Engaged Universities: Border Vantage Points on Institutionalization

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This special issue of *Metropolitan Universities* provides a rich variety of analyses on best practices in comprehensive universities well on their way toward institutionalizing civic and community engagement. The essays range from "big-picture" perspectives to the neighborhood grassroots, whole-state leadership (California) to the streets of Spokane, and various higher education institutional perspectives in between. Thanks to Jennifer Meeropol and Edward Zlotkowski for organizing this thematic issue and facilitating the review of these fine essays and their insights on exemplary practices.

Indicators of Institutionalization

Several U.S. higher educational associations have endorsed the notion that students and faculty should be engaged with their communities. The associations make space at annual meetings for informative workshops, and they publish materials on the value and merits of engagement and service learning in higher education. There is no doubt, however, that Campus Compact and its state affiliates have been on the frontlines of guiding and facilitating strategic thinking and action for campus leaders, from the presidential to the faculty and staff leadership levels. Campus Compact and state affiliates offer workshops, conferences, speakers, and analytic material that nudge universities and colleges toward engagement with their communities.

While Land Grant Universities and pre-professional training programs have long had their "community-based" components in both rural and urban areas, leadership for broader urban engagement began approximately a decade ago. Private institutions perhaps had a head start, given the service missions therein. At many institutions, leaders struggled to initiate, fund, and sustain programs that facilitated campus-community connections, especially in the undergraduate academic divisions of higher education and its core components: courses and the curriculum. In the early to mid-1990s, however, the federal government began to legitimize and even fund service-learning and engagement, inserting new discourse into their agendas. The Corporation for National Service (now the Corporation for National and Community Service) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of University Partnerships are examples of these federal initiatives. From these multiple directions, the idea of engagement and service emerged for comprehensive urban universities.

More recently, Campus Compact prepared guidelines on institutionalizing programs in

hard copy, Web site, and workshop venues. Leaders can use these guidelines for identifying and developing strategies to secure the resources necessary to introduce, deepen, and sustain community-civic engagement. In many articles for this special MUJ issue, readers will find numerous sources and bibliographic references.

In this special issue, readers will gain insights on five thematic groupings of the Indicators of Engagement identified in Campus Compact materials: (1) institutional culture, (2) curriculum and pedagogy, (3) faculty roles and rewards, (4) mechanisms and resources, and (5) community-campus exchange. Readers can extract deep, comparative analytic perspectives on a broad range of institutions, public and private, small and large.

We move now to the language of "borders," not only for the insights we may offer from our own geographic location at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) on the U.S.-Mexico border, but also for the conceptual enhancement that border notions provide for engagement processes. For leaders at engaged campuses, "borders" must be crossed or altered in order to organize, lead, and sustain an engaged campus. These borders include disciplinary and bureaucratic borders within the campus and borders between universities and their communities.

The Border Context: The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)

UTEP is located in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, a bi-national metropolitan region of more than two million residents. The sister cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, home primarily to Mexican-heritage residents, are divided by an international boundary line separating two sovereign nations. UTEP's external "community" is quite complex compared with other universities in the heartlands.

The internal institutional community at UTEP is as complex as it is anywhere in higher education. Higher education institutions are hardly monolithic organizations with faculty, staff, and students all marching to the same drum. We would offer fair warning to engagement leaders that campus cultures are diverse, pluralistic, and even competitive: organizational theorists Cohen and March call them "organized chaos" (1974).

UTEP's community engagement began well before momentum developed in other U.S. universities and colleges. It has long pursued missions that resonate with engagement in health and teacher education in the El Paso community especially, but also in Ciudad Juarez. In the 1990s, with support from the Kellogg Foundation, engagement efforts spread with a new Institute for Community-Based Teaching and Learning. The mechanism to facilitate community connections has always been based in academic affairs, rather than student affairs (Behringer et al. 2005). The Institute for Community-Based Teaching and Learning worked with faculty to transform courses in a variety of fields so that students would gain partial course credit in an organized response to community needs, focusing especially on the large, but relatively resource-poor non-profit sector and on economically marginalized neighborhoods. For example,

in Computer Information Systems classes, organized teams of students built and maintained Web sites. In Communication and Writing classes, students developed advertising and fundraising campaigns with non-profit organizations. Accounting students connected with organizations to strengthen fledgling bookkeeping systems.

In 2000, the Institute was broadened to a university-wide mandate and renamed the Center for Civic Engagement. Center faculty and staff have been successful in obtaining external grant funding for new initiatives, including student and faculty incentives for engaged work. UTEP supports course releases for the faculty leader and a professional staff salary. Private and public grants enable students and faculty to work on Border Engaged Research (http://academics.utep.edu/cce).

Many community partnerships are in place, with a synergizing quality to them. Let us provide just one example. Our partnership with a collaborative of housing CDCs (Community Development Corporations) led us to participate in El Paso's Earned Income-Tax Coalition (EITC). Students created financial literacy skits, drawing on the expertise of community partners, performed those skits in Spanish, and produced videos with English subtitles to play while people waited for EITC assistance at nonprofit organizations in the region.

A large base of faculty across disciplinary and college borders developed innovative course track records. Some faculty members pursued a regional research niche from—and with partners in—the community to pursue Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). This CBPR capability is expected more and more in Requests for Proposals from public health and human services agencies. Given the well-developed state of interdisciplinary Border Studies internationally, regional research and publications strengthen faculty portfolios, annual reviews, and tenure and promotion prospects. UTEP is hosting the first international borders conference in March 2006 with scholars from more than forty countries (http://research.utep.edu/lineaeterrarum).

The strong emphasis on research and teaching in UTEP's Tenure and Promotion guidelines was augmented with additional lines that acknowledge and value peer reviewable community-based teaching and research. The language of service (and by extension, "service-learning") is used primarily for our structured learning experiences in the community, including reading at schools and tutoring in adult English as a Second Language and citizenship classes (see Web site on ESL, Project SHINE and Just Read). Other community partnership courses are more complex examples of "community-based learning." One of our newest is Ni Una Mas! (Not One More!, focused on interpersonal violence), wherein trained students both observe in protective order and domestic violence courtrooms and make presentations in high schools. Still other experiences involve "community-based research," wherein students construct surveys, enter data, and use SPSS software to analyze results.

UTEP's engagement programming has entered a mature phase. The maturity is reflected in the multiple layers of engagement, from service learning to community-based learning and research that speak to our institution and community. The Center

for Civic Engagement takes on the labor-intensive tasks of maintaining community partnerships, assisting faculty members, and training or monitoring students. UTEP was a founding member of Texas Campus Compact, and several other institutions in the state have drawn on our expertise for their engagement pathways. We host a Community Engagement Council, drawing on the many stakeholders in and across the borders between the university and community.

Still, UTEP's civic engagement efforts are not fully institutionalized given the overdependence on external compared with internal funding. In the best of all worlds, state support and policy leverage, combined with locally generated endowments, would strengthen the ability of higher education to sustain engagement with communities facing the growing financial challenges of the 21st century. In the meantime, readers will find numerous ideas, strategies, and practices for possible application in their own institutions. To these we now turn.

About this Volume

This issue of *Metropolitan Universities* is divided into five sections, each based on one of the thematic groupings of the Campus Compact Indicators of Engagement. The first section focuses on **Institutional Culture**. Season Eckardt and Gerald Eisman are at the lead, examining the efforts to institutionalize service-learning throughout the California State University system, beginning in 1995, with $7.7 million of state funding to move service-learning "from the periphery to the mainstream of the CSU's culture." They unpack, compare, and assess the connections among the five clusters of Campus Compact indicators. In the next article in this section, Nancy Andes analyzes the mission and accountability performance indicators in the University of Alaska, Anchorage, an intriguing institution that merged the community college and university 18 years ago.

The second section of this collection focuses on **Curriculum and Pedagogy**. Seth Pollack and Pamela Motoike examine the case of the CSU-Monterey Bay campus. The article is filled with innovative practices and insights about strategies toward achieving best practices, including mandated service-learning twice during students' careers at the institution. In the second article for this section, Kevin Kecskes, Seanna Kerrigan, and Judy Patton analyze the Portland State University experience, a campus well-known for its community-based learning. The decade-old PSU motto—"Let knowledge serve the city"—is now well-recognized among students and Portland residents.

In the third section of this issue, one article focuses on **Faculty Culture**. Robert Bringle, Julie Hatcher, Steven Jones, and William Plater analyze faculty roles and rewards and faculty development at another campus well-known for engagement: Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).

The fourth section focuses on **Mechanisms and Resources**. In the first article, Sean Creighton analyzes the Raymond L. Fitz Center at the University of Dayton. At this private university, internal funds support more than half the operating costs of the

partnership program. In the second article, John Martello, Joby Taylor and Mark Terranova discuss the importance of vision, setting, and talent for the Shriver Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

The final section of this thematic issue focuses on **Community-Campus Exchange**. Dick Winchell analyzes the long-term relationship between the university and neighborhoods, focusing on the East Central Neighborhood Partnership Center in Spokane, where urban planning and business students mobilize university resources with the community. In the final article, Judith Liu, Elaine Elliott, John Loggins, and Christopher Nayve consider the University of San Diego's relationships with Linda Vista community, using an asset-based approach to community development.

References

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