Recognizing Engaged Scholarship in Faculty Reward Structures: Challenges and Progress

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Today, on campuses across the nation, there is a recognition that the faculty reward system does not match the full range of academic functions and that professors are often caught between competing obligations. In response, there is a lively and growing discussion about how faculty should, in fact, spend their time. – Boyer (1990, p. 1)

It has been a quarter century since Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990) challenged higher education institutions to redefine scholarship and better align the faculty reward system with institutional mission. In that seminal report, Boyer proposed broadening the definition of scholarship in order to better align faculty reward structures with the teaching and service mission of higher education. He proposed that faculty reward structures should recognize not just research (which he termed the "scholarship of discovery") and publication, but also the scholarship of integration, application, and teaching. A few years later, he expanded this to include the "the scholarship of engagement," meaning "connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems…." (Boyer, 1996, p. 21).

Boyer was not alone in promoting community engagement as a primary function of higher education, and the roots of this movement can be traced back to the 1980s with the founding of the Campus Compact in 1985 (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010). The concept has been endorsed by several higher education organizations, including the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU), and the Coalition of Urban Metropolitan Universities (CUMU).

A modest body of literature has examined various aspects of community-engaged scholarship (e.g., see Fitzgerald, Burack, & Seifer, 2010) and resources have been developed to support institutional change. For example, Imagining America was founded in 1999 as a consortium of colleges and universities devoted to creating "democratic spaces to foster and advance publicly engaged scholarship that draws on arts, humanities, and design" (http://imaginingamerica.org/about/our-mission/). In 2008, Imagining America published a guide providing concrete advice to assist faculty whose work focused on engaged scholarship in the retention, promotion and tenure (RPT) process (Ellison & Eatman, 2008).

Despite widespread consensus regarding the value of community engagement, progress toward aligning faculty reward structures to support community-community-engaged scholarship has been slow, even among institutions that have attained the Carnegie voluntary community engagement classification (Giles, Sandmann, & Saltmarsh, 2010, pp. 161-176). The topic is especially timely as the baby-boom generation of faculty retires in increasing numbers, opening opportunities for a new, young generation that views scholarship and the faculty role in academe very differently. This generation is more likely to value new forms of scholarship, including digital and web-based publications, which traditionally have not been valued in retention, tenure and promotion policies. Furthermore, women and faculty of color are more likely than others to be to community-engaged scholars, and as institutions seek to diversify the faculty, the need to recognize and reward this type of work has become more urgent.

This special issue of *Metropolitan Universities* aims to examine institutional approaches to the recognition of community-engaged scholarship in faculty RPT policies and processes. The call for papers requested papers that would describe evidence-based approaches to defining and evaluating the quality of engaged scholarship, as well as analyses of the processes and outcomes associated with adoption and

implementation of engaged scholarship in RPT policies. We sought to identify: ways that institutions define engaged scholarship and differentiate it from (or integrate it into) the review of teaching, service, and conventional forms of scholarship; how engaged scholarship is presented and evaluated, including the extent to which it results in "traditional" outputs and who is defined as "peers" in peer review; challenges encountered and strategies that have been successful in achieving institutional change; and the outcomes and consequences, in terms of impact on institutional performance, academic culture, or impacts on faculty, students, and communities.

The papers that comprise this volume provide a snapshot of policies, practices, and strategies for achieving change across a range of institutions. In the first three papers, we see efforts focused at a different organizational levels and institutional types: college (within a large comprehensive university), university (within a doctoral granting, research-intensive university), and the system (within a large state university system). In each of these cases, authors address both the need to change and align policies, and the need for culture change to support implementation.

Few higher education institutions have well-articulated personnel policies that would enable or support the recognition of community-engaged scholarship in the tenure and promotion process. Changing personnel policies—as well as institutional culture—can be a challenging process that requires multiple years of sustained effort. Kirtman, Bowers, and Hoffman describe a change-process that was initiated by faculty in a College of Education at a large comprehensive university, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where I serve as Dean. The case provides an example of how faculty can successfully initiate and drive an effort to change policies and institutional culture. Consultation and negotiation, particularly with senior faculty who valued traditional forms of scholarly productivity, was a critical element, as was the collaboration and support from administration. The effort's alignment with the larger institutional mission and strategic goals related to community engagement and diversifying the faculty were also supportive factors.

Pelco and Howard describe the process of incorporating community engaged scholarship into faculty personnel standards in a research intensive university, Virginia Commonwealth University, where community engagement was well-established as part of the institutional mission. Several champions, including the provost, vice provost for community engagement, and external consultant, were key to the success of this effort, which resulted in the revised RPT standards at the school and university levels. The authors note that a range of supports are needed and that policy revision is "just one step along the road to developing the campus climate that supports faculty for undertaking community engaged teaching scholarship and service." This article provides illustrations of the kinds of myths surrounding engaged scholarship, and ways that such myths can be addressed within the context of a centralized change process that is aligned with the institution's mission and strategic plan.

Policies that support community-engaged scholarship are essential but insufficient alone for institutional change. Janke, Holland and Medlin discuss the change process in the context of a four-year, doctoral granting, research-intensive university with high research activity, University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Similar to the CSUF and VCU cases, the effort to revise personnel standards at UNGC was tightly linked to a strategic plan (at the university level, in this case) and it employed both faculty and administrative leadership over a period of years to modify, align and implement policies that support community-engaged scholarship in the faculty personnel process. To address concerns with implementation of new university policy, a week-long dialogue process was launched with participation by faculty at all ranks, deans, and executive leadership of the university. The dialogues resulted in the identification of "hotspots" or issues that needed to be addressed in implementation, including: lack of consensus on the definition and value of community-engaged scholarship; honoring the spectrum of scholarship (traditional/nontraditional); stewarding the rigor of community-engaged scholarship; and the "three-bucket problem" of how to disaggregate academic work that is increasingly integrated into three

traditional categories of teaching, scholarship and service. This paper illustrates the need to create a space for dialogue among faculty at all ranks and administration, and identifies a range of concrete recommendations for addressing each of the "hotspots."

While the first three papers in this volume describe change initiatives at the college and university levels, Saltmarsh and Wooding explore strategies for change at the university system level, emphasizing the critical importance of senior leadership in creating and supporting substantive change in reward structures. This case example examines the current policies, challenges and possible solutions for the five campuses in this unionized public university system of the University of Massachusetts. To reflect on current reward structures and consider ways to effect cultural change, the system held a one-day seminar that provided an opportunity for campuses to share practices and consider on a range of rewards that could serve as incentives and recognition for community-engaged scholarship. The paper identifies concrete recommendations for the executive leadership at the systems and campus levels to actively and publicly promote community-engaged scholarship by supporting changes in personnel policies, professional development, grants, awards, and other public recognition. Notably, even while emphasizing the role and responsibility of senior leadership, Saltmarsh and Wooding reiterate the importance of collaboration with faculty leadership in both the faculty governance process (i.e., typically an academic senate) and the faculty union.

The final papers in this volume include case studies illustrating institutional contexts that can support faculty as engaged scholars in the RPT process. Lambert-Pennington describes how three faculty members navigated the tenure and promotion process at the University of Memphis, where university policy recognizes engaged scholarship, but alignment of department policies is inconsistent, on a continuum from "explicit to minimal to no mention of engaged scholarship." The paper identifies several themes that were common across the three cases, including alignment of the faculty members' departmental mission with the values of engaged scholarship; narratives that weave engaged scholarship across the three areas of teaching, scholarship and service; scholarly productivity in a range of traditional and nontraditional formats; and support from department and/or college leadership. Lambert-Pennington concludes by noting that although "it is possible to be awarded tenure and promotion as an engaged scholar under a range of departmental policies, going up for tenure in a department without clear criteria for evaluating engaged scholarship remains a risky proposition."

Boehm and Larrivee describe an institutional context where engaged scholarship is not explicitly defined in RPT policies that are specified in the collective bargaining agreement and not open to modification at the department or campus level. However, as described by the authors, at Worcester State University, "engaged scholarship is so intrinsic to the mission of WSU and the type of scholars hired by the institution that it is not difficult for the deans to encourage faculty to produce such projects." Rather, the challenge at this comprehensive university lies in mentoring faculty in selecting and presenting their engaged scholarship, as well as in balancing the demands of a four-four (12 unit) teaching load with expectations for scholarly productivity. The paper describes two interdisciplinary projects that provide a rich context for community-engaged scholarship, as well as the benefits to community, students, and faculty, and the deans' roles in mentoring faculty in using this type of engagement as part of their RPT portfolios.

Faculty who are committed to working as engaged scholars are likely be more successful in a context where the departmental or program mission is aligned with the values of engaged scholarship. Peterson, Perry, Dostilio, and Zambo describe how the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), a consortium of more than 80 schools and colleges of education that are working to improve the design of the professional practice doctorate in education, promotes this type of context. CPED-influenced programs aim to prepare scholarly practitioners who "blend practical wisdom with professional skills and knowledge to name, frame, and solve problems of practice…by collaborating with key stakeholders,

including the university, the educational institution, the community, and individuals" (CPED, 2010). These programs attract faculty who are committed to community-engaged scholarship, yet institutional expectations for scholarly work in these (doctoral granting) institutions typically emphasize traditional epistemologies and forms of dissemination. The paper includes one faculty member's description of her own journey as a scholar-practitioner after she accepted a tenure line position and subsequently navigated the tenure and promotion expectations at Portland State University, an institution in the process of transforming its expectations to embrace a more inclusive definition of scholarship. The case illustrates the passionate commitment that many new faculty bring to their work as engaged scholars, and their potential as change agents within their own institutions and in the broader landscape of higher education.

As a whole, this set of papers illustrates progress that some institutions have made over the past several years to support, recognize, and reward faculty work in community-engaged scholarship. Most of the universities described in these papers have modified personnel policies to recognize community-engaged scholarship in the RPT process, and several cases illustrate how individual faculty have been able to navigate the process under varying RPT policies and conditions.

Several recurring themes appeared in the stories of successful institutional change as well as individual faculty cases: (1) alignment of community-engaged scholarship with the institutional mission and strategic goals; (2) a top-down and bottom-up collaborative approach to institutional change; (3) space and time for conversation about the difficult issues related to evaluation and recognition of community engaged scholarship; and (4) leadership and support from deans, provosts and presidents, both for institutional change and for individual faculty using engaged scholarship to make their case for promotion and tenure. Challenges remain, however, in each of the institutions described in this volume, as well as in the field of higher education as a whole.

As a new generation of faculty is recruited—a generation of faculty who deeply value community engagement and who are interested in new ways to disseminate their work—the importance of answering Boyer's call (1990, 1996) to redefine scholarship is critical. The rich detail and insights gleaned from these papers can provide valuable lessons for institutions that are working to answer this call, to align their faculty reward structures with their values and mission as metropolitan universities.

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