

Inside Out, Outside In: A Comparative Analysis of Service-Learning's Development in the United States and South Africa

Timothy K. Stanton and Mabel A. Erasmus

Abstract

In this article, two service-learning practitioners reflect on the development of the pedagogy of service-learning within higher education in two different contexts: the United States and South Africa. They examine and compare service-learning's evolution in these two different, distant parts of the world from the vantage points of their long involvement in this work, noting the institutional locations and motivations of early pioneers and the important, often enabling influence of higher education's social context. They conclude with theory-building speculation on how these service-learning stories may illuminate some of the complexities of institutional change in higher education.

Introduction

Theories of social and institutional change animate debates across many fields. Scholars seek to know whether and how change comes from the top—from those in leadership roles and positions—or from the bottom—from those who first see and feel the need for change and experiment with innovative forms and approaches to their work. Others suggest that regardless of whether reform is led from the bottom or the top, the impetus for change within an institution comes from its outside environment—from externally organized constituencies, competitors, or authorities. What follows here are two related tales from opposite ends of the earth—the United States and South Africa—that illuminate the complexities of these debates as they relate to institutions of higher education. They are stories of service-learning's development within higher education, which we (one an overseas studies program director at Stanford University, the other an associate professor at the University of the Free State) have come to know over long, university-based careers. In telling and comparing the stories, we hope to contribute modestly to discussions of higher education change. Perhaps more important, we seek to contribute to the understanding of how service-learning obtained its first toe-holds within the academy, and then evolved—slowly in one national context and more rapidly in the other—to become a critical pedagogy across the curriculum.

Tale One: Service-Learning in the United States: In a Context of Social Movements, Education Reform, and Institutional Change

We start our overview with the longer, drawn-out story from the United States, where service-learning was first practiced, defined, and described in the 1960s and 1970s. Where did this rather ambitious, often complicated, community-based approach to teaching and learning come from? What enabled it to develop and spread across higher education? In the late 1990s, Timothy Stanton researched service-learning's early history in the United States with two colleagues (*Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999*). They identified a group of 33 "pioneers" who represented strands of related work in universities, community colleges, and secondary education in the 1960s and 1970s, some aspects of which came to be known as "service-learning." The three researchers convened this group for a 3-day conference at which they interviewed each other, reviewed the stories told, and collectively tried to understand what the stories were about. A major question was: What motivated these pioneers to engage in an educational practice that in those days usually led to dead ends in one's career (e.g., program closures, job loss)? For that, in fact, was what had happened to many of these individuals in spite of their having innovated an exciting, experiential approach to integrating community service and higher learning.

Seth Pollack (*1999*), a research associate on the project, examined the interview transcripts around this motivation question and came up with a triangular scheme representing three central concepts, the relationships among which reflected fundamental social policy debates of the time (see Figure 1). He labeled the three points of the triangle with these concepts: democracy, education, and service. The relationships between the concepts along the triangle's three axes were posed as questions, the answers to which could help resolve policy and practice tensions between them, as follows:

Education <==> Service

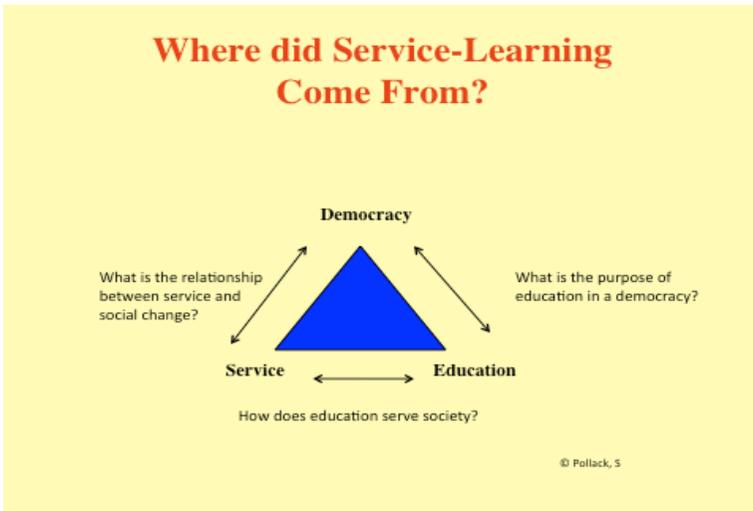
How does education serve society?

Service <==> Democracy

What is the relationship between service and social change?

Democracy <==> Service

What is the purpose of education in a democracy?



Source: Pollack, 1999, p. 19.

Figure 1: Debate Along the Axes

Pollack found that these service-learning pioneers articulated their central motivations to engage in and develop service-learning as desires to address one or more of these questions. This was true whether they worked from a campus or in the community, whether they focused on preparation of students for effective social engagement or more narrowly on students as service resources for communities. Whatever their differences, each of the pioneers was to some extent driven by social change and/or social justice ends related to the academy and the academy's relationship to community, issues prevalent in the turmoil of their time.

Thus, the United States service-learning story begins with a loosely coupled, highly motivated group of independent, and independently thinking, activists. Only a few of them were traditional academics. In fact, most started out in community-based work or secondary education. For example, the first concrete expression of practice that was labeled "service-learning" can be traced back to the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies in Tennessee in 1968.

The Oak Ridge program developed by pioneers Bill Ramsay and Bob Sigmon, employees of the institute, provided student learning opportunities that were integrally connected to workforce development needs in the communities surrounding the institute. The earliest definition of *service-learning*, "the accomplishment of tasks which meet genuine human needs in combination with conscious educational growth," can be found in publications of the

Southern Regional Education Board (1969), which took over the Oak Ridge program.

The drive for social change and justice was soon made explicit in service-learning literature that began to surface. Pioneer Jane Kendall, who directed the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE)¹ from 1979 to 1990, noted that “a good service-learning program helps participants see their [service] questions in the larger context of issues of social justice and social policy—rather than in the context of charity” (1990, p. 20). It should help students consider the broader social structures that underlie the problems they address when they volunteer. For example, service-learning should not just enable students to volunteer in soup kitchens. It should also stimulate them to reflect on why people are hungry.

Service-learning’s early advocates also differentiated their practice from volunteer service, questioning the nature of the service act itself, and evoking the concept of reciprocity between server and served. Such an exchange “avoids the traditionally paternalistic, one-way approach to service in which one group or person has resources which they share ‘charitably’ . . . with a person or group that lacks resources” (Kendall, 1990, p. 22). In service-learning the needs of the community, rather than of the academy, determine the nature of the service provided.

Service-learning thus developed a values-oriented character *and* community development philosophy of reciprocal learning that was integrated with curriculum reform goals and an activist, social change orientation to society. This view is summarized by a slogan first used at Stanford University, “I serve you in order that I may learn from you. You accept my service in order that you may teach me” (Stanton, 1992). Service-learning is reciprocal learning—everyone is in service and everyone can learn.

A Context of Change: Reforming Curriculum and Pedagogy and Restoring Civic Values in the United States

An additional point to be made about this history is the importance of social context, in other words, the outside environment in which higher education institutions function. By the 1980s, new service-learning programs had taken root across higher education, including community colleges. Consortia such as the Great Lakes Colleges Association and Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs developed and sponsored both domestic and international service-learning programs. Programs launched in the 1970s, such

as field study programs at Cornell University; the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of Southern California; and the federally funded University Year for Action matured, setting practice standards for the field. An experienced practitioner group, many of Stanton et al.'s pioneers among them, articulated and agreed upon "principles of good practice" (*Honnet & Paulsen, personal communication, 1989*), writing one of the most sought-after publications of the Johnson Foundation (*Stanton, personal communication with Honnet, Spring 1992*).

In spite of these considerable advances, however, service-learning programs remained few and far between. The 1970s saw higher education pedagogy largely unchanged and under the purview of academic departments. Student moral development and community participation were left with student affairs professionals, residence hall staff, religious groups, or other nonacademic administrators. Service-learning remained marginal, if not invisible, at most institutions.

Service-learning's condition within higher education began to advance when it gained support and legitimacy from two broad, largely unconnected education reform movements that arose in the 1980s. Both movements were concerned with student development. One movement was largely generated by scholars and advocates outside the academy who were concerned about education. They questioned the value and impact of both curriculum content and the passive, didactic process of postsecondary teaching and learning. The other movement was the response of individuals in government, public policy think tanks, and the nonprofit sector to reports of students' increasingly self-centered attitudes. Ronald Reagan was U.S. president then, and young people were dubbed by the media as "the me generation." A few university presidents shared these concerns and joined the effort to reinvigorate higher education's obligation to challenge students to lead more socially responsible lives.

Due in great part to these movements, U.S. higher education in the 1980s experienced intense self-examination, external criticism, and debate regarding basic goals and purposes. Scholars produced a series of national reports that questioned whether curricula met their defined objectives, and suggested a fundamental re-evaluation of the structure and pedagogy of undergraduate education. The national and campus-based initiatives that resulted set a promising stage for educators who advocated for service-learning. This in turn fueled service-learning's expansion in both practice and research.

The Movement for Curriculum Reform

Curriculum reform advocates focused on the teaching/learning process and the importance of active, experience-based learning. For example, the National Institute of Education's Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education (1984) recommended that faculty increase their use of "internships and other forms of carefully monitored experiential learning." Kaston and Heffernan (1984), in a study undertaken for the National Endowment for the Humanities, indicated widespread acceptance by faculty of internships and field studies as integral parts of liberal arts education. The National Society for Experiential Education reported growing numbers of requests for assistance from institutions interested in linking classroom instruction to supervised field experience in the community (*personal communication, Kendall, 1981, 1982*). With greater acceptance and utilization of internships, field studies, and other forms of off-campus learning, the issue for advocates of experiential education became not so much whether faculty would utilize these methods, but rather how well they would use them, both inside and outside the classroom, and how they could effectively assess the learning their students achieved (*Kendall, Duley, Little, Permaul & Rubin, 1986*).

This debate on pedagogy and the role of experience began to affect the core liberal arts as well as applied, practical disciplines. In debates about which content areas should compose "common learning" or general education, for liberal arts students, educators began to shift their focus from knowledge acquisition to cognitive skill development—"abilities that last a lifetime" (*Mentkowski & Doherty, 1984*). Research into the undergraduate experience reinforced this focus, stressing the importance of cognitive skills and the ability to apply one's learning as benchmarks for student assessment (*Loacker, Cromwell, & O'Brien, 1986*). The national education reports criticized the passive, impersonal nature of instructional methodologies and called for a pedagogy that was more active and involving, that enabled learners to take more responsibility for their education, and that brought them into direct contact with the subjects of their study. According to these reports, instructional research demonstrated that learning activities which require learners to solve problems by applying knowledge and skills more often develop higher cognitive skills than do traditional classroom methods (*Cross, 1987*). The National Institute of Education's Study Group (1984) recommended use of internships and other forms of monitored experiential learning to enable students to become creators, as well as receivers, of knowledge. The learning that

students obtained from such experiential education opportunities was increasingly seen as linking and integrating their intellectual growth with their moral, personal, and career development.

Restoring Civic Values

During this same period, individuals outside the academy began to question whether higher education was adequately preparing students to live in a society that faced complex and seemingly intractable problems (Boyer, 1987). They worried about research reports that showed students as increasingly isolated and holding narrow, self-centered attitudes.²

Advocates of stronger civic participation by students called on educational institutions to focus on graduating a citizenry with a broad understanding of the interdependencies of peoples, social institutions, and communities; an enhanced ability both to draw upon and further develop this knowledge as they confront and solve human problems (Newman, 1985); and a strong commitment to ethically and thoughtfully fulfilling the democratic compact, which was articulated by John Gardner as "Freedom and responsibility, liberty and duty, that's the deal" (O'Connell, 1999, p. 126).

In *Higher Education and the American Resurgence* (1985), Education Commission of the States president Frank Newman identified a failure in the structure and content of the U.S. educational system. Structurally, it did not provide a means of linking classroom study with students' direct experience of social problems and issues. In content areas, it failed to effectively educate students with both an understanding of these social problems and an awareness of the traditional responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

In response, college presidents, education scholars, politicians, students, and others began to call for integration of the ethic and practice of civic involvement, critique, and analysis into the mission and values of higher education.³ The presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford universities joined President Newman to found Campus Compact, a consortium of college and university presidents committed to increasing the level of public service activity among students. In so doing, they sought to renew and reinvigorate the public service mission of higher education (Jencks & Riesman, 1968; Waring, 1988).

Soon universities and colleges began to establish public service centers and other structures to enable students to become involved as volunteers. Such activities served both to provide community service and to develop awareness of public issues and community

needs, as well as enabling students to cultivate leadership skills and a lifelong commitment to social responsibility.

Mutual Concerns, Mutual Benefits

Although these two movements—for education reform and for public service—shared a common concern with the basic aims of higher education, they engaged in little sustained, cross-group dialogue. Neither group seriously considered the explicit relationship between public service and the core, *academic* missions of higher education institutions. In the early days of both movements, only a few lonely voices addressed the place of community service and what students learn from it within the academic curriculum (*Couto, 1982; Stanton 1988*).

As the public service initiative matured, however, it began to include the goals and values of service-learning within its agenda. The existing separation of service from learning was viewed as reflecting higher education's traditional distinction between theory and practice, and between teaching and research (*Wagner, 1986*), and as inhibiting both the effectiveness of students' service efforts and the depth of their learning while they were involved (*Stanton, 1990*).

Campus Compact: Project on Integrating Service With Academic Study

Thus, in 1988 Campus Compact commissioned a study to examine how faculty might play a stronger role in promoting civic responsibility (*Stanton, 1990*). It organized three regional conferences where goals and action steps were discussed. These conversations led the Compact's leadership to launch its Project on Integrating Service With Academic Study in 1990. A national advisory board was established, made up of advocates for linking service with the curriculum, who had stature within the higher education community, and who were in positions to influence change at the national level. A 3-year grant was obtained from the Ford Foundation to support implementation of three summer institutes to bring together faculty teams from Campus Compact member institutions for a week-long workshop on combining service with academic study. Historians of this movement view these institutes, organized by a new nonprofit organization outside the academy, as perhaps the most pivotal events in service-learning's movement from the margins to the mainstream of higher education (*Harkavy, 2006*).

Until the mid-1980s, service-learning advocates and practitioners were a small, marginal group within higher education. Indeed, at annual conferences of the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE), workshops were offered on “working on the margins,” or on “life as a marginal professional” for several years. However, with legitimacy and support conveyed by the 1980s’ education reform and public service initiatives, interest in service-learning began to grow. What was once a suspect, little-understood form of alternative education was by 1990 suddenly on the front burner of numerous higher education organizations and on the minds of a growing number of campus administrators and faculty. Both Campus Compact and NSEE reported large increases in inquiries about service-learning. The National Youth Leadership Council developed a national service-learning training program. Disciplinary organizations (e.g., American Sociology Association, American Political Science Association) organized service-learning workshops at their conferences.

In addition to its exponential growth during the 1990s, service-learning practice diversified. For example, at research universities such as Stanford and Duke, practitioners began developing service-learning research programs, enabling students to undertake “public scholarship” in cooperation with and for community-based groups. Other efforts focused on service-learning in capstone education (Portland State University), as diversity training (City Year), and increasingly as civic learning, which is most strongly exemplified at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). CSUMB’s service-learning institute works to see that elements of this curriculum—democratic citizenship learning, political learning, public leadership learning, inter- and intra-personal learning, diversity learning/cultural versatility, and social justice learning—are central elements to its service-learning agenda, which is required of all students. Today the service-learning field has turned its attention to international settings and global education.

A Literature of Evaluation and Research

Service-learning’s maturation as a field is also indicated by a change in focus of professional meeting discussions and publications, from “How to do the work?” to “How to sustain and institutionalize it?” Significantly, both practitioners and researchers began calling for and carrying out evaluation and research on service-learning outcomes on students, faculty, institutions, and, occasionally, on community partners.

During this time, resources from the Fund for the Improvement of PostSecondary Education (FIPSE) helped produce some of the more important documents in the field, including one of the most influential books, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning* (Eyler & Giles, 1999). This publication is considered by many to be the foundation of evidence that service-learning has multiple impacts on everything from academic knowledge and critical thinking to civic awareness and development of students' interpersonal skills and abilities. Growth of research funded by FIPSE and other foundations (e.g., Kellogg, DeWitt Wallace, Kettering, Pew, Ford) also led to the establishment of the field's own scholarly journal, *The Michigan Journal for Community Service Learning*, in 1994.

Campus Compact's Evolution

Campus Compact also evolved in the late 1980s and early 1990s through offering regional and national institutes, advocacy at state and national levels, and increasingly useful resource publications. The organization became the main resource and network for the growing number of service-learning practitioners. By the end of the century, Campus Compact's mission had evolved to a broader focus on institution-wide "civic and community engagement." Service and service-learning remained critically important, but they were now viewed as two components of the overall effort to infuse civic and community engagement values throughout institutions' practices—from the classroom to the procurement office.

One example of an institution that took this plunge was Tufts University. Its president established the Jonathan M. Tisch College for Citizenship and Public Service in 1999 (*Tufts University, 2011a*), a virtual college designed "to integrate the values and skills of active citizenship in all fields of study" across the entire university (*Hollister, Mead, & Wilson, 2006*). In 2005, President Lawrence Bacow advanced Tufts' institutional leadership by convening 29 university presidents, rectors, and vice chancellors from 23 countries in Talloires, France, "to catalyze and support a worldwide movement of individuals and institutions dedicated to promoting the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education." The conference participants signed the Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education, committing to a series of action steps and demonstrating the signatories' commitment to elevating the civic and social mission of their universities (*Tufts University, 2011b*).

In 2006, California's Campus Compact organized its member campuses on behalf of engaged scholarship and service-learning for graduate students through a position paper (*Stanton & Wagner, 2006*), an institute at Stanford University, and annual, regional colloquia. Most recently, Campus Compact helped establish The Research Universities Civic Engagement Network (TRUCEN) to promote both service-learning and community-engaged scholarship at research intensive institutions across the United States (*Gibson, 2006; Stanton, 2007*). In response to the explosion of research and literature in the field, TRUCEN members posted an online Research University Engaged Scholarship Toolkit (*Stanton & Howard, 2009; Stanton, Howard, & Connolly, 2011*) on Campus Compact's website: www.compact.org (*Campus Compact, 2011*).

The Importance of Partnerships

In recent years, a distinguishing feature in service-learning's development has been increasing emphasis on partnerships as the basis for program development and sustainability. Principles of effective community-university partnerships have been articulated and disseminated by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (2011) and other organizations that guide practitioners in their work with community-based organizations for service-learning and community-based research. This is helping to ensure a strong community voice in program design, development, and evaluation. The partnership concept also stresses long-term engagement between campuses and community groups to help ensure positive and progressive community impact from the work of students and faculty.

Students as Allies and Collaborators

One additional element to the U.S. service-learning story that merits attention is students themselves—those who were involved in and advocated for service-learning from its earliest days. The Society for Field Experience Education (SFEE), service-learning's first professional practitioners' organization, included students in its annual conference and as one third of the members of the board of directors (along with one third campus-based practitioners, and one third community placement organization staff members).

Students' response to the 1980s call to public service was an "if you ask them, they will come" phenomenon. They threw themselves in great numbers into volunteer work across the spectrum of human service and public policy activities. On campuses across the

country they worked as project organizers and as important allies to faculty and staff seeking to change teaching practice. For example, by 1990 students at Stanford University had organized scores of student service organizations focused on the widest variety of community needs locally, across the United States, and overseas. Stanton recalls from his many years advocating and establishing service-learning across Stanford's curriculum that there were few important strategy meetings at which students were not present. For many years, students would go door-to-door, speaking with faculty about the need for study-service connections.

Students wanted their own national network (cf. Campus Compact) of support as well. So, in the mid-1980s, a small band of recent graduates organized nationally to establish the Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) "to educate, connect and mobilize students and their campuses to strengthen communities through service and action." COOL held regional and national meetings to network and galvanize student leaders for the movement, and spawned other national student groups that focused on particular topical areas (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, "alternative breaks" for service-learning). In 2004, COOL merged with Action Without Borders to form idealists.org (see *Stern*, 2011).

In summary, this is a necessarily abbreviated chronology of service-learning's long, thorny development history in the United States. It illustrates, however, the role of innovative pioneers in igniting a movement; the importance of the social environmental context in nurturing it and influencing conditions such that it can thrive; and the role that students played as allies and willing collaborators. Service-learning, which began as a pedagogy created by a loosely coupled group of social-change-oriented education reformers, was increasingly embraced, strengthened, and ultimately institutionalized in the context of and by riding the waves of larger, national reform efforts, which were driven by broader, but related, concerns similar to those of the pioneers. Students greased the wheels all along the way.

Although all of the actors in this story are critical to its outcome, the script would be much different were it not for the two external-to-the-academy reform movements described above that rose up and ultimately shifted the environment within institutions such that service-learning could take its rightful place as a legitimate, widely-practiced pedagogy. United States universities are now ranked nationally by the extent to which they offer and support service-learning. As part of recent revisions to its widely-used institution classification system, the Carnegie Foundation for the

Advancement of Teaching (2011) developed a new elective classification that focuses on community engagement, and includes service-learning as a central arena in which institutions can demonstrate engagement through the curriculum.

Debates continue about where service-learning ultimately fits within U.S. higher education—as a discipline (Butin, 2010), in the disciplines (Zlotkowski, 1995), or across disciplines (Connors & Seifer, 2005). Moreover, is service-learning's proliferation a story of institutional adaptation or transformation (Hartley, Saltmarsh, & Clayton, 2010; Stanton, 1998)? Still, the progress achieved to date could not have been imagined by service-learning pioneers in the early days.

Tale Two: Service-Learning in South Africa: In a Context of Social and Political Transformation

Halfway around the world in South Africa, the service-learning story is shorter than the United States one. The speed of change, however, has made it more dramatic. Soon after the fall of apartheid and the country's first democratic election in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) government's Ministry of Education issued Education White Paper 3, in which "A Programme for Higher Education Transformation" is outlined (Department of Education, 1997). As noted in Section 1.10 of the white paper,

The [South African] nation is confronted with the challenge of reconstructing domestic social and economic relations to eradicate and redress the inequitable patterns of ownership, wealth, and social and economic practices that were shaped by segregation and apartheid . . . [South Africa's history] has resulted in the emergence of a sophisticated urban core economy with a relatively well-developed technological infrastructure and an increasingly highly educated, skilled labour force existing side-by-side with a peripheral, rural and informal economy from which the majority of the population, previously denied access to education and training, and restricted to unskilled labour, eke out a living. (p. 9)

In such a dichotomous society, issues like unemployment, inadequate housing, violent crime, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic further augment the divide.

The white paper called for transformation within the education sector, in terms of maximizing its engagement with, and

contributions to, the resolution of the hugely complex issues that an emergent South Africa faced internally after years of systematic, external isolation. Higher education institutions were called upon to “demonstrate social responsibility . . . and their commitment to the common good by making available expertise and infrastructure for community service programmes” (p. 11). Although the emphasis was on community development through the extension of university resources, the role of students and their development was included. The white paper further stated that a major goal of higher education should be to “promote and develop the social responsibility and awareness amongst students of the role of higher education in social and economic development” (p. 10). Interestingly, however, the paper did not address the development of students’ individual responsibilities to contribute.

The Community–Higher Education–Service Partnerships Initiative

In 1997–1998, partly in response to the white paper, the Ford Foundation made a grant to a nongovernmental organization, then called the Joint Education Trust, to conduct a survey of community service in South African higher education (Perold, 1998). Several key findings were obtained through the survey: (1) most higher education institutions included community service in their mission statement; (2) few institutions had an explicit policy or strategy to operationalize the community service component of their mission statement; (3) most of the institutions had a wide range of community service projects; and (4) generally, community service projects were initiated by innovative faculty members, staff, and students and not as deliberate institutional strategies. Building on the results of the survey, the Ford Foundation made a further grant to the Joint Education Trust in 1998 to establish the Community–Higher Education–Service Partnerships (CHESP) initiative. Given the central role of teaching and learning in all higher education institutions in South Africa, it was decided that service-learning would be the initial focus for community engagement efforts (Lazarus, Erasmus, Hendricks, Nduna, & Slamati, 2008, p. 62), and CHESP would be the vehicle for implementing it.

With guidance by, and considerable academic support from, several prominent U.S. scholars in the field of service-learning, CHESP established a program aimed at piloting service-learning courses (referred to as “modules” in the South African context) within academic programs, which would give expression to the reconstruction and development mandate of the white paper.

Community, higher education, and service sector partnerships would contribute to the empowerment and development of local communities; make higher education policy and practice more relevant to community needs; and enhance service delivery to participating communities. The Joint Education Trust had been established in 1992 by corporate leaders, the country's major political parties, trade unions, and representative organizations of Black business to assist the new democracy in restructuring the country's education system. With funding from the Ford Foundation playing a key support role in South Africa, just as it did in the United States, CHESP was to become the Joint Education Trust's primary initiative in the higher education sector (*Lazarus, 1999*).

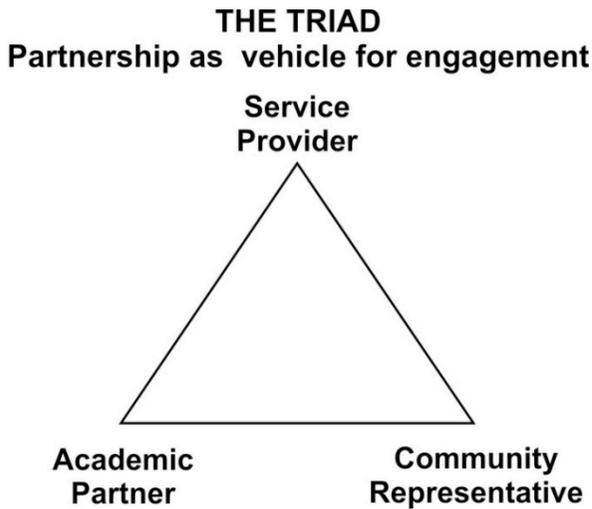
In April 1999 the Joint Education Trust approved a Planning Grant to eight South African higher education institutions to develop institution-wide policies and strategies for community engagement through mainstream academic programs (i.e., in the form of service-learning modules). Specific outcomes of the grant were to include

1. identifying community and service sector partners,
2. forming partnership structures to facilitate the planning and implementation of pilot programs,
3. identifying the assets and development priorities of participating communities,
4. conducting an audit of existing community service activities at the higher education institutions,
5. drafting of an institution-wide policy on community engagement, and
6. drafting of strategic plans to operationalize the new institutional policies.

The 5-year grant also provided significant fiscal incentives for faculty members and administrators to use service-learning for integrating service with students' learning (*Erasmus, 2010, p. 348*). As is almost invariably the case when grants are awarded in "developing countries," the assumption was that either the respective higher education institutions or the South African government, or both, would eventually pick up the bill. In this case, however, community engagement in all its curricular forms remains an unfunded mandate. That the Department of Education's funding formula for service-learning modules currently lacks provision for additional expenditure is but one of several barriers to the growth of service-learning in South Africa.

Partnerships as Core Practice

From the start, a distinguishing feature of what came to be known as the “CHESP service-learning model” was that all participating higher education institutions had to identify at least one community and one service sector partner. Generally, community partners were defined as specific geographic communities to be represented by identified community leaders. Service sector partners included nongovernmental organizations and local, metropolitan, and provincial authorities (see Figure 2).



Source: Lazarus, 2001.

Figure 2. The CHESP Partnership Triad

This CHESP design declaration is an interesting departure from U.S. practice in two key ways. The first difference relates to the importance of community voice in service-learning partnerships. U.S. practitioners did not come to appreciate the importance of partnerships until late in service-learning’s development, when they began to consider more seriously the community impacts of student work, how best to plan and maximize it, and that this would be best accomplished through more democratic, collaborative, sustained relationships with community partners. Perhaps due to political organizing and alliance building across communities and sectors that took place in South Africa during the “struggle years,” the concepts of democratic participation and inclusive partnerships were viewed more seriously there, and were linked to national development challenges that the government required in its higher education transformation agenda.

A second difference is CHESP's explicit inclusion of community members in the South African service-learning triad. In the United States, practitioners tend to think of service-learning as bipolar—between university and community—with community represented by a service provider. In South Africa, during the struggle years, tensions often arose between service provider organizations and members of their host communities. Under apartheid, charitable organizations, funded largely by international governments and funders, may often have been the only service resources in communities, but they were rarely accountable to community members. In the new South Africa, these same organizations found themselves challenged by antagonistic relationships with the new government, which itself wanted to take on the role of primary service provider. Given these complexities, CHESP's designers felt that both groups—service providers and community residents or their representatives—needed to be at the table at all stages of partnership and program development.

In the United States, on the other hand, it appears that service provider organizations are often perceived by outsiders as allies to communities in their struggles to get the local, state, or federal levels of government to address needs. These service provider organizations are thus perceived as representing communities or being knowledgeable about their challenges and possibilities. However, this is not always the case. As in South Africa, relationships between residents and service providers can be conflictual. In apartheid South Africa, oppressed communities were often forced to establish their own civic infrastructure in the absence of a benign, publicly sanctioned one. Because many U.S. communities lack such a history, they tend to be less organized, or their organization is at least less visible to outsiders, who rely on service provider organizations for gaining community perspectives.

Thus, in South Africa when CHESP pilot teams went looking for community partners, there were old African National Congress-inspired neighborhood councils and numerous voluntary "civics" to consider. In the United States, in contrast, there has been a tendency to not look for such partners, and to gloss over the sometimes complex and challenging relationships that exist between community members and service provider organizations.

In summary, during CHESP's early planning phase, it became apparent that operationalizing the reconstruction and development mandate of the White Paper actually required partnerships between communities, higher education institutions, and the

service sector. Examples of the *three different levels*, each with its own particular discourse, are described below.

- National level: Partnerships among national civic organizations, such as trade unions (*community*); the Department of Education (*higher education*); other public sector departments (e.g., the Department of Labor); nongovernmental organization coalitions, national trade and industry organizations (*service provider*). Discourse at the national level would focus on policies for human resource development related to community-university partnership development and sustainability, and service-learning and community-based research.
- Institutional level: Partnerships among local civic organizations (*community*); higher education institutions (*higher education*); local authorities, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector (*service provider*). The discourse at the institutional level would focus on strategies for human resource development aimed at similar objectives within each institution's region.
- Programmatic level: Partnerships among community members, such as schoolchildren and their parents or other caregivers (*community*); faculty members and staff (*higher education*); and the service sector, including individuals such as school principals and educators (*service provider*). The discourse at the programmatic level would be *instrumental*, aimed at the development of specific academic programs for community engagement-focused human resource development.

To implement the pilot project at all three levels, staff of the Joint Education Trust and CHESP worked with the South African Department of Education to develop policy guidelines that would encourage community engagement. They also worked with the Higher Education Qualifications Authority to develop criteria for assessing institutional progress.

The CHESP Capacity-Building Program

Once CHESP staff had identified eight pilot higher education institutions for the project, these institutions had to identify service

provider and community partners and sign them on to a team, which included university, community, and service provider organization representatives. CHESP staff considered and addressed the knowledge and skills that the team members would require to carry out programming designed to address the education and development outcomes that the team proposed. What was especially needed by all team members, who previously had focused their work within their respective sectors, was to learn how to work collaboratively across sectors.

During 1999 and 2000, CHESP staff addressed these “capacity-building” needs of the pilot teams through a service-learning/community development, partnership-focused training program. The goals of the CHESP capacity-building program are outlined below.

- Development support: To support the development of CHESP pilot projects within participating historically disadvantaged communities, higher education institutions, and service provider organizations.
- Capacity building: To equip CHESP initiative team members to facilitate the conceptualization, planning, implementation, and management of the CHESP pilot project partnerships.
- Leadership development: To develop a cadre of leaders with the necessary knowledge, practical experience, skills, and attitudes to implement new policies that would cross community, university, and service sector boundaries.
- New knowledge: To create a “learning laboratory” to generate new knowledge about community–higher education–service sector partnerships. This new knowledge would be used to assist in the reconstruction and development of civil society and higher education institutions.
- Publications: To generate research publications, monographs, and learning materials on community–higher education–service partnerships.
- Advocacy: To use the knowledge and information generated through the program to inform institutional and national policy development.

Members of the eight pilot teams participated in the CHESP leadership capacity-building program (Lazarus, 1999), which was structured and delivered through 12 3–4 day modules. The modules were spaced 6 to 8 weeks apart to enable participants to carry out assigned development work arising from each module, and to undertake assigned readings and prepare for the next module session.

Modules 1–7 were intended to provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to facilitate the *conceptualization* and *planning* of community–higher education–service partnerships. The desired outcome after modules 1–7 were completed was that each university would have an institution-wide strategic plan or intervention strategy for implementing community–higher education–service partnerships as an integral part of the university’s community service, teaching, and research missions.

Modules 8–12 were intended to provide participants with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to *implement* their partnership projects through service-learning opportunities for students and related activities. Module content included information about project management, community empowerment and development, community-based service-learning, and curriculum development.

Given the intent to integrate program development and human resource capacity-building within the CHESP initiative, each module in the capacity-building program had both *development* and *learning* objectives. Development objectives were the outcomes specified in a given module that the CHESP teams should develop for their pilot project. The learning objectives were the knowledge, skills, and attitudes participants would require to carry out their development objectives. CHESP staff hoped that through this action learning design the capacity-building program curriculum would give participants a service-learning-type experience as well as the opportunity to learn about the structures and processes needed to support such modules.

Because the pilot institutions’ participant teams represented the academy, the service sector (e.g., the Department of Health), one or more non-governmental organizations, and/or partner communities, they also represented the large racial, ethnic, and educational diversity of South Africa. Some participants had a Ph.D. or other advanced formal schooling. Few community members or staff of non-governmental organizations had had opportunities to acquire bachelor’s or postgraduate degrees in the “old” South

Africa. Thus the CHESP staff registered the capacity-building program as a postgraduate certification program with the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The certification provided multiple “graduation levels” tailored to the needs and aspirations of the diverse nature of the program’s participants.

Service-Learning Course Offerings: Growth Between 2000 and 2006

By 2004, due to the training provided by the capacity-building program and the dedication of the regional teams, 182 service-learning courses (or modules) had been developed, offered, and evaluated. The courses represented 39 academic disciplines and involved 6,930 students. At about the same time, the Joint Education Trust began to offer financial support to faculty members to engage in service-learning-related research. The research was to focus on the role of community, faculty, and service agencies in community-higher education engagement; student development and assessment in service-learning; organizational structures conducive to service-learning and community engagement; and quality assurance related to service-learning course offerings (*Lazarus, 2004*). One result of this research is literature on service-learning that is embedded in the South African context.

A significant component of the legacy of the CHESP initiative is represented by the series of resources published under its guidance. Between 2006 and 2008 the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education, in collaboration with JET Education Services (formerly Joint Education Trust) and CHESP, published *Service-Learning in the Curriculum: A Resource for Higher Education Institutions (2006a)*; *A Good Practice Guide and Self-evaluation Instruments for Managing the Quality of Service-Learning (2006b)*; and a compilation of South African case studies from the CHESP era in *Service-Learning in the Disciplines: Lessons from the Field (2008)*.

Since 2004, an increasing number of higher education institutions, which did not form part of the initial group, have joined the CHESP initiative. In 2006, CHESP and the Higher Education Qualifications Authority of the Council on Higher Education hosted the first national conference on community engagement in higher education. The conference, held in Cape Town, was attended by more than 200 delegates representing all 23 higher education institutions in the country, as well as external partners of these universities. In 10 years, as envisioned in the 1997 White

Paper, service-learning and community-based research through community-university partnerships seemed to have become important elements in the transformation of higher education in South Africa.

However, in 2007, when CHESP funding concluded and the responsibility for driving community engagement was handed over to the Council on Higher Education, there was a lull in service-learning activities. The contention of Lazarus et al. (2008, p. 81) is that although the impact of the CHESP initiative had been significant, it was a small-scale pilot project. The program's achievements had only scratched the surface of the challenge to embed community engagement in South African higher education. Lazarus et al. observed:

At best it has created an awareness of community engagement and service learning as an integral part of the academy and laid the foundations for their advancement in all South African universities. (p. 81)

Service-Learning in South Africa: Post-2007

Service-learning's development in South Africa may have stalled after the CHESP initiative pilot project, but debate on its value to and place within higher education has continued unabated. Some considered the CHESP grant guidelines for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of service-learning modules too prescriptive. Others had misgivings about the wisdom behind importing an educational approach from the United States; one author referred to service-learning as an "intellectual MacDonalds burger that has travelled to Africa as a consequence of Americanization and/or globalization" (Le Grange, 2007, p. 4). It remains an open question whether South African faculty members will successfully adapt U.S.-based models of service-learning to a South African context. In a comparison of Western-oriented and more Africanized expressions of service-learning, Hatcher and Erasmus (2008) utilize the educational theories of John Dewey and Julius Nyerere to better understand the similarities and differences between U.S.-based and Africanized service-learning. Both Dewey and Nyerere expected education to enable individuals to understand and relate to the world in which they live in ways that would ultimately contribute to its transformation for the better, a commonality that Hatcher and Erasmus consider relevant to the foundations of service-learning (p. 52). Even with this com-

parison, it is difficult to refute Mahlomaholo and Matobako's (2006) contention that service-learning in South Africa might be "held terminally captive by legacies of the past" (p. 203). One of the key challenges is to "develop contextualized expressions of service-learning through free selection of aspects that will support self-definition and uniquely South African aspirations for social development," as Hatcher and Erasmus (2008, p. 58) point out.

In the post-CHESP-initiative era, notions like "problematization," "interrogation," and "contestation" are often associated with aspects of service-learning. Terms used in the service-learning context, such as "service," "partnership," "community," "responsible citizenship," and "knowledge," receive vigorous scrutiny. One of the promising developments toward redefining and contextualizing several concepts related to service-learning is represented by the recent study of Smith-Tolken (2010). With an extensive investigation into the nature of "scholarly-based service-related processes" at a higher education institution in South Africa as a basis, Smith-Tolken (2010) defines scholarly service activity in a curricular context as "the act of applying implicit and codified knowledge in a community setting, directly or indirectly, focused on the agreed goals or needs while ascertaining growth through the acquisition of skills and an enhanced understanding of the meaning-making content by all actors involved" (p. 124).

Smith-Tolken (2010) argues for establishing community engagement as a disciplinary field within higher education studies, and incorporating scholarly service activities such as service-learning into the subfield of curriculum design. This line of argument resonates with what Butin (2010), in his relentless critique of service-learning (mainly aimed at manifestations in the U.S. context), proposes in terms of a fundamental rethinking of "engaged scholarship" and a "scholarship of engagement." He also argues for a rethinking of service-learning as "an academic undertaking that truly belongs within higher education" (p. 152) and proposes the "disciplining" of service-learning by developing an "academic home"—a disciplinary "home base"—for service-learning within the framework of an academic program.

By linking rigorous academic coursework with deeply embedded and consequential community-based learning, academic programs embody the connection and engagement desired between institutions of higher education and their local and global communities. (p. 69)

In South Africa, much more so than in the United States, convincingly embedding service-learning within academia is a work in progress (see Badat, 2011, pp. 9–10; Erasmus, 2009). Recent literature provides evidence of overt misgivings about whether those who consider service-learning an ideal tool for bridging the gap between higher education and society are fully cognizant of the complexities inherent in such an endeavor. In a theoretical exploration of the possibilities of infusing service-learning in curricula, Hlengwa (2010) discusses possibilities and constraints from a perspective of “vertical discourses” and “horizontal discourses.” In Hlengwa’s opinion, it is crucial to consider issues of power and control in relation to how knowledge is structured when examining the capacity for transferability of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries and between “the vertical discourses of the academy and the horizontal discourses of the community” (p. 11). Badat (2011) points out that community engagement gives rise to numerous and diverse challenges, including the “value-base of service-learning—whether interaction with communities is in order to *maintain* the status quo, or to contribute to *reforming* or *transforming* social structure and social relations” (p. 10).

Erasmus (2007) contends that the service-learning curriculum offers a mechanism to increase the permeability of boundaries among disciplines and sectors of society and seeks to theorize (pp. 4–11) how service-learning students may be guided to participate in contextualized knowledge creation in the *agora* where socially robust knowledge is constructed collaboratively. Moreover, service-learning offers possibilities for preparing a new generation of scientists who will be able to engage in more socially accountable research, as required by the growing complexity and uncertainty of the current “Mode 2 society” to which Michael Gibbons referred in his keynote address at the 2006 conference on community engagement mentioned above (Gibbons, 2006, pp. 23–25). McMillan (2009) builds on Gibbons’ urge to work at the boundaries of higher education and society, conceptualizing service-learning through the lens of activity theory as “boundary” work. She introduces tools aimed at facilitating better understanding of the nature of the complex social practices “at the boundary where the ‘knowledge of differently positioned people’ intersect through social responsiveness practices such as service learning” (p. 57).

From Service-Learning to Community Engagement in South Africa

It is encouraging that the broader, inclusive notion of “community engagement” has now entered the South African higher education discourse in ways that cannot be ignored as easily as was the “service-learning phenomenon.” Some South African institutions have chosen alternative concepts such as “community interaction” and “social responsiveness” to depict this aspect of their work, but in most instances the term “community engagement” is utilized. Focused attention to ways in which this “third” core responsibility of higher education may be integrated with research and teaching-learning is currently creating exciting deliberative spaces within the field of South African higher education studies. One example is a recent publication of the South African Council on Higher Education, *Community Engagement in South African Higher Education* (CHE, 2010), a collection of invited papers from a Council on Higher Education–sponsored colloquium. Another noteworthy development is the establishment of the South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF) in 2009. This organization is similar to the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA). The appointment of community engagement directors and managers at a number of universities is another promising development. Still, only two universities have appointed vice-rectors with “community engagement” or “community interaction” as part of their title. Offices for community engagement and/or service-learning are routinely understaffed and underfunded.

The gap between reality and rhetoric related to service-learning and community engagement may never close in South Africa. Hall (2010) reflects that community engagement has been one of the three founding principles of the post-apartheid reconstruction of the South African higher education system (along with teaching and research). The principle is clearly captured in policy documents and the like. “Why then, is the imperative of community engagement regarded as radical, risqué and anything other than taken for granted?” (Hall, 2010, pp. 1–2). To ameliorate this puzzle, Hall recommends that incentives be provided “through the state subsidy for teaching to ensure that the models of good practice for service learning developed through the CHESP Program are established and resourced as integral parts of teaching and learning across the Higher Education sector” (p. 48). Hall also recommends (p. 48) encouraging the National Research Foundation to make recurrent funding allocations for research on third sector engagement. In fact, in August 2010, the National Research Foundation

launched a Community Engagement Program, which provides fiscal incentives for engaged forms of scholarship.

The Status of Service-Learning in South Africa: 2011

In 2011, the first community engagement conference of the post-CHESP initiative era was held. It is noteworthy that service-learning featured prominently at the conference in keynote addresses, papers, symposia, and workshops. A considerable number of faculty members reported on service-learning-related master's and Ph.D. studies that they had recently completed. It appears that service-learning has emerged as the most significant form of curricular community engagement of the current South African higher education context. It is also fast gaining prominence as a form of engaged scholarship. In his keynote address, Saleem Badat, contributor to the original documents calling for the transformation of higher education in South Africa and currently vice-chancellor of Rhodes University, observed that the intersection between teaching and learning, research and community engagement currently constituted "the specific activity of service-learning" (2001, p. 5) in South African universities. As the body of postgraduate studies and scholarly publications grows, an increasingly more legitimate space is created for service-learning within South African academia.

The quest for creating some level of consensus regarding the various aspects of service-learning for the South African context continues. These aspects include policy-related matters; philosophical and theoretical underpinnings; conceptualization; partnerships, participation, and community development; curriculum development; reflection and student development; assessment of student learning; risk management and ethical issues; quality management (monitoring, evaluation, and impact studies); and last but certainly not least, research into and through service-learning. In an effort to build shared discourses around these complex aspects, credit-bearing service-learning capacity-building courses for faculty and other staff members have been established at three South African universities. These courses can be regarded as a continuation of the CHESP capacity-building program outlined above. Two of the courses are offered, either as modules within master's programs in higher education studies, or as short learning programs to faculty from other higher education institutions. The University of the Free State offers a Short Learning Program in Service-Learning Capacity Building (SPSLCB), and the University of Stellenbosch offers a

Short Program in Service-Learning and Community Engagement (SPSLCE). The University of Pretoria offers a similar course at the advanced diploma level. It is hoped that these courses will help to embed service-learning at many higher education institutions across South Africa—one faculty member at a time.

South African students represent a largely untapped source of support for the various forms of community engagement, especially service-learning. In comparison with the United States, there is still a dire lack of student “grease” to oil the wheels of the service-learning movement in South Africa. Getting students more actively involved as service-learning advocates who will demand a service component in all their academic programs is another challenge, especially since students often appreciate the value of such courses only after they have completed them. In a plea for new student politics in South Africa, Lange (2011) reminds students that they are a privileged minority constituting only about 20% of the appropriate age group who access university education (p. 3). This creates a special responsibility for both the university and students. One of the university’s responsibilities is to teach students “to do useful things and to help them to be good,” Lange points out. However, since a student is the knower, the agent of change, only students can help the university succeed in this mission, by co-constructing the quality of their education (p. 3). Lange’s arguments serve as a wake-up call for service-learning advocates. Unless innovative (including online) ways can be created to utilize service-learning as a means to connect students to a larger purpose, beyond their immediate personal interests, much of the transformative potential of this pedagogy will remain unfulfilled.

Conclusion: Bottom-Up and Inside-Out Versus Top-Down and Outside-In

Comparing these two stories of service-learning’s development on two continents reveals interesting similarities and differences worthy of further consideration.

A major contextual factor service-learning pioneers faced in both countries regardless of the different times in which they worked has been the social conditions that animated them. These social conditions included enforced segregation, racial discrimination, persistent poverty and inequality, and the movements to address these conditions.

Initiatives to undertake service-learning arose at different levels of the two countries’ higher education systems. Service-learning’s

development in the United States was a grassroots, bottom-up innovation, which in its early days received little support and often antagonism from the upper ranks of institutions. It rode partially on the backs of already engaged and committed students, and on larger waves of education reform that focused on students' cognitive, emotional, and moral development. Once they had a toe-hold in the academy, the U.S. service-learning pioneers, as one of them put it, were able to "throw open the windows" of their institutions to make resources—primarily students—available to communities (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, p. 132).

In South Africa, the service-learning initiative seems to have been more of a top-down, policy-driven movement, instigated and legitimized by the new government's education ministry, and catalyzed by an outside organization, the Joint Education Trust. In this way, it was an "outside-in" approach to the academy process. Although those pushing the initiative were concerned with developing South African students' awareness of and capacity to deal with the many pressing problems of the new democracy, their focus was primarily on extending university resources to assist previously disadvantaged communities. Students were rarely involved in policy-making, planning, and program implementation and evaluation. They rarely organized, nor were they invited to organize, to advocate for outcomes for the academy and communities.

These different approaches to education innovation relate to differences in each nation's higher education system, and to their social/political environments at critical moments. For example, South Africa's higher education sector is more regulated from the government's side, and much more centralized than that of the United States, making a top-down approach both possible and desirable. It would be difficult for such an approach to take place in the United States, given its intensely fragmented higher education sector and that state and federal education departments focus only minimally on higher education, with weak or non-existent initiatives to advance education reform.

Other differences also require further research and analysis. One difference, for example, is the European heritage and traditions of many South African universities, and their epistemological assumptions about knowledge and knowledge acquisition. Challenges to an engaged, collaborative pedagogy such as service-learning are relatively weak in the United States because of an emphasis on applied problem-solving education, service mandated by the federal government's implementation of a land-grant university system in the 19th century, and by changes in students and disciplines brought about by the social and cultural ferment of the 1960s and 1970s.

In summary, this essay reveals the importance of social context in relation to the evolution of service-learning in two countries. Successful innovation strategies, whether instigated from above or below, or from inside or outside higher education institutions, ultimately gain traction when they find ways to enable these universities to respond to and better serve their changing external environments. In addition, as is evident in these two stories, the innovators (in this case service-learning pioneers) working the boundaries between campus and community help transform higher education's social context, in general, while simultaneously assisting their universities to respond to change.

Endnotes

1. The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) came into being through a merger of two professional organizations. One of these, the Society for Field Experience Education (SFEE), was started in the late 1960s by early service-learning practitioners to support their work. SFEE focused on service-learning and was the main support network for these early pioneers.
2. According to annual ACE-UCLA surveys of freshmen, since 1972 students had been attaching decreasing importance to values such as helping others, promoting racial understanding, cleaning up the environment, participation in community action, and keeping up with political affairs. During the same period, the percentage of students placing high priority on being well off financially jumped from 40% to 73%. The goal of "developing a meaningful quality of life" showed the greatest decline, almost 50%. Surveys by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Independent Sector indicated similar trends.
3. For example, the American Association for Higher Education in 1986 convened an "action community" of faculty and administrators to examine strategies to increase student involvement in community service. The Council for Liberal Learning of the American Association of Colleges and Universities examined the importance of combining academic study with structured community experiences in the development of student insight into the nature of public leadership. The Kettering Foundation expanded its series of Campus Conversations on the Civic Arts, and organized regional faculty seminars and training events. Responding to a directive from the state legislature, the California State University and University of California systems prepared plans for implementing "Human Corps," which strongly encouraged all students to engage in community service.

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About the Authors

Timothy K. Stanton is director of Stanford University's (USA) Bing Overseas Studies Program in Cape Town, South Africa (<http://bosp.stanford.edu>) and coordinates the program's Community-Based Partnership Research Program. As a Campus Compact Engaged Scholar, Stanton helped organize and coordinate a national U.S. initiative on community engagement and research universities, The Research Universities Civic Engagement Network (TRUCEN; <http://www.compact.org/initiatives/civic-engagement-at-research-universities>). Stanton earned his bachelor's degree in English from Stanford University, his master's degree in education from San Francisco State University, and his Ph.D. in human and organization systems from Fielding Graduate University.

Mabel A. Erasmus is associate professor and head of service-learning in the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. Her current research interests include service-learning capacity-building for faculty, institutionalization of community engagement, and various collaborative research projects with nonprofit organizations as service-learning partners. Erasmus earned her honors and master's degrees from the University of Pretoria, and her Ph.D. from the University of the North West, South Africa.