Original Research

Institutionalizing Community-Based Research: A Case Study of Articulated Program Development

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Abstract

Community-Based Research (CBR) presents a wide range of benefits in higher education to students, community partners, and universities. Yet, on our campus (and many others), CBR remains less common than other related high-impact practices (HIPs), such as service learning and undergraduate research, due to a lack of effective institutionalization. Here we detail our efforts to institutionalize CBR on our campus to expand the practice and its resulting benefits appropriately. These efforts focus on three initiatives: raising the visibility of CBR, diffusing expertise to implement CBR, and providing critical support for designing and implementing CBR. After our narrative case study, we also include our assessment plan, which utilizes a mixed-methods approach to explore how our initiatives have made an impact on faculty and community partners involved with CBR, as well as to assess interest and knowledge about CBR among faculty and community partners who are currently involved in service learning but not yet involved in CBR. We present our efforts as a model with ideas to offer other universities seeking to increase the implementation of CBR.

Keywords: service learning, undergraduate research, high-impact practices, higher education implementation

Introduction

Community-Based Research (CBR) in higher education offers valuable benefits to the community, the university, and students included in the practice. Yet, for various reasons, it remains less common than other related forms of community engagement. Expanding the CBR practice to reap more benefits requires cultivating greater familiarity about CBR among those potentially interested, diffusing expertise about how to initiate and implement CBR projects, and promoting greater institutional recognition and support for those engaged. In other words, it must be institutionalized at the campus level. Here, we describe our efforts in recent years to institutionalize CBR at our small regional public university through a series of related initiatives. Before describing those initiatives and our plan to assess their effectiveness, we will describe how CBR relates to other community engagement practices as well as how CBR is commonly implemented on our campus with attendant examples.

Contextualizing CBR

CBR is a form of community engagement in which research is conducted in partnership with and on behalf of the community – typically a nonprofit organization serving the community. We use the term CBR following early seminal research by Strand et al. (2003), but those general practices are also commonly referred to as Community Engaged Research (CEnR). CBR and CEnR are distinguished from traditional academic research (which may focus on communities) by the community's engagement, involvement, and partnership in all parts of the research process.

CBR also provides opportunities for Community Engaged Learning (CEL) for students. As a pedagogical practice, CBR goes beyond service learning which "attempts to link academic study with service" (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 5) by creating "a partnership of students, faculty, and community members who collaboratively engage in research with the purpose of solving a pressing community problem or effecting social change" (Strand et al., 2003, p. 3). Thus, change within communities is forefront, and student learning occurs through participation in the research process. Although CBR and service learning may develop independently, CBR on our campus has emerged out of service-learning initiatives. In our campus framework, we conceptualize CBR as a combination of two High Impact Practices (HIPs) - service learning and undergraduate research (Kuh, 2008) - in which the service conducted for the community is research facilitated by undergraduate students. Although CBR does not require student participation, as a teaching university committed to service learning, we have sought to promote student engagement in CBR.

While community partnership defines CBR, it exists along a spectrum of community research practices. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) defines the highest level of

engagement, characterized by its deep and ongoing relationship with community. While CBPR represents a valuable model, it is not always possible to meet that ideal – nor is it always necessary. Community partners often need research to address specifically defined needs for which they lack resources or expertise; a heavy time commitment in the process represents a cost to be minimized or balanced out (Downey 2018). Such "research service" is particularly valuable for resource-limited organizations that are often so busy juggling their organizations' and clients' various immediate needs that they do not have time for such work (Strand et al., 2003). Such projects also tend to be very applied, as partners have less interest in broader theoretical issues and disciplinary debates.

On our campus, while we recognize the value of the CBPR model (and seek to build toward that type of engagement in some areas), most research with the community is of more targeted and limited duration. To a large extent, that targeted engagement model is a corollary of the characteristic noted previously; student-engaged projects are conducted in the context of classes, which means that most projects tend to be one semester in duration (even if the partnership can extend to multiple discrete projects over a longer span of time).

We will provide some examples to provide a more concrete sense of the general type of CBR projects that fit the description above and are engaged through our institution. Program assessments are a common need for partners, and our students and faculty have engaged in assessments of farm-to-school programs and a local homeless-to-housing program (which the partner was able to use as part of a formal grant-required assessment). Projects have also focused on client/needs assessments to help partners better serve the community – such as for a local food pantry or a free medical clinic. Another recent example is a survey of clients at a local center for the performing arts to find ways to serve the public better and underscore their value to the community (for which they initially sought a private contract but found the costs prohibitive). A related type of research focused on volunteers (another critical population for nonprofits), assessing their satisfaction, motivations, needs, etc. For instance, survey and interview-based projects have focused on volunteers for a community hospice service provider, a local foster youth facility, and a program to provide medical services to our local homeless population. Another (growing) area of research partnerships focuses on providing secondary data analyses. For example, a demographer and his students provided detailed community information to a statewide human relations organization to better help them serve and partner with local communities. Another project partnered with our local commission on the status of women to provide detailed information about issues of inequality in our county (which they were able to use as leverage for a $20,000 grant to follow up). Such limited scope and duration CBR projects have proven successful in serving partners while providing valuable experiences to students (Downey 2018).

The projects described above represent a critical mass of CBR projects to date, but they do not exhaust the full range of projects. As we institutionalize CBR and expand its practice, the types of projects engaged will inevitably expand (for example, with more truly CBPR partnerships and more partnerships in STEM fields).

Benefits of CBR

Advocates of CBR have identified various pedagogical benefits for students (e.g., Strand, 2000) and how these benefits may be distinct from those of traditional service-learning experiences (Lichtenstein et al., 2011). Perhaps most importantly, it allows students to grapple with abstract and technical methodological concepts in an applied real-world situation (Collier & Morgan, 2002; Mayer et al., 2019; Potter et al., 2003; Shostak et al., 2019). Working with community partners also increases buy-in and motivation for students since they see how knowledge and information can be used as a tool for social change, not just a grade (Chesbrough, 2011; Cooke & Thorme, 2011; Darby et al., 2013; Duffy & Raque-Bogdon, 2010). CBR projects also provide valuable professional development for students as they develop their communication and research skills (Downey, 2018; Mayer et al., 2019).

The benefits of CBR also extend to the community, faculty, and the institution. Community-based organizations, and by proxy, the community they serve, benefit by gaining access to new information or more developed analyses that may be inaccessible given their limited resources and/or expertise. Faculty can apply their skills to real-world situations (Cooke & Thorme, 2011; Greenberg et al., 2020) and often feel immense satisfaction and pride when students enthusiastically use their emerging disciplinary skills and knowledge (Strand et al., 2003). Through CBR, institutions can also become an integrated community aspect rather than maintaining their presence as a separate "ivory tower." This integration facilitates the community getting to know more about the institution and those within it while encouraging the institution to think critically about its role and responsibility to the community (Greenberg et al., 2020).

Despite its immense benefits for students and the community, the unique challenges and obstacles of CBR result in its under-implementation in higher education (Strand et al., 2003; Stocking & Cutforth, 2006; Polanyi & Cockburn, 2003; Weinberg, 2003). Specifically, since CBR combines service learning and undergraduate research, the associated teaching load and expectations (for all participants) are higher for CBR than either of the other two HIPs individually. In service-learning courses, learning - and even civic engagement - is not a guaranteed outcome of service participation (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Manley et al., 2006), and community partners may receive relatively little in return for the resources invested in training and monitoring students' service experiences (Beckman et al., 2011; Blouin & Perry, 2009; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Sandy, 2007; Sandy & Holland, 2006). In CBR, when research is conceptualized as service, students and faculty face greater consequences for failed service projects, may have

greater difficulty bridging the expectations of community partners and the goals of academia, and must work within various institutional constraints (Jaeger et al., 2012; Polanyi & Cockburn, 2003; Weinberg, 2003). Those challenges represent cumulative obstacles that must be addressed at an institutional level if CBR is to be widely practiced, reaping the benefits to students, communities, and institutions. Here, we present our efforts to do so by raising the visibility of CBR on our campus, diffusing CBR expertise, and supporting those who are interested in as well as those already engaged in CBR. Collectively, those efforts have sought to institutionalize CBR.

The Importance of Institutionalization

Our conception of institutionalization draws from sociological research focusing on processes by which a practice (CBR, in this case) is supported and sustained through "routine reproductive procedures" (Jepperson, 1991, p. 145). To the extent that we have effectively institutionalized CBR on our campus, we expect the practice to be sustained (and, hopefully, to expand) via initiatives we have already implemented. On a more concrete level, we mean that CBR becomes an accepted, expected, and commonly available option for faculty to choose from when they design their courses – similar to how other HIP teaching/learning options (like capstones, learning communities, student research, service learning, etc.) have become commonly recognized practices. It is important to note that institutionalization is not the result of a single initiative but a number of articulated initiatives designed to work together to achieve the necessary collective foundational requirements of institutionalization. The following represents the collective requisites that we recognized at our university: increasing the visibility of CBR on campus and in the community so that it is recognized as a common and beneficial pedagogical practice; cultivating and diffusing expertise in the implementation of CBR projects to serve as a reservoir to draw from when faculty decide that they may want to undertake a project; and supporting CBR in ways that make it more feasible for the people (primarily faculty) who have to make the greatest investment in bringing it about.

In the following sections, we describe the initiatives we designed and implemented to address each of those requisites. Collectively, they represent our attempts to overcome key challenges of institutionalization, such as gaining a critical mass of faculty involvement, diffusing core competencies for practice, and elevating the work of CBR so that it can be more officially recognized (Blanchard et al., 2009; Holland 2001). The three initiatives described below focus on creating and expanding awards and recognitions, developing a repository of model CBR reports, and building a faculty fellows program. We describe each component and the role it is designed to play in the institutionalization process.

CBR on our campus is still in a state of incipient institutionalization, in part because pandemic procedures (principally, all online instruction) made it significantly more difficult to initiate and engage in community partnerships. Thus, while each of the initiatives below was implemented

prior to the pandemic, the expansion and institutionalization of CBR largely stalled throughout the pandemic. However, over the past year, we have seen expansion take root, and we have begun formally assessing the effects of our initiatives in the spring and summer of 2023.

University Context and Components of Institutionalization

Foundation for Institutionalization

CSUCI was established in 2002 as the youngest university in the California State University (CSU) system. Over the past two decades, our campus has built a foundation of initiatives to institutionalize community-engaged learning (CEL) more generally, which has made it an appealing beachhead for our efforts to institutionalize CBR (Deblasis, 2006; Eckardt and Eisman, 2006). Consequently, it is important to briefly describe these more general initiatives before moving to those addressing CBR specifically. Our campus is the youngest in the CSU system, and the cornerstone of our foundation in community-engaged learning began with a commitment at the system level to support and promote service-learning experiences for our students. That commitment created a critical funding source and a broader support network for community-engaged initiatives on campus. Moreover, community engagement was integrated into our founding mission statement at the campus level as one of four "mission pillars" and is thus a central component of campus identity. Those system-level and campus-level commitments led to the creation of the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), which leads these initiatives on campus. The CCE is centrally located and supported by permanent staff positions, including a full-time Director of Community Engagement. Approximately a decade ago, the campus also committed to a full-time Community Partner Coordinator who serves as the primary point of contact between the university and community partners. The university also supports a CCE Faculty Director (with 20% reassigned time) who serves as the principal liaison between faculty and the CCE. Beyond these staffing and personnel commitments, the CCE also benefits from a system allocation of $45,000 annually and a campus allocation of $10,000 annually. CSUCI's CCE is one of a network of community engagement (/service learning) centers across the CSU system with one on each campus. The system-wide network and CCE personnel described above have been critical in developing an interactive campus-wide database of community partners. This user-friendly database is designed to connect students to community partners and track their service-learning activities; faculty use it as well to explore and consider appropriate community partnerships.

The CCE has worked to institutionalize community engagement through a range of initiatives, all guided by the seminal work of Furco (1999) in institutionalizing service learning. Recent five-year strategic plans for the CCE have intentionally designed developmental programs to move our campus to higher stages in Furco's model of institutionalization – from critical mass building to quality building to sustained institutionalization. Some of the programs implemented to realize

that transformation include annual awards and recognition programs, a range of faculty development programs, initiatives to build capacity for service-learning among community partners, and events to facilitate connections between faculty members and community partners. These initiatives have fostered a culture of community engagement on campus and commitment to high-quality community-based experiential education for our students.

Beyond its institutionalization of community engagement, our campus has also moved toward greater support and institutionalization of undergraduate research in recent years. Specifically, undergraduate research has become partially institutionalized through faculty positions, space on campus, and on-campus student conferences. To this point, undergraduate research has been primarily supported by grant funding, although the campus is initiating a shift to internal funding sources. Since we conceptualize CBR when implemented with students as a form of service learning wherein the research is the service provided, we see CBR as a strategy to strengthen service learning and undergraduate research (Harden et al., 2017). Given the greater institutional commitment to student research at the current juncture, the increased association will likely benefit CBR, although we have not yet built those bridges. The following sections describe the three initiatives that have been the focus of our work toward institutionalization.

Raising Visibility: Awards and Recognitions Program

One of the fundamental tasks of institutionalizing CBR is raising the practice's visibility. Before any initiative can gain traction, potential practitioners need to know what it is and why it is valuable. One of the areas where the CCE has had the most success in raising the visibility of service learning and community engagement generally has been the gradual expansion of its awards and recognition programs over the past decade. While those programs have roots before that, there was a concerted effort to expand them beginning around 2013 when two authors had the opportunity to work together in CCE leadership roles. The expansion started with the annual year-end Celebration of Service, designed to highlight and bring greater visibility to all aspects of service on campus. At the time, the celebration was a modest affair attended by several dozen faculty, staff, and students, with annual awards for a faculty member, a student, and a community partner. Over the next half-decade, the Celebration of Service expanded to become an annual signature event on campus, with an attendance of approximately 200. Although attendance declined significantly during the pandemic while the event was discontinued or held online, it has rebounded to about 140 in the spring of 2023 as we return to in-person events.

Awards and recognitions were also expanded (for example, adding a student reflective essay award and a poster session to highlight successful initiatives and projects), and an annual Activities, Awards, and Recognition booklet was created, presenting notable community engagement projects. All of those helped bring much greater visibility to service learning and community engagement generally – and to the CBR projects initiated in that space. In 2018, the

Celebration of Service became a great showcase for all aspects of community engagement, and we inaugurated the Community-Based Research Award for a faculty member who implemented a notable project or otherwise promoted CBR. In addition, a concerted effort was made to highlight CBR projects through the poster session and in the annual awards and recognition booklet distributed across campus and externally. Those efforts have significantly raised the profile of CBR on our campus among multiple constituencies. The Celebration of Service includes students, faculty, and community partners, which not only disseminates notable models of CBR but also fosters networking opportunities that can lead to new partnerships. Another strategic audience has been higher administration, and in recent years, the event has typically been attended by deans, provosts, and university presidents. In 2022, our new university president attended and commented that he had been unaware of the extent of the work being done in community engagement and that he was impressed with what was on display. Administrators frequently request awards and recognition booklets when they lobby with legislators in Sacramento. If CBR is to become institutionalized, it is vital for administrative leaders to support such efforts (Kezar, 2005; Moore & Mendez, 2014), and spotlighting CBR and its benefits both at the celebration event and in the booklet are critical ways of garnering that support.

Raising Models and Marketing Credit: Creating a CBR Repository

One of the ongoing challenges in promoting CBR is that the balance of benefits and challenges does not accrue to the same parties. Moreover, the party most critical for initiating CBR projects with students -- the faculty member -- carries the largest share of the burden and arguably has the smallest direct benefit. There are clear rewards for faculty in terms of satisfaction, but the professional benefits are minimal. Despite growing pressure for community-engaged work to be formally recognized in retention, tenure, and promotion policies (Leugers et al., 2009; Saltmarsh & Wooding, 2016), faculty conducting CBR with students are often either credited for teaching or service rather than serious research (Jaeger et al., 2012; McCall et al., 2016). That lack of credit for faculty represents a serious limiting factor for the expansion of CBR. While CBR projects can represent solid research contributions, they are rarely amenable to peer-reviewed publications since they are not designed to be generalizable disciplinary contributions and therefore do not satisfy current requirements for tenure and promotion. Consequently, significant investments in CBR projects – that benefit community partners, students, and the institution – generally go unrecognized in faculty advancement applications and portfolios and their professional records. Students are likewise often unable to properly document what likely represents their most important research experience and contribution in any formal or permanent way.

To provide formal recognition for significant CBR projects, we worked over many years to develop an online repository of CBR reports conducted by faculty and students at our campus,

branded *CBR@CSUCI.* All reports included are reviewed (by one faculty reviewer and one community partner reviewer) for the quality and contribution of research and clarity appropriate to general audiences. This repository serves multiple purposes. Most directly, it creates an online "home" for projects that can serve as models for those interested in engaging in CBR (whether faculty, students, or community members). For community partners, it also creates a permanent record of their research to be accessed and used years later. (In the past, some community partners would lose track of reports as they underwent staffing or leadership changes.) In addition, it generates a sense of excitement and connection to the university to have the reports officially archived. For students, it is a potential resource for graduate school or job applications since they can provide a permanent link to reports presented in a digital home that properly highlights them. Perhaps most importantly, it allows faculty to document significant contributions in a way that can be professionally recognized. While we initially considered creating a peer-reviewed repository that might represent core publications in the retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) process, we decided that it would blur the lines too greatly between disciplinary research and the kind of community and informal research that is more common for CBR. So, while publishing in the repository does not contribute to the core metric for tenure (that is, disciplinary peer-reviewed publications), it contributes in a visible way to round out a tenure file and provides credit to faculty for their work – regardless of whether they want to claim that credit as part of their research, service, or teaching responsibilities.

Overall, the repository increases the visibility of CBR, and pulling them together creates a multiplier effect that further raises the status of CBR on campus. Moreover, we are working with library faculty/staff to migrate these reports into ScholarWorks, a CSU system-wide repository of faculty work, to be visible beyond our campus. Unfortunately, we could only establish one annual volume before we entered the COVID-19 pandemic and have not yet completed new rounds of submissions, reviews, and publications. So it remains somewhat sparse and skeletal. However, we are again receiving new ("post-pandemic") submissions, and the third component of our institutionalization efforts promises to cultivate new submissions to the repository.

Cultivating and Diffusing Expertise: CBR Faculty Fellows Program

The final strategic leg of our institutionalization efforts is our CBR Faculty Fellows Program. The CCE has been expanding faculty development programs for some years, building on workshops and consultations addressing various aspects of service learning. For example, as we deepened our focus on social justice projects, we initiated our first faculty fellows program in 2019-20: the Community Engagement and Social Justice Faculty Fellows (CE&SJ) program. That program was designed to include up to six faculty members in a series of workshops where we brought in (or "Zoomed" in) nationally recognized figures in the field to discuss various aspects of service learning to deepen social justice engagement. Over the course of the year, the cohort met for six workshops.

The CBR Faculty Fellows program was initiated in 2020-21, designed with the CE&SJ program as a model. CBR faculty fellows participate in six workshops over the course of the year (three each semester). Workshops in the first semester explore foundational issues such as definitions and the benefits of CBR to students and the community. We routinely invite former faculty fellows, students, and community partners to discuss their experiences with CBR and its subsequent impacts. The second semester's workshops are organized around the series of tasks to be completed to effectively design a CBR-based course (such as choosing a course, inventorying expected skills and what needs to be delivered, considering topics, identifying possible partners for whom the topic would be appropriate, developing a syllabus, etc.). Those topics are presented in a discussion-oriented context where participants help others troubleshoot challenges and identify solutions. Previous fellows come to each workshop to discuss their in-progress or completed projects, including the obstacles they have confronted and the solutions they have developed. All participants receive a $1,000 stipend and are required to attend workshops, arrange to teach a CBR-based course in the following year, attend and present in the annual Celebration of Service, submit a report to *CBR@CSUCI*, serve as a reviewer for the repository, and to generally serve as a CBR mentor (formally or informally) for others on campus.

CBR Institutionalization Assessment Plan

As noted above, each of these efforts was designed to create synergies with the others and make specific contributions to the institutionalization of CBR on our campus. Collectively, they are designed to: provide more support and recognition of CBR, diffuse expertise for CBR, and expand the implementation of CBR. Unfortunately, our initiatives culminated right at the onset of the pandemic, which stalled progress and prevented the anticipated expansion of CBR. The pandemic also forced us to postpone a formal assessment of these initiatives. Now that we are moving past the pandemic hiatus, the initial formal evaluation will occur in 2023-24. We present our assessment plan here in condensed form to give readers a sense of what we will seek and what we hope to find.

Our assessment focuses on gauging the extent to which CBR has been institutionalized on our campus – that is, the extent to which it has become recognized as an effective and feasible pedagogical option for appropriate courses. We hope to find evidence that our initiatives have contributed to the interest and practice of CBR and that these efforts have cultivated "opinion leaders" (Jaeger et al., 2012) who can advocate for its persistence and expansion. Additionally, we plan to assess what other initiatives might help our campus take the next steps in deepening institutionalization.

Assessment Design

Our assessment design focuses on the two primary constituencies integral to institutionalization: faculty and community partners. As these two groups are the ones who take the lead in planning and implementing projects, they are the participants who have the greatest impact on the initiation and practice of CBR. Students represent a third critical constituency, but they are generally uninvolved in making decisions concerning the *initiation* of projects and, therefore, less directly essential to institutionalization. We will utilize a mixed-methods assessment strategy which includes in-depth interviews with CBR practitioners and a survey to assess interest among those currently engaged in service learning but not yet engaged in CBR. Additional information on the thematic focus of research components is discussed below, while Table 1 lays out the basic assessment logic (with the number of potential subjects in parentheses).

TABLE 1. Assessment plan and potential subjects

	Faculty	**Community Partners**
Interviews	Faculty Fellows (15)	Partners w/ CBR experience (24)
Survey	Service-Learning Faculty (45)	Partners in database (128)

Our faculty assessment will focus on our past and current CBR Faculty Fellows to learn about whether CBR has established itself as part of their regular teaching practices and to find out how we can better encourage and support their efforts. That research will be completed through a series of in-depth interviews. The secondary component of our faculty assessment focuses on the broader population of faculty involved in service learning but not yet participated in CBR; these data will be collected via an online survey. Our goal here is to learn whether these faculty are aware of CBR and whether they may be open to practicing it in their classes. In tandem, these data will provide an assessment of the CBR Fellows Program as well as the potential for expanding CBR in the coming years. Undoubtedly, we will also learn more about faculty's specific institutional challenges as they consider adopting CBR.

Our assessment of community partners follows a similar data collection plan. The first component of our community partner assessment will be in-depth interviews with partners who have collaborated with students and faculty on CBR projects in the past. We plan to learn about their experiences, and how they got engaged in CBR (and whether our initiatives contributed to that involvement). We will also ask whether they plan to engage in those processes in the future and how we can better support them. Like our data collection plans for faculty, the second component of our partner assessment will focus on a broader set of partners, specifically, all partners in our community partner database maintained by the CCE. This component, conducted as an online survey, will seek information on partners interested in CBR and learn what we might do to encourage and support that interest.

Challenges to Institutionalization

We look forward to exploring our formal assessment data, especially since in the spring of 2022, we saw colleagues return to CBR projects that they designed as fellows; we again recognized significant CBR projects (and other service-learning projects) at the first in-person Celebration of Service in three years; and we have seen a renewed flow of submissions to our repository. Furthermore, informal networks of support and assistance have emerged among those interested in CBR. While the impact of our efforts is only suggestive at this point, we are hopeful about the future of CBR on our campus.

And yet, we remain aware of the challenges ahead to further institutionalization (beyond the pandemic). First, there is still progress to be made in elevating CBR to the visibility and support of comparable programs such as undergraduate research, which has received high visibility in recent years as well as extensive economic support in the form of faculty release time, summer stipends, and funding for both conference attendance and conference production. While such support is feasible for CBR projects (Dubb, 2007; Harden et al., 2017; Williams & Payne, 2021) and can even result in long-term federal funding and research agendas (Jetson et al., 2009), those supports are not currently available for CBR on our campus. It is important to recognize that the support for CBR as a type of service learning and undergraduate research is not a zero-sum competition but rather a mutually beneficial practice.

Second, we need to do more to hardwire CBR into the retention, tenure, and promotion processes (Dubb, 2007; Greenberg et al., 2020; Jaeger et al., 2012). As noted above, CBR bridges traditional RTP categories (teaching, research, and service), but there is a lack of clarity about how to count it, especially as research activity. Each of the three components of our work above helps to clarify that, but we still need to help faculty by clarifying how to present CBR in their files. Moreover, research is arguably the most "high value" of the three categories, but also the one where our initiatives have established the least foothold. Consequently, we are initiating conversations with strategic academic programs about the possibility of introducing contributions to our CBR repository into the core publications metrics – beginning with programs that use a point system that would allow such contributions to count toward research but not be commensurate with a peer-reviewed publication.

Additionally, the structural constraints of the academic year pose several challenges. Similar to service-learning courses, courses engaged in CBR are often constrained by the academic semester (15 weeks) (Watterson et al., 2011), as well as the heavier workload and expectations of CBR projects. Engaging in high-quality CBR projects on such a timeline is extremely difficult, and most faculty opt for students to work in groups to complete the research. Two-semester timelines are better for such work; however, not many two-semester sequences are available. Instead, suppose CBR projects are planned to be more than one semester. In that case, the faculty

member typically continues the project with a new set of students each semester, which can undermine commitment and motivation for the project. This also has serious complications for sustainable partnerships since community-based organizations operate on a year-round schedule. Moreover, faculty may have little say in their teaching assignments and may not be able to continue an unfinished CBR project into the next semester (either because they are not teaching the same class or are not able to take on the workload that CBR requires on top of their regular teaching, service, and research obligations). While these challenges may seem daunting, there are ways to mitigate them (Strand et al., 2003; Greenberg et al., 2020; Watterson et al., 2011), especially with institutional support.

Next Steps and Conclusion

The timing of our initiatives was unfortunate in that we had just begun to make significant headway toward institutionalization when we were hit with the onset of the pandemic. We are now working to regain that momentum. As noted, our Celebration of Service has nearly returned to its pre-pandemic vibrancy, and for 2023 the CCE sponsored a CBR-focused forum prior to the main event titled "Realizing the Promise of CBR." Approximately fifty individuals (faculty and community partners) attended a presentation from a widely recognized scholar and practitioner of CBPR, followed by a faculty/partner/student panel presenting their CBR partnership/project, followed by an opportunity to network – all of which increased excitement around CBR.

Despite this excitement and the positive outcomes CBR projects offer for students, communities, and institutions, institutionalizing such a challenging and rewarding experience is its unique hurdle. Our initiatives to institutionalize CBR described here have focused on strategically building on institutional precedent and support for community engagement. We plan to continue these efforts while expanding our focus to other opportunities. For example, the CCE's "engaged departments" initiative has focused on encouraging and supporting departments in developing strategies to more deeply integrate service learning into teaching and curricula, as well as in scholarship and faculty evaluation. We plan to integrate CBR into the framework for engaged departments as we expand the initiative.

Beyond individual disciplines lies another opportunity to integrate CBR with interdisciplinary efforts (another pillar of our university mission). Interdisciplinary CBR partnerships would strengthen students' learning opportunities, potentially reduce faculty workload (if co-taught), and have a larger impact on community partners (Greenberg et al., 2020; Watterson et al., 2011).

Another opportunity we are currently exploring is how to highlight and bring together all types of community-engaged research. Disciplines approach community-engaged research differently, and that variety should be spotlighted and celebrated. An umbrella website would be ideal for this effort. Pre-existing archives or repositories, like *CBR@CSUCI*, would not be subsumed in

this effort but be incorporated as an example and maintain themselves as a stand-alone repository.

We recognize that not all universities have the same foundational principles/pillars of community engagement embedded in their mission and history and may be considering how to engage in CBR in less supportive environments while other institutions are further ahead. However, we hope these initiatives will spawn ideas for administrators and faculty interested in making CBR a cornerstone of undergraduate education.

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