

## Reciprocity as Sustainability in Campus-Community Partnership

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*The concept of reciprocity permeates the literature on campus-community partnership as a matter of principle, aspiration, and – ideally – best practice. More recently, principles and practices of sustainability have pervaded scholarly and popular discourse, emerging from and applying to environmental studies, economic development, and social justice fields, with aspirations to extend well beyond. This article explores the relationship between principles of reciprocity in community engagement scholarship and practice, and this burgeoning discourse of sustainability. The paper draws upon efforts to explore reciprocity and sustainability among community-based learning offices in the Five College Consortium and organizations in the City of Holyoke in Western Massachusetts. A theoretical frame for sustainability in campus-community partnership is proposed, linked to the delivery of reciprocity. Prominent challenges to implementing sustainability in community engagement are then considered.*

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Last year, the Five College Consortium in Western Massachusetts (including Amherst, Smith, Hampshire, the Mount Holyoke Colleges, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst) sponsored a “Blue Sky Brainstorm” to “envision sustainability for the Five Colleges and beyond” (Five College Sustainability Studies, 2012). The invitation issued by the Five College Directors – the college presidents and University chancellor – was to submit “suggestions, ideas, or fully developed proposals for new and improved sustainability initiatives.” Partly because the invitation explicitly encouraged “opportunities for community engagement,” and partly because the call came from a consortium of higher education institutions, I was prompted to consider the question: Were community engagement practices in the Five Colleges consistent with the consortium’s notion of “sustainability?” And where, where not, and how?

At present, the most prevalent conception of sustainability is arguably the “three pillars” view that sustainability is comprised of environmental, economic, and social equity. Most ascribe this formulation to

the report “Our Common Future” (Brundtland, 1987) and advanced successively at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and 2005 World Summit on Social Development. The Five College Sustainability Studies Program – catalysts for this large, multi-institutional initiative – “examines the impacts of both humans and the institutions and organizations they create and perpetuate on their environments” (Five Colleges, 2011). Considering this, I wondered: If we were to apply definitions or evaluative criteria emerging from this field of “sustainability studies” to our work, would we find that our collaborations with communities and community organizations to advance learning and scholarship met the standards we might hold for sustainability?

What became clear to me as I pondered these questions is that, as the community engagement literature generates ever more sophisticated and compelling definitions and terminology regarding principles and practices of mutual benefit (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009), an entire field of discourse and scholarship concerning sustainability studies has been developing a connected vocabulary, principles, and bodies of best practices. Where were the parallels, and where were the disconnects with modes and purposes of civic engagement otherwise familiar to me and my colleagues? The version of this article I contributed to the “Blue Sky” process landed with indifference and some misunderstanding. I was politely thanked, but told I appeared to be discussing sustainability OF campus-community partnerships, rather than (what they presumably might have been looking for as) their concept of sustainability applied IN campus-community partnerships. I wasn’t sure I understood the difference, perhaps because of the very conception which shaped my own view of sustainability. So this article is mainly an attempt to explore further the connections between concepts of sustainability and current thinking and practice in community engagement.

### **Sustainability in Community Engagement**

The conceptions of sustainability that those of us who are practitioners or facilitators of campus-community partnership draw inevitably from the compelling and influential narratives in the history of campus-community interactions that populate our scholarly and professional development literature. One source of these narratives is the set of now widely-known examples of ethical failure in university-driven community intervention, largely contained within a body of knowledge emerging from biomedical research (e.g., the Milgram experiments, Tuskegee syphilis experiments, etc.) now forming a text of cautionary lessons for training in ethics, principles, and practices of inquiry involving human subjects (National Institutes of Health, 1979). Scholars of community engagement and practitioners of community partnership alike draw from and frequently generalize these and other stories of ethically suspect or exploitive expert-community dynamics.

They articulate important general lessons about where and how inequitable power balances in community-university relations can and sometime do lead to blunders – major or minor – or, at a minimum, perpetuate inequities and unresponsiveness (Checkoway, 2001; Maurasse, 2001). These ethical failures, tales of unintended consequences motivated both by good intentions and arrogance, are woven throughout the history of community-based research and academic (as well as private and state) interventions. Lessons drawn from human subjects research and ethical disasters are now essential elements in our preparation of researchers and students, and community engagement scholars have produced critical texts in response, describing more responsible and corrective practices (e.g., Stoecker & Tryon, 2009; Strand et al., 2003). Though this is not nearly as well-explored in the literature, it is nonetheless important to note the loci of these failures as intersections of class and race, as they lie geographically at the junction between historically, predominantly white and resourced institutions, and frequently urban, low-income communities of color. It is, for example, for this reason we put diversity education and identity development elements into our responses to this historical dynamic. In sum, well beyond the ethical lessons these stories are employed to convey, they construct a historical landscape of what might be considered as “unsustainable” interactions between universities and communities. Critics have made clear that “mutuality is a crucial element,” and that “problem solving ‘for’ communities is an outdated and elitist view” (Thomas, 2000, p. 90), and wherein these conditions do not exist we find interwoven challenges of ethics and sustainability in this work.

Other sources that colleagues in the field of community engagement draw upon are particular case studies of campus-community relations. One influential example is the rich and instructive case study of the history and circumstances surrounding the “East St. Louis Action Research Project.” Dr. Ken Reardon’s depictions of the conditions and advocacy that led the University of Illinois to construct an essentially new social contract with a distressed, over-researched community have contributed themes and lessons central to what many in the field now understand about problems and principles in campus-community partnerships (Reardon, 1999). The “ESLARP” story depicts a community which took to dramatic and powerful local and state-wide political organizing to demand university action, after experiencing little or no return on their investment of resources to facilitate access by and cooperate with university researchers. Among the key themes emerging from this tale were: the repeated cycles of arrival, requests for time and assistance, and departure and disappearance of university researchers; the significance of establishing a role for community voice in decision-making about what issues would be examined and addressed in such partnerships and in decisions about ownership of the processes and products that result; the ethical responsibilities embedded in the sharing

of knowledge, capacity, and products in partnership; and the necessity of allocating resources and attention to community outcomes and not just to processes of learning and inquiry.

The significance in this and other case studies of delivering tangible, demonstrable impacts and outcomes has led me, along with colleagues in the region, to invest persistently in collaborations – among our offices and between our campuses and shared community partners – that help us examine issues of reciprocity together as a matter of sustainability. Since its establishment in 1995, members of the Five College CBL Committee (FCCBL) have pursued two efforts in particular to advance understanding of sustainable practice in collaboration with our community partners. In the early 2000s, we undertook intensive consideration of relationships among community-based learning and community engagement agendas via the “Holyoke Planning Network” (HPN). Holyoke is a post-industrial city of approximately 40,000 in Western Massachusetts, near to all five of our campuses but host to none of us. Holyoke has a rich social and cultural history, home in turn to waves of immigration from early French and Polish, to mid-19th century Irish, to mid-20th century Puerto Ricans. The city also wrestles with some of the greatest educational, social, and economic challenges in the state. The city’s rich array of cultural resources and socio-economic challenges draws the largest regional concentration of our partnership and outreach resources, and we work frequently in collaboration with Holyoke Community College in collaborations for community development, educational achievement and access, and social service support.

The HPN was a coalition comprised of Holyoke non-profit organization and community program representatives and campus CBL office staff and faculty, who together sought to examine the engagement relationships that had been historically driven and defined by campus constituencies. HPN aimed to enable and empower partners to articulate community development priorities and define productive, reciprocal, and ultimately sustainable practices. HPN history is discussed at length in our joint paper, “Building Sustainable Community/University Partnerships in a Metropolitan Setting,” in which we wrote:

The challenge for CBL faculty and staff in working with community partners is to develop ways to adequately measure and articulate the benefits of community-based learning for both students and faculty and also to determine the true costs [and benefits] to a community organization that is accommodating CBL opportunities. On both sides, a fair accounting of the total resources required to create true community-based learning opportunities is a necessary prerequisite for equitable partnerships... As representatives of academic

institutions, we must recognize that our fate is intrinsically tied to that of our neighboring communities, and that we share a responsibility for each other. Talk of social justice and social change is meaningless unless we work hard to overcome the barriers to justice and change in our own institutional settings, while at the same time striving to ensure the well-being and sustainability of our community partners. (Bloomgarden et al., 2006, p. 116)

The second effort built upon and extended the work of HPN, involving joint exploration with community partners which might be characterized as “terms of engagement.” Supported by a grant from Third Sector New England, representatives from Holyoke community organizations (some residents and community leaders, and students, staff, and faculty from area colleges) gathered through 2007-2008 to articulate persistent challenges of practice in campus-community partnership, and to brainstorm possible responses. This produced the January 2009 Compact, in which reciprocity and sustainability figure prominently among the five “Statements of Principle” that constitute the core agreements of the document (Holyoke Campus-Community Compact, 2009):

- We seek to ensure that campus-community collaborations reap reciprocal benefits for participating partners.
- We seek to ensure that campus-community partnerships are characterized by shared respect, trust, and decision-making.
- We seek to ensure that campus-community partnerships define needs and clear expectations for mutual benefit.
- We seek to ensure that students, faculty and staff who engage in all forms of community partnership in Holyoke are appropriately prepared, oriented, trained and supervised for such work.
- We seek to build capacity among community agencies, residents, and campuses, and assure sustainability of partnerships to create measurable change.

On our campuses, approaches to fulfilling the commitments we made (formally, in a public signing ceremony and celebration) still vary in type and extent. At Mount Holyoke, the Compact constitutes required reading for 40-50 CBL program student “Community Fellows,” is distributed to all CBL faculty for inclusion in syllabi and discussed by some classes, and appears on the CBL Program website as part of our principles of practice. Nonetheless, we still struggle to saturate our outbound constituencies. The FCCBL has made some strides in addressing both the letter and spirit of the document and in creating some infrastructure to support those efforts, including establishing a shared office in downtown Holyoke and a shared Partnerships Coordinator hired from the community. To a certain

extent, these developments might be considered tangible results from these processes.

And yet we have a long way to go in many of the aims before we could legitimately claim our practices are comprehensively reciprocal and sustainable. Among the most glaring shortfalls in our ability to meet the terms of the Compact are our abilities to reach and include new constituencies on and off campus, and to consistently track impacts. Extending the dialogue and relationship-building that went into creating the document beyond the comparatively narrow circle of community-based organization (CBO) staff and campus representatives (administrators, faculty, students) is difficult, as there is such turnover among these constituencies and a document is far easier to duplicate than an intensive, cumulative process. But beyond the somewhat typical community process tribulations of bringing new partners continually into the circle, it is the accountability to outcomes we all agreed had to explicitly drive our processes of formation and implementation that is perhaps the most complex challenge. Here in the brief but significant statement in which the Compact holds partners to outcomes: “Every campus- community partnership will strive to produce concrete results and, when possible, lasting change on issues that are identified by community participants in the partnership” (Holyoke Campus-Community Compact, 2009). In the Compact, we collectively seek to apply a concept of reciprocity that explicitly depends upon the production and communication of tangible and significant results as a means of underpinning the continued investment of human and financial resources in campus-community partnership. Taken together, this is a picture of reciprocity as a matter of outcomes, which, in turn, makes reciprocity a condition of sustainability.

### **Connections between Sustainability and Outcomes**

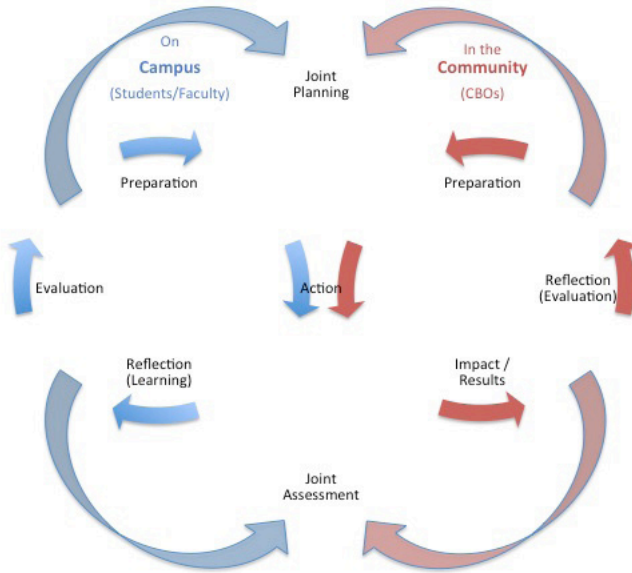
In one sense, the challenge I experienced persuading a panel of “Blue Sky” reviewers that exploring sustainability principles and practices in campus-community partnerships would be worthy of investment and prioritization might have been a challenge of terminology. Too often perhaps, we accept the use of the term “sustainability” – which is being applied with increasingly broad ramifications – when, in fact, what is meant by its use is a more specific reference to just one “pillar,” environmental impact and responsibility, or “environmental sustainability.” But what I now consider to have been a more troubling disconnect in my “Blue Sky” experience is this: Lacking a framework for applying the more generalized concept of sustainability to campus-community partnership, those of us in higher education are all too readily inclined to think of sustainability in an instrumental fashion – as an evaluative measure of efforts to pursue economy, conservation, responsible stewardship of resources, or reduction in environmental footprint. Instead, what I suggest here is a concept of sustainability appli-

cable to campus-community partnership that encompasses a view of community engagement collaborations as ecosystems of their own. How would we understand sustainability in campus-community partnership if we drew upon reciprocity as a governing principle and considered sustainability as interdependent to that reciprocity in the same way as those in “sustainability studies” view humans and institutions or organizations as interdependent to our environment? What, then, might appear as the true dynamic of that ecosystem and where might we expect challenges to sustainability to emerge?

As the literature on community engagement has blossomed during the last decades, campus-based practitioners (community-based learning/service-learning directors and faculty) have become increasingly aware of the ethical and practical imperatives to enact principles of reciprocity and mutuality in their work. We have come to see campus-community work as highly dependent upon the construction of relationships that are genuine, robust, professional and, inevitably, also personal. But connected to the foundations of mutual respect and trust that underpin those relationships must also be project partnerships and practices that yield definite and important mutual benefits. One indicator of the significance this concept of reciprocity has achieved is its prominent place in the Carnegie Classification system’s definition of Community Engagement:

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2013)

In order to understand how outcomes in CBL partnerships are created, we need to understand how they develop among students and in communities, and between campus and community partners. Perhaps the most important arena in which reciprocity emerges is in the processes of partnerships, which produce outcomes and substantive returns that matter. Those returns may matter in different ways and to different extents, but they intersect and retain momentum in similarly cyclical ways for campus and community constituencies. Independently and jointly, these cycles are dependent upon the creation of results, or outcomes. The model below depicts these two interdependent cycles.



At left is the campus cycle, represented by the blue cycle of preparation, action, reflection, and evaluation (PARE). PARE is a widely employed framework for sequencing experiential with academic learning in higher education, drawing upon the learning theories and conceptual frameworks of many, perhaps most notably John Dewey (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2002). At right is the community cycle, represented by an adapted version of the same PARE framework, but instead drawing upon the cycles of program planning, implementation, and evaluation more commonly shaping nonprofit organization project management (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). The central point here is that sustainability depends upon maintaining motion and productivity on both sides. Reciprocity and mutuality emerge here as the interactivity between left and right to maintain momentum. In this way, the concepts of reciprocity and mutuality become inseparably linked to sustainability.

Here is a concrete example of how these synchronized cycles appear in practice. The Mount Holyoke College CBL Program maintains a strategic partnership with the Peck Full Service Community School in Holyoke, MA. Peck is a K-8 school which has undertaken dramatic innovation in the last four years to enhance home-school alignment, instructional practices, and student engagement, all toward the aims of improving outcomes for students and families. As a comprehensive strategy, these changes brought many, varied opportunities for student and faculty engagement in the forms of capacity-building research (e.g., on behavioral



management, family engagement, and literacy strategies); participation in organizing and strategic planning events alongside teachers, parents, and administrators; and other project-based learning activities. These opportunities yielded both rich academic and applied learning for my students and colleagues, and access to additional, generative relationships that continue to produce more experiential learning and avenues for scholarly inquiry. Yet, for me, and for the school's principal, who has become my closest community partner, the continued justification we must make for the investment of our financial, human, and intellectual resources depends upon each of us yielding definite and documented outcomes to these activities. For me, those results take the form of student learning and efficacy in developing skills and knowledge about social action for my students, and access to embedded opportunities to apply, test, and challenge theory and knowledge from courses taught by my colleagues. For him, those results must center squarely upon student academic achievement, though indicators of student engagement, social development, and behavior are also important. Together, our capacity to sustain the activities we undertake and the partnership overall depends directly upon our ability to demonstrate extent and significance among the results, measurable both by their inherent value (are they good?) and by their dependent value (are they dependent on THIS partnership?). We must each evaluate this in light of continuing actions and reflection, and determine value in both of these dimensions. This is truly reciprocity as sustainability.

### **Campus Challenges to Sustainability**

The emphasis in this examination of reciprocity as sustainability is upon the challenge presented by the difficulties in defining and delivering meaningful results from collaboration in campus-community partnership. Some of that difficulty emerges from the fact that achieving concrete results means different things for campuses and communities, and that those things are not inherently complementary or mutually-reinforcing. Some of it stems from the challenge of consistency – constructing partnerships that consistently enable student learning while addressing needs and opportunities defined by community partners' priorities, resources, support, etc. There are many creative, promising, productive ideas for aligning these aims. But consistency, flexibility, and adaptivity in our selection of and approaches to partnerships, and commitment to monitoring and documenting the processes, experiences, outputs, products, and results methodically and transparently remain still more principles than practices.

Though there are also a great many challenges to sustainability faced by community partners, from my campus perspective, I am best positioned to devote this article mainly to those affecting campus constituencies. An important challenge, most clearly identified in the HPN process

described above, is in naming and investing resources in the relationship-building and maintenance effort. Creating visibility for the resources and commitments it takes to develop and maintain the cycles described above is challenging for all campus-community partnership management personnel (in service-learning offices, community engagement centers, etc.) because the ongoing efforts they take are often underestimated, assumed, taken for granted, or worse, dismissed as low priority (compared with investments in student learning, for example). Generally, sustainability in community-based learning might be said to hinge upon:

- a) allocation of consistent campus and community resources, in sufficient scale and with sufficient flexibility/adaptivity to enable the productive collaborations between faculty/staff/ students and community organizations in selected partnerships;
- b) creating self-perpetuating cycles of responsive deployment of resources (on campuses and in communities), student learning and community impact, assessment and communications of outcomes and results (to each other and to our own constituencies), collaborative planning for next steps, as described above; and
- c) making demonstrable progress toward goals that matter and address respective campus and community aims such as to sustain a) and b).

It is illustrative to name examples of practices that are unsustainable and do not achieve the above conditions. Here are two common tales of unsustainability. First, the research project that, in tapping community partners for orientation, knowledge and material support, accessed value and resources from communities but neither returned them in the form of reporting or relevant knowledge, nor compensated partners in other ways (monetary or otherwise) for the investment of their capital. Second is the partnership that drew upon community partners to devote time and knowledge to enriching student learning, but failed to deliver impacts through services or products that advance the missions of the programs and organizations, and which was not understood to produce recognizable, meaningful short- and/or long-term positive impacts or appreciable outcomes.

In the context of this article, we might readily consider such practices as unsustainable and perhaps also unethical. But, in application, identifying these as questions of equity and finding routes to addressing them as such are not straightforward and easy tasks. Assigning these aims top priority is unfortunately less common than should be the case. Imbalance between the flow of resources and value between campuses and communi-

ties presents practical, political, and moral obstacles to continued investment and threatens sustainability. Similarly, another form of unsustainable practice is the pursuit of projects that either do not address community needs as *identified by the community*, or that otherwise do not clearly meet the needs and priorities of one partner or the other. Examples of this would include activities that fundamentally cannot produce tangible and measurable outcomes, or activities that are driven by a single agenda, either from the campus or from the community

Even at our best, our campuses struggle with devoting sufficient resources and attention to some of these challenges, and these constitute challenges to sustainability. On one level, these challenges stem from logistics. Constructing systems of transportation sufficiently coordinated and tailored to meet varied geographies, student scheduling needs, and community partner program needs is a major challenge. So, too, is the problem of aligning community service and community development work to idiosyncratic campus schedules. Loaded and changing campus calendars, students and faculty cycling through rhythms of eight semesters, Januarys, summers, study abroad and sabbaticals, conflicting vacation schedules, and the continuing march of community changes make elusive the consistency and persistence campus-community collaboration needs to produce outcomes (Martin, SeBlonka, & Tryon, 2009).

While transportation and scheduling are commonly understood sustainability issues, in contrast, two other challenges are less acknowledged. First is *presence* – the dedication of staff time to participate community conversations for developmental and maintenance purposes that are both specific and transactional, and non-specific and relational. Presence at all stages and for all these purposes is what enables campus representatives to shape – and not just enter late – discussions of education, youth development, community development, research and assessment, and other projects. Presence is critical to the relationship-building processes that underpin capacity to respond rapidly to opportunities and crises, changing conditions, and access to new resources.

Similarly, the flip side of presence is *access* – attention to ensuring access to the people, especially decision-makers and those in command of resources, on our campuses. Clarifying entry points, points of contact, decision-making, resource allocation, and facilitation is a challenge our campuses face. Our institutions and bureaucracies appear often incomprehensible and difficult to navigate to community partners. Yet a responsive posture demands of us receptivity to receiving and hearing expressions of both need and opportunity from the communities with which we work.

Finally, and cutting across all of this, is *assessment*. Community

engagement office staff and community partners alike face persistent challenges to accessing, prioritizing, and implementing assessment resources and strategies from inside and beyond their organizations. Campus-community partnerships are challenged to track, document, assess, and understand results while they focus upon all of the above and on the daily tasks of constructing and maintaining reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships. As programs, and perhaps as institutions as well, colleges, schools, and nonprofit organizations are all typically better structured, resourced, and oriented to action than to evaluation and assessment. Monitoring, evaluating, and documenting progress and outcomes demands dedicated resources, capacities, skills, and access to data outside the scope of managerial purview on campus and in the community by many of the partners who collaborate directly to connect faculty, students, and education or community development programs. There is a continuing struggle with documenting and subsequently accessing the products of partnership. How many community engagement programs or centers, for example, undertake systematic archival and managed public access to the output of student, class, faculty, and institutional products stemming from campus-community collaboration? There are likely some program-specific efforts and perhaps modest institutional initiatives. But the inability to provide consistent, ongoing access to the fruits of collaborative labor is a hidden sore in the relationships between many campus and community partners, and a central challenge to sustainability, because it is a sore that undermines true reciprocity.

The challenges we face in developing and tracking concrete and specific outcomes in student learning or student development present less of a sustainability problem for us on campus than one for our community partners. Higher education approaches to learning outcomes – measuring content knowledge, monitoring proxy outcomes like post-graduation success in graduate school entry or career placements, along with our focus on classroom measures of impact with which we are comfortable (student reflection and analysis, discussion of praxis, etc.) – lead us to hold faith that experiential learning has short and long-term benefits for students. To date, our strategy of following outcomes by proxy may be recognized as flawed, but it has been nonetheless largely sufficient. But whereas we may have the luxury of investing the resources we do in such indirect and/or longitudinal ambitions, communities and community partners cannot base decisions to invest time and resources in accommodating our experiential learners and engaged scholars similarly. What may appear as a process that leads to indirect or nonspecific results and outcomes for us is a process that is resource-intensive, extractive, and problematic for community partners in a more immediate way. This means that this work presents what is as much an ethical problem as a problem of sustainability. It becomes unjust for us continue to expect community partners to receive our students and

respond to our learning and scholarship needs in partnership, when we cannot effectively and consistently demonstrate, or help them to demonstrate to their constituencies, that such partnership delivers concrete and positive results. Engagement is positive when it is responsive, productive, and regenerative; and it can be essentially unjust, exploitive, and self-serving when it is not. To call such non-reciprocal relations “unsustainable” seems to be an understatement of the injustices at work.

### Conclusions

It is possible that the very intention of the “three pillars” concept of sustainability is to refocus the use of the term away from the narrow, environmental-specific application, toward a view inclusive of the issues that are the very concern of this article – the linkage to the reciprocal and ethical. Economics in campus-community partnership, for example, are clearly in play as a definitional framework for evaluating mutuality in benefit. Outcome-based thinking is useful particularly for the value of proving worth, return on investment, and, thus, for attracting more of it in ways that reinforce this pillar. Perhaps even more compelling is the connection to social equity. The humane and responsible deployment of scarce and fragile community resources, in partnership with the generations we are positioning for citizenship and social action, demands immense care and intentionality toward the production of meaningful, significant progress and impacts. Ethical, socially-responsible application of these resources is a fundamental matter of sustainability. These are conclusions with potential application both to the practice of implementing and assessing campus-community collaborations (and thus pedagogical tools for students, staff and faculty), and to the scholarly inquiry into community engagement principles where there are many additional avenues for examining the implications of the growing field of “sustainability studies.”

Applied in this context, partnerships without attention to outcomes and impacts themselves appear as potentially ethically suspect and lacking resilience. One might readily accept that continuing human and financial investment in something proven to fail is irresponsible, but this view of sustainability raises the further question: How responsible is it to continue to invest scarce resources in projects that carry invisible actual costs, opportunity costs, and insufficient investment in attempts to document or demonstrate outcomes? Similarly, current conceptions of sustainability themselves may be inadequate for the challenges articulated above. Without attention to continued, meaningful, and hearty relationships and similarly robust cycles of planning implementation, impact, and outcomes both on campus and in the community, it is not only sustainability that stands at risk. Beyond sustainability, some have suggested expanding our view to prioritize adaptivity, in which resilience, redundancy, and dynamism sup-

plant static notions that systems, once designed, deserve to be maintained (Klinenberg, 2013). Rigidity or fragility, stemming from shallow or undeveloped relationships, hampers adaptivity to the dynamic circumstances that may be embedded there.

It is surely a complex matter to define what constitutes proof or valued outcome, but the points here are a) that there are cost:benefit equations unseen or poorly understood and b) that while that is the case, the assumption of benevolence and positive impact is exactly that – an assumption. Sustainable practice, especially where it is hinged so clearly upon both the perception and demonstration of reciprocity, cannot be expected to grow upon such an uncertain foundation and fragile processes of investment, evaluation, and reallocation. Instead, what we might call concurrent, interdependent cycles of planning, action, reflection, and evaluation can comprise a roadmap for engaging in sustainable campus-community partnerships for partnership practitioners on campus and in the community. Such a view of sustainability (or adaptivity) can both valorize and, critically, *operationalize* the objective of reciprocity in ways that community engagement practices can benefit from.

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