Principles of Successful Community Partnerships for Teaching and Scholarship

Lisa Townson, UVM Foundation
Susan Munkres, UVM CUPS Office

March 8, 2018
Imperative for Higher Education

“At no time in our history has the need been greater for connecting the work of the academy to the social and environmental challenges beyond the campus.”

Ernest Boyer, 1990

Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorship
Terms for Engaged Scholarship

- Public Scholarship
- Community-Based Research
- Engaged Epistemology
- Community Participatory Action Research
- Scholarship of Application / Engagement

Distinguished from:
- Service-Learning
- Applied Research
- Scholarship of Teaching & Learning
Examples of Engaged Scholarship At UVM

• Ernesto Mendez / Agro-ecology and Livelihoods Collaborative: coffee-growers
• Lance Smith & Bernice Garnett / CESS: restorative practices in K-12 schools
• Pablo Bose / Geography: refugee resettlement processes
• Teresa Mares / Anthropology: graphic storytelling as public health intervention among migrant dairy farm workers
Community-Involved Research Report at UVM (2012)

- Half of faculty reported working with community in research in last two years
- 22% engaged in PAR in last two years
- Particular strengths in CALS and RSENR
- 30% of female faculty, compared to 19% of male faculty
- Partners were most likely to be in education, nonprofits or government agencies
Scholar Benefits

- More in-depth understanding
- Community holds unique vantage
- Access to data
- Ability to ensure scholarship is making a difference
- Enhances student learning
Partner Benefits

- Research findings based on need/interests
- Policy and practice changes
- Sustainability of effort
- New opportunities for further partnerships
- Enhanced or transformative knowledge
- Access to institutional resources
Where to Find Partners

• Start with your research interests
• Learn about the landscape for your interests in Vermont
• Consider your own networks, including personal ones
• Talk with other UVM faculty in your area and doing engaged scholarship
• Cooperative Extension
• Business and industry
Who are your partners for your scholarly work?
How Partners May View the University

- Bureaucracy
- Unlimited resources
- Unreliable
- Uncoordinated
- Slow
Importance of Reciprocity

• Key distinguishing factor
• Without reciprocity, there cannot be engaged scholarship
• Benefits and knowledge flow in both directions
• Partners’ expertise is valued
• Partners’ needs and priorities are considered
• Resources are shared
“Equitable, Not Equal”

• Roles and Resources
  – Varies by partnership and project
• Know and manage power dynamics
• Communicate expectations
• Take the time to understand
Principles of Strong Partnerships

- Partners agreed upon mission, goals, and measurable outcomes for the partnership.
- Relationship is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
- Builds upon strengths and assets, but also addresses areas that need improvement.
Principles of Strong Partnerships

• Balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.

• Clear, open, and accessible communication between partners, ongoing priority to listen to each need, develop a common language, and validate/clarify the meaning of terms.

• Credit is shared
Potential Roles for Partners

- Develop/guide research questions
- Jointly apply for grants
- Data collection
- Ground-checking results
- Entry to research subjects
- Editing/writing report/papers
- Presenting & disseminating results
Degree of Collaborative Processes in Engaged Scholarship

HIGH DEGREE – DETERMINED MUTUALLY

LOW DEGREE – DETERMINED UNILATERALLY BY ONE PARTNER

New Times/New Scholarship, 2007
Challenges

• Negotiating goals, strategies and outcomes
  – “Is that what we decided to do?”
• Handling data - “Your data or mine?”
• Who gets credit?
• Understanding the time it takes
  – “Know your tenure clock”
• Unclear boundaries
Specific Best Practices within Partnerships – starting up

• Carefully evaluate own commitment & capacity
• Coordinate with others at UVM
• Make a long-term commitment & connection
  – Serve on Board
  – Read Strategic Plan
  – Start with smaller-scale projects
  – Work in supporting role
• Consistent “bridge” or contact person over time
  – Faculty maintain the relationship
• Develop research project within the partnership, not prior
• Start IRB process well in advance, educate partner
• Memoranda of Understanding, addressing challenges above
Specific Best Practices within Partnerships – ongoing

- Maintain regular communication
- Revisit goals and expectations
- Continually reflect on principles of reciprocity
Partnerships may end

• Not all partnerships are sustainable
  – Needs change
  – Resources may not be adequate
  – Benefits may not outweigh costs
  – Expectations may have been unrealistic

• Outcomes may not be achieved

• Best practice: debrief, reflect and learn from the work done
Climate for Engaged Scholarship at UVM

• Land-grant mission; Carnegie-Classified institution since 2006
• Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) explicitly recognizes engagement as teaching, research or service (since 2011)
• Affirmation of Boyer’s Scholarship of Engagement (Provost letter 2017)
• Historic and current support from CUPS office
Resources to Support You

- Community/University Partnerships (CUPS) Office at UVM
- Engagement Scholarship Consortium –engagementscholarship.org
- IARSLCE - researchslce.org/
- Imagining America - imaginingamerica.org/
Acknowledgement

Some of the content and concepts are based on work of Dr. Lorilee Sandman, Faculty Emeriti, University of Georgia