

# Scholarship and Mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Role of Engagement

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# Fundamental Shifts

Technological, intellectual, financial and accountability pressures are creating fundamental changes in external and internal conceptions of:

Excellence in Higher Education

and

The Nature of Scholarly Work

# Traditional Role of Universities:

Generate and Transmit

Knowledge:

Research, Teaching, Service

# Emerging Role of Universities:

Participate in a Learning

Society Through Discovery,

Learning and Engagement

# Global Shifts in Research Culture

- Mode 1: pure, disciplinary, homogeneous, expert-led, supply-driven, hierarchical, peer-reviewed, and almost exclusively university-based
- Mode 2: applied, problem-centered, transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, hybrid, demand-driven, entrepreneurial, and network-embedded

(Gibbons, 2001)

# Changes in the Production of Knowledge

- Mode 2 research requires “**transdisciplinary** modes” where knowledge is produced in the context of application
- Transdisciplinarity is made necessary by the extensive social distribution of knowledge; many knowledge sources are linked interactively through networks

# Features of Transdisciplinary Research

- Mode 2 practitioners adhere to norms of scientific method, but use different cognitive and social strategies
- Existing knowledge is used, but the theoretical framework is creative, evolving and cannot be reduced to distinct disciplinary parts
- Team includes diverse perspectives on both the question and possible applications

# Features of Transdisciplinary Research

- Research groups are temporary and dissolve as problems are solved or redefined, but communications persist through technology
- Results are diffused instantly through the network of participants; production and diffusion are merged.
- Subsequent diffusion occurs as practitioners enter successive problem contexts. Practitioners may not return to the discipline for validation.
- Quality considers efficiency and usefulness in addition to traditional criteria

# Features of Transdisciplinary Science

Knowledge is becoming “the product of networked entities, often differently situated yet motivated to find new solutions to specific problems, needs and circumstances. Enabled by technology, knowledge moves quickly through these networks-across firms, institutions, borders and distances.” (NRC Workshop on Advancing Knowledge and the Knowledge Economy, 2005)

# Features of Engaged Scholarship

- Collaborative and participatory
- Draws on many sources of distributed knowledge; based on partnerships
- Shaped by multiple perspectives and expectations
- Deals with difficult, evolving questions
- Long term in both effort and impact
- Requires diverse strategies and approaches; crosses disciplinary lines

# Civic Engagement as Scholarship

- Engaged scholarship is a specific conception of faculty work that connects the intellectual assets of the institution (i.e., faculty expertise) to public issues such as community, social, cultural, human and economic development. Through engaged forms of teaching and research, faculty apply their academic expertise to public purposes, as a way of contributing to fulfillment of the core mission of the institution.

# Scholarship of Engagement

- Integrates discovery and learning
- Is not an add-on or extra activity
- Recognizes diverse faculty interests
- Can be valued and rewarded
- Gives scholarly work a public purpose; requires learning partnerships
- Is not just a new view of “service”

# Engagement's Impact on Academic Culture

- Integrated and diverse approaches to scholarship that build new research capacity
- Expectation of an evolving scholarly agenda
- Multiple career pathways – career stages
- Collaboration with external sources of knowledge
- Balance between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards
- Standards of quality, not standardized work

# “Scholarship Assessed”

- Clear goals
- Adequate knowledge and preparation
- Appropriate methods
- Replicability
- Breaks new ground; creative and innovative
- Significant results
- Effective dissemination
- Reflective critique by peers and self

# Confusing Engagement Rhetoric

- Service-learning, community-based learning, academic service-learning, co-curricular service
- Civic engagement, community engagement, civic education
- Scholarship of Engagement
- Community-based research
- Participatory Action Research
- Campus-Community Partnerships

# Service-Learning is:

- Academic
- Integrated into courses
- About enhancing learning ....AND
- About enhancing community
- Transformational
- Intentional
- Reflective

# (Effective) Service-Learning Can:

- Increase retention; diversity of local enrollment
- Enhance achievement of core learning goals
- Make learning relevant to more students
- Influence career and major selection
- Develop social, civic, leadership skills
- Strengthen undergraduate research
- Encourage students to be productive participants in the community

# Impact of Engaged Scholarship on Higher Education

- Engagement is diversifying the academy
- Scholarly roles are becoming more integrated
- Reward/incentive structures are changing to recognize engaged scholarship
- Global interest in engagement is making this a core element of academic excellence and prestige
- Engagement is reviving awareness of the role of higher education in creating “public good”

# New Traditions of Excellence

- Intentional approaches to learning objectives and environments
- Strategic perspective that anticipates changing knowledge needs
- Intentional and evolving research agenda involving many collaborating partners
- Capacity for transdisciplinary scholarship
- Responsiveness to and engagement in regional issues and conditions

# Reaction to Innovation

- “It seems to be a recurrent historical pattern that intellectual innovations are first:
  - described as misguided by those whose ideas are dominant,
  - then ignored,
  - and finally, taken over by original adversaries as their own invention.”

# Accountability and Reputation Factors are Changing

- Incorporation of engagement into regional accreditation processes
- Federal interest in collaborative research and community impacts of research
- Persistent state pressure for evidence of impact
- Introduction of engaged scholarship (and learning) into classifications/rankings-Carnegie and US News
- Student demand for engaged learning

# Challenges for Research Universities

- Successful reputation; investment in traditional modes of scholarship
- Conservative view of innovations; resocialize new ideas to resemble current work
- Large size
- Tendency to compartmentalize in centers
- Leading models for engagement are not peers
- Discipline-dominated
- Global orientation

# Michigan Examples

- Endowed center for engagement, especially for student service-learning and partnerships; refereed journal
- Living/learning, honors, or other cohort curricular modules focused on civic learning issues
- Linking engagement to issues of diversity, access and success for Michigan students
- Engaged centers/institutes; e.g., major NSF funding for Math/Science Partnerships
- Kellogg Forum on Higher Education and the Public Good

# Committee on Interinstitutional Cooperation – Big 10

Engagement is the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

# Students and Engaged Research

- Duke: “Research service-learning” courses (many disciplines) engaging students and faculty in research on community-identified needs. ??Future Faculty??
- Similar programs:

Brown

Cornell

Georgetown

Harvard

Princeton

Minnesota

Michigan

Wisconsin

# Effective Strategies

- Develop capacity for innovation (fac dev, assessment, community partnerships)
- Focus on student learning experience
- Take risks – experiment, evaluate, adapt
- Build a strategic plan for faculty engagement
- Involve external voices
- Go with early adopters among faculty
- Document and publicize impacts
- Make engagement a focus in fund-raising

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