in the city is important to note, because they, unlike the Broadway Center or Tacoma's larger established theaters, often stage more contemporary, more diverse, and less mainstream productions. In many cases, this artistic slant is at the core of the theaters' efforts, as evidenced by the mission statement on the Dukesbay Theater website, which states the group is dedicated to producing "theatrical works that reflect and celebrate our diverse society in the Pacific Northwest" (2014). Despite their best efforts though, with no stable performance space and no stable funding to ensure their continued existence, these theater groups, if able to survive at all, have been unable to establish a consistent enough brand for themselves in order to be able to grow their audiences to sustainable levels and really achieve their goal of diversifying the theater scene in the city. The problem, as the director of Toy Boat Theatre stated in a recent e-mail, is that "name recognition is certainly among the most obvious hurdles; even thoughtful, intrepid theatre goers can be wary of untried, unfamiliar work, especially by fringe companies" (Marilyn Bennett, personal communication).

At first glance, with roughly twenty-five plays of various sizes being produced in the city each year, this might seem if not a wealth, then at least a sufficient amount of offerings for a city of Tacoma's size (population roughly 200,000), and some might argue that UWT, at least in its outward, community-looking direction, needn't invest resources or push to join an already crowded theater scene. However, when we examine the types of productions being staged in the community and compare that with the demographics of the audience, or perhaps better stated as the *potential* audience in Tacoma, we see that there is a significant gap in the economic accessibility and the audience attractiveness of the shows. This issue becomes even more pronounced if we consider the types of plays being produced in comparison to the subset of Tacoma's audience made up by UWT students.

Historically, Tacoma has had a manufacturing and shipping-based economy, and like so many urban centers with a similar profile, the economic stability of the city has been hit hard in recent decades. Despite some improvements, as of the city's most recent community data report, more than 17 percent of Tacoma's residents live below the poverty line; the city's "median household income is nearly $10,000 less than the statewide median" (City of Tacoma 2012, 10). Racially and culturally, the city is also statistically more diverse than statewide averages. It is roughly 64 percent Caucasian, with the two largest minority groups being African American and Asian at approximately 11 and 9 percent respectively (City of Tacoma, 2012, 11). Compared to this, UWT's student population is even more diverse. As of the last academic year, the student population was roughly 49 percent Caucasian, 15 percent Asian, 9 percent Latino, 7 percent African American, and 7 percent students who identified themselves as two or more races. Of the university's students, 70 percent receive financial aid, and 65 percent are the first in their family to attend college. These statistics are important to consider when examining Tacoma's theater offerings, because we would expect that if theater is going to matter, if it is going to be sustainable, then it needs to be both *accessible* and *attractive* to the potential audience in the community it serves, and in developing the vision for UWT's theater programming, it is essential that the university be attentive to both the economic realities and the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of its students and the population of the city.

In analyzing this issue, it is easy to see how the current theater offerings in Tacoma are failing on the point of accessibility simply for economic reasons alone. At the Broadway Center, the average ticket price for most shows ranges from $28 to $40, and at the four community/university theaters, the prices range from $23 to $35 per seat, which already makes the possibility of attending these productions highly unlikely for a significant portion of Tacoma's residents, not to mention UWT students, who simply do not have the means to purchase tickets. To these theaters' credit though, in an effort to combat the economic inaccessibility caused by the relatively high cost of ticket prices, most theaters in the area offer some sort of reduced admission options, including student pricing and pay-what-you-can performances. This might help the matter, were it not for the additional logistical challenge of the theaters' physical locations. Of the five established venues, only the Broadway Center and the Tacoma Little Theater are located in or near the densely populated downtown core, where the city's most diverse and economically challenged residents live. The others are located beyond walking distance from downtown, and, due to service cutbacks in recent years, none of the venues has stable round-trip service via mass transportation during the traditional evening and weekend theater performance times. What we see from this is that even though the number of annual theater performances in the city might seem sufficient for the size of Tacoma's population, the accessibility of these performances is severely limited, if not prohibited, for a sizeable and important portion of the city's population. As things currently stand, there could be a hundred plays staged in the city each year, but given the current economic and logistical realities of attending these shows, it would still leave a sizable portion of Tacoma residents, including UWT's students, marginalized.

If we look next at the issue of the audience-attractiveness of the annual theater offerings in Tacoma, we find a similar situation: there might be plenty of shows, but based on their subject matter and themes, there are legitimate questions about the level of interest they might generate with the city's diverse audience base. A recent study reviewed the seasonal offerings for the community theaters in Tacoma and found that barely over half of the productions were of plays written since 1970 (Hughes 2014, 7). While this alone does not necessarily mean that the plays would be unattractive or thematically irrelevant to the diverse populations of Tacoma, it does show that, in general, the script selections of the city's established theaters are largely not contemporarily focused, an important aspect to consider since much of the diversity movement in American theater has taken place since the late 1960s and early 1970s. As we might expect then, if we examine these productions more closely, we find very little attention to or emphasis on diversity. In fact, of the largest theaters in the community, not a single main-stage show over the past two years dealt directly with issues of diversity or had parts written specifically for diverse actors in it: the only exceptions being a side-stage production of *The Laramie Project* at the Tacoma Little Theater and a series of staged readings (not fully produced shows) from August Wilson's ten-play series, "The Pittsburgh Cycle," coordinated by the Broadway Center. This phenomenon, it should be noted, does not come entirely at the fault or blame of the artistic directors of Tacoma's theaters. Scott Walters (2012) raised similar concerns for theater nationwide in arguing that the American theater landscape has grown more and more homogenized in recent years, and newspapers from coast to coast have documented the efforts of theater professionals and critics seeking to address the issue of the lack of diversity in the regional theater scene (McNulty 2013; Wong 2009).

While the lack of diversity in American theater is a complex issue and we could trace its causes back to numerous reasons, for the purpose of this argument, we need not look any farther than simple economics. Part of the problem is the difficult balancing act that theaters must play between targeting their current audience, which is largely a White, affluent base, and reaching out to new diverse audiences at the same time. This is, in fact, one of the major challenges faced by theaters in Tacoma. At a recent community summit designed to examine the Broadway Center's programming, held in part in attempt to address issues raised here, the center's director explained the challenge the organization has faced as it has sought to diversify its offerings in recent years. Despite the demographics of the city, the director cited that roughly 70 percent of the Broadway Center's audience was made up of 55+-year-old women who were college educated and owned their own homes (David Fischer, 2014). The number 70 percent is extraordinary in comparison to the economic and racial demographics of the city, and so, given this and given that the center has enormous operating costs with its four venues, there is the simple matter of economics that the director faces. The Broadway Center can either play to its base audience and then risk not adequately reaching the diversity of the city it serves, or it can play to the city and then risk potentially losing the very audience that—literally speaking—helps keep the lights on. To the director's credit, the Broadway Center has been attentive to the disconnect in its programming, and it has begun to make attempts to combat the problem, as evidenced by the community summit itself and by the staged-readings of the August Wilson plays the theater has coordinated during the past few years. Unfortunately, these events were only moderately successful. For example, the tickets for the staged-readings were more than $20 per seat, a price still likely to be a challenge for a good portion of Tacoma's residents, and even with this, the performances lost money even with the lower production costs of the trimmed-down format. It should be no surprise then, that the vast majority of the center's programming, along with that of the city's other established community/university theaters, unfortunately continues to be mainstream in nature, playing largely to the traditional affluent audience base.

All is not a lost cause though, and if we are to look for a champion of diversity issues in the Tacoma theater community, we only need to look at the smaller fringe groups, which, as we've already seen, often make a commitment to diversity one of their central missions. These groups usually set their ticket prices at the much more accessible level of $10 per seat, and if we compare the recent productions from these groups with those of the more established theaters, we find a very different situation. As opposed to largely mainstream choices, in the last several years productions from these fringe groups have included a broader spectrum of plays including *Dakota's Belly, Wyoming*, a play which directly examines lesbian issues; *Stones in My Passageway*, a new work based on the life of the African American blues artist Robert Johnson; and Tea, which tells the story of five Japanese women who came to the United States as war brides in the 1940s.

Unfortunately, while they are more deliberate and dedicated to targeting works that might better attract the city's diverse potential audiences, these small theater groups actually have the opposite challenge of the larger established community theaters in Tacoma. Without their own physical performance venues, they lack the high overhead of the larger theaters and are thus able to make less economic driven performance choices; but at the same time, without a permanent location or captive theater audience from which to draw a stable revenue, they lack the stability to ensure long-term viability, and so far, they have been unable to achieve enough traction to offer regularized seasons and become permanent fixtures in the community. In many cases, these theater groups have survived only long enough to stage one or two shows and then they have folded.

This situation, too, is, unfortunately, not only an issue for Tacoma. A recent study of the changing face of the American performing arts scene found a very similar trend occurring nationwide. Although the number of nonprofit performing arts organizations has actually increased in the past two decades, the size, the operating budget, and the revenue of those organizations has in fact decreased (McCarthy et al., 2001, 71–73).

What seems to be taking place and what we might expect to find in the communities surrounding most urban universities like UWT, is that as the audience society-wide has been shrinking, there's been a fracturing of the theater landscape, where the largest organizations at the top remain focused on their bottom-line (and the traditional audience base that supports it) in order to maintain stability and where the smallest organizations at the bottom struggle to be nimble and adaptable (at a detriment to their long-term viability) in order to continue to survive at all.

As UWT surveyed the Tacoma theater scene, three realities quickly emerged that helped shape the university's vision for bringing theater to campus. First, however the emerging theater programming developed, it needed to be more economically accessible to the city's broad potential audience than the current offerings available. Second, artistically it needed to deliberately target an audience more in keeping with the diversity of Tacoma and our campus community. Third, it needed to make sure that campus efforts didn't come at the detriment to the work of those fringe theaters in the city that are already working toward the same ends. But the question still remained as to *how* the university might go about this? The university, after all, has had no theater infrastructure, and on first glance, outside of financial support, it didn't seem to have many assets to bring to the table. Or did it?

In strategizing what UWT might uniquely be able to offer the local theater scene, we quickly realized that in addition to financial resources, the university had three key assets, both tangible and intangible. First, as part of the tri-campus University of Washington system, UWT is part of the state's flagship university, and as such, its "Husky Purple" association brings with it instant brand recognition and respect within the community. UWT on its own merits has earned an unparalleled regard for being a key leader to the remarkable revitalization that has occurred in Tacoma's downtown during the past twenty-five years, and on account of this, the school commands a beloved spotlight from the community. These intangibles are, no doubt, similar to those enjoyed by most urban and metropolitan universities, which function as educational and cultural anchors for their surrounding communities. Second and more tangibly, as a campus with nearly five thousand students and hundreds of faculty and staff, we offer a built-in and relatively captive population, and any emerging campus theater program would only need to capture a small percentage of this to ensure a somewhat stable and sizable audience for its productions. Third and most concretely, while the university has traditionally had no theater infrastructure, it did potentially offer a performance space in the form of a broadcast studio built for the communications program. The space, while mostly outfitted for video capture, had the basic makings of a black box theater, which included black curtained walls, a lighting grid, and a separate control booth. With the addition of seating for the audience and a handful of theater-specific lighting supplies, it would make a more than suitable performance space for the types of work likely to be produced.

While at first these assets might not seem like much to build on, we realized, in articulating them, that UWT's strengths were an ideal match for the weaknesses of the fringe theater groups in the city. The university had an identifiable "brand" that brought with it instant community respect and support; it had a built in representative subset of Tacoma's diverse potential audience; and it had its own dedicated performance venue, which was, in fact, underutilized during traditional evening and weekend performance times. Recognizing this, it was at this point that the university began to consider the possibility of partnering with these local theater groups, rather than simply reduplicating their efforts on its own. This (a university-community collaboration in theater) is not an uncommon practice, and there are already examples of such partnerships at CUMU member institutions, like the Syracuse Stage at Syracuse University. Most often these relationships seem built around a resident theater model, where a professional acting company works in partnership with a university or within university space. Given the makeup of the Tacoma theater scene, however, this did not seem a realistic option in UWT's case; it wasn't that there was a single community theater that made a logical partner for the institution, but rather a handful of smaller ones which could benefit from the assets that the university had to offer.

Would it be possible then, to develop a model to fit the unique context of Tacoma and UWT? Perhaps a collaborative structure where UWT provided the umbrella ownership and management of the program, but a variety of smaller theater groups shared the opportunity and provided the artistic oversight and execution of the performances in keeping with the program's overarching vision? In considering these questions, an analogy was quickly born with that of car-sharing: the premise being that not every person needs to own a car, even though at times every person might need to use one, and it is, in fact, individual car ownership that leads to a host of other problems (excessive emissions, congested streets, etc.). In the same way, the thinking was that not every theater company needed to own its own theater (a principal already embraced by the fringe groups in Tacoma), especially since the expense of ownership can often limit the artistic freedom in the production choices and often lead to inaccessible ticket pricing structures. Thus, the practical working concept for the project was born. The university could create a Zipcar style theater program where the "car" was owned and maintained by UWT, but shared and "driven" by the fringe theater groups in the city.

The Tacoma Theater Project at the University of Washington—Tacoma is built on this premise, only unlike Zipcar which grants access to vehicles through charging membership and usage fees, the program is managed by a curated structure, where theater organizations or theater professionals with proven experience in staging productions can apply for no-cost use of university theater space for rehearsals and productions.

To assist with coordination of the project and to further establish shared ownership of the program within the community, the university has enlisted the support of *Spaceworks Tacoma*, a local nonprofit whose mission is to energize vacant commercial space in the downtown core by contracting with landlords to offer reduced or subsidized rents to local business start-ups. Building on its previous experience working with this relatively similar model of short-term use occupancies, *Spaceworks* will oversee the application procedure for the program. A review board made up of representatives from UWT (including students, faculty, and staff), local government, and the arts community will then make final decisions about the shows selected for performances during the upcoming academic year. If accepted, groups receive free use of the campus theater space for a three-month period coinciding with the academic quarters and a modest stipend to support their productions. The selected theater groups are expected to coordinate all aspects of the production, including casting, marketing and ticket sales (with UWT institutional support), and in order to apply for the opportunity, the sponsoring theater group must document the following points:

1. The production supports the urban serving mission of the university and it reflects the diversity of the campus and the city.

2. The organization will uphold university expectations regarding equal access, by holding open auditions and encouraging inclusive participation from the community.

3. The organization will involve UWT students in the production in whatever means are best appropriate. These roles could include acting in the production or participating in independent studies or internships focused on stage management, marketing, theater tech, dramaturgy, or nonprofit management.

4. The UWT community (students, faculty, and staff) will receive free or reduced admission prices. Ticket prices for the general public will be no greater than $12 per show, with additional pay-what-you-can and free performance options to promote access.

5. The organization will engage the UWT academic units through the hosting of educational opportunities whenever possible, for example thematic discussions and post-performance talkbacks.

As of this academic quarter, the program is in the pilot stage, and we have invited Toy Boat Theatre to work as our first community partner. Toy Boat Theatre has a long, though intermittent tradition (for reasons outlined here) of producing socially conscious theater in Tacoma, and this coming spring, the group will begin auditions and rehearsals for the play *Anon(ymous)* by Naomi Iizuka. The play is a modern adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey*, only in this case, the main character Anon is not a king in flight, but rather a refugee journeying through a harsh urban landscape, and the dramatic conflicts are not with monsters or gods, but rather with sweatshop owners and hostile neighbors. The play examines themes of cultural displacement, violence, and poverty, and it is difficult to imagine the play being produced in Tacoma without the support of this project; however, it is exactly the type of play the community needs, and it is an ideal debut for UWT in the local theater scene. At the completion of the production, the university will launch the full, expanded version of the program with the operational structure described here.

Perhaps one objection to this model might be that it seems a form of out-sourcing, where the once academically controlled domain of staging a university theatrical production is ceded to a professional (even if nonprofit) organization. However, we argue that it is more appropriate to frame it in reverse, as a form of in-sourcing, where the realm of the professional theater is brought under the domain of the university, with the resources and the respect of the institution creating a safe-haven for the presently unsustainable efforts of the fringe theater groups in the city. There is, in fact, a somewhat parallel operating model already being used for arts and theater nonprofits. *Collective insourcing*, as it has been called, is a system based on the premise that individual nonprofit organizations waste resources on activities that are in common with "thousands of other nonprofits," and by working together and sharing the burden of essential support services, the groups can better conserve resources for their primary arts programming efforts. In a theater's case, some of what might be shared would obviously be the high cost of maintaining a physical performance space, but it could also be the various administrative efforts (fundraising, marketing, and the like) that go into staging a performance.

Advocates of this model have argued that working in a collective insourcing way helps "organizations achieve their missions in collaboration with various stakeholders and through collective leveraging, rather than in perceived competition with each other" (Yarden and Maxwell 2011, 3). This model has already been implemented successfully within theater nonprofits in various communities, but the Tacoma Theater Project represents an innovative approach to the idea by using a major university as an anchor to a collective insourcing structure. This is not to say that UWT's program is entirely unique in this regard. In the early 1970s, Philip Arnoult founded the pioneering Baltimore Theater Project with funding support from Antioch College. Under his artistic vision, the college supported the performances of new works produced by a variety of emerging theater organizations in the city, and from the program's conception, the vision for the Baltimore Theater Project was, like UWT's, that it would promote diversity (and the avant-garde) in theater and that it would encourage inclusivity in its surrounding urban environment by offering all tickets free of charge (Smith 2011). Although the program is no longer university-based, the Baltimore Theater Project continues to operate to this day, and while some of its approach has been altered through the years (tickets are no longer entirely free), it has maintained much of its original vision. It continues to present a diverse array of theater, and very much like the vision for the Tacoma Theater Project, it continues to offer support and performance space to emerging local theater companies under its larger umbrella. It has grown into an award-winning theater organization, and now, more than forty years into its history, it offers good support that the over-arching vision and mission outlined here are sound. Furthermore, given the economic challenges now facing theaters society-wide, it seems an appropriate time for UWT and the Tacoma Theater Project to reexamine the possibilities for a university-supported structure, in line with the original vision for the program in Baltimore.

In the early stages of vetting the vision for UWT's program within the local theater community, it quickly became clear that the structure was attractive and held many benefits for the theater organizations. Most notably, it offered free space and the artistic freedom that came with that reduced overhead; beyond this, it offered modest financial support, along with access to student labor and the campus' built in audience base. Additionally, it brought with it the endorsement of the university and the respect associated with the institution, which is likely to carry weight with the general audience in the community, ideally making them less wary to try an unrecognized, less mainstream theatrical production. But what of our students? Would there be a loss, educationally speaking, by moving toward this model? And what of the community? What benefit might the structure hold and what evidence might there be that the efforts could even begin to accomplish the ambitious goals of diversifying and growing the audience base in the city?

It should be noted that for students, the Tacoma Theater Project is just a portion of the movement to grow theater on campus. There are parallel efforts underway to develop a larger curriculum in theater and drama within the Arts, Media, and Culture program, and there are hiring considerations underway to go along with those efforts. Therefore, from a classroom standpoint, the impact would seem negligible, since the curricular work would be occurring either way, even if the university were developing a more traditional theater model. As far as the connection between the classroom and the stage, this model does not prohibit the staging of conventional, faculty-led and student-acted productions. Should student interest in, and demand for, an internal theater program grow to a point where large-scale, in-house productions would be viable, there is no reason to believe they could or would not occur. In the meantime, students now have the chance to get directly involved in a professional production and develop real-world, work-place style experience in nonprofit theater programming, on both the artistic and management sides. As universities increasingly put greater attention on workplace preparation and career development, these opportunities are a tremendous asset, since it helps students prepare for a professional workplace by working in a professional capacity through internships, independent studies, and/or acting opportunities.

For the community of Tacoma in general, there are real questions about the ability of a university-based theater program to help develop a more diverse audience base in the city. However, the program's requirements for reduced or free ticket options, along with the campus's location in the center of the downtown core, immediately accessible by foot or by after-hour light-rail service, ensure that it will be economically and logistically feasible for the full range of Tacoma's residents to attend a production. In terms of trying to ensure a greater level of audience attractiveness of the productions, UWT has worked toward creating a more inclusive approach for curating the artistic selections by both partnering with *Spaceworks* and inviting community leadership to play a role in the application review process.

Of course, only time will tell if this approach will be successful in broadening audience interest within the community, but there is good reason to be optimistic. In reexamining the 2012 NEA study, which documented the decline in the theater-going audience, interestingly, there were several areas where the statistics actually improved. Despite the general trends to the contrary, theater attendance among African American and Latino groups increased over the previous four years. The same was also seen in several other genres of the performing arts, including significant increases in the size of minority audiences attending Jazz music and Latin dance (Cohen 2013; National Endowment for the Arts 2013). In light of this data, it seems fair to expect that if the Tacoma Theater Project can succeed in diversifying the theater offerings in the city, then there is likely to be an audience there ready and waiting to grow.

Conclusion

In building this program, the relative newness of the University of Washington–Tacoma has been both a hindrance and a benefit. On one hand, the lack of a preexisting faculty and other resources committed to theater meant that the discussion had to start at the grass roots, so developments were often slow as campus leaders gradually embraced the project. On the other hand, this also meant that the university could be more exploratory and think outside the box in strategizing its approach. Without a preexisting program, there were no delicate discussions to be had about traditions to overturn or, as has been the case in this era of theater cuts, budgets or faculty roles to be re-evaluated.

We realize that this will not be the norm for readers from universities with preexisting theater programs and that the UWT model is not universally replicable whole cloth. For that matter, even without an established theater program, there are countless micro, campus-specific challenges related to creating this sort of university-community collaboration. This paper is not offered as an argument that the structure of the Tacoma Theater Project is *the* solution to the challenges facing every university theater program today. Instead, it is the spirit of inclusivity, collaboration, and the community-responsive nature of the project that we offer as *an* approach for innovative theater programs during these times.

Urban and metropolitan universities often command a leadership position in their surrounding communities and with that position comes responsibility. In this case, as the role of theater is in flux both on our campuses and in our surrounding communities, urban universities have a responsibility to do just that—to lead—even as they face their own internal challenges. If theater programs at urban and metropolitan universities reach out to the local theater community with a spirit of collaboration, they are bound to discover "mutually supportive" ways they can work together, looking for ways that the campus can serve not just as a partner with professional theaters, but as an anchor to the efforts already underway.

For UWT, that has meant first recognizing the gap between the current theater programming in the city and the diversity of the potential audience it serves, and then second, recognizing that the issue was an opportunity, rather than a challenge, to create innovative ways to use institutional assets, both tangible and intangible, to support the community efforts that are already seeking to address the problem. If we look only inward for solutions to the trends facing theater, and if we continue to cut or cut back on our programs in response, without regard for their potential for creating positive change community-wide, we are, in fact, still leading, just in the wrong direction, and so we shouldn't be surprised if the downward trend for audiences continues in the future.

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Discovering Diversity Downtown: Questioning Phoenix

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Abstract

Applied community learning experiences for university students are promising endeavors in downtown urban environments. Past research is applied to help better comprehend a community engagement initiative conducted in downtown Phoenix, Arizona. The initiative aimed to illuminate the socio-cultural diversity of the downtown area utilizing storytelling methods. The initiative leveraged three broad questions: Where is downtown, what is downtown, and who is downtown? Lessons learned from the initiative, its processes, and outcomes are showcased and reviewed.

> *Downtown is resurrection. The re-birth of the cool, the now. The happening, happening again. For the first time . . . from memory . . . from the sense of living the eternal moment.* (Jack Evans, poet [Dombrowski and Talmage 2014, 3])

Like the mythical phoenix, downtown urban areas have both risen and descended over the years, but still downtowns remain the vital epicenters of today's communities (Speck 2012). It is no wonder then that many of our colleges and universities are housed in some way or another in downtown areas because of their value (Emenhiser 2012). While these downtowns may be relatively small in comparison to the entire urban area, they considerably contribute to the health of the entire urban or metropolitan area (Sisko et al. 2014). Thus, intuitively, we know that urban downtowns have value, but we need better measures of that value (Mahoney et al. 2014). Those measurements can be complex, because these public spaces do not only have economic or physical value, but socio-cultural value as well (Madden 2014; Ward 2007).

Applied community learning experiences may be quintessential tools for discovering value in urban downtown communities. In light of these notions, this paper explores socio-cultural value in the heart of an urban downtown area through an applied community learning experience, which involved university students, faculty, and community members. The experience was spurred from a grant-funded initiative that sought to illuminate the stories of socio-cultural diversity in downtown Phoenix, Arizona.

A Brief Introduction to Downtown Phoenix

The entire city of Phoenix consists of an estimated 1.6 million residents and is the fifth most populated city in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2013; World Population Review 2014); however, less than 2 percent of its residents live in its downtown area. The entire Phoenix metropolitan area is comprised of a population of 4.3 million persons, making it the thirteenth largest metropolitan area in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2013; World Population Review 2014); thus, just slightly more than 0.5 percent of the metro-area's population is found in the capital city's nucleus. In many ways, downtown Phoenix might epitomize the consequences of urban sprawl (Speck 2012), but as one downtown university professor comments, "It's starting to change, I see very real change" (Waltz 2014).

Ten years ago, downtown Phoenix rarely would see activity outside of traditional work hours unless there was an event at one of the two professional sports venues, or at one of its museums or theatres (Hilton 2013; Poore 2011). The area had somewhat of an indefinite artist community, and it was without a light rail system, university campus, and thriving city nightlife (Hilton 2013). In 2006, Arizona State University opened a satellite campus in downtown Phoenix, which in the beginning drew more than a thousand students into the area (Hilton 2013); now the campus and its programs have 11,500 students enrolled (Arizona State University 2014a). The development of what would become a higher education district was coupled with the revitalization of arts districts and the emergence of boutique lodging and nightlife venues (i.e., bars, restaurants, and a bowling alley). A light rail system was built in the area, which connected downtown Phoenix to uptown and midtown Phoenix, Mesa, and Tempe, where ASU's original campus resides (Hall 2008). What was once a blighted and high-crime region of the city now appears to be a vivacious place to visit, live, and work (E. Scott 2012; Waltz 2014).

At least in the city center, much of the once noticeable blight has begun to evaporate since the introduction of Arizona State University (Hilton 2013) and because of the hard work of local artists and community leaders (Stein, Eigo, and Kahler 2014). Grants of up to $100,000 have been employed in the area to "put vacant, blighted properties to use and support the local arts economy" (Gersema 2012). Now, the downtown area hosts art walks, pub-crawls, farmers markets, and food trucks (Hilton 2013).

The issue of blight has been targeted by many in higher education, and through creative place-making, universities have helped transform areas with blight (Grossman and Roy 2014). Many institutions have sought to become more socially embedded in their communities as a response to their ivory tower images (Arizona State University 2014b; Hall 2008). Hall (2008) writes, "The idea is that a campus should become a vital part of the city and its downtown, sharing its challenges and helping it build a sustainable future through useful research and teaching."

The presence of a campus, however, does not guarantee vitality; engagement with and dialogue between university students, faculty, and community members through applied community learning experiences are essential for healthy partnerships. Thus, what follows is a discussion of the importance of applied community learning experiences and a discussion of one of the first applied projects of its kind in downtown Phoenix. However, the applied community learning experience is presented knowing that the actual number of these kinds of experiences in the area is unknown; an accurate portrait of downtown development through university-community partnerships remains needed.

Applied Community Learning Experiences

"Where you went to college matters less to your work life and well-being after graduation than how you went college." (Brandon Busteed [Gallup Business Journal, 2014])

Applied community learning experiences for college and university students are essential to their future success in their work and personal lives (Busteed 2014). A recent study by Gallup found that experiential and deep learning, including semester or longer projects, are key to students' success in their personal and work lives after graduation (Busteed 2014). Consistently, Weingarten (2014) suggests that modern-instruction requires *richness* and *depth* in student learning experiences. Thus, it is important that "students combine academic study with some form of direct, practical involvement, usually with a community close to the university" (Bednarz et al. 2008, 87), which may include an urban downtown area.

Many colleges and universities foster applied- or service-learning experiences for their students, where students fulfill their coursework through activities in communities that help fulfill community needs. These activities serve to help students acquire important skills and knowledge that will help them in their work and community lives outside of their college and university and/or after they graduate. "Service-learning and other outreach activities give students firsthand opportunities to apply what they are learning in their disciplinary studies outside the academic setting, thus promoting leadership, character development, cultural and community understanding, and self-discovery" (Garber et al. 2010, 78).

Applied learning helps better the civic skills, the connectedness to the university, and the retention of our students (Roy 2014). If the goal is to enable college and university students to apply their skills and knowledge in their own communities, then the strategies used to teach them should relate to their own life experiences (Grossman and Roy 2014). Syracuse, New York Mayor Stephanie Miner highlights this vital sensitivity: "We deposit all of our societal problems into our school buildings along with our children, and say to educators, teach them" (Mahoney et al. 2014); thus, *how* we teach matters (Busteed 2014).

Faculty members, therefore, play a key role in facilitating successful applied learning experiences in communities for students. First, faculty perceptions of civic engagement and service-learning appear to influence participation in those activities (Hiraesave and Kauffman 2014). These experiences also may be more inclined to help build strong personal connections between faculty members and students. Second, Busteed (2014) noted that emotional support shown for students—in particular, professors that instill an excitement about learning in their students and professors that care about their students—are significant to students' success in their personal and work lives after graduation. In relation to both students and faculty, institutional commitment to applied learning is a necessity (Hiraesave and Kauffman 2014).

These learning experiences can transform into formal partnerships with a community, a community organization, or community members (Pstross et al. 2013). University–community partnerships help students connect theory and practice (Wilson 2004). They also help universities stay grounded in their communities, thus, answering Ernest Lynton's (1983) call to "rethink our conception of the university as a detached and isolated institution" (53). Powell (2014) implores that both neighborhoods with universities and universities in neighborhoods need to consider diversity in their work together:

> *Neighborhoods are home to diverse groups of residents who share a common place, but not the same degree of attachment to that place or the same sense of community. Despite the increased interest in university–community relations, there is relatively little empirical research on intergroup relations in campus-adjacent neighborhoods* (108).

Thus, the intentional integration of the university into the community and vice versa is key to joint visioning and development, especially in urban downtown areas (Waltz 2014).

Community members, however, still do not necessarily experience the same benefits as members of the university (Blouin and Perry 2009; Lear and Sánchez 2013). Blouin and Perry (2009) write, "The benefits to students are well documented, but the value to the community is less clear" (133). Benefits to the community need to be thoroughly assessed and well documented; they should not be implied or assumed (Lear and Sánchez, 2013). Therefore, sustainable university-community partnerships are founded in reciprocity and trust. Stakeholders from both arenas need to collaborate as partners, and both partners need to seek ways to leverage each other's strengths in community engagement work. Furthermore, an ongoing commitment to the partnership must be established (Davidson et al. 2010; Holland and Gelmon 2003; Lear and Sánchez 2013). Thus, a key question must be kept in mind as community developer Richard Knopf notes: "How can we become incredibly integrated to actually reflect the vision of the community, instead of the vision of [the university]?" (Waltz 2014).

Portraits of Our Universities and Communities

Integration requires self-awareness, which may be more like portraiture than cartography. Barbara Holland (2014) emphasizes that we—university personnel who work to enhance community engagement—need a reasonably accurate portrait of the activity at our institutions. Efforts have been made through the use of technological resources (e.g., Community Engagement Collaboratory) to create and capture these images making up our universities (Holland 2014), yet the same efforts need to be made in the larger communities that our universities serve.

Often our universities and communities seem as diverse as what we might see in a Jackson Pollack painting. Where to start or what to focus on seem to stress our minds as we seek to construct more accurate portraits of our institutions and communities. Holland (2014) notes that measurement may be one of the biggest deterrents of engagement, including the need to track different perspectives in our community engagement work. Thus, broad strokes are needed on the canvas to reveal the true diversity of our communities, our universities, and all the interwoven pieces between them. Applied community learning experiences can be one of the paintbrushes we use for discovery and, perhaps even, development.

The "We Are Downtown" Initiative

> *Sit down with a good book, open your mind to experience something new, and use the experience to go out and change your own community.* (Alex Stevenson, university student, [2014])

In the interest of integration and engagement, an initiative was proposed to Arizona State University's Office of Academic Excellence through Diversity. This initiative was accepted and was carried out through an applied community learning experience in downtown Phoenix, Arizona, that utilized university students, faculty, and community members. The aim was to highlight the stories of socio-cultural diversity in the downtown area through efforts initiated by university students and staff.

The We Are Downtown initiative began as a small grant-funded project. The purpose of the grant offered by the Academic Excellence through Diversity office at Arizona State University was written as such:

> *To provide our university community including students, faculty, staff, and local communities, with opportunities to explore and discuss together current and cutting-edge scholarly topics and issues, including but not limited to behavioral, societal, cultural, historical, scientific, and political perspectives, that advance an understanding of access, excellence, and inclusion from interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives. The goal of this program is to elevate the university dialogue across disciplines in order to educate our students and provide critical insights into the multidisciplinary opportunities and challenges in working with our diverse peoples and communities in the 21st century.* (Diaz 2013, 1)

Proposal responses were required to contain multidisciplinary teams and multidisciplinary methods. They were particularly encouraged to offer at least one community event to exhibit the university's commitment to diversity and commitment to working with underserved professional and neighborhood communities. The parameters, though broad and somewhat ill defined, had great promise for the team.

The multidisciplinary We Are Downtown team engaged students and faculty from three university schools: 1) the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, 2) the School of Community Resources and Development, and 3) the School of Letters and Sciences. They provided the following response:

> *The We Are Downtown project seeks to amplify storytelling in and of the diverse communities in downtown Phoenix. This effort will strengthen relationships between schools, faculty, and students at ASU's downtown Phoenix campus and*

individuals and private and public sector organizations in downtown. The many expressions of this story will be showcased in a summit that weaves connections between ASU and the downtown communities, and offers the opportunity for the community to discover its soul. (Knopf et al. 2013, 2)

After formation, the multidisciplinary team grew to include other schools even after the grant was funded.

The team was motivated to discover the diverse downtown story through an applied community learning experience, which was to conduct both traditional and nontraditional community-based research. Undergraduate students in a senior-level tourism development and management course held at the university's downtown Phoenix campus were the primary surveyors for the more conventional research portions of the first phase of this initiative. However, the diverse downtown story was chronicled not only through traditional survey methods, but also through a student-directed documentary film and sourced poems, writings, and photographs from university students and downtown community members.

Stories were assumed to contain the rich details of diversity desired. Specifically regarding Phoenix, Yoohyun Jung (2014) writes:

People interact with things or other people, creating stories and leaving traces of those stories as memories in the minds of other people or the physical space of places they go. Those bits and pieces accumulate in the pockets of this city, giving the people an experience more special than all the rest.

Thus, the team's methods aimed to elucidate a portrait of downtown Phoenix through stories of diversity.

The Essential Questions

Downtown is the celebration of the city's non-concealment of our very selves. (Michael Bartelt, university student and poet, [Dombrowski and Talmage 2014, 6])

An open process was agreed upon to paint the portrait of downtown Phoenix from its diverse perspectives and through its stories of diversity. Lees (2003) expresses the basic philosophy of this kind of process:

Urban revitalization initiatives must embrace diversity—cultural and economic, as well as functional and spatial. This diversity of different 'diversities' is often under-theorized, as are the benefits of, and relationships among, social and cultural diversity, economic diversification, mixed-use and multi-purpose zoning, political pluralism, and democratic public space. It is my contention that this ambivalence is not simply a smokescreen for vested commercial interests, but also provides opportunities for expressing alternative visions of what diversity and the city itself should be. (613)

The team established the three essential questions to guide the applied community learning experience: 1) where is downtown Phoenix; 2) what is downtown Phoenix; and 3) who is downtown Phoenix? The team then reached out to community members, university students, and others to discover the variety of possible answers these questions. More specifically, the undergraduate students, who conducted the more formal research efforts, were asked to reflect upon their own answers to these questions.

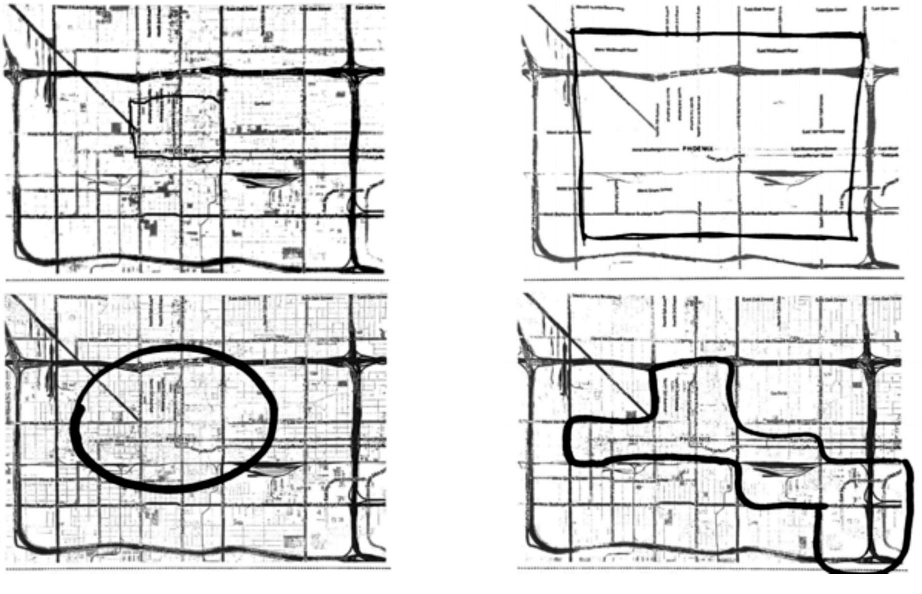
Where Is Downtown?

Before surveying the community, the undergraduate students were asked in-class to respond by drawing on a paper map, "Where is downtown Phoenix?" The map pictured a geographic area that spanned three miles north and south and four miles east and west. The students drew their perceived boundaries of the downtown area on the paper map.

The undergraduate students then went to their local friends, fellow students, family members, downtown residents, workers, and passersby on the street with maps of the general downtown area. They asked the participants to draw an outline of downtown Phoenix's boundaries. The maps collected were synthesized and organized by two undergraduate students not enrolled in the senior-level tourism development and management course to elucidate possible themes.

As to be expected, definitions varied between individuals. Out of the more than three hundred maps collected, four common responses emerged from the collection of answers. These responses are found in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Four Common Representations of Answers to "Where Is Downtown?" Survey

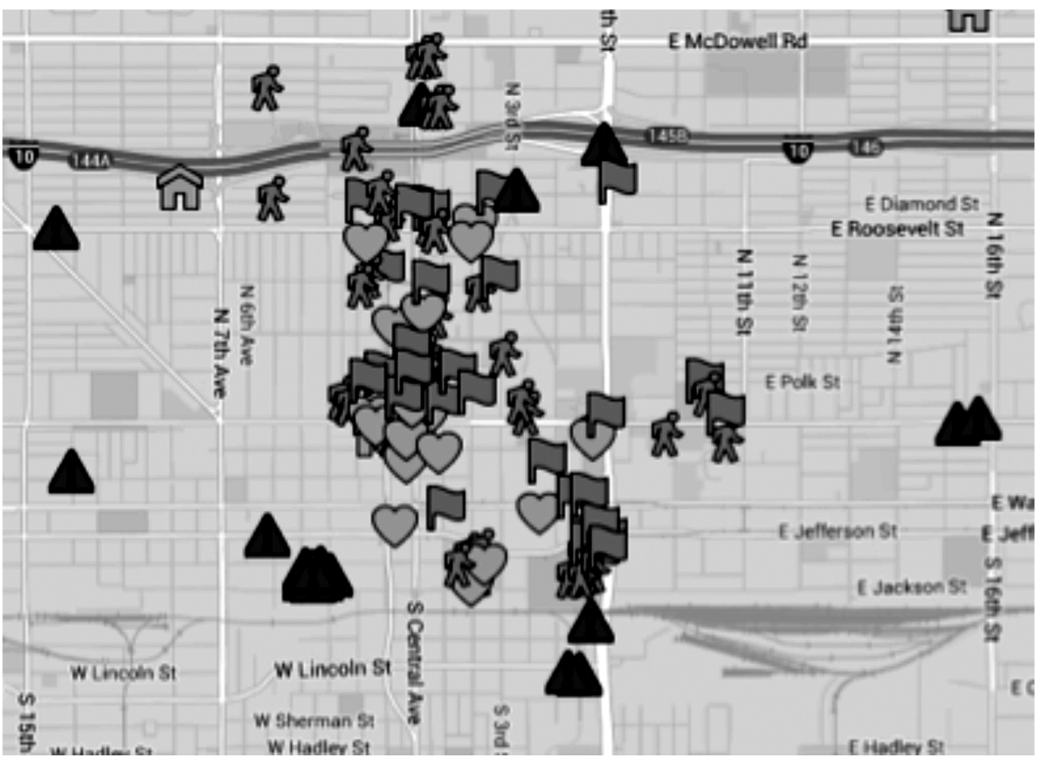


The discovery of *where* was furthered through an open house event hosted by the university at its downtown Phoenix campus. At the event, the We Are Downtown team asked more than sixty visitors to indicate on a map projected on a wall to answer the following questions by using sticky notes:

- Where is the heart of downtown Phoenix? (represented by hearts)
- Where do you go in downtown Phoenix? (represented by people)
- Where do you avoid in downtown Phoenix? (represented by exclamations)
- Where is your favorite part of or place in downtown Phoenix? (represented by flags)
- Where do you live in downtown Phoenix? (represented by houses)

The team using Google's map engine then captured the answers online, which are depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Notable Places of Downtown Phoenix

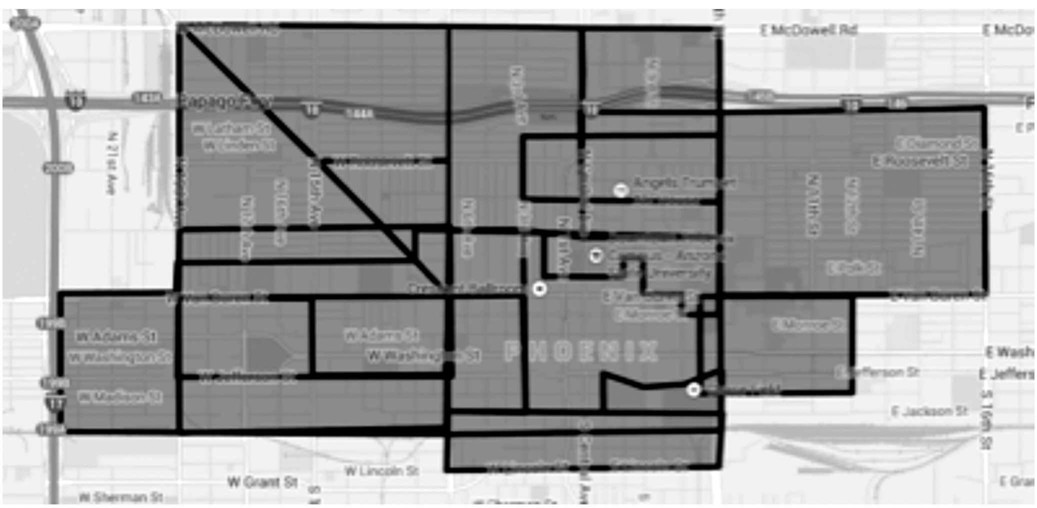


Also to be expected, the heart of downtown Phoenix seemed to yield consistent answers within a dense area of the map. The heart was found within the Downtown Phoenix

Business Improvement District's boundaries, which helps corroborate this portion of the project's findings (Downtown Phoenix Partnership Inc. 2014; Hilton 2013). The center or heart included many of the individuals' favorite places and places where they usually go. Through informal conversations with event visitors, places individuals went and favored were noted to include sports arenas, restaurants, bars, historic neighborhoods, the university, and museums. The places that were avoided were noted as government agency buildings, abandoned areas with a lot of blight, and the local city jail. Finally, the few persons who indicated that they lived in downtown did not live near the perceived heart or center, but still emphasized that they lived downtown.

The undergraduate students then were divided into eleven teams and were asked to speak with additional residents, workers, and passersby in downtown Phoenix. Ten of the teams of three to six students focused on the different official, unofficial, and overlapping districts of downtown Phoenix. These districts are depicted in Figure 3. The districts were based on City of Phoenix development plans (City of Phoenix 2014b) and historic neighborhood districts (City of Phoenix 2014a; Historic Phoenix Real Estate 2014). Finally, one team specifically focused on elucidating the university's downtown Phoenix campus' assets.

Figure 3. Downtown Phoenix's Overlapping Districts



What Is Downtown?

Two sub-questions were deemed necessary to better understand what is downtown: 1) What is a downtown?, and 2) What is our downtown? Before surveying the community, the undergraduate students were asked in-class to reflect on and respond to the following question, "What is a downtown?" Following this reflection, these students ascertained the appropriate human subjects training certifications before surveying and having informal conversations with downtown community members and fellow university students around the question, "What is our downtown?" Meanwhile, other students and faculty involved in the initiative gathered poems and photos from community artists and fellow students around these two questions as well.

What is a downtown?

The undergraduate students generated, in-class, their own definitions of *downtown* and *downtown spaces* before data collection in the community began. Their definitions had both positive and negative connotations. The following are excerpts (Dombrowski and Talmage 2014) of their definitions of what is a downtown:

> *A place of hustle and bustle . . . a place of business and a place where everyone can have fun*. (13)
>
> *Where everything happens*. (13)
>
> *An area within a major city that has places to go, things to do*. (13)
>
> *Rich with culture and has an abundance of shops and businesses*. (13)
>
> *A place that takes bits and pieces of surrounding environments in order to create its own unique experiences*. (13)
>
> *A place where the community goes to get together and enjoy sports and other events*. (13)
>
> *A city area that has a different vibe . . .not a suburb or a rural area*. (14)
>
> *Where events and activities take place for locals and tourists*. (14)
>
> *An urban community*. (14)
>
> *The heart of the city*. (14)
>
> *Oldest area of the city*. (15)
>
> *A corporate culture filled with monotonous jobs and daily activities*. (15)
>
> *Traffic and expensive parking*. (15)
>
> *Tall buildings, narrow streets, not very convenient for cars*. (15)

Common themes appeared to include a central location, a place for the community (in general), government, businesses, and tourism. The more negative themes centered on parking and traffic. These definitions likely were influenced by the students' definitions of and personal experiences in downtown Phoenix, which was examined using the question, “What is our downtown?”

What is our downtown?

Then, the undergraduate students along with the help of faculty members also forayed into the downtown Phoenix area exploring the question, “What is our downtown?” Statements and poems were sourced from local downtown Phoenix residents and stakeholders. The following are excerpts (Dombrowski and Talmage 2014) of their reveries of what their downtown is:

> *Downtown is the possibility of art for everybody.—Elizabeth McNeil, poet* (17)
>
> *Downtown has a key word that stands out . . .”own.”—Leah Marche, poet, writer, and community member* (17)
>
> *Walt Whitman would say it contains multitudes. I’d say it’s won my heart.—RD, poet, co-founder/host of the Phoenix Poetry Series, university lecturer* (18)
>
> *My downtown is the blood that runs through my veins, it is a transfusion for a new Phoenix—Mike Pfister, co-founder of CollabX, musician, and university instructor* (19)
>
> *I chose to live downtown because I want to be centrally located and live in a culturally diverse neighborhood.—Downtown resident* (17)
>
> *I live downtown because it is where my family has lived all my life.—Downtown resident* (18)
>
> *Downtown is becoming more diverse. Before it was just businessmen and corporate industry, but now that [the university] has brought a student presence to the area, more people are attracted to living downtown. With the addition of the convention center, [the university] downtown, and places such as Cityscape, there is a more diverse community within the downtown Phoenix area.—Downtown business owner* (17)
>
> *Downtown allows me to express who I am through my work. It allows me to contribute to the urban and hip feel, the new vision of the downtown area.—Downtown business owner* (17)
>
> *I see the future for Phoenix being very bright. I have worked downtown for many years and have watched it develop for the better in so many ways.—Downtown worker* (19)

These excerpts reflect the types of conversations the undergraduate students and the entire We Are Downtown team held with local community members. The *what* of downtown Phoenix appears to be fluid and dynamic, and diversity is only one part of the story. The outlook appears positive for future efforts for development, student engagement, and further discovery of diversity and inclusion in downtown Phoenix and amongst its many stakeholders.

Who Is Downtown?

> *Downtown is a place where all different peoples, cultures, and communities can come together.* (Dombrowski and Talmage 2014, 40)
>
> *A city's soul lies in the diversity that embraces cultures of all origin.* (Jung 2014)

For development, it is crucial that appropriate leverage points for positive change are found *(where)*. It is also necessary that community needs and assets be elucidated and the desired changes for development be agreed upon *(what)*. But, it is equally important to consider *who* will be leading development efforts, *who* will be affected by any changes, *who* has a say in proposed and implemented changes, and *who* resides within or makes up the membership of a particular community (Mahoney et al. 2014; Talmage 2014). Thus, community-wide data collection is core to our work (Mahoney et al. 2014).

To answer the question, "Who is downtown?," both traditional and nontraditional methods were used. A doctoral student examined U.S. Census data bounded in the vicinity of downtown Phoenix to explore the sub-question, "Who is downtown Phoenix?" Other university faculty and students on the We Are Downtown team then utilized nontraditional methods, such as artistic and community-involved efforts, to address a second sub-question, "Who are downtown Phoenix's stakeholders?"

Who is Downtown Phoenix?

> *Phoenix, you've given me all, and now I'm something.* (Dombrowski 2012)

The doctoral student was able to capture the demographics of the downtown vicinity using the American FactFinder search and data collection utility provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Census tracts (CTs) were deemed as the best geographic unit for analyses because they did not overextend outside the designated urban downtown area like zip codes did. The census data revealed a useful portrait of the downtown area. Census data summaries are provided below and in Tables 1 through 7 as examples of the kinds of information that can be accessed and analyzed by students in their applied community learning experiences.

Eleven census tracts—CT(s) 1129, 1130, 1131, 1132.01, 1132.02, 1132.03, 1140, 1141, 1142, 1143.01, 1143.02—were included in the demographic investigation for this initiative (U.S. Census Bureau 2008–2012). These census tracts encompassed the same geographic area pictured in the *where* portion of this initiative; thus, these assessed tracts spanned three miles north and south and four miles east and west. Selected social, economic, housing, and individual background characteristics were downloaded and explored from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The social make up of downtown Phoenix consists of around 9,109 households and more than 22,000 persons. Average household sizes amongst the eleven census tracts ranged from 1.23 to 3.71 persons, and the average family size ranged from 2.40 to 4.65 persons. Single persons (more without children than with) make up the majority of households (just over 70 percent). There also appear to be more adult men than women in the area. The educational attainment of individuals appears almost to be divided into three equal categories: 1) residents without a high school education, 2) residents with a high school education, and 3) residents with a college degree or higher. Table 1 illustrates social characteristics from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 1. The Social Characteristics of Downtown Phoenix

Social Characteristic	Total Number	Percent of Total	Margin of Error*	Error Percent*
Total Households	9,109	-	1,142	12.54%
Families	4,339	47.63%	1,020	23.51%
Families with Children	2,301	25.26%	874	37.98%
Married Couples	2,151	23.61%	834	38.77%
Married Couples with Children	896	9.84%	594	66.29%
Single Fathers	583	6.40%	429	73.58%
Single Fathers with Children	286	3.14%	321	112.24%
Single Mothers	1,605	17.62%	762	47.48%
Single Mothers with Children	1,119	12.28%	697	62.29%
Nonfamilies	4,770	52.37%	1,091	22.87%
Singles (living alone)	3,949	43.35%	1,002	25.37%
Singles (65 and older)	834	9.16%	374	44.84%
Households with Children	2,607	28.62%	897	34.41%
Households (65 and older)	1,590	17.46%	552	34.72%
Total Population in Households	22,167	–	4,077	18.39%
Householder	9,109	41.09%	1,142	12.54%
Spouse	2,144	9.67%	829	38.67%
Children	6,672	30.10%	2,133	31.97%
Other Relatives	1,975	8.91%	1,333	67.49%
Nonrelatives	2,267	10.23%	1,204	53.11%

Unmarried Partner	900	4.06%	614	68.22%
Total Persons (15 and older)	20,426	92.15%	4,416	21.62%
Men	11,857	53.49%	2,603	21.95%
Women	8,569	38.66%	1,813	21.16%
Never Married	11,124	50.18%	3,844	34.56%
Married (not separated)	5,101	23.01%	1,862	36.50%
Separated	672	3.03%	698	103.87%
Widowed	803	3.62%	716	89.17%
Divorced	2,726	12.30%	1,428	52.38%
Grandparents with Children	88	0.40%	81	92.05%
Responsible for Grandchildren	54	0.24%	73	135.19%
Total Persons (25 and older)	16,251	73.31%	2,877	17.70%
Less than 9th Grade Education	3,277	14.78%	1,429	43.61%
9th to 12th Grade Education (no diploma)	2,044	9.22%	986	48.24%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	4,635	20.91%	1,509	32.56%
Some College (no degree)	2,698	12.17%	1,021	37.84%
Associate's Degree	746	3.37%	600	80.43%
Bachelor's Degree	1,879	8.48%	942	50.13%
Graduate or Professional Degree	972	4.38%	557	57.30%

*Margin of Errors and Error Percentages are based on a summation of the 11 census tracts' error values.

The economic characteristics of downtown residents show that from the just more than 20,000 population of persons 16 and older that there are slightly less than 10,000 persons in the civilian labor force. The unemployment rate for residents in the labor force is 13.28 percent. Most workers drive their automobiles alone to work (62.10 percent); however, around a third of workers walk, take public transportation, carpool to work, or utilize other means (i.e., bicycle). Also, around 30 percent of residents in downtown Phoenix are without a vehicle to drive. The average commute time for workers ranges from 16.8 minutes to 28.2 minutes amongst the eleven census tracts.

Management, business, science, and arts occupations appear most prevalent, and the largest industry for employment is the educational services, and health care and social assistance industry. Almost 80 percent of workers are privately employed, but almost 14 percent of earners are employed by a government agency. Around 6 percent of workers are self-employed, and around 2 percent of workers work from home in the area.

The median household income ranged from $15,767 to $39,046 amongst the eleven census tracts, while the mean household income ranged from $20,854 to $58,509. The percentage of all families whose income in the past twelve months was below the poverty level ranged from 13.0 percent to 63.3 percent (for all families) and 20.9 percent to 67.3 percent (for all people). Around 23 percent of residents received food stamps or SNAP benefits. Additionally, 30 percent of residents indicated they did not have health insurance, and it appears that 19 percent of children in the area were also without health insurance. Tables 2 and 3 illustrate these selected economic characteristics from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 2. The Worker Characteristics of Downtown Phoenix

Economic Characteristic	Total Number	Percent of Total	Margin of Error*	Error Percent*
Population (16 and older)	20,088	–	3,319	16.52%
In Civilian Labor Force	9,915	49.36%	2,192	22.11%
Employed	8,598	86.72%	2,058	23.94%
Unemployed	1,317	13.28%	930	70.62%
In Armed Forces Labor Force	10	0.05%	152	1520.00%
Not in Labor Force	10,163	50.59%	2,800	27.55%
Total Commuters (16 and older)	8,419	–	2,072	24.61%
Drive Automobile (alone)	5,228	62.10%	1,586	30.34%
Drive Automobile (carpool)	804	9.55%	591	73.51%
Public Transportation (not taxicab)	649	7.71%	647	99.69%
Walkers	631	7.49%	444	70.36%
Other Means	649	7.71%	584	89.98%
Work at Home	458	2.28%	413	90.17%
Civilians Employed (16 and older)	8,598	–	2,058	23.94%
Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations	2,838	33.01%	1,023	36.05%
Service Occupations	1,975	22.97%	1,052	53.27%
Sales and Office Occupations	1,985	23.09%	1,059	53.35%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	895	10.41%	690	77.09%

Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	905	10.53%	599	66.19%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining Industry	115	1.34%	239	207.83%
Construction Industry	530	6.16%	472	89.06%
Manufacturing Industry	596	6.93%	480	80.54%
Wholesome Trade Industry	140	1.63%	206	147.14%
Retail Trade Industry	866	10.07%	667	77.02%
Information Industry	328	3.81%	375	114.33%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities Industry	308	3.58%	348	112.99%
Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Industry	623	7.25%	504	80.90%
Professional, Scientific and Management, and Administrative and Waste Management Industry	1,233	14.34%	689	55.88%
Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance Industry	1,632	18.98%	719	44.06%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services Industry	1,209	14.06%	810	67.00%
Other Services Except Public Administration Industry	551	6.41%	462	83.85%
Public Administration Industry	467	5.43%	423	90.58%
Private Wage and Salary Workers	6,836	79.51%	1,906	27.88%
Government Workers	1,183	13.76%	655	55.37%
Self-Employed Workers (unincorporated)	547	6.36%	468	85.56%
Unpaid Family Workers	32	0.37%	168	525.00%

*Margin of Errors and Error Percentages are based on a summation of the 11 census tracts' error values.

Table 3. The Income and Health Insurance Characteristics of Downtown Phoenix

Economic Characteristic	Total Number	Percent of Total	Margin of Error*	Error Percent*
Total Households	9,109	–	1,142	12.54%
Less than $10,000	1,995	21.90%	909	45.56%
$10,000 to $14,999	1,192	13.09%	644	54.03%
$15,000 to $24,999	1,713	18.81%	824	48.10%
$25,000 to $34,999	987	10.84%	596	60.39%
$35,000 to $49,999	1,017	11.16%	594	58.41%
$50,000 to $74,999	830	9.11%	567	68.31%
$75,000 to $99,999	556	6.10%	404	72.66%
$100,000 to $149,999	584	6.41%	423	72.43%
$150,000 to $199,999	154	1.69%	246	159.74%
$200,000 or more	81	0.89%	178	219.75%
Receiving Employment Earnings	6,340	69.60%	1,187	18.72%
Drawing Social Security	1,970	21.63%	716	36.35%
Drawing Retirement Income	556	6.10%	387	69.60%
Drawing on Supplemental Security	662	7.27%	432	65.26%
Receiving Cash Public Assistance	414	4.54%	339	81.88%
Receiving Food Stamps and/or SNAP Benefits	2,130	23.38%	413	19.39%
Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	23,924	–	4,543	18.99%
With Health Insurance Coverage	16,755	70.03%	3,552	21.20%
With Private Health Insurance	7,625	31.87%	2,142	28.09%
With Public Health Insurance	10,260	42.89%	3,084	30.06%
No Health Insurance	7,169	29.97%	3,065	42.75%
Population of Children (under 18)	5,991	25.04%	599	10.00%
Children with No Health Insurance	1,153	19.25%	1,259	109.19%

*Margin of Errors and Error Percentages are based on a summation of the 11 census tracts' error values.

There appears to be around 11,501 housing units available in downtown Phoenix, and 79 percent of these units are occupied. Only 26 percent of those are owner-occupied, while 74 percent are renter-occupied. The homeowner vacancy rate ranges from 0.0 percent to 26.6 percent and the rental vacancy rate ranges from 0.0 percent to 29.9 percent amongst the eleven census tracts. The median monthly owner costs $979 to $2,140 for those with a mortgage and $324 to $710 for those without a mortgage. The median gross rent costs ranges from $573 to $769 amongst the eleven census tracts. The average household size of owner occupied units ranges from 1.32 to 4.55, and the average household size of renter-occupied units ranges from 1.21 to 3.21. Finally, the majority of residents appear to have moved into their current unit starting in the year 2000 or later.

Regarding the actual units, the median housing values range from $76,600 to $300,000 amongst the eleven census tracts. The largest proportion of dwellings are multi-housing, consisting of more than twenty units. By proportion, most dwellings appear to have been built after the year 2000 or before the year 1940. The median room size ranges from 2.8 to 4.6 rooms, and most homes contain at least one or two bedrooms. Finally, some housing units lack heat, lack complete plumbing systems, lack complete kitchen facilities, and are without telephone service. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate these selected housing characteristics from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 4. The Housing Characteristics of Downtown Phoenix

Housing Characteristic	Total Number	Percent of Total	Margin of Error*	Error Percent*
Total Housing Units	11,501	–	817	7.10%
Occupied Housing Units	9,109	79.20%	1,142	12.54%
Vacant Housing Units	2,392	20.80%	936	39.13%
Owner-Occupied	2,380	20.69%	778	32.69%
With a Mortgage	1,701	14.79%	704	41.39%
Without a Mortgage	679	5.90%	445	65.54%
Renter-Occupied	6,729	58.51%	1,189	17.67%
1-Unit Detached Dwelling	4,030	35.04%	866	21.49%
1-Unit Attached Dwelling	513	4.46%	435	84.80%
2-Units	1,043	9.07%	639	61.27%
3 or 4-Units	1,341	11.66%	749	55.85%
5 to 9 Units	778	6.76%	571	73.39%
10 to 19 Units	929	8.08%	550	59.20%
20 or more Units	2,762	24.02%	611	22.12%

Mobile Home	105	0.91%	223	212.38%
Built 2010 or later	150	1.30%	245	163.33%
Built 2000 to 2009	2,474	21.51%	852	34.44%
Built 1990 to 1999	1,115	9.69%	601	53.90%
Built 1980 to 1989	780	6.78%	492	63.08%
Built 1970 to 1979	663	5.76%	500	75.41%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,162	10.10%	690	59.38%
Built 1950 to 1959	1,257	10.93%	734	58.39%
Built 1940 to 1949	1,082	9.41%	614	56.75%
Built 1939 or earlier	2,818	24.50%	413	14.66%
1 Room	1,488	12.94%	777	52.22%
2 Rooms	873	7.59%	486	55.67%
3 Rooms	2,826	24.57%	950	33.62%
4 Rooms	2,944	25.60%	1,011	34.34%
5 Rooms	1,815	15.78%	800	44.08%
6 Rooms	677	5.89%	487	71.94%
7 Rooms	369	3.21%	328	88.89%
8 Rooms	311	2.70%	291	93.57%
9 Rooms or more	198	1.72%	255	128.79%
No Bedroom	1,572	13.67%	781	49.68%
1 Bedroom	3,598	31.28%	1,006	27.96%
2 Bedrooms	3,626	31.53%	1,045	28.82%
3 Bedrooms	2,061	17.92%	797	38.67%
4 Bedrooms	493	4.29%	398	80.73%
5 or more Bedrooms	151	1.31%	234	154.97%
No Heat	159	1.38%	223	140.25%
Lack of Complete Plumbing	60	0.52%	194	323.33%
Lack of Complete Kitchen	194	1.69%	249	128.35%
No Telephone Service	920	8.00%	595	64.67%

*Margin of Errors and Error Percentages are based on a summation of the 11 census tracts' error values.

Table 5. Occupant Characteristics of Downtown Phoenix

Occupant Characteristic	Total Number	Percent of Total	Margin of Error*	Error Percent*
Occupied Housing Units	9,109	–	1,142	12.54%
No Vehicles Available	2,718	29.84%	949	34.92%
1 Vehicle Available	3,954	43.41%	1,109	28.05%
2 Vehicles Available	1,916	21.03%	767	40.03%
3 or more Vehicles Available	521	5.72%	384	73.70%
Moved in 2010 or later	2,049	22.49%	833	40.65%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	5,387	59.14%	1,223	22.70%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	678	7.44%	437	64.45%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	549	6.03%	415	75.59%
Moved in 1970 to 1979	266	2.92%	269	101.13%
Moved in 1969 or earlier	180	1.98%	231	128.33%

*Margin of Errors and Error Percentages are based on a summation of the 11 census tracts' error values.

Downtown Phoenix residents range in age from 24.4 to 40.6 years of age amongst the eleven census tracts. Based on frequency, most residents appear to be between twenty to fifty-four years of age. Around 10 percent of the population is 62 or older, and less than a quarter of the population is younger than eighteen. Again, there are more men than women by proportion in the area. Finally, the largest racial background observed is White, followed by Hispanic/Latino, Black or African American, and other races. Tables 6 and 7 outline the age and sex and racial/ethnic characteristics, respectively.

Table 6. Age and Sex Characteristics of Downtown Phoenix Residents

Resident Characteristic	Total Number	Percent of Total	Margin of Error*	Error Percent*
Total Population	25,572	–	4,660	18.22%
Male	14,206	55.55%	3,061	21.55%
Female	11,366	44.45%	2,715	23.89%
Under 5 years	1,586	6.20%	909	57.31%
5 to 9 years	2,162	5.72%	1,339	73.70%
10 to 14 years	1,398	5.47%	845	60.44%
15 to 19 years	1,591	6.22%	978	61.47%

20 to 24 years	2,584	10.10%	1,311	50.74%
25 to 34 years	4,939	19.31%	1,762	35.68%
35 to 44 years	3,836	15.00%	1,310	34.15%
45 to 54 years	3,313	12.96%	1,238	37.37%
55 to 59 years	1,075	4.20%	681	63.35%
60 to 64 years	1,099	4.30%	721	65.61%
65 to 74 years	1,347	5.27%	669	49.67%
75 to 84 years	427	1.67%	269	63.00%
85 years and older	215	0.84%	300	139.53%
18 years and older	19,580	76.57%	3,247	16.58%
21 years and older	18,227	71.28%	3,051	16.74%
62 years and older	2,594	10.14%	969	37.36%
65 years and older	1,989	7.78%	793	39.87%

*Margin of Errors and Error Percentages are based on a summation of the 11 census tracts' error values.

Table 7. Racial Backgrounds of Downtown Phoenix Residents

Resident Characteristic	Total Number	Percent of Total	Margin of Error*	Error Percent*
Total Population	25,572	–	4,660	18.22%
One Race	25,295	98.92%	4,641	18.35%
Two or More Races	277	1.08%	332	119.86%
White	20,366	79.64%	4,398	21.59%
Black and African American	3,165	5.72%	1,687	73.70%
American Indian and Alaska Native	739	2.89%	789	106.77%
Asian	354	1.38%	415	117.23%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander 736.36%		22	0.09%	162
Some Other Race	1,214	4.75%	964	79.41%
Hispanic or Latino	14,701	57.49%	3,955	26.90%

*Margin of Errors and Error Percentages are based on a summation of the 11 census tracts' error values.

Who are Downtown Phoenix's Stakeholders?

> *We—the poets and artists and scholars—live in the heart of you, and your complex network of chambers and arteries and valves are our fodder.*—RD (Dombrowski 2012)
>
> *It's not what the city has to offer, but what you have to offer to the city.*—Michael Bartelt (Waltz 2014)

We need to recognize the psyches and personalities of our urban communities (Mahoney et al. 2014; Ward 2007). Both students and faculty recognized this notion as they reflected on this applied community learning experience. The team reflected in their chapbook, "Demographics alone do not provide us with the tools we need to understand diversity, but the real question is, 'Who gets to decide what is diversity for our downtown?'" (Dombrowski and Talmage 2014, 41). This question might also be phrased, "Who wants to decide what diversity is for our downtown?" Consistently, McCann (2002) writes, "A major concern . . . in recent decades has been to analyze how and in whose interests local space economies are produced and reproduced" (385).

Thus, the posture assumed by the We Are Downtown team and the students involved in the applied community learning experience was that everyone deserves a say in the future of downtown Phoenix (Waltz 2014). One graduate student commented, "Everyone has something at stake with downtown's success" (Waltz 2014). Because of the aforementioned assumption and the large scale involved, the initiative and the team were left with a conundrum. The team reflected their posture in their chapbook:

> *In our quest to better understand the diversity of downtown, what we discovered was that* ***the more possible it seemed, the more impossible it became****. And so what we discovered was merely the paradox of discovery—the impossibility of identifying diversity amongst diversity . . . Ultimately, in order to discover the answer to* ***who is downtown****, you must first ask,* ***who are you****?* (Dombrowski and Talmage 2014, 41)

The initiative needed to be retooled and reinvigorated not only through self- and team-reflection but also through further conversations with downtown stakeholders in and about the downtown community. Both reflection and change appeared crucial to the success of future applied community learning experiences.

The Chapbook and the Community Showcase

> *Events make cities exciting. Everyday spaces can be successfully inviting.*—Jeff Speck (2014)

Two mediums served as tangible products created from the applied community learning experience: 1) a documentary film; and 2) a chapbook. The answers to the broad essential questions posed by the team and the students were compiled into a fifty-page chapbook. An electronic version was made available online on the university's website (Dombrowski and Talmage 2014). Two hundred printed copies were distributed at a community showcase in May 2014.

The community showcase was held at a local film bar, which had an auditorium where patrons would be able to view movies. The location was chosen, because the bar fell within the found heart of the community and because the We Are Documentary (Waltz 2014) was going to be unveiled at the event. Doors opened for the event at 5:00 p.m. on a Monday in May 2014.

The event was publicized through press releases, emails, word-of-mouth from local community leaders, university channels, websites, and social media. Over one hundred and fifty university and community members were in attendance at the event. Each attendee received a chapbook, and a few of them received extras to pass on to others. Two showings were offered for the documentary. The showings were followed by a Q&A with the university student documentarian and the rest of the We Are Downtown team that were in attendance. Of those in attendance, only ten persons were a part of the initiative's team.

Lessons Learned

> *Downtown is still the beating heart of Phoenix.—We Are Downtown initiative facilitator and graduate student* (Waltz 2014)

Mediums

The applied community learning experience despite its scale and limitations appeared to be a successful endeavor for students, faculty, and community members. The team found film to be a great medium for community conversations. The gathering to screen the film allowed diversity not only to be talked about and/or heard, but diversity also was seen by looking each other in the eyes and listening to each other's conversations and comments during the Q&A session. This is consistent with previous uses of film in and outside of classrooms to discuss community and social issues (Lawler 2014). Film as a gathering mechanism in research initiatives also helps answers Lynton's (1983) call to "reexamine the ways in which we disseminate the results of our work" (23). In general, critical analyses of media portrayals of downtown areas and lifestyles by students are useful learning experiences (Liu and Blomley 2013).

The chapbook also was noted as a useful takeaway. There were no chapbooks left after the event ended. Community and university members and leaders alike asked if they could take extra copies to their friends, family members, co-workers, and others they knew had an interest in the success of downtown Phoenix. Notably, emails came in after the event wondering when the chapbook and documentary would both be available for viewing online. Within a couple of months, both were made available online.

Conversations

Thus, the conversations and communication continued after the event. Intrigue was established. The broad essential questions utilized in this applied community learning experience helped catalyze the community conversations during and after the event (Pstross, Talmage, and Knopf, forthcoming).

It was clear through conversations at the community event and reflections by the We Are Downtown team that the conversations held during the project did not sufficiently capture the entirety of diversity in downtown Phoenix. For example, urban planning information, such as physical diversity was missing. More work was still needed to discover diversity, such as mapping downtown assets (Kretzman and McKnight 1993), conducting psychogeography in the downtown area (Coverley 2012), and noting the urban area's walkability (Speck 2012, 2014). Overall, the project served well to discover the downtown style; however, new urbanism is not only about style but also about design (Speck 2014).

Motivations

From the outset of the project, the We Are Downtown team realized that they were essentially working without funding. The funds from the small-grant were designated for some personnel costs and the costs associated with the event. Thus, proper motivation was essential for all those involved.

Extrinsic motivators are useful but usually are not the best approach with long-term projects (Deci and Ryan 1985; Herzberg 1987; Sachau 2007). With no money, the students needed to be pushed to perform well in their roles aside from the motive to achieve a high grade in the class. Though anecdotal, the team noted that students who were able to participate (alone or in groups) autonomously and artistically contributed the most to this project. For example, the undergraduate students that decided to take pictures (for extra credit in the course) tended to be more excited about their project and more detailed and thorough in their work. Not surprisingly, autonomy and interesting work are key to successful individual engagement in the workplace (Herzberg 1987; Sachau 2007).

The graduate students and faculty involved were initially extrinsically intrigued by this applied community learning experience because it would help them develop professionally (i.e., potential publications) and make new connections within the downtown Phoenix community. Their motivations appeared to shift to more intrinsic motives as they began to become intrinsically interested in the idea of diversity and how to suitably conduct community research with undergraduate students and without a great deal of financial capital. The applied community learning experience moved these graduate students and faculty to remain involved as the university-community initiative looked towards its future.

Stimulating Interest in the Interim

After this first applied community learning experience finished, a few members of the We Are Downtown team stayed formally engaged in the community. For example, one doctoral student interviewed downtown community leaders and members about meaning-making in downtown. This helped stimulate interest in the initiative over the summer; meanwhile, overall, it was on a summer hiatus.

But in the following fall semester, the team realized that time was not on their side. A great deal of public relations effort seemed to be needed to keep community stakeholders interested. Communication went out to those previously involved to keep them titillated until the formal processes for the next phase of the initiative were designed and implemented in the spring semester.

Taking It a Step Further

> *We must embrace change, because with change means opportunity.—*
> *Chancellor Syverud* (2014, 2)

Changes were made to initiative by the team, so that future applied community learning experiences might succeed. The team realized there would likely be transitions in university and community leadership. The team also noted that any future applied community learning experiences needed to be even more locally adapted. Local adaptation is necessary for authentic partnerships between communities and universities in community research efforts (Mahoney et al. 2014).

What was clearer after the first portion of this initiative is that a more pinpointed approach is needed for exploring diversity and for connecting university and community members and leaders. For example, recent conversations led by graduate students and faculty with community-based association leaders have shown that there is still a large disconnect between associations in the area. Students and faculty through applied community learning experiences can access important community entry points that might be used for future assessments and to catalyze future conversations amongst area stakeholders. Table 8 contains a list of eighteen possible entry points to discover diversity and inclusion in an urban downtown area.

Table 8. Entry Points for Exploring Diversity and Inclusion in Downtown Areas

1 City Personnel	10 Educational Institution Leaders, Workers, and Students
2 Safety/Emergency Services Personnel	11 Nonprofit Leaders, Workers, and Clients
3 Faith-Based Association Leaders	12 Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Workers and Users
4 Cultural/Arts Leaders and Creators	13 Mass Media Personnel (i.e. Journalists and Publishers)
5 Community-Based Association Leaders	14 Underground Media Personnel
6 Political Association Leaders	15 Grassroots Leaders and Members
7 Tourism Leaders and Workers	16 Ethnic-Based Group Leaders and Members
8 Big Business Leaders and Workers	17 Public Service Leaders and Workers
9 Small Business Leaders and Workers	18 Public Transportation Workers and Users

The theme for the next implementation of the initiative and its future applied community learning experiences has been changed to focus not only on diversity but now to explore the importance of *inclusion and/or inclusiveness* in the downtown Phoenix story. The aim is to connect those disconnected to help strengthen the bonds between those already working together and to build bridges between those not yet connected in the downtown area. Consistently, Richard Gaurasci (2014) notes that university-community partnership and engagement is an essential building block for an intercultural and interracial democratic society.

Conclusion

> *Downtown Phoenix is ubiquitous; it's where we meet, and it's where create, but then we take what we create elsewhere, and so that mean's downtown Phoenix is everywhere.*—RD (Waltz 2014)
>
> *There is much more to this mural than context and what meets the eye.*—Alex Stevenson (2014)

The applied community learning experience sought to discover what diversity is in the context of downtown Phoenix, Arizona. As with most endeavors, the experience left students and faculty members with more questions and opportunities than answers and action plans. Academic initiatives, even those embedded in the community, seem more predisposed to this style, whilst local governments tackle searches for comprehensive solutions (Mahoney et al. 2014).

University initiatives like the one previously described can act as powerful experiences that motivate our faculty members, current students, and even alumni to continue to stay connected to and civically involved with our universities and our communities

(Busteed 2014). Thus, it may be more important in our community engagement work to focus on *how* and *why* the work is carried out rather than *what* was reported (Busteed 2014; Primavera 1999). Finally, universities and communities together must recognize that "in the ecology of knowledge in modern society, efforts to enhance the utilization of knowledge are every bit as essential and as challenging as activities toward the creation of knowledge" (Lynton 1991, 3).

Communities thrive on diversity (Florida 2005; Speck 2012). Creative class expert, Richard Florida (2005), notes that both diverse places and diverse people attract talent (like students) to a city. He states, "Talented people are attracted to locations that have a high degree of demographic diversity and are distinguished by a high degree of openness and relatively low barriers to entry" (100). Allen Scott (2010) proclaims, "The city is a powerful fountainhead of creativity," (115) and diversity appears necessary to the city's success. University faculty and students need to be a part of conversations regarding diversity, and applied community learning experiences can help start and sustain the dialogue between both community and university members regarding the subject.

Urban downtown cores must recognize that "people will be moving back to the city," and ask, "Will they be moving back to your city or to someone else's?" (Speck 2012, 23). Diversity appears to be a fundamental part of any city's answer (Florida 2005). The hope is that the answers that spring forth from our downtown urban communities resemble how Patrick Stump sings about his city: "This city is my city. / And I love it, yeah I love it. / I was born and raised here. / I got it made here. / And if I have my way, I'm gonna stay" (Stump 2011). If sung in unison (metaphorically) by both universities and communities, together our downtown urban cores may be revitalized, and our talented faculty, students, and community members will stay and thrive.

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For Better and For Worse: Understanding Optimal Campus–Community Relationships through the Lens of Marriage

Stephen M. Gavazzi

Abstract

Borrowing from marital research literature, a four-square matrix constructed from the twin dimensions of effort and comfort levels is used to describe a typology of campus and community associations. Results from a study using the Optimal College Town Assessment to measure community member perceptions on town–gown relationships are presented next, followed by a discussion of a mobilization cycle that situates such assessment efforts inside of an engagement strategy for establishing harmonious campus and community partnerships.

During a marriage ceremony, couples typically take turns stating traditional vows to remain together "for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health." While this ritualized pledge often ends with the statement "until death do us part," in practice only about half of all marital vows end with one spouse's mortal demise. That is because modern marriage is based on the premise of free choice. And while it takes two individuals to give their consent in order to get married, it takes only one partner to terminate the marital relationship.

The relationships that exist between institutions of higher learning and the communities that surround them resemble marriages in some striking ways. As will be discussed later in this paper, the relative health of those relationships seems to rest on some of the same factors that create strong marriages. That being said, town–gown associations differ from modern marital relationships in two very profound ways. First, campuses and communities are better described as an "arranged marriage" in which the partners seemingly had no choice but to be together. Second, and relatedly, divorce is not a realistic option for the town–gown partners.

The objective of the present paper is to utilize the metaphor of marriage in order to advance a discussion of how to best understand the characteristics of an optimal relationship between campus and community partners. Following a brief overview of the town–gown literature, recent efforts to conceptualize and measure the quality of relationships maintained between municipalities and the colleges and universities that exist in their midst is reviewed. Finally, various activities undertaken as a series of logically organized steps designed to influence the relative health of the town–gown relationship are discussed.

Town–Gown Literature

Attention paid to campus-community relationships is on the rise, as evidenced by a number of recent books on town–gown topics (Fox 2014; Gumprecht 2008; Kemp 2013). However, the literature seems to indicate a bit of mystery regarding the current state of affairs between institutions of higher learning and the municipalities that surround them. On the one hand, the glass is seen as "half empty" by some. For instance, Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006) stated that "historically, town–gown relations have been a source of difficulty, frustration, and annoyance for both the town and the university" (125). Others, on the other hand, see the glass as more "half full." One example of this latter way of thinking is Fox (2014), who noted that "there is an important need to identify common issues and approaches . . . associated with having the college or university present. Communities without a postsecondary institution simply do not have this as a factor in their galaxy of community issues, wants, needs, and opportunities. Most wish they did!" (103).

Whether one adopts a more optimistic or pessimistic viewpoint on this subject matter would seem to align closely with the quality of the relationships that are experienced between campus and community representatives. Until recently, however, there has been precious little consideration given to clarifying what exactly constitutes the optimal town–gown relationship. The present paper reviews some of the more recent work being conducted in this area, with the expressed intent of illuminating some of the key factors that contribute to more optimal interactions between institutions of higher learning and the municipalities that surround them.

The Marital Metaphor: A Brief Overview of the Town–Gown Typology

The metaphor of marriage specifically and the image of interpersonal relationships more generally have been applied to town–gown relationships in previous writings, with the earliest identified reference coming from Hill (1994). A decade later, Bringle and Hatcher (2002) discussed campus–community partnerships in interpersonal relationship terms, with special emphasis on phases (initiation, development, maintenance, dissolution) and dynamics (exchanges, equity, power) that helped to define those relationships. Most recently, Bringle and colleagues (Clayton et al. 2010) have sought to better define certain qualities of *partnerships* that can arise within the multiple interacting dyadic relationships that exist in service learning and civic engagement activities.

Adapting early work done by Cuber and Haroff (1965) on marital quality research, Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014) asserted that two distinct yet related conceptual dimensions can be used to describe the quality of campus–community exchanges. The first dimension pertains to the level of comfort that higher education personnel and community stakeholders experience inside of their relationship, while the second dimension centers involves the level of effort required to maintain the present state of the town-gown relationship. By combining the comfort and effort dimensions (see Figure 1), four types of relationships are used to describe the characteristics of campus–community interaction: harmonious, traditional, conflicted, and devitalized.

Figure 1. A Four-Square Typology of Town-Gown Relationships

The *harmonious* type—relationships consisting of higher comfort levels and higher effort levels—is the most optimal form of town–gown relationship as described by Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014). In marriages, harmonious couples tend to report the highest satisfaction levels, owing in large part to the fact that they contain partners who are working together in ways that define and enhance their relationship with one another. Similarly, harmonious town–gown relationships are defined by the relatively high amount of activity that is directed toward the pursuit of goals that are of shared benefit to the campus and community.

The *traditional* type—a combination of higher comfort levels and lower effort levels—is thought to be the default state of affairs for most campuses and communities according to Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014). While traditional couples report modest satisfaction levels, the partners typically have little contact with one another and often lead very separate lives. This is a marriage of convenience, also described as "passive congenial" by Cuber and Haroff (1965). The hallmark of the traditional town–gown relationship is the way that university and community representatives operate in largely autonomous fashion, often ignoring each other as they pursue their own individual goals.

The *conflicted* type reflects relationships that are comprised of lower comfort levels and higher effort levels. Cuber and Harroff (1965) employed the term "conflict habituated" as a way of describing these less than satisfactory marriages that are defined by persistent fighting between the partners. Lots of energy is expended on issues that seem to be beyond the reach of the partners to resolve. In corresponding fashion, conflicted town–gown relationships are marked by ongoing quarrels, often about chronic issues such as land use (Sungu-Eryilmaz 2009) and student misbehavior (Fox 2012).

Finally, the *devitalized* type—a combination of low comfort levels and low effort levels—is used by Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014) to describe relationships with the least amount of overall satisfaction. In marriages, devitalized couples report high levels of disappointment along with the sense that something was "lost" along the way. This sentiment underlies the notion that all devitalized relationships formerly reflected qualities of the other relationship types. As applied to town–gown associations, some campuses and communities that once were locked in combat simply give up on each other and refuse to communicate at all. Alternatively, a devitalized relationship can come about when hopes of a harmonious relationship are dashed repeatedly by the failure of one or both partners to follow through on promises and assurances.

Development and Piloting of the Optimal College Town Assessment

Gavazzi and Fox (2014) recently reported on the development of the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA), a measure that operationalized and quantified the four-square conceptual scheme offered by Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014). The OCTA was designed to evaluate perceptions of campus–community relationships as the combination of effort and comfort levels, capturing participants' direct personal experiences of these two dimensions as well as their opinions about overall community sensitivities. On the campus side of the equation, the measurement of effort and comfort levels examines the relative contributions of each of four campus representatives: students, faculty, leaders/administrative staff, and members of the board of trustees. Reciprocally, the OCTA taps into the relative contributions of four main groups of community representatives: business owners, non-profit organization leaders, government officials, and local school district administrators and teachers.

A number of interesting findings were reported by Gavazzi and Fox (2014) from the analysis of data gathered from a sample of community members living and working in three municipalities surrounding a Midwestern regional university. First and foremost, perceptions of effort and comfort were significantly related to one another. That is to say, greater contact between campus and community members on the whole was associated with increased satisfaction inside of the town–gown relationship. Additionally, proximity played a prominent role in the amount of effort and comfort reported by community members who participated in the pilot study. Simply put, when community members were geographically closer to the campus, they reported significantly higher levels of both activity and comfort inside of their relationships with campus representatives.

Gavazzi and Fox (2014) also presented findings regarding some interesting group differences. For example, in a sub-sample of community members who had supplied information about their type of employment, the reports of perceived comfort levels were found to be highest among business owners, followed by non-profit leaders, and then educators. As well, results indicated that community residents consistently reported the most contact and greatest comfort levels with students from the campus, providing some evidence that the student body may serve as a key connecting point between the campus and the community.

The Town–Gown Relationship Mobilization Cycle

The use of an assessment tool such as the OCTA takes the guesswork out of understanding the quality of the town–gown relationship by providing a standardized way of examining effort and comfort levels between and among various campus and community stakeholders. This sort of activity serves to create a baseline data-gathering strategy that can be repeated over time in order to mark progress in the development and maintenance of more positive and productive collaborations among higher education and municipal representatives.

There are thought to be a number of important activities that can take place both prior to and following such assessment efforts that can augment the understanding and enhancement of town–gown relationships. While these activities are interconnected, there is a logical sequencing that can provide valuable assistance in planning for and implementing an overall engagement strategy for campus and community partners. These activities are organized into a Town–Gown Relationship Mobilization Cycle as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Town-Gown Relationship Mobilization Cycle

The first step of this process involves awareness-raising on both the campus and in the community and focuses on basic questions such as, "Where (and how) do we begin?" Here, the mobilization cycle is activated by increasing knowledge of and appreciation for the importance of focusing on the town–gown relationship itself. Of course, campus and community representatives will be all over the map in terms of readiness to focus on their relationships with one another. The common denominator, however, will be the recognition that the campus and community stand to gain much more by acting together than by standing apart. As Gavazzi, Fox, and Martin (2014) noted previously, there may need to be a "therapeutic" component to this type of work, especially for those campuses and communities with conflicted and devitalized relationship histories. Here, past disagreements and disappointments may need to be acknowledged by one or both parties before meaningful partnerships can be formulated. One particularly fitting framework for this sort of community conversation is that of Zehr (2002), whose work on restorative justice principles introduces a process of "healing the harm" that allows various parties to move beyond past grievances and toward more constructive engagement.
The second step involves coalition building, with particular attention paid to the identification of the primary campus and community stakeholders who will participate in various relationship-building activities. This phase of the mobilization cycle involves a determination of who will be targeted in local data gathering efforts, which should be strongly related to the partners that will be approached in order to get the amount of campus and community participation that is necessary to create a meaningful (and hopefully representative) sample. In parallel fashion, this step also should involve the recognition of intended audiences who will be asked to listen and respond to information generated throughout this process.
Data gathering represents the "middle ground" of the mobilization cycle. As the third step, it is preceded by activities designed to maximize access to key representatives on the campus and in the community. The ultimate success of this entire effort, however, rests on obtaining high quality data from the respondents themselves. Much of the work on the OCTA to date has been aimed at standardizing the field's understanding of the quality of campus-community partnerships. The OCTA items are available for use by individuals who are interested in the assessment of town-gown relationships, and over time will allow users to compare and contrast findings across settings and institutions. At the same time, this quantitative approach ideally should be balanced with the collection of more qualitatively oriented information. This latter effort would

be especially important in terms of developing a better understanding of the idiosyncratic needs and wishes of individual campuses and communities as they seek to better interact with one another.

The fourth step of this process is centered on the interpretation of information that has been collected on the town-gown relationships. Here, the quantitative and qualitative data must be organized, analyzed, and reported on in some manner that is both understandable and immediately applicable to the intended audience of campus and community stakeholders. This phase of the mobilization cycle should involve the creation of relatively straightforward and easy-to-understand reports on sample demographics, methods, and results of interest to varied audiences. In addition, wherever possible, graphs and other visual aids should be employed alongside text descriptions of the information. Pictures are indeed worth a thousand words, especially for community stakeholders who typically are unfamiliar with research and evaluation jargon.

The fifth and final step involves an evidence-based call to action, answering the fundamental question, "Now what?" This last phase of the mobilization cycle focuses attention on the development of next steps in the process of engaging campus and community partners. One of the keys to success here is remaining data-driven; being led by facts (i.e., the survey results) instead of feelings (i.e., someone's hunches, gut feelings, or recollections). On a related note, if the survey results end up raising as many questions as it answers, some further data-gathering may be in order. For example, perhaps a key constituent group was overlooked, resulting in the need for more quantitative data to be gathered from additional respondents. Alternatively, even more attention might be paid to the collection of more elaborate qualitative information that would help to flesh out the initial quantitative findings. In this latter case, the use of focus groups would be an especially effective means by which to gain a richer understanding of town-gown relationship characteristics and pressing issues.

Conclusion

This article began with a marital theme, and it is to the metaphor of marriage that we now return in conclusion. American journalist and author Mignon McLaughlin has been widely quoted as noting that "a successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person." And like a fruitful marriage, a flourishing town–gown relationship will demand a lot of determination to keep seeing one's partner as worth all of the work that is required to keep things moving in a positive direction. Of course, such work is predicated on the notion that higher education administrators and municipal leaders are fully up to the task of creating and maintaining healthy and mutually satisfying interactions with one another. This requires both the requisite skill set that can make the relationship work over time, as well as the desire to do so.

Beyond questions of aptitude and aspirations, however, town and gown partners often as not are uncertain about where they stand in their association with one another at any single point in time. In the movie *Rocky*, the story's hero says to his girlfriend Adrian: "I got gaps, you got gaps. We fill each other's gaps." Essentially, the present paper has argued for a better understanding of how well campus and community partners are seen as complementing one another. Stated slightly differently, the more intentional examination of the current state of a given town-gown relationship is thought to be the first best step toward the optimal enhancement of that collaboration at ever more harmonious levels.

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30,000 Degrees: Steps Toward the Formation of a Staten Island Higher Education Partnership

Robert Fanuzzi, Kenneth Gold, Samantha Seigel, Christopher Cuccia, Michael Kress, and Sandy Sanchez

Abstract

In order to confront lower than average completion rates in New York City and to provide a strong economic and civic foundation for Staten Island, the borough's three institutions of higher education, College of Staten Island/City University of New York, St. John's University, and Wagner College, have brought together their high school and community partners to form the Staten Island Educational Partnership. Broad-based and cross-sectoral, the partnership has the goal of achieving 30,000 college degrees by 2025.

The College of Staten Island/CUNY, St. John's University, and Wagner College have joined together to create a cross-sectoral, borough-wide initiative – 30,000 Degrees: College Readiness for a Stronger Staten Island. Modeled after Louisville's "Degrees at Work: 55,000 Degrees," the 30,000 degrees initiative brings leaders in higher education, secondary and primary education, pre-Kindergarten children services, nonprofit community-based organizations and social services, and government to form the Staten Island Educational Partnership – an organization and a vision that gives everyone a stake and role to play in improving college readiness on Staten Island. As we bring the Staten Island Educational Partnership into existence, we report as the working group tasked with this project on the outreach, organization, and organizational changes that have guided our efforts so far. We also reflect on the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead in creating a truly inclusive, borough-wide partnership that draws on the resources and responds to the challenges of growing a prosperous, educated workforce in New York City.

Although the work undertaken so far has brought the participating educational institutions closer together, we also believe that we are helping to bring higher education closer to its metropolitan context and setting, laying the groundwork for new models and narratives about the role and institutional growth of higher education in US cities. In this respect, we contribute our working group's progress and the future work of the Staten Island Educational Partnership to the growing number of institutional initiatives by the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU) member institutions who are actively trying to create a distinctly urban vision for higher education and college attainment that is rooted in the needs and resources of their metropolitan community.

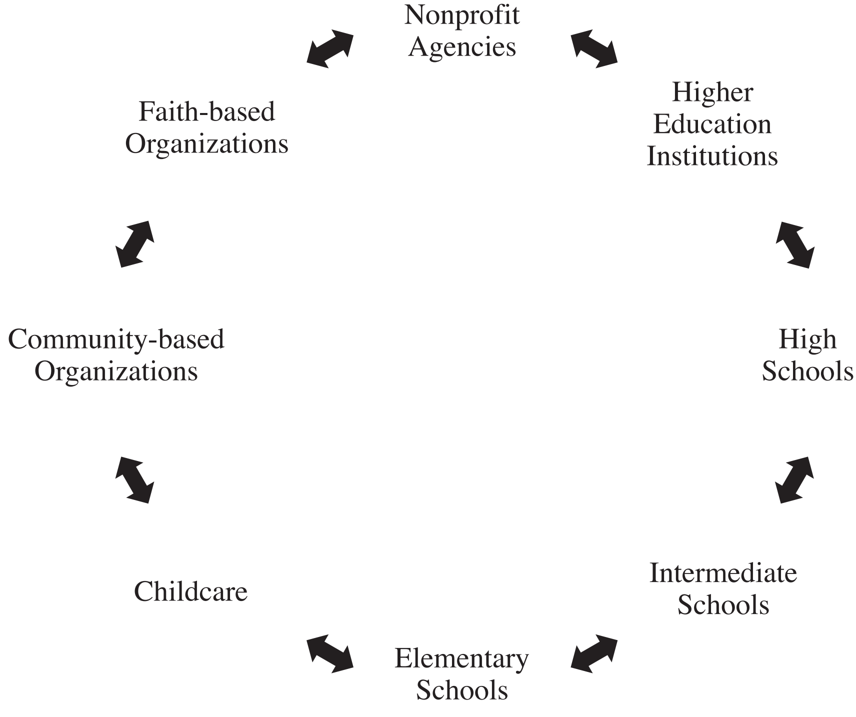
The Staten Island Educational Partnership has a still more vital connection to CUMU. Its signature initiative, 30,000 Degrees: College Readiness for a Stronger Staten Island, is a direct outgrowth of Staten Island educational leaders' participation in the 2013 CUMU conference. The Staten Island Educational Partnership was formed in order to achieve the results sought by a similar coalition of business, government, higher education, pre-K–12 education, and community organizations in Louisville. The partnership and the 30,000 is, therefore, a statement about what investment and participation in CUMU can accomplish. As more member institutions learn of similar initiatives throughout the country, we are happy to offer 30,000 as an example of an organizing, professionalizing potential that lies within CUMU and its journal.

Origin of 30,000 Degrees

In 2013, representatives of the College of Staten Island, Wagner College, New Dorp High School, Port Richmond High School, and Staten Island Technical High School attended the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities conference in Louisville and learned about the work of "Degrees at Work: 55,000 Degrees." Among the goals of degrees at work are the objectives "to improve the ease with which working adults access the postsecondary system; to increase the affordability of education; to promote the adoption of education-friendly programs, policies, and practices among Louisville employers; to measure and report the completion rates of working-age adults who return to school." The Staten Island participants at the 2013 CUMU conference recognized the need for such an initiative in their home borough and the benefits that could be realized by expanding the traditional "feeder school" relationship between high schools and colleges to include K–12 schools, business, and community organizations.

After the conference, President William Fritz of the College of Staten Island and Richard Guarci of Wagner College presented this vision to Vice Provost James O'Keefe of the Staten Island campus of St. John's University, and a three-college partnership was born. Although meetings of university presidents and executives are not uncommon, this would be the first time that the three institutions of higher education on the borough of Staten Island were devoting resources and strategic focus to a shared agenda: improving college readiness in the borough

The executives of the three colleges formed a working group composed of Dr. Michael Kress, vice president of information technology and the Economic Development and Civic Prosperity unit for the College of Staten Island/CUNY; Sandy Sanchez, director of the Economic Development and Civic Prosperity unit at the College of Staten Island/CUNY; Dr. Kenneth Gold, dean of the School of Education for the College of Staten Island/CUNY; Samantha Siegel, director of the Center for Leadership and Community Engagement for Wagner College; Dr. Christopher Cuccia, academic assistant vice president for St. John's University; and Dr. Robert Fanuzzi, director of civic engagement and public programs for St. John's University. Working closely with the high school principals in their core high school partnerships, the 30,000 working group moved quickly to establish a paradigm for their program goals and their methodology. The paradigm became summarized as a circular, mutually beneficial relationship that drew not only on the traditional “feeder school” relationships but also on the middle schools that delivered students to the high schools, and the community centers and organizations that supported the students outside their schools.



About the Participating Institutions

College of Staten Island/City University of New York

The College of Staten Island is a four-year, senior college of The City University of New York that offers exceptional opportunities to all of its students. Programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies lead to bachelor’s and associate’s degrees. The master’s degree is awarded in eighteen professional and liberal arts and sciences fields of study. The college will now assume degree-granting authority of the doctorate in physical therapy, and this will become effective for students enrolled in the class of 2017 (beginning fall 2014). The college participates in doctoral programs of the city university graduate school and university center in biology, chemistry, computer science, nursing, physical therapy, and physics.

The historic mission of The City University of New York (CUNY) has been to provide both access to and excellence in higher education. The 2012–2016 master plan articulates “a steadfast insistence on the ability to serve students from all backgrounds, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to proceed smoothly through the educational pipeline to degree completion . . . and a dedication to the university’s urban setting.”

As the borough's only public institution of higher education and the second largest employer on Staten Island, the College of Staten Island (CSI) plays an integral role in developing sustainable campus-community partnerships. Community engagement and service/experiential learning components are integrated values and fundamental principles of CSI's strategic plan. We actively work to instill the value of education and civic participation and are proud of our leadership role for Staten Island.

Furthermore, CSI has committed internal university budget allocations dedicated to supporting institutional engagement within the community. Under the auspices of a senior executive, the newly created Economic Development and Civic Prosperity unit has forged major inroads within the community, elected officials, educators, and civic and business leaders.

St. John's University

In 1870, the Rev. John Loughlin, Bishop of Brooklyn, asked the Vincentian community to establish an institution of higher education to serve a growing immigrant population. The result was St. John's College on Lewis Avenue in Brooklyn. The college grew into what is today known as St. John's University, with four campuses in New York—Queens, Staten Island, Manhattan, and Oakdale—and locations around the world. As a Catholic and Vincentian university, St. John's applies its vast resources on behalf of those in need, combating the root causes of injustice and creating paths to a more equitable world.

St. John's University's commitment to Staten Island dates to the late 1960s, when Archbishop Terrence Cardinal Cooke of the Archdiocese of New York asked the Vincentian Fathers of St. John's University to integrate Notre Dame College, a premiere but struggling small college that had been educating women since the 1930s, in order to maintain Catholic higher education in the borough. With the New York State Board of Regents approval in 1971, St. John's has been a vibrant educational force on Staten Island for more than forty years, presently serving more than 2,000 students who are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs. This unique campus, where the graceful buildings of the former Ganz estate stand alongside state of the art technology centers, has graduated more than sixteen thousand students and continues to fulfill the promise of bringing together the academic rigor of a national Catholic university with the Vincentian mission, devoting its intellectual and physical resources to search out the causes of poverty and social injustice and to encourage solutions which are adaptable, effective, and concrete.

Consistent with its mission and history, the Staten Island campus of St. John's remains focused on the aspirations of the ever growing immigrant population in New York City and the needs of the underserved and marginalized, including access to educational opportunities for nontraditional students. St. John's University faculty and students explore issues related to poverty and social injustice, enhancing their studies with skill-building experiences, community-based research, and academic service learning in their local and global communities through the Vincentian Institute for Social Action, the

Office of Campus Ministry, the Office of Global Studies, the College Advantage program, the Scholars Program, the School of Education's Community Engagement Project, the Office of Adult & Veterans Services, and other programs and services.

Wagner College

Wagner College was founded in 1883 as the Lutheran Proseminary of Rochester, N.Y., working to prepare future Lutheran ministers for admission to seminary. As the school grew in reputation and size, the New York Ministerium, a Lutheran church organization in control of Wagner, recognized the need to find a new location. Reverend Frederic Sutter, a graduate and lifelong supporter of Wagner College, had established his own ministry on Staten Island in 1907. Through Sutter's efforts, Wagner College relocated to Grymes Hill on Staten Island in 1918. The new campus found a home on the thirty-eight-acre former country estate of nineteenth century shipping magnate Sir Edward Cunard. Wagner's move to Staten Island ushered in a new era in the history of Wagner in which the college became well known for its liberal arts curriculum and, as a result, grew both in its academic reputation and enrollment over the next three decades.

Today, Wagner College is uniquely positioned as the only true, private, traditionally residential liberal arts college within the five boroughs of New York City. More than two thousand students in more than thirty academic programs and four graduate departments make up the Wagner College community, which is ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* among the top twenty-five regional colleges and universities in the northeast, continuing its tradition of academic excellence into the twenty-first century. Keeping with its tradition of community engagement, Wagner College is intimately connected to the greater community locally, nationally, and internationally.

The mission of Wagner College is to prepare students for life, as well as for careers, by emphasizing scholarship, achievement, leadership, and citizenship. Wagner offers a comprehensive educational program that is anchored in the liberal arts, experiential and co-curricular learning, and service to society, and that is cultivated by a faculty dedicated to promoting individual expression, reflective practice, and integrative learning.

Wagner College achieves this mission through the implementation and enhancement of The Wagner Plan for the Practical Liberal Arts, which was formally launched in 1998. This innovative and bold curricular framework is predicated on direct links between theory and practice. It builds upon Wagner's history of combining liberal arts and focused professional programs, coupled with our unique location and requires community-based learning for all students. The plan has, thus, ushered in a new vision of engaged student learning that is at once reflective and integrated, theoretical and practical.

Working to deepen the Wagner plan, the Port Richmond Partnership was developed in the spring of 2008 and is made up of representatives from Wagner College, leading organizations, and institutions in Port Richmond and focuses on the areas of education, economic development, immigration, health and well-being, and the arts. The partnership further demonstrates the Wagner commitment to learning by doing and to rejuvenating a historically rich but economically distressed community. The partnership seeks to increase student learning, raise civic consciousness, and further sustain its impact and commitment to the local community.

Ralph McKee Career and Technical Education High School

Ralph McKee Career and Technical Education High School has been a leading representative of Staten Island in career and technical education (CTE) for more than ninety years. McKee is like a private school, with small classes, committed faculty, secure grounds, and sophisticated technologies. Led by Principal Sharon Henry, McKee provides students with the knowledge, study habits, resources, and guidance not only *to go* to college, but also *to thrive* once accepted by equipping students with the skills and certifications to pursue career fields like drafting, graphic arts, CISCO/A+ networking, automotive technology, cosmetology, and construction. Today, as it prepares youth for key roles in the twenty-first century, McKee's motto is, "McKee: College, Career, Life." As a recipient of a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant to start the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, McKee stands as the only AVID certified CTE secondary school in the Northeast region. In 2013, it was one of thirteen schools to be awarded a Bloomberg Technology Initiative Software Engineering Program (SEP), through which students are on a path to receive New York state certification as a CTE designation on their high school diploma. Other recent achievements include a first place in desktop publishing and design and third place in package design in the 2014 Citywide Graphic Arts Competition; both a first and third place finish in the 2014 Greater New York Automotive Dealer's Association automotive technician citywide competition; second place finishes for both advertising design and architectural drafting in the 2014 Skills USA New York City Area 5 competition; and both first and second place finishes in desktop publishing and design in the 2013 Citywide Graphic Arts Competition.

New Dorp High School

New Dorp High School serves more than twenty-seven hundred students in grades nine through twelve. Its student population is 51 percent White, 27 percent Hispanic, 12 percent Black, and 7 percent Asian. Seventeen percent are special education students, and 4 percent of students are English language learners (ELLs). More than 57 percent qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The school is located on the east shore of Staten Island. Principal Deirdre DeAngelis has led the school since 1999.

New Dorp High School has implemented a variety of structural and instructional systems using data to develop school-wide approaches to improve student outcomes. Through an inquiry approach, staff and administrators continually identify areas for growth and strategize possible levers for improving student outcomes. Concerned about the school's graduation rate, they divided the large, comprehensive high school into eight Small Learning Communities (SLCs in 2006), each with a specific career focus, a dedicated administrator, guidance counselor, teaching staff, and other support staff to create a personalized environment to better meet the needs of all students.

Academically, they focused on writing as a growth area throughout the school based on analysis of student data. As a result, all teachers have been supported in explicitly teaching analytic writing in their content areas. With more than a 22 percent point increase in their four-year graduation rate since 2006, the results are starting to show. Parents and families are key partners in New Dorp's turnaround—a widely used online grading and information sharing system keeps them updated and allows them to communicate with teachers regularly.

Port Richmond High School

The mission of Port Richmond High School is to provide students with individualized challenges, opportunities, and resources, to become lifelong learners and productive, responsible citizens. Port Richmond High School believes that all students can learn and achieve at a high level of expectation given the proper attention to their individual needs. Principal Timothy Gannon believes that close community partnerships with colleges, universities, and local organizations help enhance students' educational experience and provide them with multiple options. In 2013, 61.1 percent of Port Richmond High School students graduated in four years and about 50 percent of students graduated with a weighted diploma. Overall, the school received a B for college and career readiness with around 75 percent of graduates taking academically rigorous classes and 43 percent enrolling in postsecondary classes after graduation.

Staten Island Technical High School

Staten Island Technical High School is among the prestigious New York City's specialized high schools. The admissions process is highly competitive and based upon the specialized high school admissions test, which is taken annually by more than twenty-seven thousand New York City students. All ninth grade students receive an iPad to use in school and take home for four years via the 1:1 Digital Education Initiative. The school's college preparatory curriculum provides a robust and challenging experience through courses in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM), as well as the liberal arts and health and physical education, along with a cutting edge career and technical education program and extensive Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) opportunities for the scholar-athlete. Staten Island Technical High School is one of our nation's top high schools, with all core courses taught on the honors level and featuring one of the best college preparatory experiences across the curriculum, with a strong emphasis in STEAM education, and premier college and career readiness programs, producing the nation's finest scholars, innovators and athletes.

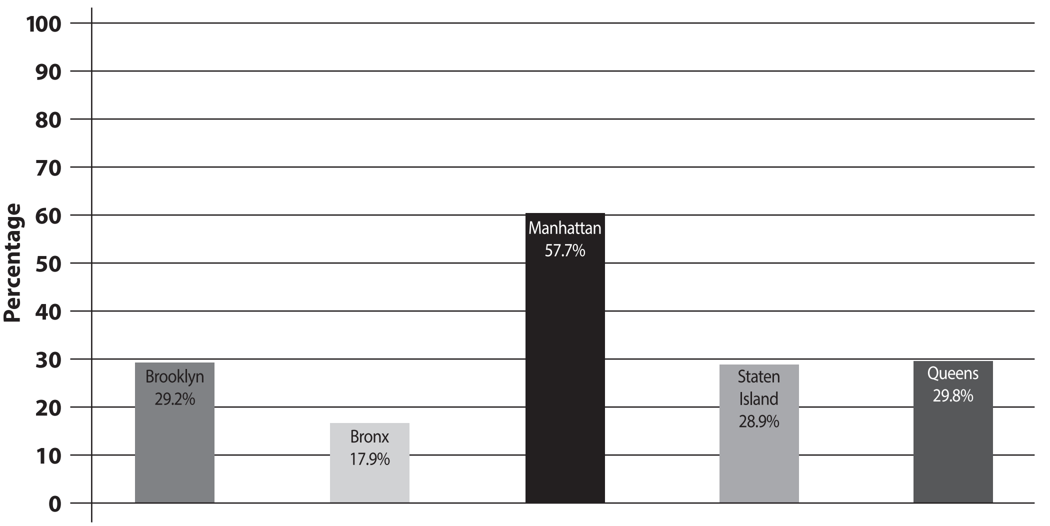
Staten Island Technical High School was recently ranked sixth in *Newsweek*'s 2014 list of America's top high schools. One hundred percent of Staten Island Tech's graduates go on to four-year colleges and universities, including the service academies. The 293 students of the class of 2014 earned $61 million in college scholarships, with most students earning sixteen to sixty college credits via the school's vast Advanced Placement program and dual-enrollment college accredited courses. Pivotal partnerships with the College Board's Advanced Placement program, CUNY College

Now, SUNY University in the High School, St. John's University College Advantage, and the College of St. Rose provide students with the opportunity to earn and graduate with fifteen to sixty college credits. Over 60 percent of the faculty members teach AP and college-level courses.

About Staten Island

As the smallest of New York City's five boroughs, Staten Island has come into sharper local focus and into national consciousness in the wake of super storm Sandy. It currently ranks fourth among the five boroughs in the rate of college degrees by borough residents:

Percentage of Borough Residents with a Baccalaureate Degree or Higher



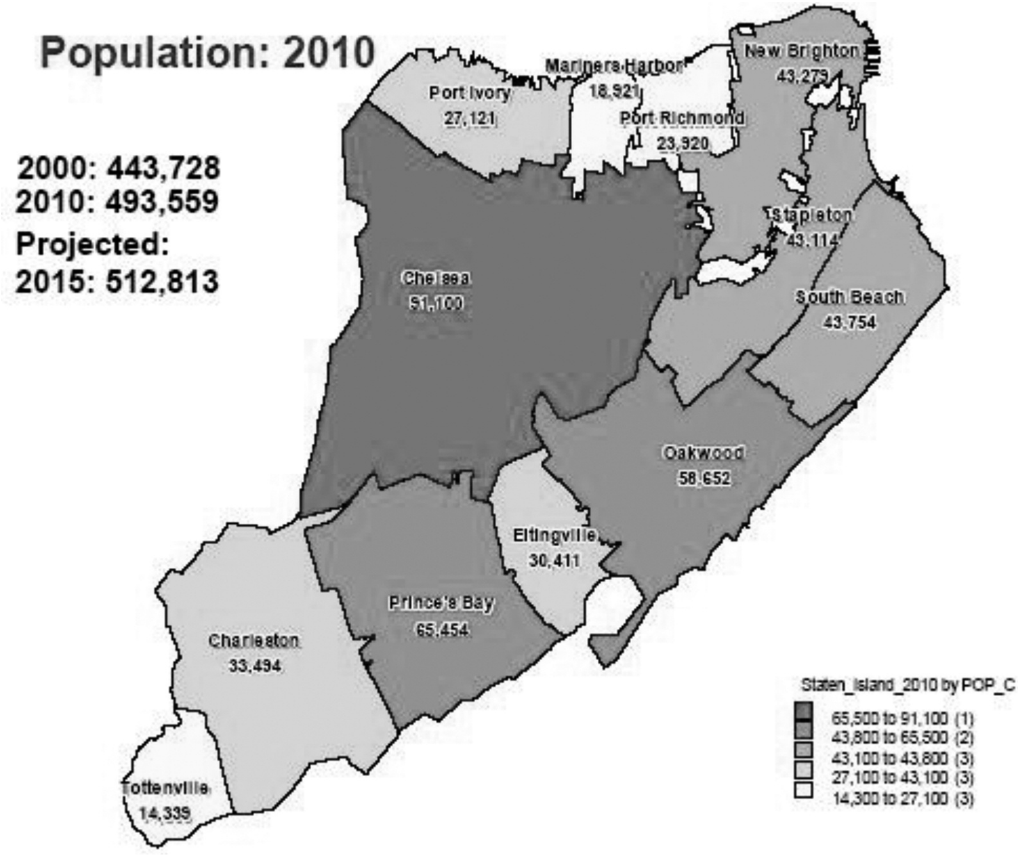
The New York City average is 32.5%; Staten Island 30,000 Degree target is 35%

Source: *2012 United States Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau Report.* Manhattan, 57.7%; Queens, 29.8%; Brooklyn, 29.2%; Staten Island, 28.9%; and Bronx, 17.9% of baccalaureate degree or higher attainment (age 25+) 2007-2011

2010 census data informs us that the percentage of persons aged twenty-five or over (2007–2011) who have attained a baccalaureate degree or higher is 28.9 per cent (136,040 degrees) of the island's 470,728 residents. Based on the analysis of Staten Island population growth and recent trends in higher education, a goal of thirty thousand additional degrees from the baseline 2012 census will require an increase of 2,128 degrees above the trend over the ten-year period from 2015–2025. Also, based on the national average completion rate of 50 percent this would require an additional 426 college-ready high school graduates per year who choose to go to college (United States Census Bureau Report 2014).

An extra opportunity and incentive for the Staten Island Educational Partnership to reach these goals is the 35 percent increase in the foreign-born population in the borough from the census years 2000 to 2010. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2008–2012 American Community Survey, the foreign-born will number 97,369 out of a total population of 468,374, almost a quarter of the population. Will Staten Island's newest residents become part of the borough's educational progress? The Staten Island Educational Partnership was formed with this challenge in mind.

The Staten Island Educational Partnership made a close study of other relevant demographic trends that will inform its focus and outreach.



Using information collected from the 2012 American Community Survey and the 2010 US Census, a report issued by St. John's University found that other than the Bronx and Staten Island, all the other boroughs will see increases in the ten to fourteen age group in 2015. The entire city will grow in population by about 5.2 percent. Staten Island will have the largest decrease in the ten to fourteen age group at –4.4 percent. Overall, the fifteen to seventeen age population will decrease by about 6.5 percent around the city.

White population will continue to decrease in the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island and increase slightly in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Staten Island has the largest increase in Black population by 75 percent since 1990. Black population will decrease about 2.6 percent in 2015 for all but Staten Island, where it will increase by 5.4 percent. Asian populations will increase across all of the boroughs by 9 percent in 2015, with Staten Island having the largest Asian population increase at 167 percent since 1990. Hispanic populations have increased in population across the boroughs by about 35 percent since 1990, with Staten Island having a 204 percent increase in Hispanics since 1990. In 2015, projections show Staten Island's Hispanic population increased by 16.5 percent.

The population has increased across Staten Island by about 16 percent since 2000. The largest increases were in Charleston (31 percent), Tottenville (30.8 percent), and Port Ivory with about 26 percent. Overall, population in Staten Island will grow by about 4 percent from 2010 to 2015, but the borough will see decreases in the ten-to-fourteen age population in the –4 percent range by 2015. Since 2000, the ten-to-fourteen age population has decreased at a rate of about –3.5 percent over fifteen years. High school aged populations will reach their peaks in 2012–2013 and then will be followed by a long and gradual decrease in population throughout this decade. The fifteen-to-seventeen aged population reached its highest point in 2010–2011, but decreases will be about –7 percent by 2015.

According to the same St. John's University report, the borough will see increases in the percentage of residents without a bachelor's degree.

Table 41 Staten Island Area Less Than BA Degree: 2000 - 2015

	Zip Code Area	< BA 2000	< BA 2010	< BA 2015	% 15 Yr Change	% Chg 2010-2015
1	New Brighton	17,944	18,274	19,117	6.54%	4.61%
2	Mariner's Harbor	8,862	9,934	10,644	20.11%	7.15%
3	Port Ivory	10,997	13,079	14,380	30.76%	9.95%
4	Stapleton	18,244	20,158	21,659	18.72%	7.45%
5	South Beach	21,448	23,490	25,069	16.88%	6.72%
6	Oakwood	30,022	31,042	32,385	7.87%	4.33%
7	Tottenville	5,995	6,919	7,573	26.32%	9.45%
8	Eltingville	14,923	15,427	16,116	7.99%	4.47%
9	Charleston	13,662	15,921	17,443	27.68%	9.56%
10	Port Richmond	10,541	10,875	11,478	8.89%	5.54%
12	Prince's Bay	29,714	32,524	34,651	16.62%	6.54%
14	Chelsea	42,362	43,360	45,321	6.99%	4.52%
	Staten Island	224,714	241,003	255,836	13.85%	6.15%

The knowledge that the borough is lagging in college attainment and projected to continue to lag spurred the 30,000 working group to ramp up their outreach efforts to high schools to see if existing programs could be intensified or more strategically utilized (Ross, Cuccia, and Hughes 2012).

College/High School Partnerships Underway

St. John's University has begun an in-depth partnership with McKee High School in the St. George neighborhood of Staten Island that implements the Advancement Via Individual Determination program. Housed in McKee High School, the AVID secondary program (grades seven through twelve) "develops learning, study, and academic behavioral skills that are essential to success in rigorous coursework. It acts as a catalyst for schools to develop a culture of college readiness for all students across the campus. In the AVID elective class, students receive daily instruction and support to prepare them for college from a trained AVID elective teacher. AVID impacts students school-wide as academic strategies like writing to learn, inquiry, collaboration, organizational skills, and critical reading (WICOR) are taught in all classes by teachers who have been trained to use AVID strategies in their specific content areas." An essential part of AVID's program delivery are the college tutors, who "create a positive peer group for students" and help them "a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination." Working closely with high school students, college students provide the crucial mentoring and academic follow up that is necessary for the success of AVID.

St. John's School of Education faculty member professor Kristin Pitanza is the liaison and coordinator for delivery of the AVID program at McKee, supervising students from the School of Education and from the St. John's University core class, Discover New York. She reports that the close relationship between AVID trained teachers and the St. John's University student tutors is already paying dividends. The AVID tutor sessions use college tutor facilitators to pose problems, lead inquiry-based learning activities, and to collectively develop solutions to the problems posed by students. The AVID approach rewards the student who has the best question and helps others learn to develop similar problem-posing skills. Students are empowered to become leaders and are made responsible for envisioning and performing higher level work outside the classroom.

Working together, content area teachers and college tutors are devising tutoring outcomes that will help the content area classroom and teacher reach their desired goals. By preparing students for more demanding tutoring questions, St. John's University students and the content area teachers of McKee High school are preparing their high school students for success in college by modelling and demanding a higher level of performance and participation. St. John's University students also learn about the motivational and programmatic challenges that lay ahead in the field of college readiness.

Principal Sharon Henry reports with great satisfaction on the working relationship and level of cooperation achieved so far between St. John's University and McKee High School and looks forward to achieving tangible outcomes in college readiness as the program continues throughout the academic year.

St. John's University also administers the College Advantage Program in the following local high schools: Curtis High School, Miraj Islamic School, Moore Catholic High School, Monsignor Farrell High School, New Dorp High School, Notre Dame

Academy, Staten Island Technical High School, St. John Villa High School, St. Joseph-by-the-Sea Academy, St. Joseph Hill Academy, St. Peter's Boys High School, Susan Wagner High School, and Tottenville High School.

Wagner College believes that comprehensive neighborhood partnerships are the most effective ways for institutions of higher education to align with like anchor institutions in order to achieve long-term measurable and sustainable community good. Considered the cornerstone of the curricular framework, the Wagner Plan for the Practical Liberal Arts/Port Richmond Partnership seeks to develop collaborative programs that contribute to school improvement, economic growth, health care enhancement, and immigration reform. The partnerships play a significant role in advancing research and inquiry about pressing community issues and builds mutually beneficial curricular and co-curricular placements for Wagner College students to broaden their experiences and strengthen a wide variety of community-based initiatives.

Community leaders first broached the Port Richmond Partnership in 2008 as a way to augment Wagner's highly successful Civic Innovations Program. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in the spring of 2009, officially establishing the partnership. Based on an agreement between Wagner College and leading organizations and institutions in Port Richmond, the partnership was designed to extend Wagner's commitment to learning by doing and to rejuvenating an economically distressed community.

Over the past three years, the number of partnership organizations has doubled, and through regularly scheduled meetings, partners have worked together closely to tap into existing community assets by continuing to build significant, sustainable, and increasingly ambitious partnerships. To date, 30 percent of Wagner College undergraduate students have at least one community experience through which they work with and learn from the residents of Port Richmond. The Port Richmond Partnership offers the following opportunities:

- Curricular- and co-curricular-based placements for Wagner College faculty, students, and staff .

- Professional development activities for area students, teachers, educational personnel, and organizational leaders.

- Cooperative programs to forward school improvement, economic development, immigration reform, and health promotion efforts.

- Research, data collection, and dissemination.

With a strong focus on college readiness, citizenship education, and school improvement, the education subcommittee of the Port Richmond Partnership is the most profound example of community engagement work at Wagner College. In 2010 MARGA Incorporated conducted a year-long study of the Wagner Plan for the

Practical Liberal Arts/Port Richmond Partnership and found that more than twenty community partners across disciplines agreed that the educational partnerships were the strongest and most central way for Wagner College to connect to the greater community. Since 2011 around $500,000 of grant money has been received and distributed to augment education work in the Port Richmond community.

The most profound example of this work is the Port Richmond Partnership Summer Leadership Academy for rising juniors at Port Richmond High School. Wagner College launched the Port Richmond Partnership summer leadership academy to increase the likelihood of at-risk youth going to college and graduating with a strong degree and moving on to a successful career. Working in close partnership with the New World Foundation, Wagner College, Port Richmond High School, and Project Urbanista have designed a summer leadership academy for high school students residing in the Port Richmond community of Staten Island. This leadership academy is based on the Civic Opportunity Initiative Network (COIN) model of increasing college access for students from underserved communities through programs that encompass the following key elements: increased access to higher education, effective mentoring, community engagement, and development and a commitment to advancing civic engagement and education as core aspects of democratic citizenship. During the pilot summer of 2014, twelve students from Port Richmond High School participated in a five-week summer academy at Wagner College participating in courses as well as interning in the Staten Island community. It is anticipated that the summer academy in 2015, 2016, and 2017 will be held for the duration of seven weeks and will contain a maximum of sixteen students per cohort. Sixteen of the academy graduates will receive full tuition scholarships to Wagner College.

The College of Staten Island, and in particular its School of Education, has long worked closely with New Dorp High School in the preparation of future teachers. New Dorp hosts CSI students in the Teacher Education Honors Society for field observations, New Dorp teachers have joined as members of the adjunct faculty in education at the college, and teacher education students serve as student teachers at New Dorp in many different subject areas. New Dorp sits atop an extensive feeder system that includes three intermediate schools and twelve elementary schools. Among these schools were many that also had lengthy collaborative relationships with the College of Staten Island. For example, PS 13, PS 14, PS 39, PS 57, PS 78, and IS 49 are all stalwart collaborators in the field experiences of the teacher education students.

The college's work with PS 78 is of particular note. Located in the Stapleton neighborhood of Staten Island, PS 78 is a Title I school serving large numbers of low income families. It is a site for the CSI Percy Ellis Sutton SEEK program, in which participating children are paired with College of Staten Island student tutors/mentors. These mentors provide homework assistance and tutoring services, using best practices drawn from reading, math, writing, and other academic areas. The tutoring is tailored to academic needs that become obvious during homework time and/or upon request by the student or school staff. In addition, SEEK offers leadership and financial literacy workshops. The leadership development workshops are based on Steven Covey's *7*

Habits of Highly Effective People and cover principles of self-development, personal responsibility, goal setting, and team work. Financial literacy is based on the principles of saving, spending, donating, and investing.

With so many schools already intertwined with New Dorp and CSI, Principal Deirdre DeAngelis and Dean of Education Ken Gold gathered the principals of the New Dorp feeder schools together at the high school on March 10 and April 25, and they subsequently met again at the college in July. The group of invitees gradually expanded as additional schools learned about the initiative and asked to participate. Most notable was the addition of Staten Island Technical High School. Given its physical proximity to New Dorp and the close professional relationship between the leadership of the two high schools, the Staten Island Technical High School was also invited to join the working group and quickly became a central partner. All participants eagerly embraced the cradle to career concept that emphasized college graduation as a motivating goal.

The meetings produced some animating principles and possible programs for the schools to establish, some in conjunction with the college and/or community organization. The principals articulated a need to address socio-cultural issues (e.g., imagining a future in college) as well as academic ones (e.g., preparing for a future in college). Participants completed an interest inventory of activities and programs that they were currently running or interested in launching. Some of these included career fairs, college information sessions, learning communities, internships, and parental outreach activities. The idea of structured school visits garnered the most immediate traction, with the principals interested in launching or expanding their efforts to acclimate students to the intermediate and/or high school that they would subsequently attend. Two-way visits were envisioned, with students returning to their previous school to address younger students and with students visiting their next school to speak with the alumni of their current school. In this way, each school would send and receive student ambassadors. Both New Dorp and Staten Island Technical have enlarged their school visit programs for the 2014–2015 academic year.

Achieving Collective Impact

The Staten Island Educational Partnership took an important turn when it held is first community forum in May 2014. A large group of community leaders, elected officials, educators, and other stakeholders agreed in principle with the overall objectives of 30,000 Degrees but desired a larger organizational structure that would allow them to work alongside the representatives of the three higher education institutions. Betsy Dubovsky recognized the opportunity to achieve a "collective impact" with the help of the nonprofit Strive, and engaged Strive as a consultant to grow the partnership beyond its current membership and to bring the organizational objectives into better alignment with the needs and capacity of the Staten Island community.

As described by Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer (2012) in their Stanford Innovation Review article, "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact

Work, " "collective impact" is an organizational strategy designed to maximize the value of cross-sector partnerships for structural, disciplined, rigorous activities that are also flexible and organic. In the parlance of collective impact, achieving 30,000 degrees requires first and foremost a system change in how higher education, pre-K–12 education, nonprofits, government, and the business community work together. Creating a broader, more inclusive Staten Island Educational Partnership is the first step toward achieving this borough-wide system change, and though the work of organizing can be tedious in the early stages, the resulting partnership will gather that many more stakeholders in what we intend to be a collective endeavor. Without the coordinated leadership structure and organization, higher education and the various other sectors of borough life will continue to make isolated impacts and to generate programs that are limited to their expertise. Collective impact strategy offers one sector to understand the impact of its activities on another sector and to assess the improvements that might be made to overall outcomes by aligning our information and efforts more closely together.

With the help of the Strive consultancy, the Staten Island Educational Partnership is working toward the broader organizational structure that embraces these five basic principles of collective impact:

Common Agenda	**All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.**
Shared Measurement	**Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.**
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	**Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.**
Continuous Communication	**Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.**
Backbone Support	**Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and to coordinate participating organizations and agencies. (Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer 2012)**

As we work through these organizational challenges, the members of the working group are particularly excited about developing strategies for attaining the first three articles of this agenda. Of special interest is developing the "shared measurement" that will be based on the various ways that the participants in collective impact define their progress toward the common agenda. "Mutually reinforcing activities" will arrive as we complete our inventory of what we are able to measure and contribute toward achieving our common agenda: thirty thousand degrees and a better educated workforce for Staten Island.

Conclusion

On September 13, 2013, during NBC's fourth-annual Education Nation Summit, a gathering on the state of education in America, the United States secretary of education Arne Duncan announced that education in America is in "a real state of crisis." Findings of a study showed that American adults fare poorly in mathematical and technical skills needed for a modern workplace compared to their counterparts in most other developed nations (Chuck 2013). Nationally, college enrollment in 2012 declined by nearly a half million students compared to a year earlier, according to new figures released by the US Census Bureau, with students over the age of twenty-five leading the miniature exodus from higher learning (United States Census Bureau 2014).

This information has special import for the educators who work in New York City's least populous but most fast changing borough and its metropolitan institutions. Although the members of the Staten Island Educational Partnership knew at the outset that our efforts would partner us closely with leaders of the community and K-12 education, we could have never realized the extent to which our efforts would engage us in prospects for the health, welfare, and development of our borough. Each member of the working group brought an exceptional portfolio of program activities and initiatives to the effort as we began our work, but we already have achieved our own collective impact in realizing that we are actually doing each other's work in a mutually reinforcing fashion: the education of Staten Islanders. Never before have the stakes for this effort been clearer to us as we confront the costs of an uneducated workforce, high school drop-out rates, and lack of college attainment as well as to the prospects for the borough as a whole. While Staten Island continues to recover from the most destructive storm this city has ever seen, we take great pride in bringing equal focus and determination to an equally destructive problem that threatens to leave the borough behind the city's and the nation's economic progress. We are heartened in this effort by the contributions of a wide range of leaders and stakeholders who likewise realize that a college educated workforce is the work of us all. The best potential and strategic plans for a metropolitan college or university, we posit, will always have this fact before them.

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Building Sustainable Neighborhoods through Community Gardens: Enhancing Residents' Well-being through University–Community Engagement Initiative

Nicholas Siewell, Stephanie Aguirre,
and Madhavappallil Thomas

Abstract

Building communities through creative community garden projects is increasingly common and seems to create beneficial effects for participants. This study recognizes the need to understand the impact of gardens on low socioeconomic neighborhoods. By conducting a needs assessment study and establishing a community garden, we were able to study its impact on residents of a neighborhood in Bakersfield, California. Data were collected from residents and garden participants using surveys and focus groups. Findings show overwhelming support for the garden and identify benefits of gardens on physical and mental health, social capacities, and spiritual health of individuals and neighborhoods. The study shows how such university community engagement initiatives provide a macro practice intervention framework for students, practitioners, and leaders.

Community gardens have become an effective tool able to aid in community building, increase neighborhood interaction and cohesion, reduce crime, establish neighborhood pride, and enhance neighborhood beautification. Previous community garden experiments in New York and Oakland specifically have shown several positive outcomes (Correia 2005; Cotel 2005). For example, the New York garden project donates more than seven hundred pounds of food to local soup kitchens and sells close to $4,000 worth of food to nearby farmers' markets. The Oakland garden has grown to become an alternate for vegetable shops and provides access to fresh produce at affordable prices. These projects show that community gardens are assets to their communities.

Additionally, community gardens are often used as "open air gardens." Open air gardens are classrooms located outside, in which students are encouraged to interact with nature. This interaction has been shown to be a powerful educational tool, as it motivates and engages students in their learning process (Scott, Boyd, and Colquhoun 2013). Some of these gardens are designed to become "open-air classrooms," providing education to the public on many subjects, from gardening and nutrition to physical education and personal well-being. The regular classes and events hosted at the gardens are for local community members (Siewell and Aguirre 2013).

Studies show that community gardens contribute to individuals' physical benefits in terms of health, obesity, improved food choices (Twiss et al. 2003; Van den Berg et al. 2010), mental health benefits for individuals and groups (Stuart 2005), social benefits (Alaimo, Reischl, and Allen 2010; Beilin and Hunter 2011; Evers and Hodgson 2011), spiritual benefits (Unruh and Hutchinson 2011), and any combination of these. Several social benefits of community gardens are also linked to the sustainability of urban environments (Beilin and Hunter 2011) and to increasing the social capital and the value associated with a community or neighborhood (Alaimo, Reischl, and Allen 2010).

Given these beneficial outcomes of community gardens, it is important to further explore this area by assessing the need for community gardens and documenting the impact of gardens on low socioeconomic neighborhoods and rural areas. Against this backdrop, the current study focuses on the Langston and Jonah neighborhood situated in the Greenfield community in Bakersfield, California. Bakersfield was recently named America's Hungriest City with 21 percent of the residents in Kern County being food insecure (Food Research and Action Center 2013). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2014) indicates that Kern County residents' health is the worst of any county in California, and that "more than 60 percent of Kern County's population is considered obese." In addition, 22.5 percent of individuals in Kern County live below the poverty level (US Census 2011). The Kern County Community Needs Assessment (2012) identifies Kern County in the worst quartile for high violent crimes with a rate of 586.5 crimes per 100,000 populations (Healthy Kern n.d.).

In view of the above, it is important to assess the need for community gardens and examine the positive outcome it could have on these neighborhoods. It is also evident from the literature that community gardens may contribute in some ways toward possible solutions to social problems, and they may have a salutary impact on building sustainable neighborhoods. This project was part of a university community engagement initiative in which graduate level social work students from California State University, Bakersfield, worked closely with community members and local agencies to establish a community garden in a low socioeconomic neighborhood in Bakersfield, California. Several different agencies and individuals were involved in the creation of the garden such as nonprofit agencies, civic agencies, elected officials, and local groups dedicated to making their community a better place for all. This paper documents the findings of a needs assessment study and the successful implementation of a community garden project, as well as its benefits and impact on the surrounding neighborhood and those involved with its creation and maintenance.

Literature Review

An in-depth review of the existing literature shows that the benefit of community gardens is an area that is empirically studied by several researchers. Although these studies are different and diverse in nature, scope, and methodologies, they can be grouped into four categories or domains in terms of the benefits of community gardens, namely, physical health and well-being benefits, mental health benefits, social benefits and sustainability, and spiritual benefits.

Physical Health and Well-being

Carney et al. (2012) conducted a study in the United States to explore the effects of community gardening on produce consumption, food security, and relationships within families in a rural Oregon community. Their findings indicated that participants' community garden involvement improved their overall health and that the produce intake of all participants increased significantly. The introduction of and involvement in local community gardens have been linked to an increase in physical activity and healthy lifestyle, as well as a reduction in health complaints among garden participants (Van den Berg et al. 2010; Twiss et al. 2003).

Researchers have also examined the correlation between body mass index (BMI), demographics, level of physical activity, and other health-related factors. Litt et al. (2011) showed a significant reduction in BMI for individuals involved in gardening activities. Several other studies have reported similar findings documenting a decrease in obesity associated with gardening activities and community garden involvement (Castro, Samuels, and Harman 2013; Davis et al. 2011; Zick et al. 2013).

Mental Health

In addition to the physical health benefits reported previously, the literature review also revealed a link between community gardens and gardening in general with improved mental health. For example, Carney et al. (2012) found a relationship between stress reduction, increased relaxation, increased self-esteem, confidence, and a positive sense of passing time with gardening activities. Studies by Mecham and Joiner (2012), Okvat and Zautra (2011), and Van den Berg et al. (2010) provide similar results. Stuart (2005) suggests that gardening made adjustment to life in domestic violence shelters easier for residents, relieved stress, absorbed negativity, provided a peaceful retreat, and instilled hope upon participants seeing growth of plants. The study further indicated that nurturing plants and producing food provided empowerment, a connection to one's cultural heritage, and is a cross-cultural unifier.

Along similar lines, Gonzales et al. (2011) and Unruh and Hutchinson (2011) have shown that participating in community activities can decrease some symptoms of depression and provide purpose for individuals. Gardening has also been associated with reducing the risk of developing dementia and has been shown to be effective at improving cognitive functioning among the elderly (Fabrigoule et al. 1995; Simons et al. 2006; Thelander et al. 2008; Tse 2010).

Social Benefits and Sustainability

There are a few major themes emerging within literature discussing the benefits and impacts of community gardens on society and communities. These social impacts generally were measured in terms of sustainability, social capital, and specific social outcomes associated with community gardens. “Social capital” has been identified as an underlying theme that is often emphasized in the literature reviewed. In the literature (or in this context), it is conceptualized as a measure of the connectedness (or lack thereof) and relationships between both individuals and groups within a community (Alaimo, Reischl, and Allen 2010; Draper and Freedman 2010). Social capital, then, is a measure of both intrinsic and extrinsic value of a neighborhood, community, or region, as perceived by that area’s residents, be it individuals or groups within or outside the area. A recent study on intergenerational mobility in the United States identified a correlation between social capital and income mobility—those living in areas with greater social capital were more able to move into higher income brackets and, in some instances, overcome poverty (Chetty et al. 2014). Increased levels of social capital help individuals by providing them with protective factors in the form of strong social ties, which fosters positive growth of communities.

Alaimo, Reischl, and Allen (2010) found that involvement of residents in community projects such as community gardens increased the level of social capital by helping people make connections with their neighbors and by making them more aware of neighborhood organization. Similarly, Firth, Maye, and Pearson (2011) emphasized the effectiveness of community gardens in bringing people together and building stronger communities. The study reports that there are four ways that community gardens can create social capital: they get people to come together and provide a shared objective and purpose, which creates a sense of ownership and pride for participants; they provide a place for individuals in the community to meet, which allows interaction and community creation; the things that happen in the garden, i.e., growing, cooking, and eating food, are social activities that allow people to interact and bond; and gardens help link communities to organizations and political and governmental authorities (Firth, Maye, and Pearson 2011).

Several studies have identified “sustainability” factors highlighted by community gardens affecting ecosystems and urban life style. Beilin and Hunter (2011) compared two community gardens in Australia and showed how community gardens can contribute to the sustainability of a city as measured empirically via the Victorian Government-approved community indicator framework (the Community Indicators Victoria, aka, CIV). The study linked a sustainable community with the existence of community gardens in the communities studied by CIV measurements. It was shown that increased biodiversity was among the ecological benefits of the gardens studied. Similar findings were mirrored in studies done in the United Kingdom and Ireland (Clavin 2011), Berlin (Colding and Barthel 2013), and the United States (Macias 2008).

Turner (2011) stresses the importance of understanding where food comes from in order to maintain sustainable cities and healthy lifestyle. Additionally, Turner discussed the idea of “embodied sustainability” as being the notion that we are not passive beings, but “actors in and on the world”; that “we know and produce the world through our bodies” (Turner 2011, 515). Community gardens are physical representations of this concept of being, and Turner argues that this concept must be recognized in order to make community gardens successful in bringing about sustainability through strong, vibrant communities and empowered individuals. A community's ability to sustain itself is directly related to its collective health, strength, and viability.

Several other social benefits are cited in the literature. For example, Evers and Hodgson (2011) found that community gardens have benefits such as increased food security, increased self-efficacy of individuals, and enhanced positive relationships. Reduction of local crime and neighborhood revitalization is associated with the findings of multiple studies on community gardens (Gorman et al. 2009; Henderson and Hartsfield 2009; Okvat and Zautra 2011). Additional benefits of community gardens discussed in the literature include expression of values and creativity, benefit of neighborhood beautification, an increase in community pride (Flachs 2010; Litt et al. 2011; Okvat and Zautra 2011), increased education about the natural world and food (Flachs 2010), binding neighborhoods cross-culturally (Stuart 2005), and empowering and building individual and social resilience for those involved in garden projects (Henderson and Hartsfield 2009; Okvat and Zautra 2011).

Spiritual Benefits

Finally, there are some key spiritual benefits associated with community gardening. The deep connectedness fostered through gardening activities and cultivating the soil is a way to create strong bonds between gardeners and their communities, as well as an invaluable way for individuals to learn more about themselves. In Flachs (2010), it was found that participating in community urban gardening helps one develop his or her own identity. The study reported that community gardening is a way to be creative, to express one's values, and to make a positive impact on one's community and the environment. Similarly, gardening activities fostered a sense of belonging with the natural world (Litt et al. 2011). This ties in with Turner's (2011) concept of embodied sustainability, which reflects many gardeners' view that soil in their garden was an active partner in the growing process. Similar findings were also reported by Unruh and Hutchinson (2011), whose results indicated that gardeners experienced a connectedness with their garden and a feeling of positive inner being associated with their gardening activities.

An extensive review of literature on community gardens indicates that there is a dearth of empirical studies documenting the need for community gardens in lower class areas and rural suburbs with relatively high poverty and unemployment rates. This study focuses on such a neighborhood within the Greenfield community in Bakersfield, California, where there is a strong presence of underrepresented minority population. Distinguishing it from most other research, this study focuses not only on assessing the need but also on documenting the impact after the implementation of the community garden. Thus, the study links the assessed need and identified benefits with the impact of the garden on the community. In view of this, the objectives of the study are to assess the need for a community garden in the Jonah/Langston neighborhood, to identify the benefits of community gardens as perceived by neighborhood residents, and to assess the impact of the garden on the neighborhood. The three main research questions related to these objectives are: What is the nature and level of participation of the residents in the community garden? What are the potential benefits of community gardens? What has been the impact of the community garden on the Jonah/Langston neighborhood?

Methodology

The needs assessment study used a convenience sampling method. The selection of the sample group was based on participants' willingness to complete a two-page questionnaire, which resulted in ninety-five participants who lived in the Greenfield neighborhood near the corner of Jonah and Langston Streets in Bakersfield, California. The participants in the study lived within a mile radius surrounding the selected community garden site, and all participants were over the age of eighteen. The research protocol was approved by the Human Subject Review Board of California State University, Bakersfield, prior to the commencement of the data collection phase. Data were collected using a questionnaire, which was created in both Spanish and English. A pilot test was conducted before the data collection in order to assure the quality of the instrument and the information acquired.

The questionnaires were completed by the participants and collected by the investigators going door to door during March 2013. Participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent form, complete the questionnaire, and return it to the investigators. The questionnaire consisted of questions on demographic variables, their willingness to participate in the garden, their level of participation, and their concerns about the community garden in their neighborhood. Additionally, participants were asked to identify reasons to participate in the community garden. Finally, a Likert scale was utilized to identify how important selected benefits of community gardens were to study respondents. Each respondent was asked to rate five different items on a one to five scale with "one" representing "not very important" and "5" representing "very important." The collected data was checked for accuracy and was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 software.

To assess the impact of the community garden, data were collected using focus groups. Two focus groups were conducted. One group consisted of two members and the other consisted of nine members. Participants were individuals who either live near the garden, took part in creation of the garden, worked in the garden, or any combination of these. Data were collected using a focus group questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated into Spanish to collect data from non-English speaking participants. A Spanish translator helped collect the data. The translator signed a confidentiality agreement to protect information covered in the focus groups and to protect the identity of focus group participants. The major themes explored in the questionnaires include the benefits and rationale behind community gardens, specifically in terms of the social and health benefits, and reasons to participate in community gardens. The focus group data was content-analyzed to identify major themes on the impact of the garden on the neighborhood.

Findings

Demographic Characteristics of the Needs Assessment Survey

Out of the ninety-five respondents, 40 percent were males and 60 percent were females (see Table 1). The ages of the study participants ranged from nineteen to seventy-one, with a mean age of 36.52. In terms of ethnicity, most of the participants identified as Hispanic or Latino (68.8 percent), while the remaining participants were either African American (12.9 percent), Caucasian/White (12.9 percent), Pacific Islander/Asian (1.1 percent), or other (4.3 percent). More than half of the respondents were employed (67.4 percent). Out of the employed respondents, 56.7 percent worked in a full-time job, and 13.4 percent worked part-time jobs. However, a substantial segment of respondents did not respond to questions about current occupation. The top three occupations of respondents were sales, grocery, and cosmetology (10.5 percent), homemakers (8.4 percent), and health care, caregivers, and certified nurse's aides (6.3 percent). Additionally, 8.4 percent of respondents indicated that they were unemployed and/or disabled. With respect to their education, nearly half of the respondents reported high school education or less (49.4 percent), followed by some college (21.1 percent), college degree (14.7 percent), other (9.5 percent), trade/technology school (3.2 percent), and attending college (2.1 percent).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender		
Male	38	40.0
Female	57	60.0
Ethnicity		
African American	12	12.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1.1
Hispanic/Latino	64	68.8
Caucasian/White	12	12.9
Other	4	4.3
Employment		
Employed	64	67.4
Unemployed	31	32.6
Education Obtained		
High School or less	47	49.4
Some College	20	21.1

Attending College	2	2.1
College Degree	14	14.7
Tech/Trade School	3	3.2
Other	9	9.5

Level of Participation

The data and findings showed that residents of the Jonah/Langston neighborhood expressed unanimous support for this project. Over three-fourths of the respondent's indicated that they were willing to participate in a community garden if one was in their neighborhood (77.4 percent), while the remaining respondents indicated that they preferred not to participate (see Table 2). Of those who wanted to participate in a community garden, 47.4 percent wanted to participate as a garden volunteer (i.e., use the garden to grow vegetables and maintain it), 15.8 percent wanted to participate as donors, and 1.1 percent wanted to participate as an educator, if possible. The remaining respondents either did not report a participation preference (18.9 percent) or reported other, e.g., garden maintenance (16.8 percent).

Table 2. Participants' Willingness to Participate

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent
If there were a community garden in your neighborhood, would you like to participate?		
Yes	72	77.4
No	21	22.6

A significant majority of the respondents (91.5 percent) did not report having any specific concerns about a community garden in their neighborhood. The remaining respondents reported having three main concerns about the community garden project being implemented in their neighborhood: vandalism and/or theft of garden equipment and property (5.3 percent), concerns about maintenance of the garden (1.1 percent), and other/unspecified concerns (2.1 percent).

Reasons to Participate in a Community Garden

Reasons to participate in the garden were broken down into two main benefits groupings—health and educational reasons (see Table 3), and social and recreational reasons (see Table 4). The study indicated that opportunity to socialize (93 percent) and the opportunity to work and exercise (92 percent) were the main reasons respondents wanted to participate in a community garden.

Table 3. Health and Educational Reasons to Participate

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent
Access to Fresh Vegetables		
Yes	77	85.6
No	13	14.4
Opportunity to Work and Exercise		
Yes	83	92.2
No	7	7.8
Education (i.e., learning about the benefits of community gardening)		
Yes	76	85.4
No	13	14.6

Table 4. Social and Recreational Reasons to Participate

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent
Save Money on Monthly Food Expenses		
Yes	75	84.3
No	14	15.7
Opportunity to Socialize		
Yes	83	93.3
No	6	6.7
Additional Recreational Time		
Yes	77	88.5
No	10	11.5
Difficulty Finding Food in Local Grocery Store		
Yes	39	45.3
No	47	54.7

Benefits of Gardening

The study further identified potential benefits of community gardens, and these included promoting community building, promoting neighborhood interaction, adding to neighborhood pride, adding to neighborhood beautification, and reducing neighborhood crime. The findings clearly indicate that respondents strongly consider these benefits as being important to them and to their community. Although there are variations in the mean scores on the benefits of gardening, neighborhood beautification was rated as the most important benefit (see Table 5).

Table 5. Mean Score Analysis of Benefits of Gardening

Variables	Frequency	Mean
Promotes Community Building	95	4.26
Promotes Neighborhood Interaction	94	4.36
Adds to Neighborhood Pride	95	4.37
Adds to Neighborhood Beautification	95	4.41
Reduces Crime	94	4.26

Impact of the Community Garden

Focus group data was content-analyzed in order to assess the impact of the garden on the community and its residents. In terms of physical health benefits, several focus group participants pointed out improvement in participants' and their family's eating habits and lifestyles. For example, one focus group participant gave a personal account on how the garden is having a positive effect on her family, saying, "One of the things that the community garden has brought is that we are eating healthier, and we are showing our kids how to eat healthier."

For some respondents, the community garden has been a place to quiet the mind and meditate on the moment. One focus group participant claimed that "the garden is used as a therapy where we can come and forget about everything." Some participants felt that the garden has increased the value of homes in the surrounding area. One focus group participant stated, "Real Estate agents are talking about the community garden and how it affects the value of houses in the neighborhood." Further, some focus group participants noticed that many community residents are taking an interest in the community garden, as it contributes to the overall beautification of the neighborhood. Nearly all the participants stated that they have observed or spoken with community residents who wanted to get involved.

Prior to being a community garden, the lot on which the garden has been planted was utilized for illegal activity including illegal dumping of trash. Now, the community garden has been identified as a source of neighborhood beauty and pride. One participant noted, "There is no illegal dumping on site. It is very pretty, and it has definitely made the community nicer in general." A few focus group participants have noticed that the community garden has contributed to an increased sense of community, not only among individuals working in the garden, but also among individuals in the neighborhood. One focus group participant went on to state that "the community garden keeps us active and it brings families together."

Several of the respondents also felt that the community garden has had an effect on the participants' knowledge and awareness of sustainability practices. Participants reported making more organic food choices as a result of participating in the garden. One participant stated how the garden is being utilized to teach residents about composting, stating, "Here at the garden and as a group, we are using the things we take out of the garden to make compost." Community garden participants also reported that they are learning more about how food is grown and the local environment. Another participant reported making more sustainable, eco-friendly choices, reporting of her family that, "We sometimes come to the garden walking, rather than using the car." Finally, the garden participants have plans to incorporate the garden into educational opportunities for the nearby elementary and junior high schools in order to further utilize the garden as an open-air classroom.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to assess the need for a community garden, identify potential benefits of community gardens, and to examine the impact of the community garden on the neighborhood surrounding the selected garden site. As expected, findings indicate that there was almost unanimous support for the garden among the study participants. Clearly, people in this neighborhood considered a community garden to be an important addition and asset to their community. Similarly, it is important to note that most of the respondents were able to identify benefits associated with community gardens. This implies that the residents in this area are aware of and possibly knowledgeable about the potential benefits of community gardens.

For a significant majority of the respondents, important reasons to participate in this community garden were increased opportunities to socialize with neighbors and increased opportunities to work and exercise. This finding is congruent with several studies, which explored the benefits of community gardens on mental health (Carney et al. 2012; Gonzales et al. 2011) and building social capital in neighborhoods (Alaimo, Reischl, and Allen 2010; Firth, Maye, and Pearson 2011). While community gardens have been shown to effectively prevent obesity (Castro, Samuels, and Harman 2013; Davis et al. 2011; Zick et al. 2013), involvement in garden activities has also been found to increase physical activity and healthy life style of participants (Twiss et al. 2003; Van den Berg et al. 2010). Additionally, most survey respondents reported that community gardening can provide them with additional recreation time and can save them money on their monthly food expenses.

Almost half of all respondents indicated that access to fruits and vegetables was not a problem for them. This may show that most of the people in the Jonah/Langston neighborhood surveyed in this study have access to fruits and vegetables. It may be concluded from this result that the Jonah/Langston garden is perhaps desirable to respondents on a more social and ascetic level. As shown in Flachs (2010), Litt et al. (2011), Evers and Hodgson (2011), and Okvat and Zautra (2011), community gardens have the capacity to meet these needs while simultaneously increasing the pride community members have in their neighborhood.

All the benefits identified in the study had a mean rating of above "four" out of a maximum of "five" in terms of importance. Thus, findings show that there is no significant variation in terms of benefits of gardening. The mean score analysis indicated that neighborhood beautification was the most important benefit associated with community gardens. In this context, it is worthwhile to note that most of the benefits identified were social benefits that could potentially increase the social capital of the neighborhood. In this regard, Alaimo, Reischl, and Allen (2010) found that creating a higher degree of social capital can lead to increased perception of responsibility for and connection to one's community. This study also shows that community building is a benefit strongly desired by community garden members.

In terms of the impact of the community garden, the focus group findings show that many of the benefits identified as desirable in the needs assessment study had come to fruition. Focus group respondents also indicated benefits not explored in the needs assessment study but identified in the literature on community gardens. As reported by Carney et al. (2012), Van den Berg et al. (2010), and Twiss et al. (2003), the focus group respondents who worked in the garden reported that they had improved their eating habits and that they were leading a more active lifestyle. The focus group respondents also said that participating in the garden helped them quiet their minds and better appreciate the present. These themes are consistent with the findings of Carney et al. (2012), Mecham and Joiner (2012), Okvat and Zautra (2011).

Study participants also identified key social benefits associated with community gardens. For example, individuals stated that the value of the homes in the garden neighborhood has increased. Although it is unclear of a direct link between the increase in value and the garden, it is clearly evident that the garden is a prominent feature of the neighborhood, which adds to the overall worth of the community for residents and non-residents alike. Participants also reported that the garden has helped bring the neighborhood together and that the garden promotes an actively involved community lifestyle. These findings are similar to those of Evers and Hodgson (2011), Flachs (2010), Litt et al. (2011), and Okvat and Zautra (2011), where they indicate a clear increase in social capital of the neighborhood benefiting individuals, families, and the greater community. Additionally, the garden has become a place to learn about sustainability and sustainable practices (i.e., composting, buying locally and organically grown food, and learning about how food is grown). Focus group participants also report that involvement with the garden has been a valuable learning experience that has helped teach participants about the origins of their food and the local environment.

Limitations

Although the findings of this study add to the existing literature, there are some limitations. The study employed a convenience sample of residents living in the Jonah and Langston neighborhood in Bakersfield, California. Such a sampling method may not provide a cross-sectional random representation of the population living in the neighborhood, which in turn may limit generalization beyond the study population. Also, the opinions and perceptions of people who live in this neighborhood may be different from other neighborhoods, which may limit the study's ability to draw conclusions about other communities. The demographic composition of the sampled area is unique with a strong presence of Hispanics/Latinos. To this extent, the findings will likely dominate the opinion of one particular group. These factors serve as external threats to the generalizability of the study's findings to other settings.

Conclusion

The study and its findings reveal several benefits and implications for the Jonah/Langston neighborhood and for the larger community where the garden was established. This study and project were part of a university–community engagement initiative in which graduate level social work students worked in partnership with community members and local agencies to establish a community garden in a low socioeconomic neighborhood. Social work educational programs can replicate such university-community collaborative models for engaging students in community practice. It demonstrates how such neighborhood development projects can be effective macro intervention learning tools for students, community practitioners, and community leaders.

Community problems are often complex, and it takes adequate resources and assets to rebuild and rejuvenate communities like the Jonah and Langston neighborhood. As shown by the literature and our findings, community gardens can be an effective tool to achieve varied community improvement goals. Community practitioners and leaders can adopt such collaborative models as part of a plan to address community deficits and to increase community assets. This may play an important role in raising awareness of organic food and healthy eating.

The garden has become a community gathering place, bringing families and neighbors together, which in turn has fostered a tighter-knit, stronger community. The study shows how the garden provides peace, beauty, and a sense of pride for people in the neighborhood, and it has helped participants by teaching them more about sustainability and sustainable practices in urban life. These are community assets that build social capital which in turn can improve social relationships and develop social leadership in community residents. Findings show how the community garden brought several community agencies and community members together in solving their problems, meeting their needs, and in building community assets. These findings can provide an intervention framework for students, community practitioners, and leaders alike.

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