DEFINING & DESCRIBING COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP - CONSIDERATIONS FOR P&T

UNC GREENSBORO
Institute *for* Community & Economic Engagement

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro has recognized community-engaged scholarship (CES) in promotion and tenure (P&T) since 2010 across university, college/school, and department policies as an aspect of teaching, research, creative activity, and service. Defining the core characteristics of CES in faculty reward policies and practices is essential to ensuring that high quality and ethical practices are codified and recognized. We share insights from UNCG's journey to help scholars shape their policies, as well as their narratives for faculty review and reward.

STANDARDS

Community Engagement is a strategy that may result in many different products or activities, and can be differentiated from other forms of scholarship based on the outcomes and processes that characterize the partnership. These include,

- **Mutual Benefit** - Partnerships achieve community and academic priorities.
- **Reciprocity** - Community members are valued and included as thought partners, co-laborers, and peers in knowledge creation and dissemination.
- **Asset-based** - Approaches support communities in identifying and sharing their strengths to promote resilience and independence.

CHALLENGES

- Traditional P&T policies often do not adequately recognize or value CE scholarship as an essential aspect of academic work.

- Recognition of relationship-building, a core characteristic of CES, is lacking in traditional P&T policies.

- CES centers community knowledge, yet traditional academic measures often exclude diverse epistemologies.

INSIGHTS

Rethinking & Redefining	Relationship-Building	Recognition	Value
P&T policies should better align with the principles of CE scholarship while scholarly artifacts should include outputs, outcomes, and processes.	Relationship-building between researchers and community members should be recognized and valued in P&T policies to better reflect the nature of CE scholarship.	P&T policies should value and include non-traditional forms of knowledge production and acknowledge diverse ways of knowing to better align with the principles of community engagement.	Including community impact as a significant factor in promotion and tenure evaluations highlights the importance of considering the real-world implications and outcomes of CE work.

HOW DO P&T POLICIES DESCRIBE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

## Community engagement is characterized in three ways:

OUTPUT: *Activities & Artifacts*

Community engagement is described by what is produced, delivered, or supplied, such as activities (e.g., service-learning class, internship, presentation, outreach event) and artifacts developed (e.g., policy recommendations, book/monograph, program, article, curriculum, data set).

OUTCOME: *Purpose &Values*

Community engagement is described by the purpose, the expected or achieved contributions to populations or stakeholders, or the values, the principled intentions that drive efforts to engage.
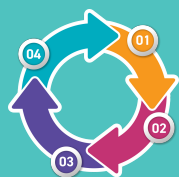
PROCESS: *Relationship & Epistemic Inclusion*

Community engagement is described by the relationship, the ways in which partners work together (e.g., collaboration, reciprocity, mutual benefit), or epistemology, the primacy of community members in the co-construction of and sharing of knowledge.

PROCESS IS A KEY CHARACTERISTIC:

Who is included in the work	How work is done together	Why process matters
The knowledge and experience that community partners bring to the table is valued and essential to the new knowledge generated.	Community partners collaborate and co-labor, from start to finish, in ways appropriate to the conditions of the partners and partnership.	Effective CES requires ongoing dialogue, trust-building, and co-creation of knowledge between researchers and community members. Ignoring the process (epistemology and relationships) is effectively excluding co-researchers in the community that we seek to include through CE scholarship.

"We're Talking About Process: The Primacy of Relationship and Epistemology in Defining Community-engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure Policy"
by Janke, E., Quan, M., Jenkins, I., & Saltmarsh, J. (2023)

HOW DO PROMOTION AND TENURE POLICIES DEFINE & FRAME COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Research Question	How, if at all, was CES described and defined? What characteristics were used within policies?
Institutional Case Study	67 P&T policies at the university, school/college, and department levels were examined - The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Analysis/Coding	The study team used inductive analysis, guided by the conceptual framework, to identify themes and codes to understand how CE was defined and described, if at all, in policies.
Open Codebook	A Codebook developed for this study is freely available to other researchers in Civic Leads! https://doi.org/10.3886/E170041V1

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Democratic Civic Engagement (DCE)
Saltmarsh, Hartley & Clayton, 2009

- Participatory epistemology
- Collaborative research
- Trans-disciplinary
- Scholarly artifacts
- Non-academic knowledge experts
- Impact

Epistemic Justice
Fricker, 2007
Settles, Jones, Buchanan & Dotson, 2021

- Examines the persistent exclusion of one's contributions to knowledge
- Relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

How knowledge is produced and recognized

KEY FINDING

Each unit defined CE in its own way!

Some policies named CE but did not define it. Most units characterized CE in a variety of ways, including outputs, outcomes, and processes. Supplementary documents, beyond the university policy, were influential in helping frame CE more fully.

Output, Outcome & Process

- **Output** includes **activities** and **artifacts** yielded through collaboration.
- **Outcome** encompasses the **purpose** and **values** that CES aims to achieve.
- **Process** refers to why and how partners work together and the elements of **relationship** and **epistemology** distinguish CES from other forms of scholarship.

Discussions & Implications

I. Integrating Relationship-Building in Scholarship Evaluation

In CES, the ways in which knowledge is produced is as essential as the knowledge product itself. Thus, highlighting the importance of fostering meaningful relationships is crucial in P&T policies.

II. Recognizing Diverse Epistemologies and Ways of Knowing

The marginalization of CES is directly connected to the marginalization of diverse scholars. Thus, P&T policies must acknowledge diverse ways of knowing, and be inclusive of experience, community wisdom, and indigenous knowledge systems.

III. Considering Community Impact in Evaluation

Proposing the inclusion of community impact as a vital criterion in P&T evaluations beyond traditional academic outputs like publications, and encouraging scholars to actively engage with communities and contribute to positive social change.

IV. Reconceptualizing Scholarly Outputs in CE Scholarship

Underscoring the importance of expanding the definition of scholarly outputs within CE scholarship to include community activities, collaborations, and knowledge co-creation, broadening the recognition of its diverse and impactful forms.

FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP

- **Address challenges in integrating community-engaged scholarship into promotion and tenure.**
- **Study the impact of policies recognizing relationships, diverse epistemologies, and community impact.**
- **Develop evidence-based guidelines for promoting community-engaged scholarship.**

CONCLUSION

- **To fully recognize CES it is essential that P&T policies include and define its core principles.**
- **Definitions of CES must address the foundational processes of CE inclusive of relationships and epistemic inclusion.**
- **CES as an issue of faculty rewards must be considered an issue of addressing diversity, equity and inclusion.**

Check out our study website here:

http:communityengagement.uncg.edu/ourscholarship

Scholarly Expectations:

Definition of Community Engagement:
- Does the policy explicitly mention community engagement as a valuable scholarly activity?
- Does the policy include a definition of CE?
- Are processes, as well as outputs and outcomes used to describe the essential characteristics and values of CE?

Definition of Scholarship:
- Does the policy clearly articulate a definition of scholarship that is not synonymous with the term research, but instead embraces diverse forms of faculty roles, scholarly approaches, methods, audiences for impact, and products?

Research/Creative Activity:

Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Contributions:
- Does the policy recognize and reward interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary contributions that align with the institution's mission of teaching, research, and service?

Distinction from Other Scholarly Work:
- How does the policy clearly differentiate CES from other forms of research, like applied research or public scholarship?
- Does the policy value processes, inclusive of relationships and epistemology, as a distinguishing factor of CES?

Product Recognition:
- Does the policy explicitly recognize a broad range of scholarly products that are produced for community and/or academic audiences?

Peer Review and Evaluation:
- Does the policy address who qualifies as a peer for reviewing CES?
- Are evaluation criteria transparent and aligned with the unique characteristics of CES?

Impact Assessment:
- Is there a framework or metrics for assessing the impact of CES, considering diverse audiences beyond academic or disciplinary communities?
- Are there examples of how collaborative CE efforts can enhance the institution's broader goals?

Teaching:

Pedagogical Approaches:
- Is community engagement described explicitly as a valued approach to teaching in a way that differentiates it from other forms of experiential learning?
- Are there examples of how community engagement can enhance teaching effectiveness and student learning?

Integration:
- Is there recognition of how faculty activities focused on developing and sustaining reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships may serve as an essential pathway for scholarly endeavors, including teaching and scholarship?

Service:

Recognition of Service Activities:
- Are community engagement activities and service to the broader community recognized as a legitimate part of a faculty member's service responsibilities?
- Is the value of community service in fulfilling the institution's mission acknowledged?

Integration of Service and Scholarship:
- Does the policy recognize the often inherent relationship between community-engaged scholarship and service?
- Are faculty members encouraged to integrate service and scholarship in meaningful ways?

How to Craft an Effective Narrative So that Reviewers Understand Community-Engaged Scholarship

Challenges:

Faculty often struggle to articulate their scholarly engagement coherently.

Scholarship efforts are sometimes mistaken as service.

Promotion and tenure (P&T) reviewers seek clear aims and evidence of success.

Crafting a compelling narrative for P&T involves both self-identity and how others perceive you.

Strategy:

Seek external input: Have someone knowledgeable about your work share what they see as most meaningful about your work.

Tell your story by weaving a narrative web - what are the scholarly threads that form the tapestry of your scholarly agenda?

Describe the threads of your scholarship that are community-engaged, but also those that are not. Reviewers need to know how it all connects.

Clearly define the terms of success for those reviewing your work. What did you set out to do and how do you know you've been successful?

Tell your scholarly story using these narrative components:

Agenda: In one sentence, describe the core passion or curiosity that motivates your work.

Threads: Describe 2-3 areas of focus that captures the different projects you've pursued. How do these relate to your agenda? Which of the threads are community-engaged? Not all are likely to be so and that's okay.

Methods/Approaches: Describe what methodology is most appropriate and ethical for each of your scholarly threads.

Collaborators: Describe the thought partners and co-laborers and the essential qualities and characteristics they bring to your scholarly threads.

Audience for Impact: Define specific communities and groups your threads are intended to serve. Describe what success means to them and who is qualified to review this work.

Impact Goals: Describe what you hoped to achieve by pursuing your scholarly threads.

Products/Artifacts: Describe the types of scholarly products that were delivered and how they are used by the impact audiences to make a difference.

Here is an example of how one might map components of their narrative. This example shows how a single agenda can be made up of multiple scholarly threads that are distinct yet related. It is partially completed. What might you expect to see in the empty cells given the information provided? How does this inform your own narrative?

Agenda: Transform the relationship of families and high schools so families and students experience a sense of belonging.					
Threads	**Methods/ Approaches**	**Collaborators**	**Audiences for Impact**	**Impact Goals**	**Products/ Artifacts**
Thread 1: How do principals increase restorative justice practice and participation in high schools?	Participatory Action Research, case study	School principal and guidance counselor, teachers, and parents at a school Undergraduate students enrolled in independent study and summer research	High School administrators, teachers, and families Undergraduate students Principal/school leadership scholars	Increase efficacy of school efforts to engage families Student Learning Increase scholarly record related to PAR methods, as well as findings	Design and delivery of PAR methods Final report to school and parents Presentation to School board Independent Study credit; final paper, conference presentation Conference Presentation Blog (association) peer-reviewed journal
Thread 2: Establish new participatory evaluation methods for assessing restorative practices among school leadership, teachers, and parents.	Culturally Competent Evaluation Methods, single institution	Principals, families, teachers, parent association Graduate student class enrolled in a 600-level course on School Evaluation Methods.			
Thread 3: Effects of local and state policy on student and family engagement with schools	Policy analysis; document analysis,	Faculty colleagues			

TRY IT YOURSELF! What is your scholarly narrative? What is the core passion or curiosity that motivates you to do what you do? What are the threads that you pursue? How do you pursue them? To what ends? Fill out the sheet below.

Agenda:						
Thread	**Methods/ Approaches**	**Collaborators**	**Audiences for Impact**	**Impact Goals**		**Products/ Artifacts**

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Available at https://communityengagement.uncg.edu/our-scholarship/