

## ***Institutionalization of Community-Engaged Scholarship at Institutions that are Both Land-Grant and Research Universities***

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### **Abstract**

This case study examines North Carolina State University's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program established in 2009–2010. Reflections by the program coordinators and participants reveal that the university's paradoxical identity as both a land-grant and a research institution has produced tensions in three areas: funding support; reappointment, promotion, and tenure policies; and faculty commitment. During the 2-year process of designing and implementing the program, the authors concluded that simultaneously holding an institutional identity as a land-grant university and as a research university creates a paradox that challenges the institutionalization of community-engaged scholarship on a campus.

### **Setting the Context**

*I*n an article about organizational communication, Stohl and Cheney (2001) describe the concept of “paradox” in organizations. They explain that although paradox is inherently neither good nor bad, its existence places limits on the behavior of the organization's members. The authors of this article believe that a paradox exists between community engagement efforts and various messages received by faculty members at universities that are both land-grant and research universities. During a 2-year process of designing and implementing a community-engaged scholarship faculty development program at North Carolina State University (NC State), they concluded that simultaneously holding an institutional identity as a land-grant university and as a research university creates a paradox that challenges the institutionalization of community-engaged scholarship on their campus. Institutionalizing community-engaged scholarship at NC State would include such elements as continued financial support for faculty engaged with the community; employing administrative personnel whose responsibilities focus on community-engaged teaching and learning; the continuance of current faculty development efforts that address community-engaged scholarship; recognition in the form of promotion and tenure for community-engaged scholarship; and integration of the various offices,

programs, and other efforts that support community-engaged scholarship at NC State, but are not formally connected.

### **Literature That Grounded the Development of NC State's Community-Engaged Scholarship Faculty Development Program**

The literature that formed the basis for the design of NC State's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program falls into three main categories: campus-community partnerships (Barker, 2005; Breu & Hemingway, 2005; Latham, 2008; Letcher & Perlow, 2009; Peters, 2008; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009; Shuman, 2005); institutional transformation and organizational change in higher education (Kezar, Chambers, Burkhardt, & Associates, 2005; Rogers, 2003; Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O'Meara, 2008); and faculty culture and faculty development (Finkelstein, 2008; O'Meara, 2010; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006; O'Meara & Rice, 2005; Saltmarsh, Giles, Ward, & Buglione, 2009; Sandmann, 2008; Sandmann, Thornton, & Jaeger, 2009; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008).

### **Campus-Community Partnerships**

Two conceptual frameworks form the basis of NC State's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program design: Enos and Morton's (2003) distinction between transactional and transformative partnerships, and Saltmarsh, Hartley, et al.'s (2009) contrast of technocratic and democratic norms. Using transformational language to describe campus-community partnerships underscores the desire for reciprocity that has become the hallmark for defining community-engaged scholarship. The language on the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) website illustrates this principle.

Creating healthier communities and overcoming complex societal problems requires collaborative solutions which bring communities and institutions together as equal partners and build upon the assets, strengths, and capacities of each. (<http://www.ccpb.info/>)

Enos and Morton (2003) point out that although transactional partnerships aim for a mutually beneficial exchange of goods and/or services, they work within established systems and do not produce deep change. Transformational partnerships, on the other hand, involve deeper commitments and expectations of shifts in identities and values, challenge norms and systems, and focus on

outcomes that extend beyond mutual benefit to mutual growth and change.

A feature of university partnerships that may be a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of transformative partnerships is the faculty partner's democratic rather than technocratic identity in relation to student and community partners (see Jameson, Clayton, & Jaeger, 2011; Saltmarsh, Hartley, et al., 2009). This distinction suggests that traditional (technocratic) norms in the academy privilege academic expertise and, thus, limit possibilities for truly collaborative engagement. A democratic approach, on the other hand, integrates the knowledge and expertise of university faculty members with that of community members and students and ensures that all partners have a voice in the identification of questions or problems, the design of interventions or research processes, and the development and assessment of innovative solutions. In the words of Saltmarsh, Hartley, et al. (2009):

The norms of democratic culture are determined by the values of inclusiveness, participation, task sharing, lay participation, reciprocity in public problem solving, and an equality of respect for the knowledge and experience that everyone contributes to education and community building. (p. 6)

These theoretical and practical considerations suggest that a faculty development program should focus on building capacity for transformative, democratic partnerships that include faculty members, students, and community members as co-educators, co-learners, and co-generators of knowledge.

### **Institutional Transformation and Organizational Change in Higher Education**

Sandmann, Saltmarsh, and O'Meara (2008) offer an integrated model for institutional change in support of community-engaged scholarship. They point out that enhancing faculty capacity for community-engaged scholarship and ensuring its sustainability requires a shift in the core values of the university. This shift is consistent with the move from a technocratic to a democratic orientation, which requires recognizing the knowledge that comes from experience as legitimate, and considering faculty and student ability to learn from community members. The model they posit is based on transformational change, defined by Eckel, Hill, and Green (1998) as (1) altering the underlying assumptions,

behaviors, and processes of the culture; (2) having a deep and pervasive effect on the whole institution; (3) intentional; and (4) incremental, change that occurs over time. The model of institutional change is based on two axes: depth and pervasiveness. Change that is low on both depth and pervasiveness is called adjustment. An isolated change is one that has depth but is not pervasive. Far-reaching change is highly pervasive but lacks depth. Eckel et al. suggest that transformational change is both deep and pervasive.

Eckel et al.'s (1998) model indicates that transformational change that occurs in pockets will not have an institutional impact. Change will be sustainable only if it is pervasive throughout the institution's colleges and departments. Holland (2005) suggests that organization members must assess an innovation, in this case community engagement, in terms of its potential to generate positive impacts for themselves or their institution. At the same time, community engagement must align with members' personal vision as well as the mission, goals, and culture of the organization. If individuals recognize a disconnect between their own and the institution's perspectives about community engagement, support for community-engaged scholarship may not be institutionalized.

Another theory of change that has implications for institutionalization of community-engaged scholarship is Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovations theory. Part of this theory describes "opinion leaders" as organization members who have status and are important links among different subgroups within the target population. Opinion leaders communicate important information about new ideas, practices, or technologies. Their adoption of new practices encourages others to follow them. Combined with Eckel et al.'s (1998) model for institutional change, diffusion of innovations theory suggests that a key element of a faculty development effort is the inclusion of opinion leaders from diverse areas of the institution who can assist in the innovation diffusion and adoption process.

## **Faculty Culture and Development**

Jaeger and Thornton (2006) suggest a movement toward a more dichotomous faculty at some land-grant institutions—faculty members who engage with community, and faculty members who do not. Finkelstein (2008) suggests that faculty development becomes more important than ever in this climate.

Faculty attrition is most likely to occur at developmental turning points in the faculty career: movement from doctoral

student to first academic position, at the point of the tenure decision, or just before or after promotion to full professor (*Finkelstein, 2008*). This suggests that effective faculty development programs should attend to the career-stage needs of an institution's faculty members. Gappa, Austin, and Trice (*2007*) note that "professional growth opportunities that enable faculty members to broaden and deepen their knowledge, abilities, and skills; to address challenges, concerns, and needs; and to find deeper satisfaction in their work are more important than ever with the changing and expanding responsibilities faculty must handle" (*p. 280*). O'Meara (*in press*) presents a model for community-engaged scholarship professional growth programs that includes having participants learn the language and history of community-engaged scholarship; giving participants the tools to be agentic (having a sense of power over one's work); helping participants connect to a larger network of community-engaged scholars through professional relationships; and helping faculty develop a commitment to other faculty members engaged in this work, and to community-engaged scholarship.

### **North Carolina State University: Background**

North Carolina State University (NC State) is a land-grant university that was designated as a community-engaged institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2006. During the 2000s, NC State initiated several institutional change endeavors related to the scholarship of engagement. These included the establishment of a task force on the scholarship of engagement led by the Vice Chancellor's Office of Extension, Engagement, and Economic Development; the creation of a Center for Excellence in Curricular Engagement and Institute for Nonprofit Research, Education and Engagement; activities by the Center for Leadership, Ethics, and Public Service; and efforts by individual faculty members. Many of these activities were distributed rather than integrated, with one consequence being contradictory messages communicated to faculty about their appropriate roles and responsibilities. During this period the authors designed and implemented a community-engaged scholarship faculty development program called Education and Discovery Grounded in Engaged Scholarship (EDGES) to capitalize on, advance, and integrate the various scholarship of engagement institutional change endeavors.

## **NC State's Community-Engaged Scholarship Faculty Development Program**

This article's description of NC State's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program is based on a case study (Creswell, 2001) that included analysis of documents, interviews, and reflections over an 18-month period. The authors coordinated the faculty development program. IRB approval was obtained prior to program initiation.

NC State participated in the Faculty for the Engaged Campus (FEC) initiative's charrette meeting held at the University of North Carolina in 2008 as discussed in this issue in the Gelmon and Blanchard chapter (2012). NC State's FEC team consisted of three faculty members (including the authors) and one administrator. The Faculty for the Engaged Campus initiative's charrette meeting provided a space for campus teams to develop their own community-engaged scholarship faculty development action plans, and to get feedback on those action plans from the other campus team participants. Subsequent to the charrette, NC State was awarded 2-year implementation funding from the FEC initiative to develop a community-engaged scholarship faculty development program.

### **Program Design**

Per the guidelines of the Faculty for the Engaged Campus initiative charrette process, the authors collected data about NC State. This included a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats); assessment of the current level of campus engagement; and conversations with faculty members, students, and administrators, especially those connected with NC State's Center for Excellence in Curricular Engagement. Documents analyzed included a report from the Provost's Task Force on Faculty Development, the NC State Carnegie community engagement application, the NC State strategic plan, and the UNC Tomorrow report, a special report on strategic priorities and goals inclusive of all 18 higher education institutions in the University of North Carolina system.

The authors identified four criteria for an effective competency-based model for a community-engaged scholarship faculty development program at NC State. They felt that the program should

1. use a developmental approach with multiple entry points for faculty participants as well as opportunities for ongoing growth (as opposed to a "one shot" workshop approach);

2. be experiential;
3. be multifaceted, with a variety of levels of intensity, objectives, and levels of faculty investment; and
4. be focused on “integration” as the fundamental lever of change in individual practice and institutional culture.

They also designed the program in response to a needs assessment they conducted which indicated that NC State’s faculty members

1. lacked a shared understanding of community-engaged scholarship,
2. viewed their relationship with the community as one of applying expertise,
3. had limited understanding of their community partner, and
4. felt uncertain about how community-engaged scholarship would be understood and valued by their peers and department heads.

As a result of the Faculty for the Engaged Campus Initiative’s charrette process, the authors determined four goals for an NC State community-engaged scholarship faculty development program. The goals were to

1. create a shared discourse that incorporated both teaching and research into a common understanding of community-engaged scholarship;
2. increase the participants’ understanding of community-engaged scholarship and their related capacities and needs at different stages of faculty careers;
3. create a cross-disciplinary and intergenerational mentoring community of scholars with different levels of experience in community-engaged scholarship; and
4. support the development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of new community-engaged courses and research projects that involve undergraduate students as partners.

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and/or research projects in collaboration with students and community partners. The program would be a developmentally structured, competency-based approach to supporting faculty in the design and implementation of community-engaged scholarship projects during key transition points (or edges) in their career paths—projects that, in turn, would involve undergraduate students.

### **Implementation**

NC State’s community-engaged scholarship faculty development program was launched with 21 participants, representing 10 NC State colleges. The participants included

six doctoral students, seven new faculty members, four associate professors, and four late-career faculty members. Participants were assigned readings that addressed community engagement in both teaching and research contexts. They completed three sets of reflection questions to help them examine readings and discussions in the context of their own roles, departments, and professional development goals. In addition to informal gatherings, EDGES members participated in 10 key sessions over the course of the program.



**Table 1. EDGES Sessions**

Title	Hours	Activity
Orientation	2	Session outlining goals for the program
Community Engaged Scholarship: A Shared Developmental Journey	2	Work session with partners at Wake Nature Preserve Partnership
Framing Your Community Engaged Scholarship Project	2	Work session with EDGES facilitators to work on project proposal drafts
Democratic Civic Engagement and Community Engaged Scholarship	7	Seminar led by John Saltmarsh
Project Protocol Development	2	Meeting with panel of experts to comment on progress of project protocol projects
Documenting Our Community Engaged Work	2	Seminar led by Cathy Jordan
Sustaining Community Engaged Partnerships	2	Work session with EDGES facilitators to discuss barriers of effective partnerships
Celebration of the Engaged University	3	Program where participants present final projects and awards are given
Community Engagement and Service Learning: Where Are the Faculty?	3	2 Seminar led by KerryAnn O'Meara
Institutionalizing Community Engaged Scholarship	4	Seminar led by Amy Driscoll; group debriefing and reflection on the program's success

Of the 10 sessions, four featured a nationally known community-engaged scholar. The guest scholars were

1. John Saltmarsh, director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts;
2. Cathy Jordan, director of the Children, Youth and Family Consortium at University of Minnesota;
3. KerryAnn O'Meara, associate professor of higher education at the University of Maryland, College Park; and
4. Amy Driscoll, senior scholar, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

These four sessions covered understanding and embracing the concept of democratic civic engagement (Saltmarsh), documenting community-engaged scholarship for tenure and promotion (Jordan), faculty roles and rewards for community-engaged

scholarship (O'Meara), and institutionalization of community-engaged scholarship (Driscoll). In addition to these sessions, workshops were held that focused on community partnerships (featuring a successful, long-term faculty-community collaboration), integrating community-engaged scholarship into the faculty role, preparing community-engaged scholarship teaching and research projects, and fostering sustainable partnerships.

Attendance at the orientation session and workshops was high, although sustaining 100% attendance was difficult. Frequently, participants had competing demands from departmental, teaching, or service obligations. In a few cases, faculty interest waned. Attrition occurred over the 18-month program, and five participants were unable to complete the project, including one doctoral student and four assistant professors. Of those five participants, two of the assistant professors chose not to continue in the program once they were notified of their acceptance. Table 2 presents a breakdown of participant numbers.

**Table 2. Participants Categorized by Title**

Participant Title	No. of Initial Participants	No. of Participants Completing
Doctoral students	6	5
Assistant professors	7	3
Associate professors	4	4
Full professors	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>

### **Products Produced by Participants**

Each participant in NC State's Education and Discovery Grounded in Engaged Scholarship (EDGES) program was to generate a plan for a new community-engaged course or community-engaged research project. Participants received financial support for these projects, including a \$500 stipend and the opportunity to have students apply for \$1,000 undergraduate research awards (funded by NC State's Office of Undergraduate Research). Ten awards were made to students to work with six of the EDGES program faculty participants.

EDGES projects were developed in fall 2009 and spring 2010, with implementation planned for the 2010 fall semester. The program provided mentoring by veteran community-engaged scholars,

and peer-mentoring among program participants was encouraged. Participants met about once a month to discuss their projects. In addition, half of the participants received travel support for conferences related to community-engaged scholarship. Six participants presented their projects at the 2010 National Outreach Scholarship Conference held at NC State in 2010, together with their student collaborators.

The program supported three new community-engaged/service-learning courses and two other revised courses. Six participants developed new community partnerships. Each of the doctoral students re-conceptualized at least part of their dissertation to have a community-engaged focus.

### **Reflections: Three Tensions**

In this section, the authors reflect on how the nature of a public land-grant, research university (Carnegie classified RU/VH: Research Universities [very high research activity]) can create systemic and individual tensions that can affect efforts to support community-engaged scholarship at the institution. Their case study of the EDGES program suggests three tensions that resulted from NC State's paradoxical identity as both a land-grant and a research institution. The three tensions move from the university level to departmental and individual levels, and are inherently systemic.

#### **Tension I: Funding Support**

The first tension was created by NC State's public commitment to engagement amidst reallocation of funds away from initiatives that support engagement. NC State made its land-grant values "public" through promulgation of its designation as a Carnegie community-engaged institution in the first application round (2006). Yet in subsequent, difficult budget years, offices that supported community-engaged scholarship (e.g., the Center for Excellence in Curricular Engagement and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Extension, Engagement, and Economic Development) were either removed or restructured. These actions sent mixed messages to the university community about the senior leadership's priorities. This outcome is consistent with Moore and Ward's (2010) findings that matching rhetoric with action presents a challenge for research universities.

## **Tension 2: Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Policies**

The second tension was created when administrative revisions to NC State's reappointment, promotion, and tenure policies conflicted with departmental norms, interpretations, and expectations. The tenure policies include "six realms of faculty activity," which are inclusive of the variety of ways scholarship is conducted and the diverse activities of faculty across the disciplines. At the institutional level, NC State embraced community-engaged teaching and research. At the department and school-college level, however, community-engaged teaching and research were still not universally appreciated or recognized. Again, this is consistent with Moore and Ward's (2010) examination of research universities. They have identified a misalignment between the rhetoric of institutional mission (articulated in NC State's case through new reappointment, promotion, and tenure policies), and the actions of faculty colleagues, department heads, and deans.

## **Tension 3: Faculty Commitment**

The third tension occurred at the individual level when faculty members perceived their commitment to communities as mutu-

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ally exclusive of commitments to their academic departments. Some participants in NC State's community-engaged scholarship program reflected that community-engaged work is still perceived as an "add-on," rather than integrated into faculty roles.

In summary, the three tensions that the authors identified in this case study are reflected in Moore and Ward's (2010) study of community-engaged scholars. They found that institutional support is often rhetorical. The pressure of producing documentable activities (e.g., journal articles, research dollars) still takes priority over sustained community relationships that result in non-traditional types of scholarship.

## **Next Steps for NC State**

Despite the many challenges faced by NC State's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program, the coordinators feel it was successful. The participants created a shared discourse that incorporated both teaching and research into a common understanding of community-engaged scholarship. The program created a cross-disciplinary and intergenerational mentoring community of scholars with different levels of community engagement experience. This interdepartmental and intergenerational networking established new relationships. Many participants have collaborated on projects and are committed to sustaining their relationships. Finally, the program resulted in the development of new community-engaged research projects and service-learning courses, and encouraged undergraduate interest in these offerings.

Following the completion of the program's first cohort in 2010, EDGES was discontinued due to lack of funding. The Office of Faculty Development, however, provided resources to support one faculty member as a community-engaged scholar for the next academic year. This scholar coordinated activities related to community-engaged teaching and learning. The Office of Faculty Development continues to provide administrative and financial support for community-engaged teaching and learning programs.

## **Lessons Learned**

From their experience designing and implementing NC State's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program, the authors learned three lessons that may be helpful to the reader. To improve the chance that such a program will be institutionalized, the program should be framed (1) so that faculty members, community members, and students are co-learners and co-generators of knowledge; (2) as an interdisciplinary and intergenerational experience; and (3) as a way to develop opinion leaders who will go on to be advocates in their departments, in their colleges, and across campus.

### **Lesson 1: University and Community Members as Co-Learners**

The participants in NC State's faculty development program came to understand that all partners and all parts of the community-engaged scholarship process contribute to both a research project's goals and the community's goals. One participant's comment illustrates this lesson.

The primary challenges [of community engagement] would include the ability to change the paradigm related to doing research in a particular academic discipline to include new thinking about ways to engage with people in the community to create new knowledge together. (*Doctoral student*)

Another participant explained how he explicitly transcended the tension between teaching and community engagement through modifying a course following one of the EDGES program's workshops.

"The community is another text for this course" (*Saltmarsh, January 2010*). I loved this phrase and after the session, I revised my syllabus to include a passage that there would be multiple texts for our course: the child development textbook, the supplemental readings, and the field experience. It helped me to frame for myself (and I hope for my students) that the focus of our writings and reflections would extend beyond the traditional "texts" we were reading together. (*Assistant professor*)

This reflection reinforces the notion that a successful reframing of community-engaged scholarship includes the ability to see a community as an integrated, rather than separate, component of the university. A third participant summarized it this way:

We will be engaging with the community when the community is no longer treated as a completely detached and dead piece to be researched about. Instead, the research and teaching is a collaborative process with the community. (*Professor*)

## **Lesson 2: Interdisciplinary and Intergenerational Faculty Development Programs**

One of the successes of NC State's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program was the creation of a support network of community-engaged peers across disciplines and departments. These connections provided faculty members needed "agency" (*O'Meara & Campbell, 2011*) in their work. O'Meara and Campbell note that something which gives one a sense of his

or her work is agency. For example, at one of the program's peer-mentoring events, a doctoral student shared her project proposal with a full professor from another college who guided her to reconsider the breadth of the study and how she could integrate undergraduate students into the project. The doctoral student referred to that session as "life-altering," because it allowed her to better focus her project and reconsider the integration of research, teaching, and engagement goals. Several research collaborations were formed over the course of the program. Some were among faculty from psychology, education, and communication. One formed between faculty members and doctoral students from veterinary medicine and education faculty members. Another formed between agriculture and social science faculty members.

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Having an intergenerational community of community-engaged scholars served as a support system for faculty and doctoral students as they faced the "hard" edges that characterize points of entry and exit in the major phases of their university careers (Finkelstein, 2008). Community-engaged scholarship effectually softened the edge and supported faculty collaborations within and across disciplines.

### **Lesson 3: Cultivating Opinion Leaders**

As described in the model of institutionalization by Eckel et al. (1998), transformational change requires high depth and high pervasiveness. Participants in NC State's community-engaged scholarship faculty development program discovered that they play an active role as campus leaders advocating for this work, as one participant's comment illustrates.

What is important to me as an academic professional has not changed. What has changed is my understanding of the academic culture and structure in which I am working to create engaged scholarship. (Professor)

The authors posit that having opinion leaders and advocates among a university's faculty is a key mechanism for sustaining incremental changes in institutional culture.

## Conclusion

From their experience participating in the design and implementation of a community-engaged scholarship of engagement faculty development program, the authors conclude that institutional identity as both a land-grant and a research university creates a paradox of identity (*Stohl & Cheney, 2001*) that impedes efforts to institutionalize community-engaged teaching and learning practices in the classroom and in research because of the difficulty of achieving both depth and pervasiveness of change across the institution. Faculty development that includes faculty across departments and career stages helps manage the tension by enhancing faculty understanding of community-engaged scholarship as integrating teaching, research, and service aspects of the mission. Those faculty members who have participated in such a program can serve as campus opinion leaders who help reframe the tensions into a new, all-encompassing, institutional identity.

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