Envisioning a Public Research Agenda in Los Angeles

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Abstract

The University of California, Los Angeles is an institution founded on a public mission and positioned as a world-renowned research university. This article describes the successes, challenges and future directions of a concerted institutional effort to engage with the broader Los Angeles community to address pressing social issues and needs. The notion of "engaged scholarship" is at the core of the UCLA initiative.

Introduction

Research universities play an important role in the fabric of American life. They produce new knowledge, discoveries, and practices; train the next generation of thinkers, leaders, and professionals; provide widespread access to higher education; and serve as an engine for economic growth. Widespread changes—demographic, political, economic, and technological—over the last quarter of a century have led to a fundamental re-examination of how public universities relate to the broader society (Boyer, 1990). Of primary concern is the perception that universities are unresponsive to the greater social good. Put differently, how do research universities relate to their broader communities while at the same time remain places where "big questions" can be explored in relatively abstract ways without being overly constrained by day-to-day realities of life?

For the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) the question is: How should an elite public research university relate to Los Angeles? The answer to this question is, in no small measure, contextualized by our mission and the unique framework that the State of California has used to model higher education.

The University of California (UC) was founded as a land-grant institution in 1868. Its public mission was further shaped by a statewide master plan one hundred years later. "A Master Plan for Higher Education in California: 1960-1975" (California State Department of Education 1960) defined the work of the UC as serving a particular niche for California higher education, reinforcing the emphasis on research and doctoral-level education, in addition to education of the state's top undergraduates.[1]

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[1] Further information on the California Master Plan for Higher Education can be found at: http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/aboutuc/masterplan.html

Indeed, the UC was mandated as the state's primary academic research institution and the only doctoral-granting institution in the state. Over the years the Master Plan has been affirmed as 'the state's blueprint for providing high-quality and affordable higher education to California's residents.'[2] Even as the plan has been re-examined to address the state's growing population and increasing diversity, the important role of the UC in academic research has not been contested. The UC mission statement, created as part of the 1974-78 Academic Plan, specifically states that the obligations of the University "are shaped and bounded by the central pervasive mission of discovering and advancing knowledge."[3]

The University mission is to serve the public; nonetheless, public commentary, particularly in the early 1990s, began to severely question our commitment to contributing to the public good. In this vein, one community leader remarked, "UCLA is seen as exploitative, only showing up when they want data."[4] This critique was valid in that UCLA—as an institution—did not intentionally nor systematically seek to engage the greater LA community. Rather, many of the faculty, staff, and student community involvements were ad hoc, sporadic, and uneven in their accountability. This is not to diminish, of course, the value of all projects—many were of value and have had significant scholarly and community impact; in some cases, there have been longstanding and fruitful collaborations between deeply committed UCLA personnel and the community.

Aware of the public questioning of UCLA's role in Los Angeles, UCLA Chancellor Albert Carnesale focused on reinvigorating the land-grant mission of the University in our particular urban context. As a result, although public service is implicit in the University of California mission, a focus on partnering with local communities to address pressing social concerns is an aspect of the mission that has gained increased visibility much more recently here at UCLA.

UCLA is perhaps the only highly selective public Research University located in a large, world-class city and as such has been in a unique position to re-imagine the way an urban land-grant institution relates to its broader community; moving from a narrow view of public service as providing outreach services, to a view that emphasizes what we term the discovery dialectic. This concept maintains that engaging in a dynamic process of question and answer between basic science and community experience opens up another realm of intellectual and experiential discovery. As Plato argued in The Republic, "[T]he great science of dialectic or the organization of ideas has no real content; but is only a type of the method or spirit in which the higher knowledge is to be pursued by the spectator of all time and all existence" (Plato, 1993 translation). Put

[2] The UC Mission Statement can be found at
http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/aboutuc/missionstatement.html
[3] "Thoughts from UCLA Faculty Working in the Los Angeles Community." 2000-2001. "UCLA in LA," Internal Focus Group Report. Los Angeles: Office of the Chancellor, UCLA.
[4] Carnesale, A. 1998. A strategy for a great university.
http://www.ucla.edu/chancellor/university/univ_strategy.html

differently, engaging community in a reciprocal partnership is at the heart of this re-imagining process.

In this article we share the history of the "UCLA in LA" initiative and reflect upon our learning in the short time that the initiative has been underway. From describing the creation of the Center to evaluating the various partnerships as well as our own work, we forward the "big questions," as well as laying out the range of considerations that have played into the development of the Center for Community Partnerships model. In examining the challenges encountered where the initiative meets the day-to-day realities of a research university in a large city, we describe the strategies we have used, our successes, and the challenges we face as the work moves forward.

The Ramp-Up: Creating the Center for Community Partnerships

Early in his tenure at UCLA, Chancellor Albert Carnesale identified "UCLA in LA: Partnerships for a Greater Los Angeles" as one of the frontiers of knowledge that embraces UCLA's responsibility as a leader in local, national, and global arenas.[5] By declaring local partnerships as one of his key initiatives, the chancellor brought resources and recognition to bear on the role UCLA was poised to play in Los Angeles. Importantly, the "UCLA in LA" initiative was shaped from the outset in collaboration with the Los Angeles community. To this end, the chancellor and his staff held a series of meetings in 2001 with leaders in the Los Angeles nonprofit, public service, and business communities, as well as with UCLA faculty and staff engaged in community-based work. The goal was to better understand how these constituencies viewed UCLA and to identify areas for developing, strengthening, and extending productive relationships. The end product of these meetings was the outline of a basic model for strategic partnerships that would mutually benefit the University and Los Angeles. The three goals of "UCLA in LA" are to:

1. Create research-driven agendas that improve the quality of life for area residents,
2. Forge links and transfer mechanisms between research and community issues and needs, and
3. Sustain these efforts by infusing this mission into UCLA's teaching, research, and service.

By prioritizing the creation of research-driven agendas and aiming to infuse engaged work into the teaching and research work of the faculty, the Chancellor was tapping into the very core of UCLA—the academic culture. He was not envisioning a new outreach or extension program—either of which would risk being at the margins of the academic core and would not likely be embraced by faculty. Nor was he suggesting an image-building public relations campaign, although there is an element of bringing

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[5] See, UCLA Center for Community Partnerships. 2003. UCLA Center for Community Partnerships 2002-2003 Report. Los Angeles: University of California.

attention to engagement efforts by broadening and deepening existing efforts and encouraging innovation. Rather, the goal of the initiative is to create something that draws upon and strengthens research and teaching in the University in ways which tangibly improve lives in Los Angeles.

To implement the vision of "UCLA in LA," the Chancellor created an Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC) position in his cabinet in 2002. The Associate Vice Chancellor would lead the newly created Center for Community Partnerships, located in the main administration building of the campus. From an organizational standpoint, creating a high-level position, locating the office down the hall from the Chancellor, and assigning resources to the initiative sent a message to the faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the community beyond the campus about the extent of the University's commitment.

Given that the Center was created to strengthen partnerships between the University and the community, the qualifications of the new position merited consideration; the new AVC could either be a community leader or hired from within the University. Both options have advantages: choosing a prominent member of the Los Angeles community would signal a strong commitment to operating from a community perspective. On the other hand, choosing someone from within the University would signal an understanding that an 'inside' perspective is important to get things done in the academic environment. While an academic administrator could have been chosen, the search committee and the Chancellor understood that if the objective was to encourage the faculty to engage in this effort, the leader of the Center would need to understand faculty culture and be respected by the faculty. In the end, a member of the faculty was chosen to lead the Center—a full professor from a large social science department whose scholarly research included communications and communities.

"UCLA in LA," like any new initiative, was not created in a vacuum. A number of community-based activities were undertaken prior to the appointment of the Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC) and the creation of the Center for Community Partnerships. First, in 1999 the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) funded the system-wide Community Education Resource Centers program (CERC) (University of California, 1999). CERC attempted to develop programmatic activities in several Los Angeles area communities. The CERCS were primarily designed to involve the community in a set of discussions about the various roles UCLA might play in developing ongoing relationships with community stakeholders (CERC Background Report, 2001). While some initial goals were accomplished (e.g., student run mentoring programs, internships, and a service-learning class in sociology), the CERC generally failed to develop new programs with substantive depth or significant scholarly intentions. By 2002 the UCOP money had run out and one of the first assignments for the new AVC, Community Partnerships was the very difficult task of sun-setting the CERC program. This task required a delicate balance between redesigning the community engagement model and being sensitive to relationships that had already been established by the CERC. In conjunction with the dean of the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (the administrator previously

assigned to monitor the CERC), the AVC met with both community and campus representatives likely to be impacted by the impending changes. In particular, there were student groups that felt some ownership of the programs. These meetings, however, provided the opportunity to apprise partners of the new programs and to reassure them that they would have the opportunity to participate in future projects.

Another stream of early work was carried out by the UCLA Office of Government and Community Relations. A primary outcome of these efforts was the production of a community directory which was introduced at a campus-wide event in the spring of 2001. In addition, Government and Community Relations began in earnest to build bridges with local elected officials in anticipation of the impending appointment of the AVC. In this regard, the pump was being primed, so-to-speak.

The third early activity was the creation of a Web presence utilizing the GIS mapping capabilities developed by the UCLA Advanced Policy Institute This novel tool was designed to provide UCLA personnel as well as community members a way to utilize the mapping technology forwarded by the Institute to better understand trends and statistics about Los Angeles. In addition, the technology allowed users to map the locations of UCLA community engagements on top of community socio-economic characteristics.

This ramp-up process highlighted several important points. First, the detailed information from the community-based focus group participants about their expectations concerning UCLA's involvement in the civic life of greater Los Angeles was very useful in determining what we were up against. Perhaps the most salient point in these data was the observation that far from resenting UCLA (as the common wisdom told it at the time), the community was eager, indeed hungry, to have UCLA more fully and intentionally at the public table. Second, it was clear that whatever we did must be vetted by and discussed with key opinion leaders in the community. Third, if the initiative was to succeed we had to insure that it had substantive depth, academic excellence, and sustainable programs (something the CERC was unable to do). Fourth, we needed to devote a great deal of energy to decoupling our vision of civic engagement from traditional notions of outreach, service, volunteerism and university extension. Fifth, we needed quick and visible "wins" in terms of our public programs. In short, we realized we had to fundamentally re-engineer the way a selective, public university engaged the broader community.

The Start-Up: Initial Work of the Center

The Center for Community Partnerships focused on creating a unique and forward thinking model of university-community partnerships.vii Our work was informed by the ramp-up process, including reports from the community interviews; our own scan of other institutions, administrators and scholars; and the broad array of lessons learned from our experience with faculty, staff, students, community residents and other stakeholders in Los Angeles.

These data revealed three interrelated, but analytically distinct, models of university-community partnerships—Service and Outreach, Facilitation and Public Relations, and Engaged Scholarship—which are characterized below.

Service and Outreach   Our review of other research universities indicated that this is a common model of university-community partnerships. The primary activities are service-oriented and provide such things as tutoring and mentoring, after school programs, and sending volunteers and students into the schools. These activities are often concentrated in one neighborhood (i.e., the local neighborhood of the university). While in some cases applied research projects inform the work, more often universities offer technical assistance in areas such as the arts, economic development, and public health. The goal of this approach is to concentrate service delivery in the local community utilizing staff, students, and sometimes faculty. These programs tend to operate out of Outreach Offices.

Facilitation and Public Relations   Some universities utilize university-community partnerships as a means to manage external relations. The core goal of this model is to be the conduit through which relationships with the local community are maintained. Like the outreach model, this approach generally calls attention to a particular set of neighborhoods. Activity areas include public events and programs; network creation and development; technical assistance; and image management. Students and faculty are sometimes enlisted to help, but in the main, this approach does not feature an academic component. As with the prior model, the partnership offices are located with External Affairs, University Relations, or Government and Community Relations.

Engaged Scholarship   The notion of engaged scholarship has increasingly been at the core of the Center's work. Barbara Holland, an authority on the role of the university in public life, notes, "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" (Holland, 2005). viii Conversely, academic scholarship is shaped by community knowledge and experience. Put differently, if initiatives like "UCLA in LA" are to succeed at elite research institutions they must have direct connections to research, training of graduate students, and undergraduate education. More importantly, this work must make the case that the dialectic of discovery is a significant method for advancing scholarly work.

Operationally, focusing on engaged scholarship means paying serious attention to aligning core activities with the academic enterprise. With regard to existing programs, we have focused on supporting projects that have the capacity to clearly demonstrate the value of connecting academic activities to community needs. In all, we have designed programmatic activities that reflect the very best principles of engaged scholarship. When starting from scratch, the first step in operationalizing this model, of course, is to develop a staff and an advisory structure.

Organizational Structure: Center Staff   After a series of discussions with key chancellor's office staff, the conclusion was reached that the uncertainty of starting a new unit called for an administrative structure that provided for maximum flexibility. To this end, the architecture of the Center was to start with a small permanent staff, but maintain the capacity to utilize other campus human capital (particularly from External Affairs) on an as-needed basis. So, for example, we were able to draw on personnel from University Communications (media relations, publications, and strategic communications) and Government and Community Relations (connection to public officials) without taking on a large and cumbersome permanent administrative staff. Nonetheless, this arrangement provided access to up to twenty additional personnel who could be utilized on an as-needed basis. This has proven most useful with regards to media relations, publications, and government relations.

The permanent staff assigned to the Center consists of five staff members – the Associate Vice Chancellor, a senior budget analyst, an information technology coordinator, an administrative assistant, and an assistant director. In addition, the Center draws on an evaluator (20 percent); a multi-media producer (15 percent) and two undergraduate work-study students. As of 2003, the Center for Community Learning in the College of Letters and Sciences is an indirect report to the AVC, Community Partnerships. This arrangement was made to accommodate the growing relationship between the partnership programs and credit bearing service-learning courses for undergraduates developed by the Center for Community Learning.

Advisors to the Center   By January 2003, the Center established two key advisory groups led by the AVC, Community Partnerships. The first was the appointment of a 27-member advisory committee made up of University and community leaders. This body was strategically constructed in response to insights derived from the focus groups conducted in 2001. In fact, many of the community leaders who were originally contacted by the chancellor became members of this body. The function of the advisory committee is to provide strategic advice about community issues and stakeholders, aid in the implementation of programs, and to be public ambassadors for "UCLA in LA." The second advisory group was an ad hoc group of key campus advisors comprised of the Associate Vice Chancellor of Development; the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Government and Community Relations; and the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Communications. At the behest of the Vice Chancellor for External Affairs, this group met on a regular basis to advise the Associate Vice Chancellor and support the development of programs.

The Center for Community Partnerships: Engaged Scholarship Programs and Activities

The Center's programmatic activities are designed to promote academic initiatives with Los Angeles. Over the last three years the Center for Community Partnerships has developed three core programs of engaged scholarship:

- Funded partnership opportunities for the faculty, professional staff and community-based organizations.
- The Rosenfield Distinguished Community Partnership Prize and Distinguished Community Leader Award.
- Community Knowledge Forums.

Funded Partnerships   One of the very tangible ways that the work of the Center is supported by the Chancellor is through the allocation of UCLA Foundation funds (private money donated to the University) that support partnerships between UCLA faculty and staff and Los Angeles communities. Annually, the Center offers funding on a competitive basis for proposed partnerships between faculty/professional staff and organizations in Los Angeles. One program provides funds to UCLA faculty or professional staff working with local nonprofit organizations; the second makes funds available directly to Los Angeles nonprofits collaborating with UCLA faculty and staff partners. Support has been for one year, though we have modified the program to fund two-year partnerships (see discussion below). The proposals are reviewed by the advisory committee and the Center staff. The primary goal of the funded partnerships is to seed projects reflective of engaged scholarship. In this regard, the successful proposals not only identify important areas of focus and novel approaches to examining them; they also effectively articulate the nature of the proposed partnership. That is, they are able to make a compelling case for how the partnership produces mutual benefits (a "win-win" outcome).

Each proposal is considered a model collaboration that links community knowledge and expertise with that of the campus. The funding supports program outputs and outcomes (rather than staff salary). The model collaborations include adherence to the Center's principles of partnership, an accountability process involving all partners through written progress reports, site visits, evaluations, and dissemination of the work accomplished.

The first two years of funded partnerships have supported ninety-two projects in the amount of 2.6 million dollars. The program has provided many opportunities for academic boundary-crossing and interdisciplinary work and has provided over a half-million dollars in funding (through the partnerships) for graduate student support. The funded partnerships thus play a role in educating the next generation of scholars as well as addressing issues of interest in Los Angeles communities.

The projects cover a diverse range of campus units and disciplines, as well as multiple community partners and geographic communities: medicine, world arts and cultures, bio-chemistry, education, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, engineering, ethno-musicology, dance, digital media arts, public affairs, urban planning, film, and pediatrics. Similarly, community partners represent organizations both large and small, from the San Fernando valley to East Los Angeles to South Los Angeles.

It is useful to highlight a handful of the partnerships. For example, a professor in psychiatry is partnering with an umbrella organization of Asian American social

agencies to document the prevalence of and preconditions for gambling addiction in Asian American communities. The basic research ranges from developing survey instruments to document the incidence to bench science to isolate genetic predisposition for problem gambling. In concert, the nonprofit partners are helping to develop intervention tools to be utilized by social service agencies serving the affected communities. This project has received heightened attention in recent months due to several high profile family homicides in which Asian men with large gambling debts killed themselves and their families.

Another interesting project has been the development of nanotechnology kits by a professor in bio-chemistry to help area public high school teachers teach advanced nanoscience to their students. The professor is using the development and implementation of the tool kits to train graduate students in the fundamentals of nanoscience pedagogy.

A third project, led by the chair of the department of Ethnomusicology, archives old recordings and traces the history of gospel music in Los Angeles. This project has also attracted a great deal of attention and was recently featured in a multi-page spread in the UCLA Magazine. This project is in the process of digitizing important gospel works that have been languishing on wax to make them available for public and scholarly uses. In addition, the faculty member is writing the definitive piece on the importance of Los Angeles (and its recording industry) to the development and history of this originally American art form.

A fourth project is underway for which a full professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese began 'planting the seeds' six years ago, when she and other professors developed a department-wide Service Committee. The committee's purpose is to 'further departmental involvement in the greater Los Angeles community.' The current funded work, unanimously approved by the Service Committee and supported by the chair, involves faculty, undergraduates and graduate students working to develop positive relations between Black and Latino communities in Los Angeles through the implementation of Spanish language academies for African American youth ages six to twelve. In addition to addressing an important community issue, two aspects of this project stand out: (1) it is one of several efforts underway for this professor and the department, and (2) many members of the department are committed to this partnership, both during and after the funded program ends. The partners project dovetails with the department's new major, Spanish and Community and Culture, and Language Academy classes will serve as internship sites for Spanish and Portuguese undergraduates.

These are but a few examples of the wonderfully significant projects that the Center has supported. Perhaps more importantly, these projects have found that engaging the community in scholarly pursuits has pushed the boundary of intellectual discovery in ways that could not be accomplish solely through basic research paradigms.

Assessment of the funded partnership program has revealed the importance and power of the funded partnerships for research. The development of a funding program immediately put us on the map and created a focal point for internal and external constituencies. The program provides us with the opportunity to identify, develop, and promote model partnerships meeting the highest values of academic excellence. While the scope and direction will undergo some changes, the basic point remains the same: this program is at the core of our work.

The Rosenfield Distinguished Community Partnership Prize   This program is designed to publicly recognize ongoing or one-time collaborations between UCLA faculty or staff and community residents or nonprofit organizations that have already enhanced the quality of life in Southern California communities in meaningful and measurable ways. Each award is made jointly to the principal UCLA participant and the community partner, thereby publicly recognizing and uniting the two halves of the "UCLA in LA" partnership. We have awarded twelve prizes since the program's inception in 2003, totaling $220,000. The Rosenfield Prize reception attracts a large audience and receives widespread media coverage.

Community Knowledge Forums   The purpose of the forums is to share the learning, results, and best practices that derive from our partnership projects. The forums are organized by geography, issue domain, or theme. The first forum brought several of our East LA partnerships together for a public discussion of the partnerships and their impact on the quality of life in East LA's neighborhoods. The second forum, held at the Museum of Tolerance, featured several of our projects that examine the broad theme of tolerance and civil society in Los Angeles. The third forum, held at the Los Angeles Central Library, highlighted four model partnerships that address the issue of mental health.

Undergraduate Education

The Center for Community Learning represents the undergraduate curricular arm of the Chancellor's "UCLA in LA" Initiative. It serves undergraduates, faculty who teach undergraduates and community partners through a clearinghouse model. The Center for Community Learning provides faculty development, student advisement and supervision, and a portal for community partners interested in academic credit-bearing partnerships through a variety of UCLA courses. The Center for Community Learning Director works with the Academic Senate to create and enforce policies on academic standards for undergraduate service learning courses and internships. Graduate students work as Teaching Assistants assigned to service learning courses and academic credit-bearing internships to promote civic engagement, assist faculty with community partnerships, provide mentoring to undergraduates, and acquire valuable training for future careers as the next generation of academics. The Center is also home to the undergraduate minor in "Civic Engagement" which provides an academic context for students who wish to have an intensive research project around a policy issue related to an extended community-based internship at the local, state or national level.

This work with undergraduates is critical, in that it includes academic rigor and faculty involvement. It presents a model that contrasts sharply with volunteerism or "community service," which is available to students through entities housed within Student Affairs.

Together, the Center for Community Partnerships and the Center for Community Learning build the capacity of community partners. For example, an agency working on a funded partnership might benefit from the assistance of undergraduate students once the project is completed. In this way, the work of the project can be extended and undergraduates get access to research and service projects normally reserved for graduate students. Joint staff meetings and site visits encourage collaboration across disciplines and connect students at all levels with partnership work.

The Center Director partnered in one of the first Center-funded partnerships, working with public health nonprofits on a new service learning research course on program evaluation. Staff members from agencies enroll in a course alongside UCLA undergraduates. Together they evaluate a program operating in Los Angeles, while learning important research skills in the class. A final culminating event presents these research findings to an audience of campus and community leaders, creating new skills and products for the agencies and a new potential career path in public service for undergraduates. The course and program have continued each year, and are now a permanent part of the Center's budget, sustaining this work into the future.

Evaluation of the Center's Work

The evaluation of the Center's activities takes place on two levels: On the first level, the "micro" level, we evaluate each of our funded partnerships in collaboration with the projects themselves. The evaluation activities include mid-year progress and final reports completed by the funding recipients, with oversight by Center staff, including an evaluation specialist. We have found that monitoring the progress of the partnership—particularly conducting site visits to the projects—has been extremely useful as a mechanism to strengthen the partnership and our work. Our 'hands-on' approach to monitoring the partnerships by visiting the community organizations has taken some by surprise. Several people from community organizations have shared that they have received grants in the past but have not experienced a 'funder' take such an active interest in their work. Of course, site visits and regular communication serves our interests as well; we want the partnerships to succeed and sustain where possible.

The second level of evaluation, the "macro" level, entails collecting data from the many partnerships and analyzing it systematically. We have maintained a very practical focus for our evaluation work, in keeping with the values of engaged scholarship. This has meant that data from a variety of sources is used with the intention of improving our work. For instance, we wanted to know whether it was better to fund graduate students directly or to fund faculty members who in turn use grant funds to hire graduate students. We examined data from budget documents and evaluation reports to analyze differences in process and outcomes between the two approaches. Our site

visit impressions were thus confirmed—there were some very strong projects funded both ways, but the goals of the Center were better met when graduate students were funded through faculty members.

In a slightly less formal manner, the entire staff of the Center collectively evaluates each of our other initiatives (Community Knowledge Forums, Rosenfield Prize program, other convenings) in the form of debriefing shortly after the event. For example, with the Community Knowledge Forums, we discuss our own impressions, participant reactions, the extent to which new networks or connections were made, the number of press articles generated, the success of our strategy to publicize the event, participant turnout, and logistical considerations such as parking facilities and event location. Since we are a small staff, these debriefings are very productive and certainly shape future convenings.

Challenges

The first three years of the Center focused on building an organizational and advisory structure, developing initial programmatic activities, and evaluating initial outcomes. Over the last six months, we have spent a good deal of time taking stock of where we are and outlining the next phase of the Center's development. We have created and strengthened our core programs, developed many relationships across campus and in the community, and supported engaged scholarship in numerous ways.

Nonetheless, several challenges remain. One of the most important challenges we continue to face is changing campus perceptions of our work. While we feel we have made some headway in distinguishing ourselves from outreach, extension and service, we have farther to go. In particular, we must continue to find ways to communicate and work with the various deans to encourage them to develop mechanisms to integrate engaged scholarship into their ongoing activities. One hopeful sign is a current discussion initiated by regarding the Provost requiring deans to report on their engaged scholarship activities in the strategic planning process. Indeed, connecting to the deans in meaningful ways is one of our central challenges.

Likewise, we must to a better job of connecting our work institutionally to the academic administration of the campus. To this end we have met several times with the leadership of the Academic Senate to discuss the various ways in which we might work together to provide better information and opportunities to the faculty. For instance, we are in the early stages of a conversation with the Senate about a joint funding project that would expand the reach of our model partnerships.

We are also concerned with how other campus representatives characterize our work to the outside world. While we have found some University staff members willing to actually think about the conceptual differences between outreach and engaged scholarship, most people fall into the easy default frame of outreach. If our work is to have significant influence on the institution and the community we must find more effective ways of getting our message across. In effect, this means building our

strategic communications capacity in order to have greater control over the content and frequency of our information flow. We comment below on staff restructuring as it relates to communications.

Finally, an important challenge is long-term sustainability to fully achieve a robust Center for engaged scholarship. As they say, "if we knew then what we know now," we would have pushed much harder for the creation of an endowment in the context of the recently completed development campaign. If "UCLA in LA" is going to be a viable initiative over the long haul there needs to be an endowment or other form of sustained support.

The Evolution: Future Directions for the Center

The Center for Community Partnerships is entering a new phase of civic engagement with greater Los Angeles. While continuing the programs currently in place, this work centers on three programmatic activities: placed-based sites for engaged scholarship, revisions to the funding opportunities program, and new academic initiatives. To support these activities, we are in the process of modifying advisory board functions and revisiting our staffing structure.

Placed-based Initiative   Our work with faculty and community partners has also involved the exploration of place-based partnerships. Over the last twelve months we began to develop a strategy to extend our programming to include a portfolio of place-based activities. This process included convening a meeting to gauge faculty interest in the establishment of a site in south Los Angeles (over forty faculty attended); consulting key members of our advisory committee; and meeting with important community stakeholders working in south Los Angeles. While the initial strategy of "letting a thousand flowers bloom" was the right choice for our start-up phase, it is now clear that our evolution must incorporate some place-based programming. This allows us to direct some of our attention and resources to specific communities where faculty expertise and community needs converge.

The rationale for the place-based strategy is based on the observation that while we have covered a great deal of ground—both figuratively and literally—the capacity to focus our energies on one community (to start) will allow us to more rigorously measure and evaluate the impact of engaged scholarship on a set of jointly defined community outcomes. As it stands, the current model is too diffuse across a wide range of community and scholarly interests. Nonetheless, we will also continue to support model partnerships across the broader Los Angeles community. In short, we are embarking on a mixed-method strategy which allows for both breadth and depth.

Moving a place-based initiative forward requires a thorough planning process. The planning process will be a significant three-year active engagement project between the University and communities, supported by external funding. Not simply devoted to collecting data and making plans for some future time, the process will help to build the network of relationships integral to our future success in these and other

communities. The primary purpose of the plan is to identify the various activities and services; research, training, and teaching opportunities; potential sites; and fiscal needs that will provide the greatest opportunities for success. This process will be informed by a joint community-University advisory board and by the community members hired to manage parts of the initiative. We envision the first two years as foundational to establishing a set of practical and feasible action steps to be undertaken in the respective communities. We intend year three to be a year of transition between the phase of planning and exploration with our partners, and the set of ongoing activities deriving from the first two years.

We propose to collaborate with all stakeholders on an evaluation process for the place-based initiative, knowing that the evaluation plan itself will be developed as the strategic action plan unfolds. We look forward to the scholarly process of examining our work and systematically assessing the project outputs and partnership sustainability as well as the opportunity to engage with all stakeholders in the fruitful process of planning for evaluation. In all, the information shared, perspectives and challenges acknowledged, and relationships established provide the basis for the formation of authentic partnerships, above and beyond the tangible outcomes of the planning phase.

Revision of the Funded Partnerships Program   Our initial strategy for the funded partnerships was to cast as broad a net as possible so that we might get a fast and comprehensive scan of the capacity, magnitude, and quality of potential campus and community partners. In the main, this was the right decision. We have received well over four hundred requests for funding and believe we now have a pretty good read on the universe of observations. What we learned was that one-year projects typically required eighteen to twenty months for completion. The disjuncture between the university calendar (as well as the pace of university work) and the nonprofit calendars is the primary reason projects took longer than planned. This has several implications. We have come to the view that it makes more sense to fund projects for a longer period of time (twenty-four months). This has the benefit of allowing the partnership ample time to form and collaborate. Further, it creates the opportunity for more meaningful and sustained impact. While we have been nothing short of amazed at how effective the one-year partnerships have been it raises the tantalizing prospect of even greater community and scholarly rewards.

Revision of the Center Staff and Advisory Committee   The new initiatives require some changes to the Center's staff. In particular, we anticipate adding personnel to support the place-based work, re-purpose the IT position to a staff writer position to document the work and create new communication vehicles, add a part-time multimedia producer to create new electronic products, acquire more time from our evaluation specialist, and create a new administrative support position.

To be sure, the advisory committee was extremely useful in helping to select the funded partnerships. This was particularly true given our strategic decision to encourage submissions from as wide a pool of applicants as possible. The knowledge and expertise of the community leaders on the committee was invaluable. As we move

towards a more focused approach to funding partnerships, it is time for the committee to play a different role. The main thrust involves using the committee in a much more strategic fashion. For example, we intend to turn to specific members for advice on how to engage particular communities and their leaders. Similarly, we may call on them to host fundraising events, make introductions, or help with communications. We need to be ever more vigilant in communicating with this body, something that we have been inconsistent in executing.

New Academic Initiatives   We continue to align our work with the core academic imperatives of the campus; namely, research, teaching, and service. To this end we are in the planning process with other UCLA and community leaders to more fully and intentionally develop a number of programs and activities over the next several years that promote scholarly discovery and social application. Some examples:

Pre-doc and post-doc fellows   Our connections to campus and community experts on a wide range of topics makes a fellows program particularly attractive. The goal is to provide opportunities for young scholars to pursue projects of engaged scholarship that focus on Los Angeles.

Visiting scholar program   A comparative advantage of UCLA is its location in world-class city. Given this, we plan to establish a national program that offers a visiting scholar the opportunity to work on a scholarly project that has Los Angeles as its focus. We anticipate building on relationships we have with the (undergraduate) College and the professional schools to identify high quality applicants. In addition, this has the potential to serve as a pipeline for faculty recruitment on any number of fronts.

Occasional paper series   We plan to develop a paper series designed to publish engaged scholarship (with a focus on Los Angeles) from a deep pool of faculty and community thought leaders. Such a series could provide the foundation for an edited volume.

Curriculum development   We are building on the productive relationship we have enjoyed with the Center for Community Learning. In particular, we are working to develop an instructional development program that provides support to faculty interested in developing either service learning courses or new classroom-based courses that examine the broad theme of civic engagement in Los Angeles.

Scholarly convenings   We plan to convene conferences and workshops (statewide and national) that extend our work in engaged scholarship.

Undergraduate student award   We plan to develop an undergraduate awards program that recognizes outstanding UCLA students who exemplify a commitment to engaged scholarship. This program would be folded in with the Rosenfield Prize program.

Implications

The early years of the Center have been ones of excitement and great learning for us and our partners. Now we'd like to turn our attention to the question of "Where do we go from here?" In other words, what are the implications of our work and learning? The implications we share here reflect our belief that this work challenges the status quo of the University culture, and we see the role of the Center as not only facilitating partnerships between campus and communities, but also as working to strengthen the University community's commitment to engaged scholarship.

The next developmental stage of our work will no doubt involve increased collaboration with the UCLA Academic Senate. First and foremost will be the development of new standards for retention, tenure and promotion that include criteria for the review of engaged scholarship. It is critical to revise and reform the faculty rewards system to incorporate this brand of scholarship. Deans, department chairs and academic personnel review committees must be provided with tools to evaluate the scholarly value of community-based work as well as the impact that teaching and research are having on the communities of Los Angeles. Without such tools, it is impossible to determine whether a certain project has the depth and scope to qualify as serious research within a variety of academic disciplines.

Further, the work of the Center must be sustained over time. After the initial development stages and the strengthening of relationships and programs with reciprocal benefit, we now look to secure permanent funding. This too, will be a collaborative process between the Center and the Chancellor's office. Endowments from private donors provide the type of foundation from which to deliver ongoing and consistent scholarship, and grants or other shorter-term funding can develop more innovative pilot projects and partnerships.

Conceptually, our work must continue to push frontiers of new knowledge and produce new models of engaged scholarship. The models must emphasize the shared and distinct value of such scholarship to urban communities as well as to faculty and the larger University community. By reflecting on our ongoing work, networking with other institutions and communities, and learning from our mistakes, we can create new partnerships. These partnerships emerge from the vision of faculty who provide both training in research and new forms of curriculum, and the vision of the community which likewise has a role in training new scholars and strengthening research while simultaneously building strong and healthy communities.

Finally, we respect the critical need for increased evaluation and assessment activities and a commitment to studying the development of civic engagement activities in a research university. This will not only provide important data for program or course modifications but also mechanisms for disseminating data on the process and outcome of engaged scholarship.

Five years ago the UCLA Chancellor set out to reinvigorate the University's commitment to Los Angeles. We have shared here some of the successes and challenges faced in the early years of this institutional commitment. As the Center grows and strengthens partnerships with Los Angeles in multiple ways, we hope to contribute to strengthening scholarship through engagement and to improving lives in our community.

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