Public Scholarship within an Urban School District: A Community and University Partnership Approach to Service-Learning

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This article reports on a collaborative partnership, based in principles of public scholarship and designed to serve local, at-risk or high-risk youth. The program is a six-week summer service-learning initiative in the Sacramento, CA, area developed for transitioning 9th grade students through a multi-agency partnership. The project organizes the university to draw students who often do not make it to college toward a trajectory of high school completion and college enrollment. In addition, the article details opportunities, particularly for junior faculty, to establish local relationships that inform and support ongoing research, create sustainable opportunities to engage in more complex methodological work, and position faculty to participate in public discourse about the role of universities.

In this article, we discuss an ongoing, collaborative effort based in principles of public scholarship. The project, Summer of Service, is a six-week youth service-learning initiative in the Sacramento, CA, area developed to target at-risk or high-risk transitioning 9th grade students. The Sacramento City Unified School District established a multi-agency partnership drawing together local community partners, university staff and faculty, and school district administrators and teachers to provide students access to engaging experiences and resources. Summer of Service was designed to address the challenging period of transition to high school for roughly 500 students from disadvantaged circumstances. Six of thirteen school sites and two community centers offered the program in the first year. Anchoring the program were the goals of connecting incoming students with their new campus, peers, and teachers, and helping students discover connections between their lives at school and their hopes for their communities and families. The school district also sought to increase its capacity to provide service-learning projects based on best practices throughout the school year. In the first year, they committed to supporting projects addressing community environmental concerns, disaster preparedness,

and cultural and language barriers to participation, particularly faced by the community's immigrants. Program partners participated in the facilitation of service-learning projects and helped students gain access to local networks.

Each university and community partner has played a critical role in planning and implementation, iterative design of the program, and researching outcomes for participating young people. While the partnership is balanced in terms of roles and responsibilities, here we will focus particular attention on university and faculty engagement in the project. Specifically, we describe the parameters of the partnership and the resulting new forms of participation available to participants and partners alike. Through this partnership, a set of unique opportunities emerged for junior faculty: 1) to connect with community needs and work alongside those addressing them, 2) to engage in mixed-method research models, and 3) to serve as a link between a university and the surrounding community at a time when the role of universities is being publicly negotiated and refined.

Background

University involvement in the Summer of Service (SOS) came through the University of California, Davis, School of Education. As a public, land-grant institution, UC Davis has a clearly articulated commitment to serving communities in the state of California, in addition to strong commitments to research. As such, following the UC cooperative extension model designed to promote outreach between the university and regions across the state, the School of Education at UC Davis houses The Center for Cooperative Research and Extension Services for Schools (CRESS). Faculty, researchers and educators are encouraged and supported to work collaboratively in service of California students, teachers, and families where scholarship and practice intersect.

From a university perspective, there exists an untapped opportunity to actively participate in drawing students toward the university who are not typically making it to college. While the university offers programs on campus to support a similar transition for students entering college, the SOS program highlights the longer view. By partnering with local school districts and community partners, university faculty and extension center researchers and educators have the opportunity to support two types of commitments. On one hand, university representatives are truly representatives. Student participants get to connect real people with their conceptions of college, while also seeing those real people at work. As a result, potential trajectories can become increasingly clarified for participants. For instance, the ongoing encouragement to attend college in the future can be balanced with real-time access to university faculty and staff who are also interested in students' current work. In addition, student participants gain a sense of the practices of research and the contributions that can be made. Moreover, in the process of gathering field-based data, faculty

build the relationships necessary to refine and pursue research agendas. At the same time, faculty lay the foundation for future contributions to a field of scholarship and to the local and statewide populace.

Public scholarship provides the framework for such university and community-school partnerships. It offers a guiding practice for addressing challenges inherent in the dynamics between academic hierarchies and "living" community-school partnership conditions. Public scholarship acknowledges the value in taking on these challenges in service of community needs and scholarship alike. For junior faculty in particular, this commitment can be a difficult challenge to meet. The demands for demonstrated research productivity, for instance, often do not lend themselves well to the work required to establish and maintain community partnerships. Public scholarship offers compelling arguments for investing the additional time and resources necessary to develop effective partnerships. Boyer (1996) described the scholarship of engagement as a means for "connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities" (p 11). University outreach and extension services play a critical role in establishing and maintaining strong relationships with practitioners and stewarding reciprocal relationships between university and community that are based in shared work. Importantly, there is no single benefactor of shared community-building experiences. Rather, multiple institutions have vested interests in the success of partnerships (Sandman, 2008).

Through this paradigm, public scholarship serves three practical university functions: 1) establishing a collaborative partnership linking university, community agencies, and schools to address identified needs and social justice opportunities in an urban school district, 2) supporting an introspective approach to cooperative extension work, and 3) promoting community-university research projects among faculty.

In the following sections, we describe the impetus for developing the SOS program, the importance of university-community partnerships in supporting transitional periods for youth, the research collaboration, the roles played by each of the partners, and the outcomes and implications for this project and public scholarship more generally. We describe the relevant details of SOS, both structure and program experience, in order to develop a clear sense of the terrain faculty and partners navigate together and to articulate ways universities can contribute to the broader work of public scholarship.

The School District's Summer of Service Program as a Vehicle for Public Scholarship

The Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is a large urban school district in Sacramento, CA, and enrolls 48,155 students in 88 schools, including over 3,800 8th graders. The district's student population is primarily low-income, with 70% eligible for free or reduced price lunch. The district is very diverse: 20.0% of the students are Asian, 32.8% are Hispanic/Latino, 21.0% are African American, and 21.2% are non-Hispanic White. The 88 SCUSD schools are located within communities that are rich in diversity, history, and pride, but some are also plagued with gang violence, criminal activity, and community strife. SCUSD schools operate as safe havens striving for strong connectedness for youth and their families, yet still have major challenges, especially for specific populations.

In 2007, the district administered the California Healthy Kids Survey and found that only 13% of 7th graders reported high levels of opportunities for meaningful participation at their school. This percentage decreased to 9% by 9th grade. This showed that a high percentage of students – over 87% – reported being disengaged from participating in their secondary school experience. The transition from middle to high school – 8th to 9th grade – has proved to be a difficult time for SCUSD young people. High school principals continually report that students are arriving in need of additional supports to successfully make it through high school. Students often also come in weathering the challenge of limited access to a network of effective support of caring adult relationships and awareness of post secondary options and pathways. One of the main pillars of the district is to ensure that each student is aware and prepared for any college or career pathway. To accomplish this goal, it became clear to district decision makers that students needed to get connected to their local community and their schools.

Connecting students to their local community and schools represented not only a critical challenge for SCUSD but a shared responsibility to be addressed in partnership. The state's public universities, in particular, are responsible for serving a population of students that reflects California's demographic population. If that goal is to be achieved, universities need increased opportunities to understand and address circumstances that pull potential students out of the education pipeline before college readiness is even on the table. Summer of Service provides one such opportunity for university participation in addressing an identified and intractable challenge. At the same time, universities must meet their core responsibilities with regard to their existing student populations and their research mission.

Publicly engaged scholarship, then, provides a framework wherein universities can sustainably join in partnership to address pressing community

concerns. Faculty put this framework into motion when developing research programs that incorporate questions informed by community partners. Additionally, public scholarship calls on faculty in the field to take on new roles as agents in service of local communities. This is consistent with service expectations for faculty. However, it presents a challenge in delineating scholarship and service.

Research Methods and Modes of Service

Summer of Service was designed in such a way that faculty involvement was conceived to meet three specific needs. The district partnered with CRESS in the School of Education, in part to develop a survey as an evaluation tool for the program. While district staff sought evaluation data, they also wanted data describing the varied experiences students would have in the program. CRESS staff invited a junior faculty member studying youth political development and civic engagement across contexts to partner and develop a qualitative study component. The qualitative research component was designed to contribute to scholarship addressing ways for youth to establish civic and political spaces for their own participation, collective uses of media and technology for participation, and service-learning as a social justice activity. The program was implemented in five comprehensive high schools, a small high school, and two community centers. Data included field notes from observations at five sites during the six-week program, informal on-the-spot interviews with facilitators and educators regarding curriculum and progress, and artifacts of student work (e.g., journals, student-produced media, project development materials). An additional role for the faculty member was to work with CRESS staff in indentifying findings from both quantitative and qualitative pieces of the study that could inform the iterative program design as SOS moved on to the second year. Finally, the district wanted university faculty and staff to be visible and accessible to student participants.

Serving as representatives of the university community was directly and intentionally related to the research activity, though not specifically as part of data collection. Rather, it was a means to make higher education and research practice accessible as possible future pathways for students' consideration. Throughout the observation phase students informally asked university faculty and staff about UC Davis and the process of getting into college. In one instance, after being introduced to the faculty member on the first day of observations, the following interaction took place with a female student working on a media project; the interaction exemplified what the district hoped students would notice:

Student: You don't look like a professor [surprised].
Faculty researcher: I'm not sure if that's a good thing or a bad thing [laughs].

Student: It's not bad. I usually think of professors all dressed up and rich looking.

In this case, research activity became a means for students to observe a faculty member at work in a practice parallel to their own project work, investigating a phenomenon and informing potential actions with data. Public scholarship is not the only way to get students to interact with university faculty, but it offers an authentic form of interaction. In this case, a public scholarship framework was intentionally used to make faculty presence serve a dual purpose.

Student Transition as an Ideal Opportunity for University Engagement

Times of transition present tangible opportunities to evaluate past experience and what is possible for the future. For universities to remain part of students' trajectories, meaningful presence at times of transition may be opportune. Research is needed to examine this possibility and explore what types of practices may be beneficial. Public scholarship can smooth a path for scholars to be present, to address a research need, and to be partners in turning the challenge of transition into a productive experience. Furthermore, efforts to support transitions at the secondary level have the potential to inform universities' efforts to support transitions for incoming freshman and transfer students at the postsecondary level.

The district identified service-learning, particularly in the context of broader community partnerships, as an ideal model and necessary strategy to support youth development, particularly for SCUSD at-risk youth. Additionally, such a model could encourage school connectedness and civic engagement while providing students with tools to be successful in a changing global society. SCUSD youth need rigorous, relevant, and engaging experiences that highlight potential trajectories and build strong relationships with peers, mentors, community partners, and school staff during these transition periods. While positive youth development literature affirms the importance of such strong relationships (Heath, 2000; McLaughlin, 2000), an emerging area for research is whether direct relationships with university partners can also strengthen students' conceptions of a long-term educational path. Service-learning and civic action efforts provide important spaces for this work to occur because learners can build meaningful community connections in direct response to their goals. Universities should be an inevitable part of such community connections. For instance, as students in SOS identified issues to address, they sought relevant research as well as access to knowledgeable and connected adults in the community. This type of learning practice opens natural opportunities to move a step beyond Internet searches to connect directly with nearby university faculty.

The need exists in Sacramento's disadvantaged neighborhoods to connect young people with service that will engage and empower the communities to address disparities and instigate solutions. The goal of the community-involved service-learning program has been to inform, educate, and empower students as catalysts to bring community and school members together to promote positive changes with positive overall impacts in the community. The goal is not to pass the responsibility for addressing systemic problems on to youth but to open up opportunities for them to participate as critical contributors in a process of community transformation. The district sought community partners and family members who understood the need to engage youth and the power of youth in a community. After school providers, local businesses, community centers, local government agencies, two universities, and alumni of SCUSD high schools all supported the project. Partners and staff worked together to develop the program. Program facilitators participated in a training using a social justice youth development and service-learning framework. The goal was for the two frameworks to work together to link the realistic context of community and the value of youth culture (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

SOS Service-Learning & Social Justice Youth Development Guiding Principles

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FOCUS: SERVICE-LEARNING ELEMENTS
1. Integrated Learning
2. High Quality Service
3. Collaboration
4. Student Voice
5. Civic Responsibility
7. Social Justice Advocacy
8. Social Media
9. Reflection
10. Evaluation

SOCIAL JUSTICE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
1. Analyze power in social relationships
2. Make identity central
3. Promote systematic social change
4. Encourage collective action
5. Embrace youth culture

Figure 1. CCSP presented these principles to after-school providers and program staff to support the development of curriculum and project outcomes that would be aligned across school sites while remaining open enough to accommodate the unique offerings of each partnering group.

The frameworks provided staff and teachers a place to "meet students where they were." The dual framework approach was taken because SOS was designed, in part, with the intent to address students' declining sense of meaningful connections with their schools. While the program focuses on supporting the transition to high school, program goals target long-term retention. With this in mind, service projects needed to be doable in a six-week period while connecting students with practices to sustain long-standing commitments to community change. The social justice youth development framework provided the tools for students to move beyond the most visible circumstances to root causes of those circumstances worthy of long-term investment and investigation. As a result, service-learning in this social justice context acted as a vehicle for youth and staff to enter into a youth-adult partnership in pursuit of shared learning experiences.

Details of a Public Scholarship Partnership

The collaborative partnership between SCUSD, the UC Davis School of Education, after school providers, and other community partners has been instrumental to the early successful implementation of Summer of Service. The complete series of training workshops, evaluation, and the careful attention to the day-to-day Summer of Service programming directly contributed to the impact and outcomes of the first year of the program and continue to inform the program as it is refined and expanded. The positive outcomes thus far have resulted from shared efforts among all agencies to sustain the ongoing relationships developed, particularly those spanning from students to teachers and program staff. This is an important consideration for junior faculty. Developing new and trusting relationships with community and school partners is no small task, particularly when one is new to a community. In this case, the university's cooperative extension model makes this task much easier because developing community relationships is a primary focus of the extension model.

Cooperative Extension as a Bridge between University and Community

The Center for Cooperative Research and Extension Services for Schools (CRESS) in the UC Davis School of Education takes on a wide range of responsibilities that include providing teacher professional development through four of the California Subject Matter Projects, education evaluation through its Center for Education Evaluation Services (CEES), and technical assistance through the Center for Community School Partnerships (CCSP). CCSP, the university's lead partner in the Summer of Service, promotes student success, youth well-being, and equitable, just communities for all students by cultivating pathways between communities and their schools. CCSP's work centers on applied research, evaluation, and technical assistance to schools and communities in service of students, families, and collaborative community-

school partnerships. The Center for Community School Partnerships works closely with UC Davis faculty and CRESS professional staff to support K-12 whole-child initiatives. The Center for Community School Partnerships partners with community and K-12 school partners, using an applied research model of "engaged scholarship," to examine the successes and challenges that inform best practices for the following: enhancing learning opportunities, social-emotional support, strategies that foster support for at-/high-risk youth, and family engagement.

Derek Barker (2004) defined a flexible framework for core practices in which to situate engaged scholarship within institutions of higher learning: 1) public scholarship, 2) participatory research, 3) community partnerships, 4) public information networks, and 5) civic literacy scholarship. Barker's approach connects emerging practices to scholarly activities that support community engaged-learning. This community-engaged learning serves as a civic renewal process that supports democracy. As a point of reference, the major program and project work of CCSP has been adapted and organized into Barker's five emerging practices and highlights the strengths and range of community extension projects. See Figure 2: *UC Davis Center for Community School Partnerships (CCSP) Scholarship of Engagement Alignment.*

Figure 2.

UC Davis Center for Community School Partnerships (CCSP) Scholarship of Engagement Alignment

Public Scholarship
  Rural After-School Summit
  Community Engaged Schools
  Childhood Obesity Conference
  Pacific Coast Teacher Innovation Network

Participatory Research
  ITQ Write Now
  Coherence Project Grant H.S.
  SAYS Participatory Co-Construction of Curriculum

Public Information Networks
  After-School Network Newsletter
  Community Engaged Schools

Figure 2., Cont'd

UC Davis Center for Community School Partnerships (CCSP) Scholarship of Engagement Alignment

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Community Partnerships

   Pacific Coast Teacher Innovation Network
   Childhood Obesity Conference
   After-School STEM Initiative
   Healty Start Community Schol Partnerships
   ITQ Write Now
   Sierra Health Foundation REACH Development

Civic Literarcy Scholarship

   Childhood Obesity Conference
   SAYS Residency Program
   Youth Social Media for Community Change
   ITQ Write Now
   Community Engaged Schools
   Summer of Service Justice

Figure 2. The major program and project work of CCSP has been adapted and organized into Barker's (2004) taxonomy of five emerging practices of Engaged Scholarship. The figure highlights the strengths and range of CCSP community extension projects.

   Barker's (2004) fifth practice, "civic literacy and scholarship," is relevant to the SOS program design. It is defined as, "deepening practices of engagement with the specific aim of reducing the separation between expert specialists and the lay public, as well as by its specific emphasis on skills that are relevant to political participation and democratic decision making" (p.132). Fundamentals of service-learning link to this practice in that at its core the purpose of service-learning is to transform educational experiences that connect democracy and decision making to participants as a civil right (Benson & Harkavy, 2002a; Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). The partnership work of CCSP on the SOS project draws on the engaged scholarship and service-learning literature in four ways. 1) CCSP has provided service-learning and social justice youth development training – a form of technical assistance – to community partners involved in the SOS project. This included a tiered four-step staff development training series that occurred intermittently over five days totaling twenty hours in May and June, 2010. The staff development training focused on team building within SOS school sites and laid out fundamental service-learning elements infused with social justice youth development principles. 2) CCSP worked in partnership with the district's Youth Development Department to develop the overall project curriculum and

management tools. 3) CCSP developed, administered, and analyzed project participant surveys and documentation protocols. 4) CCSP united the project with an education faculty member at the university to contribute the qualitative research component.

Extension and School District Collaboration: A Pathway to Engagement for Junior Faculty

While the success of the overall project is linked to the involvement of multiple community partners, this section of the article details the formal partnership between the UC Davis CCSP Training Unit and SCUSD's Youth Development Department. This relationship was critical for supporting the eventual involvement of a junior faculty member on the project. In addition to being the source of a positive working relationship with the district, CCSP's responsibility for the contract allowed the faculty member to focus on the research responsibilities. In the fall of 2009, the CCSP Training Unit accepted a formal request by the SCUSD Youth Development Department to be a lead partner in the grant conceptualization and program implementation of the SOS program in response to a federal request for proposals by Learn and Serve America. In the spring of 2010, we were notified that that grant was awarded, which would serve to implement the six-week program.

The Center for Community School Partnerships played a critical role in getting the program effectively launched within a three-month period. Because the CCSP Training Unit specifically works to build local capacity of youth-serving agencies and organizations in the Sacramento Region by focusing on youth development strategies that foster connections with at-risk or high-risk youth, the local regional work of CCSP has led to a deeper understanding of the following: 1) what and whose standards identify "at/high-risk youth" in the Sacramento region, 2) the level of practitioner quality required of adult allies to support the hardest-to-reach youth, and 3) multi-faceted staff development and training strategies that are innovative and uniquely relevant to Sacramento youth culture specifically marginalized or disconnected youth populations. As a result, CCSP was particularly well suited to inform the research design of the qualitative component by helping identify relevant links and gaps between local knowledge and scholarly literature.

The unique position of CCSP enables university staff and faculty to work with community partners and to engage the academic expertise of faculty within the UC Davis School of Education in a continuum of innovative CCSP programming. Summer of Service offers a clear example of the positive benefits of public scholarship, particularly for junior faculty. While the CCSP Training Unit and SCUSD teams worked to manage the details of program design and implementation, the teams also actively developed relationships with a new faculty member and found links between the needs of the district and the

faculty member's research agenda related to youth political development. Having described the partnership structure between the university and the district to support the project, it is valuable to consider the role of partners in establishing a service-learning program that would foster critical consciousness among students and build their capacity to work for meaningful change.

Service-Learning in the Context of Social Justice Youth Development

The SOS program adopted a Social Justice Youth Development approach intended to extend beyond traditional youth development practices that far too often lack the cultural connections needed to involve the hardest-to-reach youth (Ginwright and James, 2002). At the district level and the university level there was strong agreement that a Social Justice Youth Development approach was a natural complement to the elements of service-learning. Moreover, these analytical skills prepare students for opportunities in higher education, which is at the core of CCSP's role. The Center for Community School Partnership is a university-assisted community-collaborative partner positioned to create a pipeline of university resources that are accessible to community agencies, especially local school districts.

While fostering students' critical consciousness, it is essential to build the capacity of students' to be agents of change in their schools and communities. Summer of Service strives to accomplish this by helping students learn skills to address the root causes of issues relevant to them and their environment. Given students' declining sense of meaningful connection with their schools, this strategy is meant to dramatically increase meaningful connections between school and community. While student participants worked on a variety of projects across sites, in each case, they were learning to think, write, and act critically with regard to pressing local needs and issues.

For example, students working on a media project regarding nutrition and locally grown food identified access as a social justice issue. Their facilitator discovered that Sacramento's Mayor, Kevin Johnson, would host Van Jones – founder of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and Green for All and former Special Advisor to the President for Green Jobs – at his monthly Greenwise Task Force meeting. She secured a press pass for the students to film the meeting. When the students interviewed Jones after the meeting, they asked whether farmers' markets could accept food stamps in order to keep poverty from eliminating access. He was impressed with the question and encouraged them to pursue it. They developed the question through their inquiry into root causes. At another site, students learned that root causes could be identified when running into roadblocks while taking action. Their school was across the street from a juvenile detention facility, a goal of which was to help students transitioning from juvenile detention back to school. Their project was to ease this transition by seeking donations of backpacks to be filled with school sup-

plies and updates on current students' interests (e.g., music, television shows, etc.). Along the way, students realized they knew little about juvenile detention, unsuccessfully arranging a visit. When students invited someone from the nearby detention center to speak with them, they could only get a speaker from the division of juvenile justice. In the process, they began to question why it was so difficult to do something positive for a group of young people so nearby.

Building on and Transforming the Role of Community Partners

This kind of work and analysis on the part of students was made possible in the school context through partnership. Community partners provided the critical link between students participating in the program and district and university partners. In particular, the district's regular after-school providers stepped into a new role with the district as summer program providers.[1] These providers were able to build on their existing relationships with both students and the district while they co-developed curriculum alongside the district's Youth Development Department and CCSP for the summer program. Given the program goal to connect incoming 9th graders with their new school environments, after-school providers played a central adult ally role, in part, by maintaining familiar relationships even as students transitioned into new and unfamiliar territory. In addition to the direct staffing provided to each project group, the organizations also played a role in administrating the programs at each school site. In this way, students were likely to see familiar faces as they moved across campus.

The service-learning social justice youth development framework became the SOS trademark for the six-week program that would orient students to their new campuses, guide development of projects rooted in the local campus and surrounding community, prepare them for a culminating showcase across campuses, and engage them in a writing component to facilitate reflection and provide students feedback on the writing expectations they would find in high school. Providers then incorporated their organizational models into the program structure. For instance, one provider with a youth media focus guided youth in the production of short films with cultural heritage or local environmental justice themes. Students decided the content focus within the parameters of the themes, planned and conducted interviews, identified locations to film, etc.

The daily work of youth in the program was guided but left fairly open-ended. As a result, as the projects developed, participants often had emerging resource needs. Community partners made it possible for students to gain access to resources on a just-in-time basis. In addition to leveraging their systems knowledge – that is working within school district policy, leveraging their own organization's capacities, and navigating local municipal systems –

community partners also drew on their personal networks to gain access for young people to interview subjects and guest speakers. As with any project, at times, youth had to adapt their plans given what was available. For instance, in the earlier example where students were trying to gain access to the juvenile detention facility across the street from the high school, it was the after-school providers who collaborated to try meeting these requests and eventually brought the guest from the juvenile justice department. In other instances, program participants faced setbacks ranging from slow timelines for receiving donated resources to recovering a project from vandalism (for a full list of projects, see Figure 3).

Figure 3.

SOS 2010 Student Project List

Environmental
> Community Garden
> Earth Day Tech/Job Fair
> Going Green
> Green Voices
> Gulo Pond Project
> Morrison Creek
> Pathway Garden
> Rooftop Garden

Local Community
> Adopt a Grandparent
> Business Community Project (Juvenile Detention Center)
> Energy Efficiency and Green Tech Club
> Freshmen Orientation
> Homeless Outreach
> Reading Patio
> Seavey Circle (Public Housing Youth Outreach)

Emergency Preparedness
> Flood and Earthquake Emergency Preparedness
> Regional Transit Safety
> Robotics (Hazardous Material Cleanup)
> Teen CERT (Emergency Response)

Figure 3., Cont'd

SOS 2010 Student Project List

Cultural Heritage Media Projects
    Black Voices
    English Language Learners (ELL) Project
    Latino Voices
    Native Voices
    WISE Expressions

Figure 3. Summer of Service projects completed by SCUSD students addressed a range of topics including environmental needs, local community challenges, emergency preparedness, and cultural heritage media projects. Students are pictured at the final event showcase that brought together all participants and supporters from eight school and community sites.

In all cases, the after-school providers were able to support students in continuing the work by leveraging the resources of their organizations, communicating needs with the district team and university partners, and drawing on personal networks.

From a research standpoint, the community partners offered access to a rich source of data. In addition to being responsible for distributing the surveys developed by CCSP in conjunction with the district, community partners

provided a detailed perspective on the opportunities and challenges of service-learning work. For the faculty researcher conducting qualitative research during the program, conversations with the facilitator teams provided a daily log of progress and challenges as well as access to the unplanned activities that developed through the project work. Without having developed these positive and communicative relationships, it would have been difficult to learn about the numerous in-the-moment activities that emerged in enough time to observe them. Attendance on field trips and interviews also led to a broadening base of community contacts.

It is important to note that the opportunity to build relationships with both district and community partners is critical, particularly for new faculty members who are developing public research programs related local areas. While junior faculty may have the interest in developing such relationships, communities vary in the organization of resources and the primacy of particular issues. In addition, junior faculty must learn the history of their university's relationship with surrounding communities. This type of partnership helps junior faculty quickly develop an understanding of the local terrain, history, stakeholders, and prevalent concerns and opportunities. It also opens the door to community relationships that can inform a developing research agenda and provide access to sites and participants in future research endeavors.

Program Outcomes and Research Implications

There are critical aspects of the partnership described here that support all participants in meeting their responsibilities and achieving the stated goals. The alignment of each of these systems of networks creates a unique context both for research and for service-learning. The district draws on available data to both identify needs and viable solution-oriented pathways for action. The university's cooperative extension provides a wide array of support ranging from grant proposal preparation to program design and implementation. The faculty member brings knowledge of the scholarship, and research questions and methods that can help the district grow its implementation strategy more effectively while also gaining a researcher's perspective on variation and similarity across student experience. The community partners provide the curriculum and facilitation, the ongoing relationships so important for the 9th grade transition, and on-the-ground access to community-based networks where youth participants can experience the real mechanisms and systems for community development and change.

As measured through the survey, focus groups, and qualitative assessment, good progress was made on goals one and two for the involved youth – creating meaningful experiences through service-learning and addressing school connectedness for transitioning youth. The youth were able to participate in projects that contributed to their school, community, and themselves.

Youth were able to learn in a different type of setting, utilizing the community as the learning lab. They also completed 100 hours of service, entered the school year with five high school elective credits, and earned a $500 educational award for postsecondary education. Anecdotal evidence from principals and teachers from SOS participating schools at the beginning of the school year suggested that new students were more comfortable and familiar from the start. In comparison with previous years, these reports indicated the best start of a school year they had experienced in a long time. According to survey results (see Table 1), there was an increase for participants in their connectedness to school and in their understanding of the roles they play in their communities. Project-based learning seemed to benefit students that had previously struggled. Participants expressed a sense of future aspirations related to their projects, and they developed a sense of community through positive interactions with peers and adults as well as the continuum of relationships from their previous after-school programs. These are encouraging results.

Table 1.

2010 Student Growth Data: Attitudes, Skills, and Knowledge

Indicators	Baseline Mean*	Post-Program Mean*
Belief that "I can make a difference"	2.82	3.00
Awareness of local organizations that address community environmental issues	2.39	2.63
Awareness of environmental community issues	2.25	2.57
Know how to contact and work with adult community partners	2.20	2.55
Personal responsibility to do the "best I can in school"	3.59	3.70
Community connectedness "I feel like I am an important part of my community"	2.46	2.64

Table 1., Cont'd

Table 1. Data on participant outcomes are based on a set of 216 matched –pre and post-program participant surveys. Student surveys show that taking part in the 2010 Summer of Service program enhanced students' civic skills, attitudes, and knowledge. They learned to identify local environmental issues, collaborate with peers and adult community partners. They developed a stronger community connection and showed an increased value in school and community environmental stewardship.

*Items are ruled on a four-point scale; the statistical significance for the changes from baseline to post is .000 for all items. Changes with a statistical significance of .05 or less are considered statistically significant.

In addition, the third stated goal to inform the district's development of a service-learning offering is well underway. They are slated to implement the second year of the program including an expansion to serve rising 7th graders as they transition to middle school. Since the completion of the first year, the district has made use of early findings to make adjustments to the program. At the same time, they are working with partners to address the looming challenge of sustainability.

The combination of demonstrated need for a clear target population, the newly-implemented service-learning model, and the social justice principles informing program design made for compelling research opportunities. The ongoing nature of the research and program collaboration allows research to inform iterations of program design and expansion. The district recognizes the university as a partner to collaboratively address needs as they are identified, and the relationship is reciprocal. The district's need for metrics and effective program design aligns well with both the evaluation aspects of CCSP and the research interests of faculty. There is an opportunity to reframe formal education, at both the K-12 and university levels in terms of its place in meeting the needs of surrounding communities and contributing to regional and statewide leadership in the education arena.

Implications for Public Scholarship

For universities specifically, the opportunity for the advancement of scholarship is critical at both the disciplinary level and more specifically for faculty members developing and advancing their research programs. Scholarship also offers an opportunity to play an active role in expanding possible trajectories for youth in the surrounding communities. As universities participate in public debates and discussions about the role for higher education, particularly in economically challenging times, public scholarship serves an important role. Social justice is not only a concern for students, like those participating in SOS. It is a concern for all community and systemic partners. Public scholarship offers universities and faculty a sustainable pathway into work that promotes

social justice and is consistent with the mission and responsibilities of the institution.

In the case of this project, the internal UC Davis School of Education partnership between cooperative extension staff and faculty has led to opportunities to publish together and to present at professional conferences alongside our district partner. In addition, we have been able to develop a mixed-methods approach to the research design, a process that is both time and resource intensive. This is not trivial given the considerable demands of each participant's job responsibilities. It is a direct outcome of the public scholarship approach.

The presence of researchers and educators alongside community partners and district staff during the particularly challenging transitional period from middle school to high school for youth offers the potential to extend students' awareness of their possible future trajectories, not only toward completion of high school, but also toward college. By aligning the needs and experiences of students with such trajectories, universities have an opportunity to "pull" students toward them as districts and state educational officials work hard on strategies to "push" them through the experiences that can effectively prepare them. This balanced effort of early systemic engagement helps keep students in the college conversation who are not always perceived as members of the future student pool. At the same time, the work is consistent with both research and service responsibilities for university faculty. By highlighting a path of formal education as relatable to the needs students can recognize in their own experience, students can begin the work of reorganizing their understanding of schooling. It becomes not only a pathway toward a career, but a viable pathway toward shaping their place in establishing and sustaining a thriving community.

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[1]Partnering providers included Sacramento Chinese Community Service Center, Target Excellence, Youth Development Network, Center for Multicultural Cooperation, Sacramento Region Citizen Corps Council Teen-CERT, and the City of Sacramento Youth Development Office.

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