Supporting University–Community Partnerships: A Qualitative Inquiry With Contingent Academics to Understand Their Scholarship of Engagement

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Abstract

Using a qualitative interview design and the conceptual framework of an engaged campus (Furco, 2010), this article examines the engaged scholarship of contingent academics in a university–community partnership with several professional development schools in the United States. This article highlights some facets that make their engaged scholarship different from traditional scholarship, and the challenges in meeting responsibilities to both the community and university. The purpose of this article is to extend our understanding of community-engaged scholarship and help higher education institution administrators think about policies to support contingent academics participating in other community partnerships.

Keywords: university–community partnerships, contingent academics, higher education policies, engaged scholarship

Many research universities have made a scholarship of engagement one of the core components of their mission—to take the intellectual, resource, and human capital found within the university and apply them to key issues that affect regional development (O'Meara, 2010; Puukka & Marmolejo, 2008; Stanton, T., 2008). One of the mechanisms for regional development is university–community partnerships (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Murphy & McGrath, 2018) that take the form of long-term, mutual working partnerships between the higher education institutions and the surrounding community stakeholders. In the case of education departments and programs in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Finland, and Singapore, this partnership can involve working with schools via collaboratively developed immersive residency models where academics and school leaders use research to focus on a problem of practice (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Latham & Wedwick, 2009; Zenkov et al., 2016). Partnerships with these schools can be beneficial for both parties—the university continues to meet its mission for regional development, and local schools and districts can address their specific concerns with some positive educational outcomes (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Snow et al., 2016).

As policymakers, funders, and universities become more interested in university–community partnerships, it is important for researchers to explore the work that academics perform in these partnerships. This understanding can inform institutional policies around the work (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Kajner et al., 2012; Murphy & McGrath, 2018). Depending on the model, the responsibilities of maintaining a successful partnership from the university side can fall on contingent academics (Kezar & Maxey, 2015; Ward, 2003). In the United

States and Canada, contingent academics work full time or part time and are on contract rather than tenure track (Kezar & Sam, 2010). This employment model has parallels in "fixed-term contracts" in the United Kingdom and "casual" or "session employment" in Australia. Even for tenured and tenure-track academics, finding a way to meet university and partnership responsibilities can be difficult, especially if the institutional policies do not support the work (Sandmann et al., 2008). For contingent academics who do not have the protection of tenure, being unable to meet responsibilities may lead to unemployment (Austin, 2003; O'Meara, 2010).

This article uses the conceptual lens of the engaged university (Furco, 2010) to explore the work of contingent academics and their scholarship of engagement. More specifically, it looks at contingent academics working in an immersive residency model termed the "professional development school" network at a public research university in the northeastern United States. In this network, contingent academics are titled "professors-in-residence," and they are situated within 11 local schools. We designed a qualitative inquiry study and asked the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of contingent academics trying to conduct a scholarship of engagement in these professional development schools?

2. How can the university support contingent academics who are conducting engaged scholarship in a university–community partnership?

To answer these research questions, we first provide a review of the literature. Next, we provide the conceptual framework for this research: the engaged campus (Furco, 2010), situating academic work within that framework. We follow with a description of the methodology and our findings. This article ends with a discussion of how to think about institutional policies as a means for institutions to support community-engaged scholarship through these partnerships.

Review of the Literature

There are numerous ways to explore what community engagement means for a higher education institution's mission. The form of such work ranges from community service to regional engagement (Kroll et al., 2013).

For this article, we focus on a scholarship of engagement, or engaged scholarship (Barker, 2004, p. 125), in the form of a university–community partnership. Boyer (1990) argued for the value of engaged scholarship in his seminal work *Scholarship Reconsidered*. This scholarship involves a mutually beneficial relationship between academics and the community, and it is an "integration of teaching, research, and service" (Sandmann, 2008, p. 96). In the field of education, engaged scholarship can involve a partnership with schools to help solve problems of practice in a local context.

Sandmann (2008) has argued that engaged scholarship is currently in the fourth stage of its evolution, the "institutionalization of the scholarship of engagement within and across academe" (p. 98). At this stage, institutions have generally recognized the value of engaged scholarship, and the challenge is determining how to integrate it within institutional structures.

Even though many higher education institutions have made public and civic engagement part of their mission, the result sometimes has been described as "tokenism" where programs and initiatives have "little or no real effect on the broader, overall mission and work of the academy" (Fitzgerald et al., 2012, p. 23). This may reflect the lack of alignment between the public engagement mission of the institution and existing policies such as academic reward structures. The literature indicates that many academic reward structures do not place an equal value on engaged community scholarship compared to more traditional scholarship, to the extent that some academics have perceived that they are being discouraged from engaged scholarship (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Checkoway, 2013). When institutional tenure and promotion policies fail to align with a public scholarship mission, indicating that institutions may not value engaged scholarship, junior academics seeking tenure may be deterred from conducting such work (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; O'Meara, 2010).

For those higher education institutions that want to maintain their mission of community engagement but will not or cannot align their tenure-track academic reward structures, there is another option: contingent academics. In the United States, contingent academics are full-time or part-time limited contract employees engaged in teaching, research, service, or any combina-

tion of the three (Gerhke & Kezar, 2015). Often these positions lack job security and protections of academic freedom. In terms of degree attainment, Laurence (2013) found that in 4-year institutions, approximately 30% of contingent academics had a doctoral degree, and 46.5% reported having only a master's. There is also some crossover of contingent academic employment and graduate students. In a study on contingent academics, the American Association of University Professors (2018) found that at research institutions, graduate students make up a large percentage of contingent appointments, replacing part-time positions.

Universities have used contingent academic staff for unbundling the professional components of academic labor—teaching, research, and service—into disparate parts (Austin, 2003; Gerhke & Kezar, 2015). A growing trend may also be unbundling types of scholarship, relegating engaged scholarship to contingent academics. Matthews and Wilder (2018) noted that a substantial number of contingent academics fulfill service-learning roles. Some institutions explicitly unbundle engaged scholarship by using the designation "professor of practice" for fixed-contract academics who are engaged in that type of work (Ernst et al., 2005; Willets, 2017).

Although once considered a small population, contingent workers now constitute the majority of academic appointments in the United States (Kezar & Sam, 2010). Similar trends can be seen in the increase of casual contracts in the United Kingdom and Australia (Cavalli & Moscati, 2010; Loveday, 2018). Broadly speaking, contingent academics have experienced an otherness that separates them from tenure-track academics (Haviland et al., 2017). The existing literature on contingent academics has examined their experiences in academia with regard to teaching (Kezar, 2013), service (Levin & Shaker, 2011; Waltman et al., 2012), and scholarship (Kezar, 2013; Ott & Cisneros, 2015). Contingent academics in the United States and Canada often lack institutional and social support for their work across all three missions of higher education (Kezar & Sam, 2010, 2013; Haviland et al., 2017). Research on two-tiered academics in Australia (Kimber, 2003) and the United Kingdom has found that casual contract academics may be experiencing working conditions similar to those of their North American counterparts.

Regarding a scholarship of engagement that includes some combination of teaching, research, and service, aside from a recent phenomenological study conducted by Matthews and Wilder (2018), little empirical research has focused specifically on the contingent experience. Levin and Shaker (2011) argued that contingent academics tend to be overlooked. Much of the literature on scholarship of engagement already focuses on tenure-track academics (e.g., O'Meara et al., 2013; O'Meara et al., 2011; Sandmann, 2008). When they are included in research, the differences in their experience are not highlighted or the employment status of the participant is unknown (e.g., Buys & Bursnall, 2007; O'Meara & Niehaus, 2009). Matthews and Wilder (2018) found that those non-tenure-track academics who engaged in service-learning community-engaged scholarship experienced isolation, difficulty conducting scholarship, lack recognition for their work, and a need for their own academic community.

Professional Development Schools as an Example of University–Community Partnership

Current literature on immersive residency models, such as professional development schools, in the United States focuses on ways schools and universities collaborate to improve existing teacher education and practice (Zenkov et al., 2016) or student outcomes (Castle et al., 2008). Similar university–community partnership models can be found in other countries, such as Australia, where "university faculty are working with teams of teachers and student-teachers in schools—undertaking curriculum planning, school improvement strategies and research" (Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 300). This emphasis on either teacher education or school-level research often means that the literature focuses on elementary or secondary education rather than the university side of the work. Likewise, there is a dearth of higher education research that examines academics' experience engaging with schools or any similar university–community partnership in education, though Coburn et al. (2013) described work that is making inroads in that area. With over 1,000 school sites throughout the United States alone (Schwartz, 2002) working in partnership with higher education institutions and their respective academic staff,

it is important to understand this work for future policy.

Theoretical Framework

The Engaged Campus

To understand the experiences of academic staff as professors-in-residence, we use Furco's (2010) engaged campus as a theoretical framework. Furco (2010) connected the traditional three categories of academic work (teaching, research, and service) to the community. The result is three overlapping key components: (a) community-engaged teaching, (b) community-based research, and (c) community service and outreach. At the center of the engaged campus where the three circles converge is what Furco (2010) described as a community service–based capstone experience that includes a "strong research component" and seeks "to provide service to the community to address an important, identified community need" (p. 382).

Furco (2010) defined *community-engaged teaching* as providing students opportunities to learn from and within the broader community while simultaneously being able to give back to it. In this article, community engagement can include experiences like district-school internships or clinical experiences and clinical practice for teacher candidates. *Community-based research* differs from more traditional conceptions of public engagement because it encourages members of the community as well as university-based academic staff to shape the research agenda by identifying the genuine interests of the community (Furco, 2010; Stanton, C. R., 2014). Lastly, in *community service and outreach*, scholars within the university utilize their expertise to provide assistance to the community via volunteerism or outreach programs.

For this article, we locate professional development school work at the center of Furco's (2010) engaged campus. We frame this capstone experience as four "nonnegotiable" responsibilities that each person must meet in their role as a professor-in-residence. These responsibilities were established by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008) and guided the National Association of Professional Development Schools (2008) nine essentials of professional development school work. These four nonnegotiables

were adopted as core principles: (a) provide practicum, student teaching, and internship experiences; (b) support and enable the professional development of school and higher education academics; (c) support and enable inquiry directed at the improvement of practice; and (d) support and enhance student achievement.

Methodology

Supported by the literature on engaged scholarship (O'Meara et al., 2011; Sandmann, 2008) and the above theoretical framework, this study is part of a larger community-based participatory research inquiry (Beh et al., 2013; Stanton, C. R., 2014) to improve the policies and practices for all academics engaged in professional development school work. This larger inquiry used documents that included qualitative memos from program orientations and retreats, agendas, and minutes from monthly meetings. There were also mid- and end-of-year progress reports. From these document-based data we recognized that despite a large overlap in experiences with tenure-track academics, contingent academics also varied in significant ways.

Recognizing a need to investigate these differences, we situated a smaller inquiry within the larger project. This particular study utilizes qualitative interview design (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Patton, 2002) to delve further into the contingent academic experience. These interviews allowed contingent academics to voice their own experience and their needs for conducting engaged scholarship, separate from those who have different appointments. Institutional Review Board clearance was obtained.

Context of Study

The site of study is a college of education housed within a 4-year public research university in the northeastern United States. In alignment with its mission, the college established a partnership with 11 schools. At this university, the Office of Educator Support and Partnerships is charged with supporting this model of engaged scholarship and is the main point of contact for all schools and their respective academic staff.

Each professional development school in the network has one person who is a professor-in-residence, and that person must be employed by the university. In order to be

a professor-in-residence, the person must be employed in an academic capacity (i.e., teaching or research). These academics can be tenure track, tenured, or on a fixed-term contract. Even though a doctoral degree is not required, research experience is preferred. At the time of this study, very few pretenured or tenured academics have been willing to take the position of professor-in-residence as part of their scholarship. Thus, a majority of professors-in-residence are fixed-term academics.

Participants

The nine participants for this study were all professors-in-residence working in this university–community partnership. All participants shared several sets of descriptors. First, each participant was a contingent academic with a fixed-term 10-month contract. Similar to other types of academics in the institution, for renewal each person had to submit a portfolio detailing their research, teaching, and service. Their employment responsibilities included teaching at the university and participation in departmental service. Second, each participant had a teaching certification and extensive teaching experience in elementary or secondary school settings. Third, each participant was required to hold a master's degree.

One participant had received a doctoral degree, and five held dual roles as doctoral students and contingent academics. Among the five, one held the position of professor-in-residence a year prior to becoming a doctoral student. It is important to note that despite the dual academic identity of these five participants, they still had the same teaching, research, and service requirements that are expected of all university contingent academic hires in a similar position. It is also important to note that several participants in this study had also held other academic fixed-contract positions as instructors prior to being professors-in-residence. See Table 1 for an overview of participant demographics.

Data Sources

For this article, we collected data from all participants using three sources. First, as part of the broader community-based participatory research inquiry, we conducted a round of in-person, informal conversational interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Patton, 2002). During these sessions, we spoke with the participants about their general experiences working as professors-in-residence at their respective schools. We chose this approach because unstructured interviews allowed the participants to focus on any aspect of their work they wanted to discuss and offered the researcher freedom to ask questions as they arose from the immediate context (Patton, 2002). Brent kept memos from these interviews.

The next source of data was an additional round of in-person audio-recorded interviews. For this round, we chose a semistructured guided interview approach (Patton, 2002) because it allowed us to further explore some of the emerging themes that arose from the first interview analysis. At the same time, the semistructured format also gave the participants flexibility to talk about any experiences that might not have been directly listed in the protocol and allowed us to pursue different avenues of inquiry based on those particular experiences (Patton, 2002). Common questions in the second round reflected some of the themes that were emerging in the initial data analysis: (a) What advice would you give to an incoming professor-in-residence who has never done any professional development school work before? (b) What do you wish you knew about your roles/responsibilities as a professor-in-residence prior to beginning your current position? (c) What types of supports would you like/would have liked in your position as a professor-in-residence?

Finally, we conducted a third round of structured written interviews (Patton, 2002). This third round of interviews was designed as a follow-up with the participants from the previous rounds of interviews, and any clarifying questions occurred via email.

Data Analysis

The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps for thematic analysis. Data analysis was an iterative process (Braun & Clarke, 2006) occurring between rounds and informing the next round of data collection. We coded data in three phases: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), which resulted in the identification of eight significant themes pertaining to the participants' experience. We analyzed all data systematically and collaboratively to ensure intercoder reliability (Patton, 2002) and organized and

		Table 1. Description of Contingent Academics and Their Teaching and Research Experience		
Contingent academic	**Past K–12 teaching experience**	**Experience teaching in higher education**	**Number of years as a professor-in-residence**	**In a PhD program (y/n)**
Contingent Academic 1: Grace	14 years	1 year	1 year	N
Contingent Academic 2: Erica	8 years	1 year	2 years	Y
Contingent Academic 3: Macy	6 years	4.5 years	2 years	Y
Contingent Academic 4: Derrick	10 years	7 years	2 years	Y
Contingent Academic 5: Nora	10 years	1 year	1 year	Y
Contingent Academic 6: Wayne	6 years	3 year	<1 year	N
Contingent Academic 7: Kelly	5 years	2 years	2 years	Y
Contingent Academic 8: Lori	6 years	2 years	<1 year	N
Contingent Academic 9: Richard	6 years	3 years	2 years	N

maintained the data with Dedoose software (Lieber & Weisner, 2015).

Results

Below, we thematically present the results based on the data, using interview excerpts from the nine contingent academics.

Navigating Multiple Roles in One Position

The participants in this article had to play multiple roles that spanned the school and university settings. When asked to describe their role, most respondents answered with a series of numerous roles such as "supervisor of clinical practice interns, facilitators of [culturally responsive pedagogy] professional development, researcher, teach on-site courses, liaison between the university and school" (Macy).

Some of the roles described were specific to either the school or university setting. At the school level, the participants were a resource for the teachers and administration, providing professional development and on-site support to teachers. At the university level, the participants were also academics who belonged to departments, taught undergraduate and/or master's level courses, and were expected to produce research. However, participants also had roles that were at the nexus of the school and university settings (Gauntner & Hansman, 2017). For example, they were key in the college's student-teaching program. They were responsible for student-teacher placement and providing those student-teachers with various supports and experiences. To develop a comprehensive professional development plan for school and other higher education academics, the contingent academics also established themselves as liaisons between the schools and the university. Supporting people on various levels required them to develop nurturing, delicate, and vital relationships between

student-teachers, the university, and the schools.

Having so many roles and responsibilities can be challenging. When asked about the sources of tension that they experienced, respondents also spoke about having these different roles. For example, Erica enumerated, "Wearing several hats as a trainer and a colleague of teachers; balancing school needs and [university] perceptions of what a [professor-in-residence] is; being a PhD student and a professor; politics at [the university] and at [the district]."

Aligning Scholarly Expertise and Community Interest

Research is a core part of a scholarship of engagement, but unlike traditional scholarship, engaged research is driven by community needs. However, community needs and academic staff expertise and interests may not necessarily be aligned. The data indicated that some contingent academics needed more time to find ways to connect their expertise with the needs of the school. In the following excerpt, Macy articulated how she took a year to accomplish this task.

> Having been [at the school] a year and working really hard building relationships is finally paying off. I feel like I am doing what the school needs me to do, and that's great. . . . I was able to tie [the professional development] in with what I am passionate about, which is research on racial linguistics related to race, ethnicity, and language.

Misalignment between the scholars and the community interest may cause several issues. First, the scholars may not be able to conduct research that is within their expertise, or they must devote already limited time to learning a new content area. Second, community needs may remain unfilled, which defeats the purposes of engaged scholarship. Nora described a misalignment between her research interests and the needs of her school:

> One of the things that I am grappling with is that my concentration in my PhD program is urban education, and my work is not in an urban context. So, moving forward, as we place professors-in-residence in schools, thinking about their

research interests and how that is in alignment with the need at the school.

Although Nora felt her background and expertise did meet her school's needs, she also felt that the suburban school with a majority of middle-class students did not fulfill her own interest in urban education. Because she specifically wanted to gain experience in urban schools, this misalignment could keep her from engaging in the type of scholarship she desires and limit her productivity as a researcher.

Investing Time With the Community

All scholarship takes time. From development of studies to implementation and final production, it is a labor-intensive process. In terms of a community service–based experience, contingent academics have reported investing a large portion of time trying to be recognized as members of the school community, or at the very least to develop trust among the community members (Kajner et al., 2012). One participant, Erica, articulated how long it took to be recognized: "Prior to going to spring break, I was finally included as a true member of the community." Once she felt accepted, she felt she could take her work with the school further.

In interviews, contingent academics consistently discussed the need to develop trusting relationships with school partners as they strove to meet their responsibilities. Grace underscored the importance of building trusting relationships. She stated,

> So, what I think that's going really well is the connection with the principals and with the teachers. I really understand the relationship and how it's supposed to be. They have to fully trust me before they accept me in their classrooms or even as part of their school community.

Grace further explained how gaining trust was a gradual process. She believed the teachers and administrators valued her expertise and thus began welcoming her into various school spaces as a trusted and valuable resource.

Almost all the contingent academics reported that it took at least several months and up to an entire school year to develop rela-

tionships within the community. However, the "publish or perish" framework of some research institutions, as well as some of the outcome-driven decision making that occurs when evaluating the success of programs, squeeze contingent academics between institutional protocols demanding justification for investment of resources and communities where groundwork cannot be rushed. Not investing the appropriate time can result in the community shutting out the scholar, which may ultimately undermine the goal of the engaged research.

Having Rich Opportunities for Research

One of the potential benefits of situating academic labor within an engaged campus is the opportunity for academics to combine service, teaching, and research. This means that ideally professors-in-residence should be able to produce research from their respective sites. Macy is one participant who recognized the potential for research in her position:

> I'm like a kid in a candy store when it comes to data. It's flying off the walls. It's all over the place. Also, as someone growing as a novice researcher, this is the best situation for me. I appreciate way more now than I did [last year] . . . I am also co-authoring with teachers at my [site].

Once she realized her school was a source of rich data, Macy engaged teachers in the research process, began coauthoring relationships, and encouraged teachers to present their collaborative research at a symposium, highlighting how she was able to connect her teaching, research, and service in her work.

One of the challenges that such opportunities for research present is balancing the research component with the rest of the work. Erica explained, "I feel like I don't have a lot of time that I wish I had to dedicate myself to the research. It's always a balancing act. Research is always a part of my job, like if I want my job, it has to happen. . . ." The other responsibilities that come with working as a professor-in-residence also required her time and attention.

Needing Research Support

Despite the rich potential for research, not everyone may be able to utilize that oppor-

tunity equally. As universities continue to unbundle professional academic labor into different components (Gehrke & Kezar, 2015), staff performing engaged scholarship may have varying levels of expertise. In this study, all of the contingent academics had extensive teaching and professional experience in schools, but less experience conducting research. Grace, who had the most professional experience, had the least research experience. She described her perceptions:

> So, the research piece is big. How do we even get started? What should it look like? How do I set achievable expectations for myself while trying to get this big idea out there? And, how do I do this without a background in research? I feel like I'm at a disadvantage. Where do I even start? How do I get in the door? Being new to the university as well. Not necessarily knowing who to go to when different supports are needed.

Being contingent academic staff at the institution may also play a role in an inability to find research support. Macy explained, "Learning to do something while meeting the expectation of actually doing the work is a constant battle. As a part-time [academic], certain supports are not available, such as funding." Research indicates that contingent academics often are unfamiliar with institutional resources, or such resources may be unavailable to the staff (Kezar & Sam, 2010). Some of the resources the university offered did not address the needs of contingent academics specifically—for example, several contingent academics described how they wanted help applying for grants, but "some services are not provided to us because of our level" and they would like to know "how does that grant process look for ¾ time faculty?"

Some participants were able to tap into their doctoral studies resources to find support needed to conduct their research. However, even those who had more research experience reported still needing research support, as Erica illustrated:

> Honestly, research has always been the area in which I needed the most support. I think now, being in the PhD program, I am a little bit more supported just because I am getting

the actual instruction in terms of how to do the research. I still feel like I am asked to fly the plane, and at the same time of being given the tools to build the plane.

All the contingent academics recognized that conducting research was a core aspect of their engaged scholarship. What they wanted was support for their work.

Needing Connections With Other Scholars

Given the different roles that the participants experienced, the data also indicated that they would have liked to connect more with other academics at the university. This collaboration could be either among contingent academics or tenure–track academics. The administrative office provided opportunities for all of the professors–in–residence to collaborate with one another during consistent meeting times and planned monthly events. That data indicated that some contingent academics needed such opportunities to collaborate. When asked about what the university could do to help her work, Kelly wanted "more time to collaboratively brainstorm with other professors–in–residence." This particular need may reflect that their work differs greatly from that of other academics in the institution, so that connecting with other academics with similar responsibilities and learning from one another could be useful.

The participants expressed that the need to work with others extended to more traditional academics at the university. Grace spoke about wanting to connect with academics to help meet the needs of her specific professional development school: "We actually reached out [to] the university departments to see if anyone would be interested in coming in." This need also includes finding ways to fulfill their research responsibilities. Derrick explained, "I work with the other [professors–in–residence] to help facilitate their ability to create publishable research." Some of the contingent academics went on to coauthor conference proposals and/or copresent at research conferences, but this was not the norm among most. Even with the connections that they made working with scholars, a need for more remained. Derrick voiced this as "I don't think I have enough exposure to others' work."

Needing Mentorship and Guidance

As evidenced by the results thus far, engaged scholarship is an immense and complex undertaking. Even though the data indicate a desire to connect with others to learn from one another, there is also a need for mentorship and guidance. At times, especially for a new professor–in–residence, navigating the university's expectations could be overwhelming. Nora expanded on her experiences:

> I think that the expectations across the board are very clear, but what it looks like in every school is very different. So, [group meetings do not] always feel that helpful. I am just being honest. It feels overwhelming. Especially when people are sharing what they are doing in their school and it doesn't look like anything else of what is going on in anybody else's school.

Instead of broader collaborative opportunities, Nora wanted a more specific one–to–one mentorship process where "working in pairs would help, because you could know what someone else is doing in a situation a little bit closer to what you're doing." Seasoned professors–in–residence also wanted mentorship. Richard noted that one of the supports he wanted for his work was "a mentor to help you through the process—not an informal mentor but a formal structure for peer–to–peer [professors–in–residence] mentorship."

University program administrators provided broader collaborative opportunities but, at her stage, Nora did not always find this structure helpful. Nora's excerpt underscores the need for flexibility in university support for this work. Contingent academics' needs may change and are not one–size–fits–all.

Discussion

The findings from this study answer the research questions by highlighting the complexities that are part of being a community–based engaged scholar. First, this article illustrates that university–community partnerships can offer rich opportunities and potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between academic staff and the community when the proper alignment among needs, interests, and experience exists

(Kajner et al., 2012; McNall et al., 2009). However, without the proper support, rich opportunities for research and collaboration can be missed. Second, within a university–community partnership, academic staff had to navigate multiple roles and responsibilities housed within one position that spanned two contexts. Though traditional definitions of unbundling of academic labor involve the separation of teaching, research, and service (Gerhke & Kezar, 2015), another type of unbundling may be called for: one that delegates to some academics the public scholarship work that other academic staff may not be incentivized to do.

Finally, we found that to meet their institutional responsibilities that combine teaching, research, and service into a community-based research experience (Furco, 2010), the contingent academics had to establish themselves in two contexts: their respective professional development school site and the university. Despite the challenging nature of the work, the contingent academics seemed more comfortable navigating the roles and building relationships in the professional development school setting and in need of more support at the university level. If universities want the idea of an engaged campus to move beyond the tokenism noted by Fitzgerald et al. (2012), one of the ways to begin is through institutionalizing support of the work through institutional policies and structures (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Furco, 2010; Sandmann, 2008).

In terms of policy support, the institutionalization of a scholarship of engagement may be even more important if universities assign (either de facto or purposefully) the work of engaged scholarship to contingent academics. This study answers the second research question by finding that there are key areas where institutions can provide more support, especially in terms of the research component of the position. The literature on contingent labor already reflects a lack of institutional policies that provide support and resources (Kezar & Sam, 2010). In addition, research indicates that universities in general do not value engaged scholarship as much as traditional scholarship (Checkoway, 2013; O'Meara, 2010), making contingent academics conducting engaged scholarship that much more vulnerable to being overlooked.

Our findings yield several implications for institutional policy. First, if institutions want to incorporate engaged scholarship, they must consider some academic reward systems that support this type of nontraditional scholarly work. The data indicate that academics performing community work in schools require more time to situate themselves in the school context. Academics unfamiliar with this type of work may have unrealistic timelines for academic deliverables. For fixed-term employees, recognizing their engaged scholarship could entail offering multiyear fixed-term contracts, differentiating productivity to better reflect the work, and including other stakeholder feedback to determine renewal.

Because this study was embedded in a broader community-based research methodology (Beh et al., 2013), the needs of the contingent academics did not go unaddressed. We incorporated feedback from the contingent academics and made adjustments throughout the year. These adjustments resulted in the second and third policy suggestions. The second policy suggestion is for the institution to find a way to develop policies for structured opportunities and mentorship for professors-in-residence to work with and learn from other scholars. Such opportunities can include convening scheduled, structured meetings where academic staff can connect and learn from one another. It also could include one-on-one mentorship programs between newer and more established scholars. The third policy suggestion is to have the institution create policy to share some of the responsibility for the logistical supports that the contingent academics need to carry on their work. The way that these contingent academics experienced navigating numerous roles showed how engaged scholars can be overwhelmed by their university-side responsibilities. Universities could institutionalize a scholarship of engagement by establishing a centralized higher education administrative office or administrator(s) to provide logistical support for engaged academics (Sandmann, 2008).

Conclusion

Though this study documents the working experiences of contingent academics in the professor-in-residence position, their experiences also reflect much of the literature on other academics conducting engaged scholarship, especially those who are newer academics (e.g., pretenured academics; O'Meara, 2013). The differences between community-engaged scholarship and more

traditional forms can make it difficult for academics (regardless of the type of contract) to navigate the institutional policies and structures designed for traditional research. Support for contingent academics could also be made available to pretenured or newer engaged scholars.

As colleges and universities push to become engaged campuses and incorporate engaged scholarship as part of their overall mission, it is not enough to set the directive and expect academics to accomplish the task. Even though many academics may be interested in scholarship that both aligns with their interests and benefits the broader community, without proper support and incentives, it may not be an attractive option. Even if institutions employ contingent labor specifically to carry on the work of engaged scholarship, they must be aware of the complexities involved in such positions and be willing to reevaluate their structures to ensure that the relationships that the institution is building with community through these scholars are healthy and sustainable.

Conflict of Interest Statement

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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