Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum, (ISSN 1047-8485) is published by Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) on behalf of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities. Abstracts of *Metropolitan Universities* articles appear in *Sociological Abstracts, Social Planning/Policy Development Abstracts, Sociology of Education Abstracts, Higher Education Abstracts,* and *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts*, and are indexed in Current Index to Journals in Education (ERIC).

Send editorial correspondence and proposals for articles to: Barbara A. Holland, Executive Editor, Metropolitan Universities Journal, IUPUI, University College, 815 W. Michigan Street, UC 3140, Indianapolis, IN 46202 or e-mail bahollan@iupui.edu. Send business communications, permissions, subscription orders, and change of address requests (send old label or address along with your new address) to: Harriett Bennett, Publisher, *Metropolitan Universities* Journal, IUPUI, University College, 815 W. Michigan Street, UC 3140, Indianapolis, IN 46202. Claims for missing numbers can be honored only three months for domestic addresses, and six months for foreign addresses. Duplicate copies will not be sent to replace ones undelivered due to failure to notify the publisher of change of address. Advertising rates and information are available from the publisher at the above address, or you can telephone at 317- 274-5036 or fax at 317-278-6900. All copy is subject to publisher's approval. For more information, visit our Web site at muj.uc.iupui.edu/.

Postmaster: If this publication is undeliverable, please send notice to: *Metropolitan Universities*, IUPUI, University College, 815 W. Michigan Street, UC 3140, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

Subscription Rates: Individuals: $55/1 year, $95/2 years; Institutions: $105/1 year, $185/2 years. For all subscriptions outside the USA, add $26 per year for surface mail or $46 per year for air mail (payment must be in U.S. funds). Current and back copies are $20 per issue. Visit our website (muj.uc.iupui.edu) to view the back issues available for purchase. For information concerning orders, please contact Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis at the above address. All European and Israeli orders should be sent to Swets-Blackwell Publishing Service, Heereweg 347, 2161 CA, Lisse, The Netherlands.

Photocopier Users and Librarians: The appearance of the fee listed below indicates the copyright owner's consent that copies of articles may be made for personal use or internal use, or for personal or internal use of specific clients. This consent is given on the condition, however, that the copier pay the per copy cost fee of $10.00 per article, feature, or book review plus 15 cents per page, or $20 for entire copy of the journal for copying beyond that permitted by Sections 107 or 108 of the U.S. Copyright Law. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying, such as for general distribution, for advertising or promotional purposes, for creating new collective works, or for resale.

Cover photography by shutterstock.com / Arthimedes

Curricular Innovation: Engaged Capstones at Portland State University

CONTENTS

Sustaining Innovation: Capstones, Curriculum, and Community Partnerships at Portland State University

Amy Spring

Portland State University (PSU) is honored to have the opportunity to create this special issue of *Metropolitan Universities*. "Curricular Innovation: Engaged Capstones at Portland State University" has offered PSU the meaningful opportunity to reflect and identify some of the hallmarks that have contributed to the successful launch, evolution, and sustainability of the university's community engagement efforts. This publication shares the story and the lessons derived from PSU's innovative general education reform, particularly in regard to the senior-level capstone which is the signature and culminating aspect of our community-engaged curriculum. Articles also review complementary pedagogical practices and institutional policies, and some recent innovations in the engagement agenda at PSU. This issue is meant to provide illustrations and lessons learned that we hope will prove useful to other faculty, administrators, and campus communities that wish to initiate or advance engaged learning and community-campus partnership activities within their curricular contexts.

2015 marks the twentieth anniversary of Portland State University's implementation of the capstone program. As one of the first and largest community-based education programs in the country, the capstone at PSU engages upper-division, multi-disciplinary teams of students in a six-credit course that collaborates with a community partner to respond to a community-identified need. With 240 capstone courses working with 130 community partners to engage 4,300 students in community-based applied learning settings annually, we believe we have discovered useful ideas and practices to share. These unique courses have served for two decades as the backbone of PSU's community engagement efforts and have proved to be a durable, sustainable, and effective model. On the occasion of this significant anniversary, we are pleased to share how this distinctive aspect of our undergraduate curriculum shapes teaching and learning for students and faculty, contributes to communities and community partners in meaningful ways, and has ultimately served as a catalyst for the expansion of community engagement that touches virtually all corners of the campus.

Historical and Demographic Context

Portland State University is a fifty-acre campus situated in downtown Portland, Oregon, enrolling more than 22,000 undergraduate and 5,600 graduate students. This urban-serving university celebrates its well-known motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the

City," by animating the student and faculty teaching and research experience with engagement opportunities that use a variety of learning and research models to link the campus community in partnership with community organizations for mutual benefit. In the early 1990s, PSU reformed its undergraduate general education requirements to include a six-credit, senior-level, multi-disciplinary, community-based capstone course, situated within University Studies, PSU's innovative general education model that features intentional pathways of tiered learning. In the capstone, students and faculty work with community partners collaboratively to respond to a community-identified concern. In 1994, the article "A Model for Comprehensive Reform in General Education: Portland State University" was published in the *Journal of General Education*; it provides the specific details of our unique curricular model that is the foundation of PSU's success as a leader in curricular innovation and community-university partnerships (White 1994).

On the national scene, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) in 1994 to promote the union of higher education and local communities (HUD 2015). Central to the mission of OUP was the involvement of higher education institutions in the creation of jobs and healthier communities (HUD 2015). OUP launched several new grant initiatives that greatly increased national attention to the mutual benefit of campus-community partnerships. At the same time, PSU was beginning to examine the role of community-based learning in its new vision for a structured and challenging general education program. The intersection between the establishment of OUP and conversations about how to bring community engagement alive in the educational experience of PSU students greatly informed the initial development of the capstone program.

More than twenty years later, community-university partnerships are at the forefront of teaching and research initiatives focused on community growth and sustainability for many higher education institutions around the world. Anchor institutions are recognized by OUP as exemplars of universities' and nonprofit organizations' commitment to local communities (HUD 2015). Significant engagement work ranges from small-scale projects with short-term objectives to larger projects carried out over several years and engaging students and faculty from multiple courses, schools, and colleges. The diversity of community-university partnerships reinforces the need to develop an understanding for the nuances associated with developing authentic relationships between communities and institutions of higher learning. There are remarkable examples of successful community-university partnerships in which the community and university work together to develop and achieve shared goals (Cooper et al. 2014; Sandy and Holland 2006).

Over the many years of our community-engaged practices, PSU faculty, students, and administrators have implemented this full range of partnerships and have learned how to support and sustain¬ individual course-level efforts as well as multi-year projects that engage a variety of community and university stakeholders. Grounded in the foundational literature surrounding community-based teaching, learning, and research, and informed by effective engagement collaborations and practices over the twenty

years of our experience, PSU has developed some expertise in these arenas, particularly relating to curriculum with the power and possibility to transform campus and community. Therefore, this journal issue focuses on the story and model of our community-based capstone courses.

Included in This Issue

The articles included in this special issue of *Metropolitan Universities* detail some of the important lessons learned in partnership and curricular development that reveal the way engagement plays out in the lives of faculty, students, and community partners. Twenty years of sustained, engaged pedagogy and research have informed how the university defines and forwards faculty professional support efforts, assessment practices, methods of partnership development, systems that support the varied curricular and co-curricular interests of students, and a diversity of projects that are variably suited for students depending on where they are in their academic development.

Partnership activities at PSU began with the implementation of the University Studies curriculum and, more specifically, with the offering of the community-based capstone courses. Over time, partnership activities have made their way into university policy, faculty scholarship and research, and the overall student experience. We have honed our competence in offering community-based capstones and have more recently expanded our work to include community-based research, the development of an institutional commitment to strategic partnerships, focused partnership agendas that target work in geographically bounded communities, and the expansion of community-based teaching using online learning platforms. These innovations in PSU's engagement work are only possible because of the powerful commitment to the idea that community engagement is essential to realization of the university's mission. Establishing and sustaining the capstone program initially catalyzed and continues to reinforce that message.

"Sustaining Change: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned from Twenty Years of Empowering Students through Community-Based Learning Capstones" outlines the essential building blocks that make the capstone program effective as one of the largest and longest sustained community-based education programs in higher education today. Author Seanna M. Kerrigan expands on the historical and institutional contexts of the program's design; describes structural and operational issues related to the program, including those involving staffing and budget; and offers nuts-and-bolts details involved in efficiently managing a program of this size and scope.

In "Connecting Curriculum to Community Research: Professional Services, Research, and Teaching," W. Barry Messer and Peter Collier describe a successful and long-running partnership program with local governmental organizations. This program, which originated as a single pilot capstone course, has effectively engaged many students and faculty in community-based teaching and research in paid and unpaid roles that produce scholarly outcomes as well as useful outputs which inform regional waste management policy.

"Cultivating Community: Faculty Support for Teaching and Learning" identifies how the capstone program encourages internal community-building among faculty as a means to provide professional support for those who are teaching community-based courses. Celine Fitzmaurice highlights the ways that the program's faculty support and assessment efforts align and inform individual professional growth and overall programmatic improvement.

Seanna M. Kerrigan, Vicki L. Reitenauer and Nora Arevalo-Meier describe lessons learned about "Enacting True Partnerships within Community-Based Learning: Faculty and Community Partners Reflect on the Challenges of Engagement." Their article is based on the results of a qualitative study of faculty and community partner perspectives. Interviews with these practitioners give voice to both the challenges of partnership and its rewards, and offer new insights on effective collaboration among faculty, community partners, and students.

"Putting Impact First: Community-University Partnerships to Advance Authentic Neighborhood Sustainability," by Michelle L. Holliday, Tony DeFalco, and Jacob D. B. Sherman, describes how the Institute for Sustainable Solutions focuses its partnership activities in geographically defined neighborhoods to create synergy among the efforts of numerous faculty members and students. In the spirit of their collaboration, this article is co-authored by a PSU staff member, a PSU graduate student, and a community partner.

"To This Day: College Graduates on the Lasting Significance of Relationality and Experiential Learning" describes a long-term partnership that has engaged more than 3,500 students in an intensive, transformative, educational experience with persons experiencing significant disabilities. Grounded in the critical incident technique, Ann Fullerton and Vicki L. Reitenauer provide insights about what characterizes students' most significant learning experiences in college and generalizes the applicability of these factors beyond community-based learning settings.

"'Contagious Co-Motion': Student Voices on Being Change Agents" highlights a unique course among capstone offerings—one in which students select their own community partners and pursue projects related to those collaborations. The authors, Vicki L. Reitenauer, Tetiana Korzun, Kimberly Lane, and Melinda Roberts, include three students who offer their experiences and perspectives in their own voices, as they reflect on how a course can build on their personal backgrounds and interests in ways that propel them to heightened levels of leadership around social and political issues of their choosing.

"Online Community-Based Learning as the Practice of Freedom: The Online Capstone Experience at Portland State University," by Deborah Smith Arthur and Zapoura Newton-Calvert, describes initiatives that have launched online community-based courses and which continue to work toward the successes in student learning and engagement that mark face-to-face community-based courses. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature around online learning, the authors reflect on

their teaching practices, lessons learned, and further opportunities for curricular development and community engagement in the online realm.

"From Capstones to Strategic Partnerships: The Evolution of Portland State University's Community Engagement and Partnership Agenda" provides the framework of a recently developed partnership typology and an administrative structure that is being used on campus to systematically understand, organize, and manage partnerships within a highly decentralized campus context. Written by Erin Flynn, the article includes a case study reflecting how the university is engaging a strategic partnership agenda through multiple units, schools, and colleges in collaboration with a large public utility.

"Beyond the University: An Initiative for Continuing Engagement among Alumni" describes a recently implemented pilot program that harnessed the enthusiasm students have for the community work they do in their capstones and moved them into supported roles as change agents in their communities in their transition from students to alumni. The authors, David Osborn, Jennifer Alkezweeny, and Kevin Kecskes offer two theoretical models that ground this program and reflect on insights garnered from this of-the-moment effort.

Conclusion

It is our hope that these articles will help the reader understand how the capstone program has served as a cornerstone of much of the community engagement work PSU has done over the last twenty years. The bold and important decisions that were made back in the early 1990s, that resulted in undergraduate general education reform and the embedding of community-based learning into the requirements of nearly all students receiving an undergraduate degree from PSU, have shaped a host of additional engagement activities. The ingenuity and enduring commitment of all those who engage in this work allows us to celebrate the sustained changed and continuing growth of PSU's engagement efforts. The lessons learned from this unusually large, effective, and sustained model of engaged learning may inform and encourage other institutions as they design engaged curriculum in the context of their mission.

We, the guest editors of this issue (Amy Spring, Vicki Reitenauer and Seanna Kerrigan), deeply thank the authors included in this publication for their scholarly approach to teaching and learning, engaged research, and reciprocal partnership practices. Special thanks to public administration graduate student Nora Arevalo-Meier for her exceptional research contributions to many parts of this collection.

We are grateful for this opportunity to reflect on this effective model of engaged learning and partnerships, and we hope readers will find applicable elements and ideas that will advance the community-university partnership movement on their own campuses.

References

Cooper, Jonathan G., Zeenat Kotval-K, Zenia Kotval, and John Mullin. 2014. "University Community Partnerships." *Humanities* 3 (1): 88–101. doi: 10.3390/h3010088.

Sandy, Marie, and Barbara A. Holland. 2006. "Different Worlds and Common Ground: Community Partner Perspectives on Campus-Community Partnerships." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 13 (1): 30-43.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). 2015. "Portland State University: Partnering to Serve the City of Portland with Knowledge." Retrieved August 27. http://www.huduser.org/portal/casestudies/study_08132015_1.html.

White, Charles R. 1994. "A Model for Comprehensive Reform in General Education: Portland State University." *The Journal of General Education* 43 (3): 168-229.

Author Information

In her role as community research and partnership director, Amy Spring works with PSU students, faculty, staff, and community partners to facilitate and support the growth of community partnerships. She has spent a significant part of her career working on institutional change efforts related to engagement, while also facilitating faculty and student workshops focused on community engagement and coordinating recruitment of students and faculty to participate in applied community-based teaching.

Amy Spring
Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships
Portland State University
PO Box 751 - RSP
Portland, OR 97207
E-mail: springa@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-5582

Sustaining Change: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned from Twenty Years of Empowering Students through Community-Based Learning Capstones

Seanna M. Kerrigan

Abstract

More than four thousand students engage in the community-based learning capstone program every year by enrolling in one of 240 senior-level courses that culminate their undergraduate education. In this article, the author shares the context and history of the program, its foundational principles and processes, and the nuts-and-bolts details of the ongoing operation of the largest community-based learning capstone program in the United States.

Each year scores of institutions of higher education contact the capstone office at Portland State University (PSU) to inquire about our nationally-recognized capstone program. Each entity wants to know how Portland State has implemented, sustained, funded, and assessed the largest community-based capstone program in the nation for two decades. The intent of this article is 1) to answer the most frequently asked questions about our model, with the hope of sharing some of our evolving best practices and 2) to continue a national dialogue on student community engagement and the value of culminating community-based learning experiences for undergraduate students.

What is a Capstone at Portland State University?

At PSU, a capstone course is a required six-credit, culminating, general education course situated within University Studies, PSU's general education program. Each of these community-based learning courses typically takes place in an intensive one-quarter seminar-style format led by faculty drawn from various ranks within the university and from the community as adjunct faculty members. The capstone actively engages interdisciplinary teams of students with a community partner, where they collaborate within the community to address pressing societal issues and develop a final product that serves the community partner. Every capstone is required to address the four University Studies learning goals: communication, critical thinking, the appreciation of the diversity of the human experience, and social and ethical responsibility.

One example of a PSU capstone course is Grant Writing for Environmental Advocacy. In this course, sixteen students work in a collaborative learning environment with one

faculty member (who teaches the course in-load) and one community partner (such as the Northwest Outdoor Science School, which engages school-age youth in activities to promote environmental awareness and literacy and participate in community problem-solving). Students in this course experience lectures, discussions, and hands-on activities to learn the skills and strategies of grant writing, as well as relevant information about the importance of science education, environmental awareness, K-12 funding pressures, and equity issues in our schools. Students research viable grant opportunities and write a real grant for their community partner. This type of partnership models genuine mutuality and reciprocity, as students learn about real-world issues, develop marketable professional skills, and critically analyze educational equity issues, while the community partner benefits directly in receiving a portfolio of targeted grant proposals for immediate use with a variety of funding sources.

While the vast majority of capstone students at PSU engage in richly interdisciplinary capstone courses, about 15 percent of our students participate in our largest capstone course, which is specific to the School of Business Administration. Students with majors in finance, accounting, marketing, human resources, and real estate create business or marketing plans for an entrepreneur, company (frequently minority-run and/or small start-ups), or nonprofit that could otherwise not afford to hire professional consultants. In this capstone, students learn and apply essential business strategies content as well as deepen their understanding of complex community issues. Community partners have been thoroughly impressed by the quality of work that the students complete in this course and confirm that they would not have been able to afford to access this expertise for their organizations otherwise.

A growing number of our capstones work with incarcerated persons, partnering with a gardening program at a women's correctional facility, writing programs for incarcerated youth, and an Inside-Out course that brings fifteen PSU students together with fifteen incarcerated men inside the walls of a minimum-security men's prison. In these settings, all participants interrogate and make meaning around "justice," the possibility of change, and interlocking systems of oppression, and they imagine new ways of understanding their lives in the context of the prison industrial complex and the incarcerated persons who become invisible there. Participants—whether they are capstone students coming in from the outside or persons incarcerated on the inside—engage deeply with course readings, discussions, and activities, as they deconstruct challenging issues of race, class, ability, and gender and how these factors impact the administration of justice in the United States.

Currently PSU is fostering the creation of new capstone courses in which the students themselves develop the partnership and the project addressed within the capstone. In these courses, the goal is not to arrive at an independent study composed of one faculty member and one student, but rather a richly interdisciplinary course with sixteen engaged students all pursuing their own passions in the community and coming together in class sessions to investigate what it means to be an agent of change through the lenses of their individual partnerships. In addition to the individual projects that students engage in with their own community partners, they also collaboratively

decide on a collective project that they work on as a whole class community. Selected highlights from this type of class are addressed later in this issue in the article "Contagious Co-Motion: Student Voices on Being Change Agents."

Scale

Portland State engages over 4,300 students in about 240 capstone courses annually (http://capstone.unst.pdx.edu), with about fifty-five to sixty capstones offered each of the four quarters of the school calendar. The vast majority of capstones are seminar-size, face-to-face classes that connect directly with a community partner (usually located within forty miles of the Portland, Oregon metro region). We offer a handful of international capstones each year, in which our students travel internationally to engage in a community-based project that is accompanied with academic course work. While powerful learning experiences, we have found international capstones to be fraught with challenges around how to complete a meaningful senior-level project/final product while engaging in truly authentic relationship-building with persons across cultures.

About ten capstones per term are offered fully online. About half of our online capstones involve grant writing, because we've found that this skill is particularly well-suited to being explored within a ten-week period in a virtual format. In doing so, we discovered how this course could engage students in deep and meaningful ways about social issues (environmental sustainability, youth opportunities, political advocacy) while simultaneously addressing our learning goals and meeting a real community need. Online capstones courses are extremely popular for the student body at our urban university, where a substantial number of our students juggle complicated work and life demands. For more information regarding our online courses, see the article "Online Community-Based Learning as the Practice of Freedom: The Online Capstone Experience at Portland State University" elsewhere in this journal.

History

In the 1992-93 academic year, PSU's provost asked a group of faculty to study best practices in college general education programs. This faculty working group studied the work of Alexander Astin (1992, 1993) on the importance of student and faculty contact, peer-to-peer learning, active learning, and community-based learning. These faculty members studied critiques of higher education and responses to the criticisms, which led to important questions about what PSU graduates should know and be capable of doing in the world. Faculty also considered the literature on access and retention (Gaff 1991). They held the import of this literature against the reality of the politics and budget implications of a distribution model relative to most departments on campus. Members of the committee also spoke directly with employers in the private and public sectors to better understand what employers needed from our graduates. Employers repeatedly praised the skills that our current graduates had developed in their particular subject areas, but also noted their weakness in functioning in interdisciplinary team contexts where they needed to engage in problem-solving across disciplinary lines (White 1994).

Ultimately, the faculty working group proposed a four-year general education model that centered on lifelong learning, interdisciplinary teaching and learning, applied learning, and active inquiry. Built into the model was a one-year freshman inquiry (FRINQ) experience with a peer mentoring program integrally woven in, in which courses of thirty-six students would break into mentored twelve-person discussion groups. The model continued with a sophomore year of inquiry (the SINQ), which offered a wide range of courses across "clusters" of knowledge domains, followed by a junior year of deeper inquiry in one knowledge cluster. The final requirement of the model is the interdisciplinary capstone course described above.

The unique aspects of the PSU capstone (interdisciplinary, collaborative, applied, community-based) all made sense both in the context of the four-year curriculum in which it is situated and with the "urban university" that was clearly PSU's mission. Judith Ramaley, PSU's president at the time, saw the urban research university as a "distinctive institutional type…characterized by the nature and extent of its responsiveness to the research and educational needs of complex metropolitan regions" (Ramaley 1996, 139). She envisioned a collaboration among faculty, students, and community partners in ways that would "provide a vehicle for the university to respond more effectively to societal demands" (Ramaley 1996, 140).

In addition to her framing of the urban research university, Ramaley also left a legacy in the transformation of PSUs general education program with her advocacy of a learning organization culture (Ramaley and Holland 2005, 75). She championed "intentional change as a scholarly act" (Ramaley and Holland 2005, 75) and outlined five key strategies PSU employed in the transformation: an accurate "framing of the question...taking the time to assess the current situation...approaching the challenge from a scholarly perspective, and learning from experience" (Ramaley and Holland 2005, 78). Finally, Ramaley practiced the values that she espoused and taught those around her "to accept and embrace the risk of not knowing how things will turn out" (Ramaley and Holland 2005, 84). In the fall term of 1993, the PSU Faculty Senate voted 37 to 9 to implement this newly imagined general education program, dubbed University Studies. In the fall term of 1994, the first freshman inquiry courses were offered and team-taught by PSU faculty (University Studies 1998).

How did PSU create such a comprehensive capstone program at this large scale?

By fall term 1995, a director of the capstone program had been hired to recruit the faculty and build the community partnerships necessary to launch these senior-level courses. During the 1995-96 academic year, PSU received a $250,000 donor gift for faculty and curriculum development, the majority of which was allocated to fund a process by which departments proposed large, long-term partnerships to house capstone courses. For example, faculty from PSU's College of Urban Planning and Affairs proposed a partnership with the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services, which has been hosting capstones addressing water stewardship ever since. (See the article "Connecting Curriculum to Community Research: Professional Services, Research, and Teaching" elsewhere in this issue for details on this long-

running partnership.) Engineering, which had previously engaged students in hands-on projects that were not connected to the community, proposed partnerships with Tri-Met (a tri-county local public transportation provider). Other schools and departments proposed partnerships with local K-12, social service, and organizations in town, and the building of community relationships flourished.

This proposal process created significant buy-in from faculty and departments. Here was a process by which faculty and departments were determining exactly what a capstone at our institution would entail. The faculty decided whom the university should partner with in the community, and how. There were no top-down mandates from the administration, except that the definitional requirements of the capstone (i.e., that courses must involve interdisciplinary teams of students engaging with the University Studies goals while addressing a community issue and completing a product of benefit to a community partner) had to be met by every capstone course. The flexibility left ample space for creativity, curiosity, imagination, and academic freedom regarding what could be built. Geologists imagined capstones focused on the wondrous rocks of the Columbia River Gorge and the public education programs that encouraged community members to explore them. Historians developed courses that gave students access to original source materials from the founding of nonprofits a century earlier in order to create public history presentations and installations. Many faculty were eager to propose courses that allowed students to delve deeply in applied learning settings in which they utilized their academic expertise, others were motivated by commitments to social justice, and many were inspired by a multitude of passions that could find particular fruition in capstone courses. The capstone program came to scale with the speed and strength that it did precisely because of the investment of faculty who had been empowered to contribute their experience and their passions to guide the development of the capstone curriculum and the partnerships which fuel capstone courses.

By winter 1996, a Capstone Review Committee was formed to vet the courses that faculty proposed. The proposal asked faculty to report on the strength of the partnership, the course learning outcomes and learning activities, and the strategies the faculty member would use to engage students around the general education goals (communication, critical thinking, the appreciation of the diversity of the human experience, and social and ethical responsibility). By spring 1996, five courses had been proposed, approved, and implemented, with students taking the courses as electives (since none of the first-year students who entered the newly-approved University Studies in 1994-95 were yet in need of a senior-level requirement.) Finally, in the 1996-97 academic year, twenty-five courses were officially launched and rigorously studied.

Program Assessment

PSU's faculty development center, then called the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE), provided leadership and expertise to implement and assess these capstones for the first six years of the program. A case study model was developed to conduct

in-depth interviews with faculty and students, focus groups of students and community partners, and classroom and community observations. All of the data were collected, analyzed, published, and used for continuous improvement, as well as for the creation of an assessment model for community-based learning (Driscoll et al. 1996).

There were many lessons learned from these early assessments. Program administrators gleaned insights about faculty development, the benefits and challenges of community-university partnerships, and indicators and impacts of community-based learning on students. The most profound realization related to student learning was the recognition that simply immersing students in multicultural settings in and of itself did not automatically enhance students' "appreciation of the diversity of the human experience." Interviews with students indicated that the community engagement certainly had the potential to enhance their appreciation for diversity, as many of them reported new insights and a feeling of "border crossing" when they entered new communities that they had not interacted with before. Many of the learning opportunities were indeed framed as positive and mutual, and many students could detail the relationships they had built and how they had both learned from and contributed to the growth of others. Unfortunately, there were also findings that showed that students often had their negative stereotypes reinforced and didn't build their capacities for identifying, navigating, and transforming their fears of persons that they perceived to be different from themselves or of neighborhoods where they lacked comfort into a source of learning and growth.

The impact of these data was powerful on the early administrators of the program, and it led to strong advocacy for the capstone program to hire an intercultural specialist who would work with faculty and students to unpack issues connected to racism, to reflect on cultural assumptions, to make meaning of intercultural dialogue throughout the capstone, and to provide skills to interrupt oppression in the classroom and in the community. This proved to be a huge learning moment for those involved in capstone and became the central work of most of the individuals involved in capstones for the next two decades. Twenty years later, the program still dedicates funds to buy out the time of experienced faculty members to work specifically with faculty and students on diversity and cultural issues. Over the years, this work has expanded from mainly focusing on race to include ability, class, sexual orientation, and gender identification and expression. The capstone program continues to assert that facilitating students' growth around appreciation of diversity is the most fundamental and important work that we do. That work does not remain in a silo, but rather strengthens the teaching of critical thinking, social and ethical responsibility, and communication.

As administrators gained experience in managing and assessing this program and faculty gained expertise in designing and teaching capstone courses and evaluating and improving their efforts, a group of practitioners collaborated to produce *Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities*, originally published in 2005 and re-issued in a second edition in 2013 (Cress, Collier, and Reitenauer 2013). In this text, the contributors share content, activities, and reflective prompts designed for

student participants in a variety of community-based learning experiences developed largely through the "laboratory" of the capstone program, along with other community-based learning courses at the university. Additionally, see "Cultivating Community: Faculty Support for Teaching and Learning" in this issue for more details on the capstone program's twinned assessment and faculty support processes.

Growth

As other institutions have considered replicating the PSU Senior Capstone, one of the greatest concerns that they raise is reaching the scale needed to graduate every student with this complex course involving a community partner and interdisciplinary teams in the community. PSU had to move fairly aggressively in order to have sufficient courses for our graduating seniors under our revised general education plan. With twenty-five capstones developed by academic year 1996-97, we had enough viable models of capstone implementation to serve as guides throughout the university. The following year fifty capstones were offered, and the year after that one hundred capstones were available to students. By the 2004-05 academic year, two hundred capstones were offered annually. Each large increment of growth included brand new courses and partnerships as well as an expansion in the number of sections of existing courses. Community partners and faculty became excited by the possibility that we could offer an existing course more than once throughout the year. Within the first five years of the program, it became the norm to develop a partnership with the expectation that PSU would continue to work with the partner in predictable cycles throughout the year.

Capstone courses became increasingly popular in summer term—a "bonus" term at PSU not considered part of the regular academic year—as students realized that summer term offered them the flexibility to focus on their capstone and community work while taking fewer credits than at other times during the academic year. Summer courses that connected students with learning garden programs, environmental restoration efforts, and environmental studies of soil and water flourished. Expansion of summer programs to community members with disabilities also became possible with students' increased interest in summer capstones. As the program grew in scope and scale, it became feasible to schedule a couple dozen capstones that would simply take place once a year due to community partner and faculty capacity, alongside scores of capstones that recur three to four times per year, some (like grant writing) with multiple sections of students every term.

Partnership Formation

Within PSU's highly decentralized system for the formation of community-university partnerships, collaborations with the community come together in a variety of ways. There is no one specified office that promotes or manages all of the institution's community partnerships. Instead, partnerships are fostered in dozens of units, such as the Child Welfare Partnership, the psychology department, and the Institute for Aging. K-12 partnerships are abundant in our School of Education and our Child and Family Studies program. The School of Social Work hosts dozens of community partners that

serve as sites for its students required internships, while the College of Urban Planning and Affairs nurtures a wealth of ongoing partnerships.

The capstone office serves as a central hub for the development of capstone community partnerships, as well as the proposal process and the implementation and assessment of capstone partnerships and courses. The capstone office first initiated community partnerships by formally partnering with the United Way. The United Way was eager to serve as a community convener, organizing a series of roundtable discussions during which the capstone director met with eight organizations at a time for several weeks. The purpose of the original gatherings was for the director to communicate the requirements and definitional components of capstones (particularly the structure of these courses, involving interdisciplinary teams of students as opposed to individual interns, and the creation of a final product rather than simply the provision, on the part of PSU, of volunteer labor), as well as to get genuine feedback from the community about the concept.

Overall, the community representatives were thrilled with the possibility of connecting with thousands of students, but also overwhelmed by the potential demands on space and staff time for the supervision of the students. We maintained ongoing dialogue and came up with many creative solutions, especially around the challenge of space. Frequently students would do site visits at the agencies but performed the actual tasks of their project on campus. Organizations' concerns regarding staff time to support student engagement remains an ongoing challenge. Ultimately, it does require an investment of staff time to guide students, so capstone courses partner with organizations that find the partnership mutual and beneficial to both the university and the agency. Most agencies discover that engaging students expands their capacity to reach their mission and that an investment of time on their part is required to achieve this end. (See the articles "Enacting True Partnerships within Community-Based Learning: Faculty and Community Partners Reflect on the Challenges of Engagement" and "Putting Impact First: Community-University Partnerships to Advance Authentic Neighborhood Sustainability" herein for more on the partnership experience.) The biggest surprise to most of our original partners was the depth of work that students could provide. Instead of using students as typical volunteers who perhaps would answer phones or prepare an agency mailing, our students were engaged in oral history projects and events, the development of marketing plans, grant writing, and similar rigorous projects.

Each year scores of community organizations and individual community members continue to call the capstone office with an idea for a capstone course. All of these suggestions are documented and saved electronically. Only a faculty member may formally propose a capstone course to the Capstone Review Committee, so a central function of the capstone director is to serve as a liaison between the community-identified ideas and faculty members. For example, the capstone office receives multiple calls each year from organizations wishing to partner around some type of marketing project. These potential community partners are connected directly with an experienced faculty member who serves as point person for the School of Business

Administration's capstone. This faculty member then assesses the project and determines if it is more appropriate for a capstone in the school or for a master's level project. The capstone director works extensively with community partners to help them navigate the complexity of the university and find the best fit for a partnership, even if that takes place outside the context of a capstone.

Students are also empowered to suggest ideas for community partnerships affiliated with capstones. Students frequently come in with their own passions to serve a specific agency, neighborhood, or population. The capstone director explores ways to manifest the ideas that students promote. Sometimes there is an easy link between the student's idea and a faculty member who can formally propose a new capstone course. Other times the capstone director links the student with a faculty member who is teaching a similar course to explore expanded opportunities within an existing course. When it is not possible to create or modify a course based on student interest, we explore the possibility of the student registering for a capstone that allows students to pursue their own community partner with other students who are doing the same. The vast majority of the time students are able to engage with the partnership that they are most interested in pursuing.

Finally, faculty members themselves frequently serve as the initiator of a capstone partnership. Many of them come to the capstone office with an idea for a capstone. Sometimes they already know exactly whom they would like to partner with in the community and simply need support in the proposal process. At other times faculty know what topic they want to teach, and the capstone director helps to locate an organization that will likely benefit from the idea.

The PSU Capstone: Nuts and Bolts

Given the frequency with which faculty and administrators from other colleges and universities request information about the nuts-and-bolts operation of the capstone at PSU, we offer the following as a reflection of our scaffolded programmatic structures and processes.

Proposal Process

The process by which faculty propose a capstone is intentionally rigorous, as it is the foundation for the high-quality teaching and learning that are the hallmark of these complex courses. The course proposal process has evolved into the first faculty development tool that we employ. In order for any faculty to teach a capstone course, the course must be approved by a faculty review committee. This review ensures that the course is intellectually sound, logistically viable, and pedagogically commendable, as well as that the course addresses a real community need and has been designed to facilitate learning around the University Studies goals (communication, critical thinking, appreciation of the diversity of the human experience, and social and ethical responsibility). The proposal has two sections: the first addresses various aspects of the capstone, including the learning outcomes and the partnership, and the second explicitly asks how the faculty member will structure the course to address the

University Studies goals. The questions contained in the proposal process are identified in the table below:

Table 1: Capstone Proposal Form

Section I: General Questions

1. Title and description of the capstone.
2. Description of the community issue and/or need that will be addressed by this course.
3. A list of the main learning outcomes for PSU students. Please explicitly show the connection between the appropriate University Studies goals and each of your course learning outcomes.
4. A list of citations for the main course texts and readings that will be assigned. (Include detailed publication information, including publication dates, publishers, journal volume numbers, page numbers, etc.).
5. Description of the final product (i.e., presentations, websites, videos, brochures, reports, etc.) to be created by capstone students to address the community need.
6. A list of six academic majors that will benefit from this course and a phrase describing what these majors will contribute to the course content and the final product.
7. Description of the relevant aspects of your academic expertise and professional background as they relate to the proposed capstone and development of the final product.
8. Description of the steps you have taken to develop the community partnership.
9. If this is an online or hybrid course, provide a description of the steps you have taken to teach a course in this format. Have you taught an online or hybrid course in the past? What training have you received in this area? How will you utilize an online format to deliver the course content, build group cohesion, and facilitate reflection on the service experience and the University Studies goals?

Section Two: University Studies Goals

Below you will find a description of each University Studies goal. Under each goal, identify how this proposed capstone will promote student engagement with this goal.

- *Inquiry and critical thinking:* Students will learn various modes of inquiry through interdisciplinary curricula—problem-posing, investigating, conceptualizing—in order to become active, self-motivated, and empowered learners. Typical critical thinking objectives include awareness of connections among specialized areas of knowledge, integration of a variety of meanings or disciplinary perspectives in relation to a community issue or problem, reflection on prior experience in relation to new ideas and information, critical examination of the ways individuals perceive and respond to particular situations, and so on. Provide a specific description of how *critical thinking* will be facilitated through the course project and learning activities:

- *Communication:* Students will enhance their capacity to communicate in various ways (writing, graphics, numeracy, and other visual and oral means), to collaborate effectively with others in group work, and to be competent in appropriate communication technologies. Capstone classes will provide opportunities for students to grow in their ability to communicate in at least one of these forms. Capstone projects will provide an example useful for evaluating students' communication abilities. Provide a specific description of how *communication skills* will be developed through the course project and learning activities:

- *Appreciation of the diversity of the human experience:* Students will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of the rich complexity of the human experience through the study of differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. This goal has to do with understanding and valuing the role of diverse realities in human experience. This understanding and valuing is thought to be enhanced when people examine wider ethnic and cultural perspectives within the United States, as well as throughout the world. Provide a specific description of how the *appreciation of the diversity of the human experience* will be enhanced through the course project and learning activities:

- *Social and ethical responsibility:* Students will expand their understanding of the impact and value of individuals and their choices on society, both intellectually and socially, through group projects and collaboration in learning. Considerations around social and ethical responsibility include creating livable communities, examining ethical and organizational challenges of the present era, and exploring the role of diversity in achieving social well-being. Provide a specific description of how *social and ethical responsibility* will be catalyzed through the course project and learning activities:

Each proposal is reviewed by the five faculty members who compose the Capstone Review Committee. Committee members have all taught ten or more capstone courses and have rich expertise in pedagogy, course design, and facilitating diversity education. Membership on the committee rotates every few years, so a variety of academic disciplines is always represented. Each member of the committee votes on every proposal and makes one of three recommendations: acceptance, acceptance with minor revisions, or deferral. The chair of the capstone committee works extensively with the proposing faculty member to support their progress through the proposal process, and this support continues with courses that require minor revisions or that have been deferred for more significant redevelopment.

Assessment for Continuous Improvement
The proposal process is one of the most significant elements of the success of the senior capstone at PSU. It allows a high degree of flexibility in terms of the topics addressed, the faculty expertise involved, and the community partnerships engaged with, while also creating substantial quality control and alignment in the degree of reflection and other meaning-making pedagogical practices taking place in these courses.

In our conversations with leaders from other institutions that have culminating academic experiences, we are often asked how we manage to keep this number of

courses from drifting away from the primary learning goals and intent of the capstone. The proposal process serves as that anchor and provides solid footing to then advance our assessment and faculty support efforts. A course is approved for six years. After that time, a faculty member may be asked to re-propose the course to make sure that it hasn't significantly changed from its original proposal. Throughout that six-year period, the course is consistently assessed, as well.

After the proposal has been approved, faculty draft syllabi and consult one-on-one with the faculty support coordinator for capstones. Having completed a successful proposal, faculty are already well on their way to creating effective syllabi, with clear learning outcomes, a defined community partnership, an explicit final product, and an articulation of how this course will cap a student's general education at PSU.

Now the faculty member is ready to teach the capstone. For each new capstone, the next step in both the assessment and the faculty development processes is a qualitative mid-quarter feedback session, which typically takes place in week three or four of the ten-week quarter. The mid-quarter assessment employed by PSU is based on the small group instructional feedback technique suggested by Angelo and Cross (1993) and Black (1998). This assessment is conducted in every new capstone course and in 20 percent of all continuing capstones. This process allows us to provide student feedback to faculty in a formative way and in a timely manner, so that faculty can actually make changes during the term to improve the course in ways that respond directly to students' insights, and plan improvements for future offerings of the course. (For more description of the mid-term feedback process, see the article "Cultivating Community: Faculty Support for Teaching and Learning.")

Over the years this process has been highly successful. It allows faculty to receive real-time feedback on their teaching, get an accurate pulse of where the students are in the course, and learn the concerns of the students in ways that protect students' anonymity. The process also empowers students as active agents in their education to give constructive feedback and provides a safe place to state their fears or insecurities as learners in community with each other and with the greater community they are serving through their efforts. While the primary purpose of the feedback session is for individual course improvement, the data are also shared with the capstone director and analyzed in the aggregate to uncover the successes of the program and to document overarching challenges. This process also serves as a real-time mechanism to ensure that every capstone is indeed addressing the University Studies goals and hasn't drifted away from the intent of the capstone.

Typically, the data show that what is most commonly reported as helping our students in the classroom and preparing them for their community work is excellent facilitation of discussion related to the course content surrounding a real community issue, powerful guest speakers, provocative films and media addressing the community issue from new and multiple perspectives, role playing, and the engagement of the community partner in the course.

The most common changes suggested by students are the inclusion of greater clarity around structural elements of the course, more explicit examples of the final product, and more information earlier in the course about what is expected of the deliverable at the end of the term. During the mid-term feedback process we discover that many students are anxious at this point in the term, given that the capstone differs so fundamentally from any other course they have taken. By the mid-point of the term, students have begun to take in the dynamic and relational nature of the course; deeper learning and skill development begins. Here is an experience in which their grade is not dependent on a mid-term and a final, but rather the quality of a product that will serve a genuine community need and the soundness of their participation that has contributed to the development of that product. Students hunger to see prior examples of outstanding work produced by their peers.

PSU has presented about this assessment process at numerous national gatherings and received the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) national assessment award for institution-wide assessment. What surprises most assessment experts about our processes is the level of trust that we have developed with our faculty at PSU. Frequently, when others in higher education hear of our mid-term feedback process, they remark that "our faculty would *never* allow that!" What we find at PSU is that if the program administrators have built genuine relationships with the faculty and include faculty fully in our assessment processes, then data can easily be gathered in all courses and used for continuous improvement. The data collected in the mid-term review are completely available for faculty to use in their promotion and tenure packets, but it is never required to appear in the portfolio. Experience at PSU shows that the most important element of a strong assessment plan is trust among the faculty that administrators will use the data with integrity and not as a means of enforcing high-stakes judgments or initiating processes to level punitive repercussions against faculty.

In the last week of the quarter, an end-of-term course evaluation gathers data from students about their experiences in the course. Students are asked to state their level of agreement on eighteen items, ranging from how strongly they felt that the community work helped them understand the course content to how well the course addressed issues of diversity. The evaluation form explores how strongly the students believe that the capstone benefited the community and the level of responsibility they felt to meet the needs of the community partner. The assessment asks students to report on how the course enhanced their ability to work on a team, to communicate effectively, and to problem-solve. Faculty support and assessment personnel regularly compare the data from the mid-term feedback sessions and the end-of-term course evaluations to create a comprehensive view of the evolving dynamics of student engagement and learning throughout the ten-week term.

Finally, over the last ten years, Portland State has explored a number processes by which to assess students' written work in various forms. Our purpose was to better apprehend student learning outcomes through direct assessment of student work products. For example, more than 80 percent of students report enhancing their communication skills in their capstone, but we didn't know how and in what ways

they had enhanced these skills. The primary focus our first few years was on the final products delivered to the community partner. Researchers tried to find evidence in the student work of individual student learning regarding communication, critical thinking, appreciation of diversity, and social and ethical responsibility, but the task proved to be too complex, primarily because most of the products had been produced by groups, with no way to isolate individual student contributions.

Next we tried using a common reflective assignment distributed in 25 percent of all capstones, believing that we could assess student learning along one of our goals each year, thus developing a complete set of data around our goals every four years. This approach was abandoned after a year or two because it was clear that the common reflective writing assignment was too generic to reflect the context and depth of genuine course-based assignments, which were situated within the real partnership and project that students had been engaging in all term.

Finally, we decided five years ago to have 25 percent of all capstones participate in a work sample assessment, whereby the faculty member generates an authentic assignment for their course that best addresses one of general education learning goals. (All of the courses address the same learning goal during any given year.) The faculty then collect student responses for that assignment, along with signed informed consent forms. Faculty also submit the syllabus for the course and any contextual information regarding the course to best contextualize the course for reviewers of the work.

Originally, the analysis of these capstone course portfolios was conducted by a small team of faculty and assessment staff. The outcome of this assessment strategy was sound, and the results of our assessment finally approached the nuance and complexity required to understand student learning relative to four core goals across literally dozens of distinct courses that, while sharing core definitional and structural features, differ dramatically in the kinds of work produced by students.

Two years ago, in response to a desire on the part of faculty who had submitted portfolios for greater feedback on that work, an adaptation to this process was piloted. Starting in June 2014, the faculty contributing materials to the assessment process become the reviewers of their colleagues' portfolios in a fully collegial and reciprocal process. Now, faculty contributors meet together *before* they finalize their assignments for the course. In these pre-assessment meetings, faculty share with each other about their courses and their partnerships, and they learn about the assessment process itself. Following the collection of course materials, faculty come together in a full-day assessment session, in which they contextualize the materials they have submitted in small groups, participate in a group orientation, review the portfolios of their colleagues from their small group, and offer each other formative feedback about that material. Faculty submit qualitative comments to their colleagues and a mixed quantitative/qualitative response directly to the program. This latter document indicates the degree to which the faculty member found the course to be reflective of the goal under review.

In this way, we have fully married a faculty support process to an assessment process (Kerrigan and Jhaj 2007), and the results have been galvanizing. An analysis of faculty evaluations of the assessment process itself reveals that faculty found their time reviewing each other's work and the giving and receiving of feedback on portfolios to be deeply valuable and meaningful, with all participants affirming that the process felt both supportive of their work as capstone instructors and inspiring through the fresh ideas and approaches that their colleagues' sharing provided. All of the qualitative feedback submitted by faculty confirmed that participants found that the process was helpful to them as practitioners, that it inspired them to spend more time relating to their colleagues for the purposes of both mutual support and inspiration for course improvement, and that many desired to see the process expanded both to include more colleagues and to extend this process into the future, so that they might continue to see and to reflect collectively on the ongoing course improvement that issues from processes such as these. (To view annual assessment reports developed as a result of the practices listed above, please see http://www.pdx.edu/unst/capstone-assessment-and-research.)

One of the unexpected findings from the assessment of capstone courses in our first five years was how effective professionals from the community were at teaching capstones. Students clearly articulated that the faculty outside the academy helped them bridge the theoretical knowledge in the classroom to real issues in the community, managed group projects and group dynamics skillfully, brought pressing social concerns in the community into the center of the classroom discussions, made the learning relevant in these culminating courses, and had scores of personal and professional linkages in the community that helped students network for the future (including contacts that led to informational interviews and job offers).

As PSU celebrates its twenty-year capstone anniversary, we recognize the contributions of all faculty, including the large number of non-tenure-track faculty, who have contributed to the student experience and our institutional community engagement efforts. Within University Studies in general and the capstone program in particular, a rich diversity of faculty from a variety of institutional and extra-institutional standpoints are fully welcomed to contribute in program- and curriculum-building ways and, in fact, have been a source of much of the success of the program throughout its existence. We have experienced it to be a positive change at our institution to have senior-level courses taught by faculty who are well positioned to prepare students for a wide variety of activities taken on by successful graduates (such as continuing community activism, community problem-solving, employment, and graduate school), regardless of faculty rank. For the capstone program at PSU, it has been ideal to welcome a healthy mix of community practitioners actively engaged in this culminating educational course. While institutional mechanisms for rewarding these efforts through the promotion and tenure process continue to lag, our program and the committed faculty who actively build it every day find ways to encourage and support each other with meaning, care, and mutual respect.

Funding, Infrastructure, and Staffing

The task of funding this scale of community-based capstone courses is daunting to most visitors who study our program. Due to the multiple-year phase-in of the University Studies general education program following its approval by the Faculty Senate, we had time to plan and prepare for the costs. The good news—and the bad news—is that the capstone program is not only self-supporting but is actually a revenue generator for the University. For every dollar the capstone program generates from student tuition, it only spends approximately 90 cents (even factoring in the cost of space, energy usage, and institutional infrastructure); these surplus funds are absorbed by the university to cover more costly programs. The capstone is among the most cost-effective programs at PSU, as determined by Finance and Administration calculations.

The good news is that this means there is little fiscal rationale to eliminate this high-impact practice. The challenge is effectively advocating for more of the faculty to gain employment over half-time in order to earn benefits. In many ways this staffing structure is a win-win, as professionals with full-time positions in the community (such as the education director of an environmental education program, the director of a community health program, and the director of community development program) can share their expertise in the university, engage their passion for teaching, give students real-world experience that it would be nearly impossible to replicate without their involvement, and keep overall cost for the institution low due to the absence of benefits provided in their compensation. In some cases, though, we find it ethically questionable to refuse to provide benefits to other faculty of practice who do not have full-time employment outside of the university.

In general, the capstone program is run with very little overhead. Our small infrastructure consists of a capstone program director, minimal clerical support to list the courses and answer basic student questions, and release time for faculty support specialists. We have found over the life of the program that committed resources for faculty support are essential. Many faculty of all ranks state that they have received more support through the capstone program than from any other place at the university. For many, it has been the first time they have been genuinely invited to be part of a faculty learning community in which they have the opportunity to talk about their teaching, receive real assessment data that they experience to be useful to their teaching, and get consultation to support the development of their own best pedagogical practices. The capstone program provides course releases for three seasoned faculty members, and their cumulative release time is equivalent to about 1.2 FTE of a non-tenure-track position. The necessity of faculty support to ensure high-quality teaching and learning in these community-based learning courses cannot be overstated, as "Cultivating Community: Faculty Support for Teaching and Learning" in this journal illustrates.

Legal and Liability Issues

One of the first tasks that the capstone director needed to address in 1995 was the issue of risk management. The capstone office and the Oregon attorney general's

office worked extensively to think through the issues involved and develop a plan to manage foreseeable risks. The issue of risk management is too complex to address in detail in this article, but a few of the lessons we learned were that handbooks for students, faculty, and community partners are a helpful means to name and address risks; a community partner agreement form is a useful tool to articulate the terms of a partnership and the plan going forward, in order to prevent challenges before a partnership begins; and group insurance coverage can be secured for students as one option to limit a university's risk.

PSU provides a capstone handbook to every capstone student, faculty member, and community partner. The handbook defines a capstone and its goals and identifies best practices of service learning (such as the importance of high-quality orientation to the community, reciprocity, reflection, service, diversity, and feedback). Tips are also provided to enhance healthy group processes and students' capacity for navigating difference. The handbook reviews the roles of faculty, students, and community partners. Basic legal concepts are addressed, as are suggestions for working effectively with a community partner. All participants are reminded of the Student Code of Conduct and consequences of violations to that code. The faculty and community partner handbooks address issues pertinent to each of these roles, in turn.

The capstone office promotes the use of a community partner agreement form for every capstone course. The purpose of the form is to clarify a multitude of elements of the partnership, such as who will orient the students to the community-based learning project at hand, who is supervising the students on site, and who will provide direct feedback to the students on their performance. It also addresses issues of authorship and rights to ownership of work products.

Finally, for more than a decade, Portland State charged students $17 for group liability insurance in case any student did harm in the community and was sued. Due to changes in the Oregon university system, legal counsel determined that students no longer needed to purchase this insurance and that the risk could be managed without the insurance. All decisions for managing risk and liability at an institution of PSU's scale (and at our scale of community engagement) are handled by university legal counsel and risk management specialists.

Challenges

Over the last two decades, the rewards of implementing the senior capstone have far outweighed the difficulties, but in order to empower other institutions to implement meaningful culminating experiences, naming the challenges is essential. At PSU there are four primary challenges that we grapple with continually, almost entirely related to budget: effectively advocating for funding in an era of performance-based budgeting, which includes the challenge of maintaining seminar-sized capstones; effectively advocating for hiring faculty of practice above .49 FTE (so that they are benefits-eligible); implementing and assessing online capstones to meet the demand for online degrees; and effectively funding an alumni engagement program.

Despite its incredible efficiency, the capstone program is frequently threatened with budget cuts. The primary threat is to our seminar-style format. In the 1994 planning documents for capstones approved by the PSU Faculty Senate, capstones were described as seminars with ten students per section. Today most of our capstones are asked to enroll sixteen students per course. As real concerns mount regarding the cost of higher education and student debt, raising class size is one strategy frequently employed to cut costs. Successfully advocating for the relational learning facilitated by these seminar-style classes is becoming increasingly difficult within the capstone program.

The second challenge is advocating in lean budget times for an increase in the hiring of faculty of practice above .49 FTE. University Studies is not funded at a level whereby more of our faculty teaching capstones can apply for benefits-eligible positions. Capstone administrators are perplexed that one of the most recognized capstone programs in the nation cannot secure the funds to pay the faculty teaching these transformational courses a livable wage with benefits. The capstone office will continue to work with new and veteran administrators at PSU to explore the possibility of hiring existing adjunct faculty into more stable full-time non-tenure-track positions.

The third challenge is effectively assessing online capstones to see if they are capable of creating similar transformational learning outcomes experienced by our face-to-face courses, and, if not, learning how to improve the design or, alternatively, how to engage online students in some type of hybrid capstone that still meets their needs for flexibility. PSU is fortunate to have faculty deeply committed to effective online community-based education. These issues are more thoroughly discussed in the article "Online Community-Based Learning as the Practice of Freedom: The Online Capstone Experience at Portland State University" later in this issue.

The final struggle is the aspirational challenge to fund an alumni engagement program that will facilitate the continued active participation of our graduates in the community post-graduation. PSU is perfectly positioned to launch an alumni engagement program that could serve as a national model for post-graduation activism, as discussed in "Beyond the University: An Initiative for Creating Community-Wide Civic Agency."

Lessons Learned

After two decades of implementing thousands of capstone courses and engaging tens of thousands of students in the community, we have learned scores of lessons along the way. The top five that I encourage each institution to consider are the following:

1. Community-based capstones are fundamentally transformational to students. When done well they change students' lives and understandings. Engage students and listen to their experiences.
2. Community partners are the best co-educators that we could ever have imagined. They convey to students powerful knowledge in a context through which the students are most likely to remember the content for a lifetime.

3. Faculty with experience in practice are tremendous human resources to create transformational learning courses that connect students with the community. Seek out relationships with these unique faculty and create structures to promote them and honor their work.
4. Faculty support and faculty learning communities are the most effective way to continuously improve the teaching and learning in capstones. These are essential to the implementation of this high-impact practice.
5. Relational learning is at the heart of the transformational power of capstones. The most significant learnings that students report are those they experienced in relational ways. Small classes that engage in collaborative learning are essential in culminating educational experiences.

Conclusion

As the title of this article suggests, there is a tension involved in "sustaining change"—that is, in creating and maintaining the infrastructure to run a community-based learning program of this scope, founded on the very principles of change-making (within an institution of higher education, in the communities in which that institution is situated, and within the field of higher education itself), while remaining flexible enough to allow the program to adapt to the evolving needs of its constituents. The twentieth anniversary of PSU's capstone has afforded us an invaluable opportunity to look back at our founding, revisit our principles and processes, and recognize our debt to the literally countless numbers of students, community partners, faculty, staff, and administrators whose efforts have continuously constituted this program over the past two decades. Sustaining change is a living process and an ongoing work in progress, and the remaining articles in this issue will offer additional views of the current state of that work at PSU.

More information about the Portland State senior capstone program can be found online:
- General capstone website: http://capstone.unst.pdx.edu/
- Capstone course proposal, with an example: http://capstone.unst.pdx.edu/resources/file/capstone-proposal-document
- Faculty support resources: http://capstone.unst.pdx.edu/resources
- Assessment reports: http://www.pdx.edu/unst/university-studies-assessment-reports

References

Angelo, Thomas A., and K. Patricia Cross. 1993. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Astin, Alexander W. 1993. *What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, Alexander, W. 1992. "What Really Matters in General Education: Provocative Findings from a Study of Student Outcomes." *Perspectives* 22 (1): 23-46.

Black, Beverly. 1998. "Using the SGID Method for a Variety of Purposes." In *To Improve the Academy*, edited by Matthew Kaplan, 245-262. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press and the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education.

Cress, Christine M., Peter J. Collier, and Vicki L. Reitenauer, eds. 2013. *Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities.* Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Driscoll, Amy, Barbara Holland, Sherril Gelmon, and Seanna Kerrigan. 1996. "An Assessment Model: Comprehensive Case Studies of Impact on Faculty, Student, Community, and Institution." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 3 (1): 66-71.

Gaff, Jerry G. 1991. *New Life for the College Curriculum: Assessing Achievements and Furthering Progress in the Reform of General Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kerrigan, Seanna, and Sukhwant Jhaj. 2007. "Assessing General Education Capstone Courses: An In-Depth Look at a Nationally Recognized Capstone Assessment Model." *Peer Review* 9 (2): 13-16.

Ramaley, Judith A. 1996. "Large-Scale Institutional Change to Implement an Urban University Mission: Portland State University." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 18 (2): 139-151.

Ramaley, Judith A., and Barbara A. Holland. 2005. "Modeling Learning: The Role of Leaders." *New Directions for Higher Education* 2005 (131): 75-86.

University Studies. 1998. "University Studies 1994-1997: A Progress Report." Portland State University. Accessed September 2015. http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.unst/files/University%20Studies1994-1997ProgressReport.pdf.

White, Charles R. 1994. "A Model for Comprehensive Reform in General Education: Portland State University." *The Journal for General Education* 43 (3): 168-237.

Author Information

Seanna M. Kerrigan brings over two decades of professional higher education experience to her current position as the capstone program director at Portland State University. In this role, she works collaboratively with scores of faculty, students, and community-based organizations to create partnerships for over 240 service-learning capstones annually. Dr. Kerrigan promotes the concept of community-based learning while publishing and presenting widely on issues related to this pedagogy, as well as civic engagement and assessment. She was named a Rising Scholar by the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good. Kerrigan earned her doctorate in education in 2002 from Portland State University.

Seanna M. Kerrigan
University Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: kerrigs@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-8392
Fax: 503-725-5977

Connecting Curriculum to Community Research: Professional Services, Research, and Teaching

W. Barry Messer and Peter J. Collier

Abstract

Portland State University's Community Environmental Services (CES) has helped shape the Portland metropolitan region's sustainable materials management practices for more than twenty-five years. CES's research and program development services have benefitted community partners that in turn have provided hundreds of students with rich educational experiences. PSU faculty members also advance their pedagogical and research agendas through the development of CES-affiliated capstone courses. This article explores the CES co-production model from the perspectives of students, faculty members, and community partners.

Community Environmental Services (CES) at Portland State University is a unique twenty-five-year-old university-based service unit that has helped shape the Portland metropolitan region's ethic and practice as it relates to sustainable materials management. Over that time, CES has engaged in co-production activities with dozens of community partners to provide research and program development and management services in materials management and waste reduction. This work has involved hundreds of students, both undergraduate and graduate, and supported their education in numerous ways.

One of the most important benefits of this unique organization has been the role CES plays in providing a vital programmatic infrastructure that allows numerous faculty the opportunity to engage this work within the body of their teaching and research. One of the prominent ways this work has been done was through the development of capstone courses, as well as numerous other community-based learning courses. This article will explore the factors that allowed the two frequently separated functions in universities—research and teaching—to find common ground, and the ways both research and teaching contributed to and were enriched by this mutual relationship. The article includes an examination of the foundational roots of the work of both CES and the capstone program as a model of co-production by recounting the experiences of students, faculty, and community partners who were engaged with CES and capstone partnership work.

CES History

Twenty-five years ago, two colleagues from the School of Urban and Public Affairs organized a small-scale demonstration project to engage students in developing a

community recycling initiative. This project was inspired by the then-recent attempts of the City of Portland to begin a city-wide recycling collection program involving all single-family residences in the city. It was curious to us at the time that nearly half of the city's residents, namely those living in multi-family residences, were not included in the "city-wide" program. Inquiring into the reason for this, we were informed by city officials that trying to involve tenants who live in apartment complexes was too "risky" because of fear that their lack of interest and participation in recycling would compromise the program's effectiveness. This appeared at best an oversight of the potential gains in recycling that could be accomplished by the substantial population living in multi-family residences and at worst a blatant discriminatory bias embedded in city policies and the practices of city planners.

To raise the issue, we decided to test how multi-family residents would engage in a recycling program if given the support and a chance to participate. The faculty colleagues and students from a class examining urban environmental practices organized the first student-led recycling project at one of the Housing Authority of Portland's low-income, multi-family apartment complexes. The high volume of appropriately prepared materials from the initial pilot effort not only proved to the city that recycling efforts in multi-family complexes can be successful, but also that these residents and residential complexes were actually a strong community asset in helping the city reach its environmental goals. The City of Portland then expanded the "city-wide" program to include *all* residents, regardless of the classification of their residence, largely as a result of that pilot demonstration project. The city also decided to engage the services of PSU students in those expanded efforts as a result of the quality of the work done in the pilot project. In so doing, the City of Portland became the first city in the nation to have a city-wide multi-family recycling program. These actions were clearly instrumental in vaulting Portland into the role of national leader in municipal waste reduction and recovery, a position that continues to this day.

We were not aware that in that initial project we were modeling an initiative that has now, over twenty-five years later, become an organization that would engage hundreds of students in scores of long-term projects with countless public, nonprofit, and private entities as partners to reduce waste and implement sustainable practices. What is possibly most notable is how the groundwork that was laid twenty-five years ago became the foundation for on-going, transformative, student-centered research experiences. Nowhere is this more evident than in the contribution that CES has made to the university's capstone program.

Institutional Context

CES's efforts to build a programmatic unit for student engagement with community partners fit into a larger institutional context. Community-based learning and a broader focus on civic engagement fit well within an institutional transformation that began in the early 1990s. An historic agenda of comprehensive reform was set forth at PSU to align general education, curriculum, undergraduate and graduate academic programs, scholarship, and research with community outreach and partnership development.

PSU's location downtown enhances its possibilities to be in and of the city and the metropolitan region.

A major component of this institutional transformation is grounded in University Studies, PSU's general education program, which emerged as a model for integration of student learning with service in the community. In the University Studies program four primary goals are explicitly integrated into the curriculum during the undergraduate experience: inquiry and critical thinking, communication, appreciation of the diversity of the human experience, and social and ethical responsibility. In their final undergraduate year, PSU students take a six-credit senior capstone designed to integrate the four goals. A capstone that stemmed from the partnership work initiated by CES was among the first five capstone courses piloted in 1995. (For more details on the capstone program see "Sustaining Change: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned from Twenty Years of Empowering Students through Community-Based Learning Capstones" elsewhere in this issue.)

Over the past two decades, the number of capstones has grown, including many courses that have been developed from the partnership and program infrastructure built by CES. CES provides empirical evidence in direct support of the claim that well-conceived and executed community-university partnerships are actionable examples of how one can both teach about and bring to life an active social sustainability agenda. Also, university partnerships in the community can provide a solid base and multiple opportunities to shape research and teaching. In the next section, we discuss in more detail the program structure of CES and how it has created a valuable infrastructure through which numerous capstones as well as other community-based learning courses have materialized.

CES Organization and Structure

The mission statement for CES states that "CES provides community partners in Portland, the region, and beyond with research data and technical assistance on urban environmental issues and resource sustainability, while giving PSU students the opportunity to develop leadership capacity and practical job skills through education, service, and research." CES is a student-centered organization founded on the belief that students not only have passion and energy, but also that they have abilities. When these attributes are supported and applied to work in the community that addresses important matters of public interest, students are prepared to become future change agents as well as change agents of today.

As a research institute, CES provides high quality research and technical expertise to local community partners through contracts and intergovernmental agreements. CES operates similarly to a consulting firm, simultaneously managing multiple contracts with unique timelines and budgets. At the same time, CES is distinctive among consulting firms and many other university research centers because the mission and structure of CES is centered on student development. Students not only provide CES services to local communities, they also are given opportunities and support to shape

their educational programs around the work they perform. Teaching and non-teaching faculty members, as well as graduate research assistants with advanced CES experience, provide support for students in both their education and CES work. The organization fluctuates in the number of students working at CES depending on the amount of contracted work. At any given time there are between twenty and thirty undergraduate and graduate student employees who earn an hourly wage, along with a half dozen graduate research assistants supported with monthly stipends and tuition remissions.

Support staff positions are ideal starting points for students, providing them with industry-specific knowledge and experiences that they can build upon. Support staff work on a variety of CES projects, typically during the "boots-on-the-ground" phase. Typically this direct data collection could include conducting waste stream observations, hand sorting garbage, and collecting material weight data. Support staff also provide educational outreach by speaking with local residents and businesses about their recycling systems and making suggestions for improvements. Training and supervision of support staff is provided by project leads comprised of graduate research assistants and CES support staff who have advanced experience.

Key to CES's mission of service and student development is the opportunity for advancement and growth within the organization. As students gain knowledge and skills, CES promotes experienced support staff to the role of project leads. Lead positions have more responsibility, including supporting other student workers and taking responsibility for elements of project management. This includes providing on-going communication and project updates with community partners; staff training, scheduling, and supervising of support staff; analyzing and interpreting data; writing reports on project findings; and providing recommendations for further research or program implementation strategies. Graduate research assistant positions are similar to project leads but require students to be enrolled in a graduate program. A limited number of non-tenure track research faculty positions are supported by CES contracts to provide ongoing support for the students and overall program management.

The different types of student employee positions allows for advancement as students become more experienced. Because the scope of work varies for each project, students may work on multiple projects, in which they may be providing support on some projects and serving as a project lead on others. This approach, which offers students multiple access points for project and program skill development, as well as multiple opportunities to shape their educational and career development interests, has been one of the defining elements of CES's success. Not only has this approach been instrumental in CES's ability to provide quality services, but it has led to numerous graduates of the program being placed in senior positions in public and private sector jobs in the fields of sustainability, waste and materials management, and public and private sector program management and implementation – all directly related to the field experiences gained through their work and study at CES.

Partnerships

Over its twenty-five-year history, CES has engaged with over forty community partners, including public organization, nonprofits, and for-profit businesses (Figure 1). Many of the partners have long histories of collaborating with CES. These legacy partners have both worked with CES on multiple arenas of service and research, and provided support for student development. The City of Portland continues to be a key legacy partner. To date, CES has worked with the city in providing pilot project research and implementation of Portland's multi-faceted recycling program; extending recycling services in both residential and commercial sectors; and advancing protocols for assessing and managing the collection of a broad array of materials. The CES-City of Portland partnership over the last twenty-five years has helped to build the city's widely recognized reputation for preeminence in waste reduction innovation and success.

Figure 1: Community Environmental Services

Inputs

FACULTY
Teaching
Research
Multi-disciplinary

STUDENTS
Undergraduates
Graduate
Multi-disciplinary

COMMUNITY PARTNERS
Public sector
Nonprofit organizations
Businesses

Class Opportunities
Research Opportunities

Project Mgmt. Opportunities
Research Opportunities
Work Experience

Materials Management
Waste Reduction
Sustainable Practices

PSU
Center for
Urban Studies

CES

Outputs

Community-Based Learning Classes
Capstone Classes
Scholarly Publications

Educational Financial Support
Professional Experience
Graduate Theses
Graduate Research Assistantships
Career Opportunities

Cost savings
Innovative products and practices
Future employees

Examples:

- Over 30 capstone and other community-based learning classes with CES project partners.
- Nearly 400 students have worked in paid positions and leadership roles. Over 60 full graduate research assistantships awarded.
- Over 20 local and regional government partners; 12 nonprofit organizations and 10 private businesses utilized CES for material management, waste reduction and sustainable practices assistance. City of Portland, Port of Portland and Metro Regional Government have had partnership agreements with CES for over 20 years.

Examples:

- Community-based learning courses and Senior Capstones have completed projects within courses involving many of the community partners.
- CES has supported students in both providing stipends, tuition awards and opportunities to combine their academic programs with applied learning credit.
- Some examples of innovation with public sector include comprehensive residential, commercial and public recycling waste reduction protocol and assessment; business innovation examples include assistance in making a major grocery chain "zero waste."

Other key legacy partners include Metro (a four-county regional government body) and the Port of Portland. The CES-Metro partnership has been the basis of ambitious efforts to achieve regional waste reduction goals. The work with Metro has also led to numerous partnerships with smaller cities in the region, many of which have lasted ten or more years. The CES-Port of Portland partnership supports an innovative project that provides operational assistance and support for all Port of Portland properties, with a focus on Portland International Airport (PDX). A team of CES student employees, based at the Port of Portland headquarters at PDX, works directly with port employees to oversee, design, and implement waste and materials management programs at the airport, marine terminals, and headquarters buildings. This project provides students with opportunities to develop innovative pilot programs and initiatives while encouraging waste reduction efforts in ways that have contributed to the port's role as a leader in sustainability.

CES's partnerships are not limited to public agencies. Numerous business and commercial entities have partnered with CES over the years. These partnerships often include building and implementing comprehensive materials management and waste minimization strategies. For example, CES worked with a leading locally-owned commercial food chain to design and implement a set of management protocols and practices that would net zero waste.

CES: a Model of Co-Production

CES has been built on the fundamentals of co-production from the inception of the program to its current day operation. Co-production puts the emphasis on the contribution made by the service beneficiary in the service delivery process (Bouvaird 2007, 846). This approach has been key to CES's success in building robust and long-term relationships with community partners. The co-production approach to partnership work from public services is potentially transferable to higher education.

Higher education has always been about the development rather than the transmission of knowledge (Neary, Bell, and Stevenson 2012, 126). When students are engaged in applied learning with community partners, they are confronted with unstructured problems and are exposed to a diversity of concepts and practices. These experiences greatly increase their capacity to develop knowledge and engage in the co-production of learning. In roles students perform within CES, they are not just "consumers" of education, but their community-based work puts them in roles as "producers" as well. Examples of this increased capacity has been demonstrated in multiple CES projects in which students who had direct experience working with a community partner developed a sense of empowerment, in that not only did their work make a difference, but it also helped them acquire knowledge that could not have been gained through classroom lessons.

CES students have compelling and unique opportunities to engage and further their education while providing important services within the community. Similarly, faculty members have the opportunity to directly engage students in the co-production of learning by building a platform of experience and reflection that furthers and enriches

students' learning. Both student and faculty member capabilities and benefits are enabled through the active engagement of community partners who provide the arenas for service and support for both teaching faculty members and student learners.

In much the same manner, CES actively seeks to expand students' and faculty members' capacities to learn and teach at the same time they are engaging in the work of community partners. Thus, the student, faculty member, and community partner become co-producers of learning, teaching, and service. Each one benefits from the others' efforts, while at the same time contributing to the development of the agenda, process, and outcomes that meet the shared interests of the partnership.

Challenges Building Citizenship

Above all things, co-production is a partnership strategy. This is both its potential strength and possibly its biggest liability in considering its continued application in higher education. Partnerships between different entities hold the promise of combining resources and broadening both participation and ownership in addressing social problems, but partnerships between parties of dissimilar interest and disparate resources can be ineffective at best and even counter-productive at worst. Harry Boyte (2015) makes the observation that what we have in American society are, on the one hand, citizens who are in tune with private matters but who know little of what is needed to involve themselves with matters of public consequence and, on the other hand, a public sector which for the most part is preoccupied with purveying goods to citizen "clients" while remaining out of touch with their own citizenship and citizen-building processes (Boyte 2015, 8). Thus it follows that partnerships comprised of "private citizens" and "public servants" who are coming from such fundamentally different interests and perspectives are ill-situated to meaningfully address matters of public interest.

CES provides programmatic infrastructure that seeks to empower student learners by providing them with a structured way to be agents of social change and community betterment. As a result, students gain experience and build capacity for public citizenship. There have been countless examples of CES students taking on community improvement initiatives outside of their work at CES but building from the professional, organizational, and community engagement skills practiced through their work at CES. Both faculty members and community partners engage in citizenship building through their engagement in supporting student learners with experience and insights. Together, students, faculty members, and community partners increase their capacity to meaningfully address matters of public interest.

Curriculum Connection

From its very beginning to the current day, CES has been both a product of and a contributor to the university's curriculum. The intersection between the work that CES performs and PSU's curriculum produces an ever-expanding and deepening source of partnerships for teaching, learning, and working to produce social change. This intersection has led to many innovative curricular components that were both

conceived of and tested as parts of multiple CES projects. For example, CES and the Portland Public School District worked together to build an action-based high-school curriculum as part of a pilot for PSU's capstone program. This project modeled the power of engaged learning and demonstrated that high quality service can be delivered to high school students when supported and orchestrated within a curriculum. CES also was the organizational home for an AmeriCorps pilot program in which participants combined community service with their university educational programs. CES's reach has extended to multiple PSU schools and colleges including business, education, environmental sciences, fine arts, and urban planning. Although the curricular content of these programs is shaped by their individual disciplines, these initiatives all share a common focus of engaged action research and community partner participation, structured and made accessible by CES's established partnerships through their contracting relationships. Thus, the organizational structure of CES provides support to faculty and students to engage their educational and research interests within a continuum of established partnerships and program work.

The curricula of various PSU colleges and schools provide rich opportunities to shape CES's work as well. Many CES community connections emerge from classwork, as well as individual students' efforts as part of completing research theses or performing internships. In 2004 a team of students began a volunteer project to attempt special events recycling with a local special events organizer responsible for a twelve thousand-participant fundraising walk. This initial work inspired the development of a long-term contracted program between CES and the City of Portland to expand recycling to all special events held in the city. CES maintains a network of communications that made it possible to mine this and many other curricular collaborations for continuing inquiry and partnership development by actively engaging with faculty and students across the campus.

Throughout CES history, community partners who have contracted with CES for service have also benefitted from courses and research supported by CES. While benefits accrue to community partners from the extra services provided through curricular connections, partners also frequently benefit from the process of working with students and faculty members to help integrate important work and partners' issues into the curriculum. As community partners engage in the teaching and research being conducted, they expand and deepen their own capacities to address their important issues while developing new and innovative ways to conduct their work.

Another key element that enhances curriculum provided by the CES infrastructure is the opportunity provided for CES student staff and project leads to gain experience with teaching and research through the curricular connections. Not only do the faculty members and students in community-based learning classes benefit from having access to CES's program and partner infrastructure, but also students who are working at CES gain rich experience in mentoring and teaching. Frequently staff at CES are given roles as teaching assistants in a class and take on major responsibilities for assisting faculty members and students to connect their coursework to the work of CES and the community partner. These experiences can be important additions to students' resumes.

Recently, one CES project lead was able to lace together her experience at CES with her teaching assistantship in a capstone, allowing her master's thesis to reflect these experiences and showcase her impressive array of qualifications. This led to her being hired for a managerial position with one of CES's legacy partners, largely because of her set of unique qualifications. This is only one example of many similar stories from dozens of CES alumni who have been placed in key industry and public sector positions.

Throughout CES's twenty-five-year history, a rich exchange of both services and benefits have existed between CES and multiple dimensions of the PSU curricula. In this exchange, we see a continuum of co-production involving faculty members, students, and community partners, in which beneficiaries of service have active participatory roles in the delivery of the service. CES infrastructure serves as the essential hub of intersections between the production of education and service within the curriculum and within the community (Figure 2). The next section will take a more in-depth look at one of those curricular intersections with CES, the University Studies capstone, examining CES's capstone-related courses as recounted by student, faculty members, and community partner participants.

Figure 2: CES Curriculum and Research Examples

CES-assisted Capstones Course Projects (partial list):
- Design and implementation of a compost program at the Oregon Zoo, run by Metro regional government
- Assessment of waste stream materials and design of re-use processes for major shopping mall
- Sponsorship of re-use and material swap fair with neighborhood association
- Development of field-based recycling education curriculum for a school district
- Assessment markets and business opportunities for waste stream material recovery
- Assessment of opportunities for recycling of greywater in university housing facilities
- Design and installation of demonstration compost systems at community garden locations

CES-assisted Projects with Community-Based Learning Courses (partial list)
- Survey of public participation rates in curbside recycling
- Exploration around homelessness and public recycling
- Conducting of numerous surveys of waste stream audits at public facilities and multi-family residences
- Marketing

Graduate Theses and Dissertations (partial list)
- Developing Key Sustainability Competencies through Real-World Learning Experiences: Evaluating CES
- Sustainable Operations at Portland State University: Relevant Organizational Issues and a Path Forward
- Portland's Multifamily Recycling Program: A Study of Co-Production Policy and Citizen Involvement

CES and Capstones

Capstones occupy an important and foundational place in the general education program at PSU. Capstones provide students with a curricular structure that positions them as participants in performing important community work, but also aims to help students acquire essential skills for being active citizens and meaningful members of society. Capstones also provide faculty members with in-load courses that allow them to embed their teaching and research within community contexts. The key to the capstone structure is the community partner. Capstones are built around the work and goals of engaged community partners and, as such, offer community partners ways to broaden their organizational resource base, allowing them to address the important challenges they face. This section will explore ways that students, faculty members, and community partners have benefitted from the opportunities that capstones provide, as well as how they have addressed challenges experienced in the unique and symbiotic relationship enjoyed by CES and capstones.

The Student Experience

Capstones are, by design, community-based. As such, the discourse as well as the outcomes for learning transcends the disciplines of the academy. In this learning environment there are shared consequences between the students and the communities in which they work. This is reinforced with partnership agreements in which both community partner and the students assume responsibility and are accountable for work performed within the capstone. This level of accountability for work performed outside of the classroom and within the community presents additional challenges and can be daunting. The degree to which students are supported to meet these challenges within the classroom and within the community greatly determines both the learning and the outcomes that are experienced in the capstone. In this regard, the community partner's role becomes essential to a successful capstone experience. This role is not just defined in terms of being a service recipient, but also in terms of providing support to the students' experiences.

In addition to the community partner, there are other avenues of support available to the capstone student. For capstones that work with a CES partner, CES provides a number of resources to support student work and learning. One of the most important supports is CES students and professional staff. CES staff many times work alongside capstone students as both peers and guides, as they have had previous experience working with the community partner. As one student who was engaged with a neighborhood in helping design and implement a large-scale material swap fair with commercial and residential complexes recalled, there would have been no way they would have thought at the beginning of the term that this task could be done in a short eight-week summer class. But once the diverse skills and multidisciplinary knowledge of the classmates as well as the experience of the CES student project leads working with the class were known, the student not only perceived the project to be doable but felt "empowered" by the team she was working with.

For a student to make the most of what might be very new and challenging experiential and educational terrain, faculty members and community partners must be prepared to address the challenges in order to maximize the opportunities for students to have a successful experience. CES has demonstrated a unique capacity in this regard. Because of CES's history of developing and maintaining successful community partnerships, capstone students who work with a CES project partner have access to established relationships and successful past experiences that add richness and depth to students' current work. This point is illustrated by a CES-supported capstone student who worked with students from a neighborhood school, first to conduct a waste audit and then to prepare an action plan for how the students could help the school reduce their waste. The capstone student noted that she felt like she was "part of a legacy" by coming into this class and working on this project—and *that* was an empowering experience. It made her feel like the work she was doing really did matter and had importance because of the project's history. In addition, the continuity of this work and the breadth of experience of CES not only made the project doable but also one that would make a difference. The capstone experience put this student on a pathway that led her to take a position in CES after completing the capstone, where she will continue this work and become a peer mentor to other students in community-based learning courses.

CES helps students both to further their education as well as to prepare for future employment by providing those who complete CES-affiliated capstones with opportunities to continue working on the issues their capstones addressed. Both the student's capstone experiences and the opportunities to continue this work in CES can be life-changing. As a student who participated in a pilot capstone partnering CES with a local high schools recalled:

> The small and personal structure of the class, the challenges of engaging with other learners in the class and students with the community partner, the introduction to reflective learning around applied practice, all made possible by the faculty working with CES and the community partners in the capstone, set me on an altered course for my own education and ultimately my career (A. Spring, personal communication).

This student chose to continue to work at CES following the capstone class. She acknowledges that her time at CES helped her develop the advanced research skills and tools of community-based learning and engagement that led to her acceptance to and completion of graduate school and, ultimately, to her present position within PSU. She credits these formative CES and capstone experiences for a now nearly twenty-year career in which she continues to create applied experiences, similar to those she had, for current students.

The real-world-based methods of inquiry typically employed in CES-affiliated capstones are also important in enhancing students' educational experiences. Much of the work that students do in these capstones involves documenting what is in the waste stream and exploring ways that the amount of generated waste can be reduced. Many

times this work is tedious and unpleasant, but, in almost all cases, also very revealing and a source of curiosity and creativity. As one student who completed a CES-affiliated capstone project that partnered with a large multi-family residence, stated, "I never knew you could learn so much from a dumpster full of garbage" (L. Bruschi, personal communication). This capstone student said that she appreciated this opportunity even further after she heard that CES student-workers routinely did this same work. Capstone students come to realize that what can be learned in investigating the waste stream provides them with opportunities for creative problem-solving. This points to two very important attributes of CES-partnered capstones: first, waste stream reduction efforts are replete with learning opportunities, and second, efforts to reduce waste streams can be readily and easily measured. The omnipresent and tactile nature of the materials people use and turn into waste are important data sources that serve as a very strong reminder to students that much of what we can learn about our world and ways to improve it can come from everyday observations of the most common sort.

The Faculty Member Experience

One of the greatest challenges faculty members face in designing and offering capstone courses is locating a suitable community partner. From a faculty member perspective, requisite qualities that community partners must bring to any capstone are a willingness and capacity to support the work students will be performing, as well as the education in which they will be engaging. Since CES has an on-going roster of projects with community partners that have already been built around student staff, working with CES turns out to be an enormous asset for faculty members. An experienced faculty member, who developed a capstone course that engaged students in building a network of potential local manufacturers that could re-purpose materials recovered from a large commercial shopping center's waste stream, noted that working with CES projects and partners allowed her the opportunity to not have to work from scratch on building a relationship with a community partner but to focus on aligning the community work the students would be doing with her course (C. North, personal communication).

Faculty members discover that teaching a capstone involves taking on a number of supervisory and project management functions of community work and aligning these with the learning objectives of the course, in addition to the traditional faculty member expectations of organizing and delivering course material and assessing learning objectives. These varied responsibilities can seem overwhelming, not only with regard to the time required but also in terms of the on-the-ground knowledge to support students in their learning and to assure that sufficient time and resources are available to monitor students' community work and provide "quality control." Faculty members who work with CES on their capstones have access to a roster of community partners, all of which have past experience working with students. This provides an important resource to faculty members both in terms of initially offering a capstone and for aligning future courses that can take advantage of the continuity of work that CES provides. In almost all CES-affiliated capstones, faculty members also have access to an array of CES student support staff and project leads who are available to assist in project organization and management. A faculty member who offered a capstone on

developing a branding and marketing campaign for a large waste reduction initiative being launched by a neighborhood association acknowledged the value of these assets. She noted that working with CES student staff was like having a ready-made support system to help with the more managerial parts of the project. The faculty member was able then to put more time and energy into assuring that the learning goals were being addressed in the course.

Faculty members can also access new content elements to build their own teaching and research by working with CES in the design of their capstone courses. A non-tenure-track faculty member who co-produced, with the Portland Public School District, a capstone involving a recycling curriculum linking college, high school, and local elementary school students, discovered that partnering with CES not only provided course delivery support but also created opportunities to further a new research agenda on the positive effects of mentoring on student success. The success of the initial capstone led to it being replicated at multiple Portland area high schools. Partnering with CES opened an entire field of inquiry on the positive effects of mentoring for this faculty member that not only led to the completion of his doctoral dissertation but also to his promotion to a tenured position in his department. The capstone-based introduction to the positive effects of mentoring continued to contribute to his research and teaching over his entire career at PSU. This faculty member emphasized that the importance of the role the community partner and the students themselves had in opening this pathway "cannot be overstated." He attributes the collaborative way in which students and partners worked, and the diversity of the experiences and capacities each brought to the capstone, as key elements that drew him to this new area of inquiry that ultimately transformed his whole body of scholarship and teaching.

This pathway of research and teaching is not uncommon with faculty who have engaged with CES in teaching a capstone. This approach has been instrumental in furthering faculty members' scholarship and teaching, as well as ultimately leading to advancement in fields as diverse as psychology, fine arts, and urban planning.

The Community Partner Experience

As has been repeatedly emphasized in this issue, community partners are essential and foundational to successful capstones. But the role community partners play in capstones is unique. Unlike a typical client/consultant relationship, students are not presented to the community partner as the experts but rather as learners. In no way should this unique quality of capstones be taken as a lowering of expectations or under-valuing of the high quality work performance that students can and regularly do produce. Students are critical in the process of adding value to what would otherwise be realized in a more traditional client/consultant relationship.

Community partners in capstones benefit in unexpected ways from this unique relationship with students and faculty members. Partners frequently discover the advantages of not being limited to the role of "client" or consumer of service, but rather having opportunities to participate within the educational process – as both

teachers and learners themselves. The manager of the department overseeing Portland's city-wide recycling program explained the value derived from these non-traditional roles. He stated that "one of the most gratifying parts of the partnership with a capstone was working with students as learners." By interacting with the students about the work the city was doing, he was given new opportunities to learn about ways to perceive and address the challenges he faced in his work. He noted,

> I had no idea how much more I could learn about the very work I manage with the city until I [was given the occasion], within the many capstones that we have partnered with CES, to share my work with the students in a class. The diversity of the students' backgrounds and interests, as well as their passion for wanting to make a difference, not only provided fresh new perspectives on how to approach my work but also re-energized me in my work (B. Walker, personal communication).

Another of the CES partners who manages a large business district's sustainability programs reports a similar experience. She recalls that her experiences in implementing a CES-affiliated capstone, especially going through the process of finding appropriate work for the students to complete to help with the problem their organization was addressing, made her realize "just how many different ways one can perceive of the work we are doing and the many different avenues that can be followed in achieving the results we hope for in that work." For these community partners, stepping out of a more traditional role of a "client" seeking "consultant" services into a multi-faceted role that involves being an active participant in the learning process itself, had many additional values that went beyond the services that students provided in the project. As one community partner remarked, referring to the experience of working with CES and capstones, "It's like getting two for one. [When you contract with CES] you get an added bonus of work and knowledge [from] students and faculty…" (S. Heinicke, personal communication).

It may seem like a tall order for the community partner to be a participant in a learning process while also working to manage projects they are responsible for in their jobs. Although students in a capstone do not represent a trained workforce ready-made to engage in the challenging and important work the partner performs in the community, this does not mean their work will be somehow less valuable or that the community partner will be forced to lower its standards. For capstones to be able to sustain relationships with community partners, there must be quality products that provide a return on partners' investments. CES supports both capstone students and the community partners in ways that provide partners with a return of very valuable work done by students, and students with value-added experiences that are powerful aspects of their learning. In addition, by having a community partner with a past history of working with CES, faculty members and students have the benefit of engaging with a community partner who has experience in working with capstone classes and already sees the value in student-centered work partnerships. A CES-facilitated partnership considerably raises the chances of both a successful learning experience and a successful body of work being completed within any given capstone. As one community partner

recalls, "There was a seamless transition for [us] in partnering with a capstone class due to [our] previous experience with CES" (E. Hormann, personal communication).

Lessons from Students, Faculty and Community Partners

There are several common themes that emerge in the wide array of diverse experiences recounted by students, faculty, and community partners that have worked with CES-affiliated capstones. These experiences provide insights that can help guide a larger understanding of the value of community-based learning and inform those who wish to build a curricular connection to a student research institute or some organization with the hallmarks of CES.

Co-produced service learning. Some of the most valuable and productive experiences for those engaged in CES-affiliated capstones come from situations where participants share in the work and even the exchange of roles in the production of the educational and service experience. The structure of the capstone class, especially when the course partners with an established consulting and contracting service organization like CES, extends valuable opportunities to all parties within the partnership to participate in the delivery of both education and service. Students, at the time they are learning CES-provided content in their capstone courses, are also getting to share this information with the community. Faculty members have the opportunity to enact both their teacher and service provider role. Community partners actively participate in the teaching and learning process while still receiving valuable service as the result of students' capstone class projects. The opportunity to share in the processes as well as the benefits of work and learning can become powerful, even transforming, experiences.

Longevity and continuity in service and education. The established network of CES-affiliated community partners and projects provides an invaluable reservoir of opportunities for community-based educational experiences like capstones. Faculty members and students who engage in community-based courses, in most cases, do not have either the community networks or the time to develop the relationships with community partners necessary for these courses to be successful. CES provides access to a network of service providers and allows the work that students engage in to be part of larger and longer term community efforts. The durability of CES partnerships and the ongoing nature of CES projects provide students and faculty members with opportunities for the continuity of the work and access to partners that otherwise would not be available to them.

Connection of research centers and the curriculum. As has been demonstrated in the experiences of those that have participated in the CES-partnered capstones, the body of work that is done within CES as a research center is an enormous asset in the delivery of the curriculum, especially the curriculum built around community-based learning. Frequently in institutions of higher education, research capacity in universities' centers and institutes are removed, physically and functionally, from the

departments and schools delivering the curriculum. Such a separation is a huge loss for both teachers and researchers. CES and CES-affiliated capstones have demonstrated that more actively engaging the activity of teaching and research centers together can clearly be a win-win situation for both.

The community "textbook." The range of experiences within the community that are opened by capstones exposes an enormous array of potential learning opportunities. CES projects that investigate and track materials in the waste stream provide learners with access to a very tangible and "material" body of knowledge about how our society functions. In essence, the waste stream writes daily texts that reveal the business of living in the cities on our planet. This text for learning is tactile and observable and can be accessed through the simple act of opening the lid of a dumpster and examining the contents. In addition, the results of efforts to change the amount in the waste stream are similarly accessible. The knowledge to be gained from these physical artifacts of our waste and our society do more than teach us about the subjects that frequently are the focus of the CES-affiliated capstone classes; they represent a rich opportunity to expand our knowledge and to improve our humanity by opening our eyes and accessing the knowledge that the many "textbooks," like the dumpsters, in our communities can potentially give us.

This last point was strongly reinforced to a group of students in a CES-affiliated capstone who were working to assess and document tenant participation in a new CES-installed recycling system at a multi-family residence. In sharing the results of the study with the manager, the students were surprised that the manager was not pleased with evidence that showed that tenants were correctly using the recycling facilities at the complex. Rather, he was upset by the number of empty cat food containers the students identified in the recycling bins because the tenants were not supposed to have pets. Upon further inquiry into the matter, the students discovered that the tenants did not have pets but were buying cat food for their own use. This, as they discovered, was because the tenants were largely non-English speaking and bought the cheaper food with the picture of a fish on the label, unaware that it was pet food. When this information was shared with the manager, his indignation instantly turned to compassion and concern for their welfare. This new awareness of what the tenants must be dealing with in a world that is very foreign to them led to increased efforts on the part of the manager to better understand and appreciate his tenants' circumstances.

Continuing onto a Path Forward

Along with its many successes, CES has faced a number challenges in sustaining this robust learning and research endeavor. Efforts to support and maintain the infrastructure essential to on-going community-university partnerships can be demanding, but doing so can be richly rewarding to both the institutions of higher learning and the community. These challenges and efforts to address them as CES moves forward are discussed below.

Co-Production and Maintaining Accountability

One of the biggest challenges faced by CES is to maintain accountability by delivering quality service that meets external community partners' expectations, while also supporting student development. Since students are largely responsible for meeting the requirements of contracts with community partners, it is essential to have oversight of their work in order to assure quality control. The use of senior-level students, project leads, and faculty members in these oversight roles is a necessity. In meeting the student development goal of CES, close attention must also be paid to the level and quality of support that is provided to students in order to enable them to perform successfully. Meeting the challenge of fulfilling the two goals for high-quality work performance and student development requires close communication with community partners to assure that there is mutual understanding and joint participation. Frequently this means making adjustments and negotiating necessary revisions to work performance areas and methods so that both goals can be reached.

For example, in the beginning of a major work agreement with the City of Portland to conduct a weight study of recycling and waste containers of single-family residences, it was discovered that the original methods designed for collecting these weights were not feasible for the work if it were to be done by students because there were difficulties securing the weights of containers at the curbside in a timely way in advance of the hauler arriving to empty the containers. As a result, not all the containers that had to be weighed were weighed, leaving an incomplete database. This was unacceptable in terms of the standards the City had set. It was also frustrating to the students not to be able to complete the work in the high-quality manner they anticipated. To address this, there was a negotiation between CES and the city to find a way that the work could be done at a level of quality that met the city's standards but also in a manner that would allow the students to be successful.

This negotiation resulted in some major changes to the project, which included the following: developing a brand-new design for a portable scale that could be more easily moved from house to house, designing and developing a communication process to allow students and the hauler to more closely coordinate timing, and changing the data collection system to allow for weights and location data to be more quickly identified and entered. Each of the implemented changes was the result of student initiatives, from the engineering needed in the design of the new scale to the methodology for communication and data entry used in the study. The City of Portland provided support for these changes by adjusting the timelines for the completion of the projects and by regularly meeting with students to review the ongoing student work and recommendations for adjustments. The result was a vastly improved system that met the city's needs, as well as a set of new opportunities and experiences for student development that was supported by both CES and the city. This mutual effort not only turned a potential failure in work performance into compliance, but also produced value-added benefits of new and innovative equipment and research methods that served as opportunities for students to expand their knowledge and experience. These successful outcomes were the direct result of a true partnership initially founded on the shared interests of both parties and maintained through active participation of each

partner to assist the other in meeting their goals. Developing such partnerships with mutual understanding of the respective goals of each and identifying a process to make necessary accommodations with respect to those goals remain an on-going challenge, one that when met secures the basis for the long-term relationships and multiple benefits that frequently surpass the expectations of each partner.

Adaptive Management

Long-term community-based programming and the infrastructure needed to support this work in the university requires management that is adaptive and flexible to ever-changing community and university landscapes. Externally-funded university programs are subject to many challenges. Funding can be uncertain, and information on funding amounts and availability many times is only available on short notice. Maintaining continuity among funder, university, and partner timetables and adjusting for different workforce needs based on contract requirements that may change in size and scope because of funding are routine challenges faced when supporting university programs on external funds. These challenges become even more daunting when efforts must be made to integrate work with community partners and contractors around the academic schedule and to accommodate funding requirements for projects to meet university fiscal and programming standards.

Student Turnover

There is constant student staff turnover in an organization of this kind, largely because student tenure at the university is temporary. Established mechanisms for recruiting and training student staff, and an adaptive and flexible structure are required in order to exist within the university and to meet workforce requirements and scheduling challenges. CES representatives conduct extensive outreach by making regular class presentations to inform and recruit students to this work. It is also essential to establish and maintain relations with faculty members and student organizations in order recruit potential student workers.

Unique Faculty Member Requirements

The nature of the work requires attention to matters not frequently required of faculty members in higher education. The combination of supporting students in a work performance environment while also advancing their educational programs is demanding and frequently incongruent. Matters of program performance accountability and varying expectations of community partners and funding sponsors don't always align with what is needed to provide a learning environment. Having the ability to juggle the two roles and to find paths where there can be congruence between potentially conflicting agendas is a unique and rare quality within the academic community. Supporting faculty members in these roles necessitates a rigorous commitment and continuous support of the academic unit hosting these faculty positions.

Research Center Outreach

One of the biggest challenges universities face is to cross boundaries of research and teaching. Frequently research centers within the university operate on timelines and

technical requirements that restrict the degree to which the two functions can be mutually supportive. The experiences with CES-affiliated capstones demonstrate the potential value of finding common ground between the two distinctly different domains. Though this has been done in many cases over the last twenty-five years of CES's existence, there remains an ongoing challenge to find further ways to bring the two functions together.

Conclusion

On a sky bridge at the university, students inscribed PSU's motto: "Let Knowledge Serve the City." This symbolically captures the institutional commitment that PSU has made to be engaged with the communities of which it is a part. CES has been a robust and enduring expression of that commitment over the twenty-five years of its existence, providing a rich array of beneficial services to public and community organizations as well as business partners. As important a contribution as these services have been to the region, just as important is the method by which these services are delivered and the programmatic infrastructure which has been created to support this work. As a student-centered organization, CES structures its work around the principles of engaged learning, leadership development, and citizen participation. Faculty and community partners who share these interests work together in supporting students in co-producing results that further public interest and community betterment. Capstone courses and the curriculum of the University Studies program have provided a regular platform of opportunity, as well as a means by which students can formalize this rich learning and experiences within their educational programs. Judith Ramaley, former PSU president who presided over the general education curriculum reform and creation of University Studies, refers to community-based learning as a shared process between community and the educational institution, a process by which there are both mutual respect and "shared consequences" (Ramaley 1997, 19). This blending of participant and beneficiary in both the process and the outcomes of education is what makes these learning environments unique and of special value. The history of CES and capstones is a product of the institution's effort to build and sustain such a platform of shared experience between community and university. This has not only benefitted each partner through the shared consequences of that endeavor, but has extended the reach of those benefits far into the communities they have together touched.

References

Bovaird, Tony. 2007. "Beyond Engagement and Participation: User and Community Coproduction of Public Services." *Public Administration Review* 67 (5): 846-860.

Boyte, Harry, ed. 2015. *Democracy's Education: Public Work, Citizenship, and the Future of Colleges and Universities.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Cahn, Edgar S. 2004. *No More Throw-Away People: The Co-Production Imperative.* 2nd ed. London: Essential Books Ltd.

Neary, Mike, Les Bell, and Howard Stevenson, eds. 2012. *Towards Teaching in Public: Reshaping the Modern University.* New York: Bloomsbury.

Ramaley, Judith A. 1997. "Shared Consequences: Recent Experiences with Outreach and Community-Based Learning." *Journal of Public Service & Outreach* 2 (1): 19-25.

Author Information

Dr. Barry Messer was the co-founder of CES and was its first director, a position he held for seven years. He was a professor in urban studies and planning for twenty years and continues to provide support to the faculty and students working in CES. He worked extensively to help develop the university's community-based learning programs and has written several publications on sustainability and community-university partnerships.

Dr. Peter Collier, emeritus professor of sociology at Portland State University, developed one of the first CES-affiliated capstone courses in partnership with the Portland Public School District. He is co-author, along with Christine M. Cress and Vicki L. Reitenauer, of *Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities.*

W. Barry Messer
Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: messerw@pdx.edu

Peter J. Collier
Sociology Department
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: petercollier1@comcast.net
Telephone: 503-975-8818
Website: http://drpeterjcollier.com/

Cultivating Community: Faculty Support for Teaching and Learning

Celine Fitzmaurice

Abstract

Emerging approaches to faculty support are moving away from a "fixing" model to a "relational" model. In this article, the author describes a program of faculty support that places trust and community-building at the center of its efforts. The result is a program in which faculty members engage in a peer-to-peer approach to mentoring, professional exchange, assessment, and reflection.

On a recent spring morning I found myself conversing with a Portland State University (PSU) capstone faculty member over tea. We had met at a popular coffee shop at the edge of campus with large windows looking out on tree-lined park blocks. The cafe has become a favorite meeting place for students, staff, and faculty at PSU. It has a relaxed yet vibrant feel to it—the kind of place where faculty and students meet to catch up on each other's lives or work on a project together.

My meeting with this particular faculty member marks a typical scene for faculty support in the capstone program. A new faculty member comes into the program, and a relationship of trust and collegiality is gradually built with faculty support facilitators. Over time, the faculty member feels comfortable enough to request a coffee date or meeting to check in about her course. Inevitably, the conversation winds toward the peculiar challenges and rewards of teaching, an exchange of ideas about new classroom resources or techniques, or the intersection of one's personal and professional life. By the end of the meeting, plans are made to meet again, and each person departs with a short list of items to send the other—a group learning assessment, a community partner evaluation form, or even a list of wildflower hikes to recommend.

This is the nature of faculty support for teaching and learning in the capstone program at PSU. While the work is ultimately about supporting transformative teaching and learning, the process by which we accomplish this is an unprescribed mix of community building, attention to each instructor s individual gifts, mutual support in the face of challenges, peer training, and a healthy dose of reflection and celebration.

Faculty Support Structure

The faculty support structure within the capstone program is an ever-evolving organism designed to meet the emerging needs of faculty in the face of educational change. This flexible approach relies on the willingness of seasoned faculty members to step into faculty support roles as the need arises. In the early years of the capstone program, its director recognized the need for a particular brand of faculty support for

capstones. In addition to the services provided by our university s central teaching and learning center, she envisioned an "embedded" approach for capstone faculty that provided a range of support options which would address the specific needs of educators teaching community-based learning courses.

With the support of the director of University Studies (PSU's general education program, the senior level of which is the capstone), the capstone program secured initial funds for a half-time faculty support position to be held by an experienced capstone faculty member. Over time, the staffing structure has expanded to include three part-time faculty support coordinators who carry paid contracts, and an additional group of seasoned faculty members who assist with faculty support in fulfillment of their service obligations to the university. The paid support team recently saw an increase in FTE with the introduction of online capstones. As of this writing, one of our faculty support facilitators focuses all of her efforts on assisting faculty in the development and implementation of online capstones. Together, this faculty support team reviews course proposals, visits capstone classes to conduct student feedback sessions, plans and facilitates workshops and retreats, and meets one-on-one with faculty members to provide targeted support or simply reflect on their teaching practice.

A key characteristic of the faculty support team is that all members are actively teaching in the classroom. This allows them to serve as both colleagues and mentors in the faculty support process. Currently, this structure supports the instructors in over 240 capstone courses offered each year. The courses span a wide range of topics and teaching approaches, including face-to-face, hybrid, and online course designs. Capstone faculty represent a range of disciplines and are made up of tenured faculty members, non-tenure-track instructors, and adjunct instructors.

The "Flow" of Faculty Support
Proposal Development and Review

Faculty support in our program takes many forms. An often overlooked but particularly effective component of our overall faculty support structure is the course proposal process. Our director often says that faculty support begins when a person walks through her door to share an idea for a new capstone course. In the capstone program, faculty have the opportunity to propose their own capstone courses based on their particular interests and awareness of community needs. A committee of five capstone faculty members reviews proposals on a quarterly basis with an eye to what will make for a successful course. Before the proposal even reaches the committee, however, individuals are encouraged to meet with the chair of the committee to review the proposal draft. The chair works with the faculty member to develop a strong proposal and shares feedback from the committee once the review process has taken place. More often than not, the committee recommends that the proposer revise portions of the proposal before receiving full approval for the course. Suggested revisions reflect the committee members' collective knowledge of the common pitfalls associated with teaching capstones. By requiring proposal revisions, the committee members use their expertise to support the proposer in designing and delivering a successful course.

Pre-course Preparation

Once a course has been approved, the committee chair meets with the instructor to orient them to the capstone program and the many resources available to instructors. This orientation includes a new hire checklist, an overview of various support services on campus, an introduction to PSU's learning management system, syllabus construction techniques, and a review of best practices for community-based learning. Faculty members are also introduced to the capstone faculty handbook and the capstone website at this time. As the first offering of the course approaches, the committee chair again offers to meet with the new instructor to review the initial syllabus for the course.

Mid-Term Feedback Sessions

Each new course is scheduled to receive a mid-term feedback session halfway through the first offering of the capstone. This is also conducted by the committee chair to provide continuity in the support process. The mid-term feedback session is a central component of our faculty support program. Each year, every new course and a random sample of our ongoing capstones receives a mid-term feedback session. The approach we use for these class visits is based on the small-group instructional diagnosis process or SGID (Angelo and Cross 1993; Black 1998). The SGID is a formative assessment strategy that allows faculty members to gain teaching insights from students' comments and to make mid-course adjustments as needed.

At the start of this process, the facilitator of the SGID meets with the faculty person to hear about the dynamics of the course from the faculty member's perspective. The facilitator then schedules a thirty-minute visit to the class to invite students into dialogue about what is going well and what could be changed to improve the course. This session takes place while the faculty member is out of the room. At the end of the session, the facilitator compiles the students' comments and again meets with the faculty member. In this meeting, the facilitator shares the students' aggregated responses and offers assistance to the faculty member in making sense of the results and initiating changes to the course. In this way, faculty are invited to get useful information about students' experiences in their course while it is operating, which also models for students what it looks like to ask for, receive, and implement formative feedback.

Faculty often report deeply meaningful experiences with the SGID. In one memorable example, the seasoned facilitator scheduled to conduct a feedback session had a very difficult time connecting with the faculty member for their pre-session conversation. Finally, after a number of failed attempts to set up a meeting with the instructor, the facilitator went to his office hours, and the two discussed his course and how he was experiencing it. The facilitator described the feedback process in detail to the instructor and asked if he had any suggestions to make for how she might best facilitate the process with his students. During their fruitful post-session conversation, the professor apologized for having made himself difficult to reach initially, saying that he had never experienced a positive interaction with a colleague relative to assessment, nor

had he ever before felt seen as an instructor, let alone encouraged to open himself up to formative feedback and collegial support for the purposes of improving his teaching (about which he cared very much).

Ongoing Faculty Support:
Workshops, Retreats, and Brown Bag Sessions

Each year, one of our faculty support professionals gathers a team of capstone instructors to plan and facilitate a one-day fall workshop that focuses on skill-building. Themes for past events have ranged from syllabus development to fostering dialogue in the classroom to teaching for hope and change. At this event, all participants are invited to share their ideas for upcoming faculty development events, including any sessions they would like to lead.

In the spring, we host an annual retreat that combines reflection and celebration with a service project to support us in "walking our talk." Last year s event found us cleaning and sorting books for a local children s literacy campaign. Our host for the day was a community partner who shared with us the challenges of providing summer reading resources to bilingual students at the neighborhood elementary school. The day opened with a poem and ended with a lunch reflection in which faculty exchanged successful teaching strategies from the past year.

Between these two events, we offer monthly brown bag sessions focused on relevant teaching topics. These sessions are often led by instructors in the program who have a particular strategy, tool, or body of research to share. Finally, with the rise of hybrid and online courses, we have worked with our university s central teaching and learning center to develop a series of workshops to foster best practices for community-based learning in the online format. (See "Online Community-Based Learning as the Practice of Freedom: The Online Capstone Experience at Portland State University" in this issue for more information about online capstones.)

Sample brown bag topics include the following:
• "Working with Multilingual Students"
• "Experiential Activities for Use in the Classroom"
• "Content and Process: How We Teach is What We Teach"
• "Supporting Final Project Teams"
• "Designing Powerful Reflective Writing Prompts"
• "A Framework for Anti-Oppression Training in the Classroom"
• "The Instructor's Role in Surfacing Intersecting Identities"
• "Anytime One-on-Ones: A Responsive Approach to Faculty Support"

Sometimes, despite everyone's best efforts to prepare for success in the classroom, a crisis arises. In our program, faculty are encouraged to reach out for support at the first sign of trouble in the classroom. This support usually takes the form of an impromptu meeting. Over the years, many faculty members have knocked on the office door of a faculty support facilitator without an appointment to request a few minutes of support.

Together, we review the issue, think collaboratively about how to respond, and plan for next steps. If the issue calls for additional support from another office on campus, we use this time to reach out to the appropriate individuals. In some cases, this has involved a longer-term strategy of hiring an outside expert to advise our faculty on a particular challenge that many faculty are facing. Faculty often come back to report on the resolution of the issues or to ask for continuing support. Above all, faculty members are assured that a challenge in the classroom does not reflect negatively on their teaching performance. In fact, addressing issues as they arise in capstone courses is viewed positively within the program, indicating an instructor's commitment to effective teaching in the dynamic environment of a community-based learning class. Therefore, it is far better to reach out for help early than to endure the challenges of an unmanaged crisis over the course of the term.

Faculty Support through Course Evaluation and Program Assessment

The SGID sessions described earlier are just one component of a larger evaluation and assessment framework within the capstone program. This framework includes formative and summative approaches designed for one purpose—to improve teaching and learning. At every step, the program reminds faculty that this is not a punitive process. Rather, the program strives to implement an assessment and evaluation approach that first establishes the trust of faculty and then allows the evaluation and assessment approaches to serve as a continuous improvement strategy.

At the end of each academic year, members of the faculty support team engage in a robust analysis of program data to evaluate the capstone program and inform faculty support efforts moving forward. The data we draw on include a large sample of student comments from final course evaluations, as well as all of the mid-term feedback session summaries. Two members of our team work together analyzing each set of data. Separately, they analyze the data for themes and then come together to generate a written summary of their findings. This summary often serves as a roadmap for faculty support offerings in the following year. For example, if the data suggests that students find many syllabi to be confusing, the program might offer a fall workshop session focusing on syllabus design.

Recently, we have experimented with a new approach to assessment that involves faculty members engaging directly in the assessment process in small learning communities. A central component of our program is a set of four learning goals that are common to each University Studies course: communication, critical thinking, appreciation of the diversity of the human experience, and social and ethical responsibility. Faculty members from a variety of courses are recruited, and sometimes compensated, when funding allows, to develop a portfolio that examines the presence of that goal in their course. The portfolio includes a copy of the course syllabus, a sample assignment that addresses the goal, and examples of student work related to the goal.

Once the portfolios have been submitted, the faculty members meet to review each other's materials, to share feedback, and to engage in dialogue about what they have

learned from each other's approach to the goal. Since the purpose of this assessment process is not to critique each other's work, but rather to learn from each other, and because the facilitator of these sessions stresses the constructive, even generative, goals of this work, faculty have offered praise for what they have experienced and are taking away from these processes. In the anonymous written feedback on the assessment process that participating faculty completed at the end of this year's session, for example, one instructor indicated that the process had "re-affirmed a sense of value in sharing with colleagues." Another reported that they had gained an "appreciation for [the] assessment process." One participant, in response to the question "How will you use your takeaway(s) in future settings?" wrote, "I'm heading to my office right now to note changes to my syllabus and assignments," with a second indicating that they would "continue to come to gatherings such as this to share, analyze, review, and learn from each other." A powerful effect of this process has been the relational ties that are emerging from bringing together faculty who might not otherwise interact.

Faculty Development from the Inside Out

A unique aspect of our faculty support program is the integration of reflective approaches that help instructors explore and nurture their individual gifts as educators. We began down this path with a series of faculty book groups focused less on the mechanics of teaching and more on the nurturing of a set of values that provide the foundation for our practice. The books we have used include *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life* (Palmer 2007); *Teaching with Fire: Poetry That Sustains the Courage to Teach* (Intrator and Scribner 2003); and *Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey into Communities Daring to Live the Future Now* (Wheatley and Frieze 2011). (For more on this last text and its use in the "Effective Change Agent" capstone, see "Contagious Co-Motion: Student Voices on Being Change Agents" elsewhere in this issue.)

While these book groups center on reading a particular text, the gatherings often serve as a springboard for innovative teaching and programming which transcends the book's themes. For example, a conversation that took place in one of the *Teaching with Fire* sessions spurred one faculty member to develop a new program to support students in their continued engagement with social change work beyond graduation. This unique program (expanded upon in the article "Beyond the University: An Initiative for Creating Community-Wide Civic Agency" in this issue) drew on a website, a group of peer mentors, a series of mini-courses, and the passion and expertise of community change agents to support students to continue their social change work following the completion of the capstone. The *Walk Out Walk On* book group created a space where faculty could consider ways to courageously transform teaching and learning. An interest in further empowering students to take charge of their learning led some of the book group participants to form an affinity group that has explored various approaches in participatory pedagogy, including self-grading.

Our work with *The Courage to Teach* led to the development of a faculty retreat series based on this text and other writings by Parker Palmer. Two decades ago, Palmer

developed a retreat method based on *The Courage to Teach* which he piloted with K-12 teachers. The retreats proved successful in supporting the vocational vitality of these teachers, and a nonprofit was established to formalize the "Circle of Trust" retreat approach. Today, the Center for Courage and Renewal (http://www.couragerenewal.org/) supports facilitator training in this approach and sponsors hundreds of retreat series designed for individuals in a variety of professions each year. Since his initial work with K-12 teachers, Palmer and a network of trained facilitators have adapted this retreat approach to support university educators and a variety of service-oriented fields.

Two years ago, our program enlisted the help of a trained "Circle of Trust" facilitator to launch a retreat series for our faculty members. The series was titled "The Art of Teaching: Working from the Inside Out." In each of the past two years, approximately fifteen faculty members have gathered for a series of four day-long retreats over the course of the academic year. The retreats are held off-campus and provide a space for faculty to slow down and reflect on their professional roles. The overall focus of the retreat is to help our instructors nurture authenticity, integrity, and a sense of vitality in their professional roles. Each retreat session explores a particular theme in depth and includes time for individual reflection and collegial conversations. Sample retreat themes have included "Balancing Our Gifts and Limits," "Paradoxes of Teaching and Learning," and "Planting Seeds for Professional Growth."

Lessons Learned

In the capstone program, we've learned many lessons from experimenting with relational approaches to faculty support and engaging with the challenges in teaching intensive community-based learning courses as they arise. While many of these challenges have pushed us to improve on our approaches, other challenges have remained "sticky" problems. In the conclusion to this article, we will address the gifts that have emerged from this relational approach to faculty support. In the meantime, here are some of the challenges with which we continue to grapple.

The capstone program's faculty support efforts are constantly evolving as we adjust for mistakes and respond to the shifting educational climate in higher education. An ongoing challenge that we face is robust attendance at all of our faculty support events. Given that university educators teach at different times of the day, it is difficult to find a time for a faculty development session that matches everyone s calendar. To respond to this, we constantly rotate the day and time for faculty support events such as our brown bag sessions. We also post handouts from these sessions on our capstone website so all can access them. Over the years, this website has grown to host a large number of resources shared by capstone faculty for the benefit of their colleagues. The website allows for peer-to-peer training to continue outside of the confines of a scheduled faculty support event. The website also hosts useful forms and a set of capstone handbooks (for faculty, students, and community partners) which serve as official guides to the program.

Since our instructor pool represents a mix of tenure-line, non-tenure-track, and adjunct instructors, we find varying degrees of participation in faculty support events based on the professional demands faced by each rank. For example, a tenure-track faculty member who is preparing for her promotion and tenure process may not be able to make time for additional meetings, no matter how helpful. Similarly, adjunct instructors frequently juggle positions at multiple institutions, so they may be less likely to find themselves on campus on the day of a particular faculty support event. To address these challenges, our paid faculty support professionals work hard to nurture relationships with individual instructors and to extend personal invitations to events when appropriate. Despite our best efforts, we will never reach everyone, but at least we can ensure that everyone is warmly welcomed into our community.

Finally, the very nature of capstone courses requires that faculty facilitate deep engagement with some of the most critical issues facing our communities and our society today. As a result, faculty must develop the skills to help students engage with each other around extremely complex issues. Unlike a traditional lecture course, capstones invite students to take the driver's seat in their learning process by sharing their own lived experiences and individual perspectives as they relate to course themes. As one might imagine, this can get messy at times. Much of our faculty support effort focuses on helping faculty members develop the skills to support diverse teams of students, to gently but effectively interrupt various forms of oppression, and to create a "brave space" (Arao and Clemens 2013) where a variety of perspectives can be aired with safety and integrity.

As our student body grows and diversifies, we face new challenges that influence the design of our faculty support efforts. In recent years, faculty have asked the capstone program for support in learning more about the range of students we serve. For example, faculty have requested programming related to supporting transgender students, responding to behavioral outbursts in the classroom, engaging effectively with students experiencing mental health issues, and navigating difference in the formation of student project teams. In these cases, one faculty member's request benefits our entire faculty community by generating an event in which an outside expert shares information with us and faculty members have an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences. As the context for teaching and learning shifts, the program must be flexible enough to respond to emerging topics, needs, and concerns as they arise.

Conclusion

Over the past twenty years that the capstone program has been in operation, a relational approach to faculty support has yielded a variety of positive outcomes for faculty. Rather than speak for them, we would like to leave you with the voices of our faculty members as they speak to the impact of our faculty support efforts on their professional practice. The following quotes, received through confidential personal communications on our faculty support approaches, address some of the main themes in the feedback we have received from faculty and the outcomes generated by our community-centered faculty support processes.

- Faculty express a very real sense of camaraderie as a result of the program's focus on community building:

  I am very grateful for the spirit of camaraderie and openness established in the seminars.

  What I didn't expect, and what I have greatly come to appreciate, is that my capstone colleagues and mentors have created a work culture in which this kind of engagement and compassion extends to faculty as well.

- A collaborative approach to faculty support allows faculty to play an active role in their own professional development.

  [The program] has created opportunities for faculty to come together and share ideas and provides avenues for furthering our own education and strengthening our teaching skills.

- Continuous input from faculty allows the program to provide "just in time" support that is responsive to faculty needs and desires.

  The professional development workshops, after an attentive ear to participant requests, provide relevant and valuable assistance on several levels. In these workshops I have learned and then utilized practical strategies for serving and challenging a diverse student population, meeting the University Studies goals, building community in my classroom, and enlivening my curriculum.

- Faculty support efforts inspire faculty members to take risks and to grow as educators.

  I can count on [the program] to create a welcoming, professional space that allows me to identify and work toward my latest growing edge.

- The program's efforts to develop trust with faculty pay off in their willingness to seek help when challenges arise.

  In general, I am accustomed to working very independently and shy away from too much input into what I do. Those barriers have fallen significantly....The leadership and direction have allowed me to feel comfortable enough to ask for help when needed.

At the end of the tea date with the faculty member I described at the beginning of this article, I casually mentioned that I was working on a draft of this article. This faculty member had participated in various forms of faculty development in her two years with the program and was eager to share her reflections on our approach to faculty support. When I asked her how she felt the faculty support program had impacted her professional practice, she shared the following: "I have never experienced this level of faculty support at other institutions. This program is based on sharing ideas, on mentorship, and includes many opportunities to reflect on our work. The atmosphere is so encouraging and is rooted in personal connections" (N. Kono, personal communication).

For every faculty member who shares a comment like this, there are surely others who fall through the cracks of the program's faculty support efforts. But the work continues, with an ongoing commitment to building individual relationships with each faculty member, to cultivating a strong sense of community among our faculty, and to honoring the unique gifts and challenges that each of us bring to this work.

References

Angelo, Thomas A., and K. Patricia Cross. 1993. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Arao, Brian, and Kristi Clemens. 2013. "From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue around Diversity and Social Justice." In *The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections from Social Justice Educators*, edited by Lisa M. Landreman. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Black, Beverly. 1998. "Using the SGID Method for a Variety of Purposes." In *To Improve the Academy*, edited by Matthew Kaplan, 245-262. Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press and the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education.

Intrator, Sam M., and Megan Scribner, eds. 2003. *Teaching with Fire: Poetry That Sustains the Courage to Teach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Palmer, Parker J. 2007. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of the Teacher's Life.* 10th anniversary ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wheatley, Margaret, and Deborah Frieze. 2011. *Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey into Communities Daring to Live the Future Now.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Author Information

Celine Fitzmaurice teaches capstone courses and serves as a faculty support facilitator in the University Studies program at Portland State University. She is also a trained "Courage and Renewal" facilitator. She has facilitated experiential education and retreat programs in a variety of academic, international, and wilderness settings for over twenty years.

Celine Fitzmaurice
University Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: celine@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-8260
Fax: 503-725-5977

Enacting True Partnerships within Community-Based Learning: Faculty and Community Partners Reflect on the Challenges of Engagement

Seanna M. Kerrigan, Vicki L. Reitenauer, and Nora Arevalo-Meier

Abstract

In the past two decades, the literature on campus-community partnerships as core components of pedagogies of engagement has grown exponentially. In this article, the director and a longtime faculty member of Portland State University's capstone program report on interviews conducted with ten faculty-community partner pairs, gleaning insights on both the challenges of and lessons learned through partnering. This research adds to the literature through its use of relational methods that bring the voices of interviewees to readers, revealing a depth of connection across the institutional divide.

Portland State University (PSU) has developed the largest capstone community-based learning program in the nation, engaging more than 4,300 students in 240 capstone courses annually. At the heart of these community-based learning courses are campus-community partnerships and the engagement among students, faculty, and community partner stakeholders that results from these partnerships. The premise of partnerships in community-based pedagogical approaches rests in the belief that partnerships benefit the community, enhance learning for students, and deepen the teaching and scholarship of faculty.

Campus-community partnerships have been explicitly promoted since the 1990s, and since that time, much research has been conducted on the impacts to students of community-based learning. Relatively little literature, however, details the lived experiences of the faculty and community members who create and sustain these partnerships. Given the capstone program's fundamental commitment to relationality in all of its operations (as detailed in previous articles in this issue, including those focused on capstone nuts-and-bolts and the ethos and practices of capstone faculty support efforts), we desired to learn from our faculty and community partners in ways that both reflected and deepened the relational processes by which we seek to operate.

Review of the Literature

As we began this work, we reviewed the literature on the principles and techniques recommended in the field (Driscoll et al. 1998), incorporated the wisdom of scholars who have documented their insights on campus-community partnerships (Bringle and

Hatcher 2002), consulted existing frameworks for conceptualizing this work (Cox 2000), and examined critical elements and characteristics of partnerships (Leiderman et al. 2003; Sandy and Holland 2006). Blouin and Perry (2009) conducted interviews with leaders of community-based organizations, identifying several common obstacles to successful community-based learning from the community partners' perspectives, including lack of preparation for students' encounters with the community partners' clients, communication breakdowns (or a complete lack of communication) with faculty, and drains on organizational resources to support student learners. More recently, Morell, Sorenson, and Howarth (2015); Littlepage, Gazley, and Bennett (2012); and Curwood et al. (2011) have researched the impact of community-based learning on community partners, suggested models for mutually beneficial partnership, and offered correctives to university-dominated discourse on the value of community-based learning through a variety of methods.

Given the PSU capstone program's fundamental commitment to centering relationality, reciprocity, and mutuality in its community-based courses, we chose to ground this research in qualitative interviews with *both* faculty and community partners, so that the insights shared in this article may be deeply informed by their voices. This current article extends a previous piece published by the authors (Kerrigan and Reitenauer 2012) which offers interviewees' rich descriptions of the gifts in their partnership experiences. The contribution made by this article is the braiding of insights about challenges, lessons learned, and advice issuing from those lessons offered by educators on both the university and the community sides of the community-based learning equation.

Research Methods

In this section, we describe the methods used to gather and analyze data in this study. (The description here effectively reproduces the description that appears in Kerrigan and Reitenauer 2012, 131-132). Since our primary interest was to learn about the lived experiences of our faculty and community partners as they engaged in campus-community partnerships, the authors of this study conducted in-depth interviews with ten capstone community partners and ten capstone faculty. Our intention was to investigate the effects that capstone partnerships have on community partners and faculty members, as well as to gain insight into the qualities and characteristics of both exemplary partnership practices between postsecondary institutions and community organizations and the roadblocks that get in the way of high-quality partnering.

The authors recruited fifteen randomly selected capstone courses for participation in the study. In order to recruit a randomized sample, the titles of all of the capstone courses listed in the student bulletin were entered into an Excel file, then randomized within that program. The authors contacted the faculty member and corresponding community partner of the first fifteen courses selected through randomized sampling, inviting them to participate in the study. This letter was followed up with a phone call. Out of the fifteen randomly selected courses, ten courses were included in the study, as this number of faculty-community partner duos agreed to complete individual in-depth interviews. There was no difference in the course pairings that chose to participate and

those that declined, outside of their availability and agreement to participate. Both groups included capstones from a variety of topical areas, including courses focusing on K-12 public education, the environment, and services to persons experiencing homelessness. Those that declined reported that their schedules did not permit their participation. The researchers chose not to go back to recruit additional participants, because the data analysis showed that the themes were consistent within these ten faculty-community partner pairings, thus saturating the themes.

The two researchers engaged in separate analyses of the data so that themes could be confirmed and verified. The researchers employed Creswell's (1994) and Patton's (2001) protocols for data collection and coding and engaged in the process of data analysis as suggested by Creswell (1994). The researchers first read through all of the interview transcriptions carefully to get a sense of the whole and to note initial ideas about the data. Second, each researcher looked through the data one interview at a time and answered the question, "What is the underlying meaning of this interview?" Next, the researcher made a list of the core underlying topics and clustered similar ones into topical themes. Patton describes these initial stages of analysis as a process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data.

The researchers then tested these themes by looking at the data to see if they could be organized according to these themes. Patton (2001) identifies this as a process of content analysis, in which topics are defined and labeled. After organizing the data, the researchers categorized the data accordingly and looked for relationships between the themes in order to make final decisions about the themes and their coding. The data were analyzed and recoded until a coherent and comprehensive thematic analysis had taken place. The two researchers compared and contrasted their thematic findings and confirmed the results.

In gathering data about the nature of these partnerships, the roles involved in them, and the positive and negative impacts, we hoped to capture the stories, the lessons learned, and the best practices informed by those lessons. As other articles in this issue address quite thoroughly the successes of various partnerships, this article will focus solely on the challenges identified by seasoned faculty and community partners, as they give voice to the hidden challenges of partnerships, which are often overlooked in the institutional promotion of community engagement.

Results

Throughout the interviews, participants spoke freely and with great interest about the ways their partnerships had begun, their thoughts and feelings about partnering, and the meaning contained within their collaborations. They shared their joys, successes, challenges, frustrations, and insights. Through our analysis of the rich material provided by our interviewees, we identified that they offered insights regarding both stumbling blocks and advice for faculty, community partners, and students engaged in this work. For the purposes of discussion, we have organized the themes that emerged from the data in this way:

1. Common Stumbling Blocks in Partnerships
   - Scheduling
   - Aligning Organizational Timelines
   - Communication Breakdowns
   - Focusing the Partnership on High Priority Projects: "Does the Community Really Need Glasses?"

2. Advice for Future Partnerships
   - Advice for Faculty: Be engaged, listen, and act with humility
   - Advice for Community Partners: Be aware of the time commitment and clarify priorities
   - Advice for Students: Do the homework to be "in choice" about engaging in community-based learning, be flexible, and be reliable

Each of these themes is discussed below.

Common Stumbling Blocks in Partnerships

Scheduling. The first and most prominent difficulty documented through the interviews was scheduling. Participants' comments about scheduling usually referred to the enormous task of matching the schedules of students at a large urban university with the schedules and needs of community partners. Most students at our institution work at least one part-time job, many are juggling childcare and family obligations, and almost all have multiple demands on their time, including their other coursework. Faculty and community partners were unanimous that this was the primary challenge in their partnerships, as evidenced by the following quotes, the first from a community partner and the second from a faculty member:

> The challenge is getting the scheduling done. It's getting the students, the tutors, placed. It's very hard. We try to get it done at the beginning of the year. We wait about a month so the [public] schools can settle down…The hardest thing is getting their placement[s] done because they have these very, very different schedules…We get university students who have part-time jobs, who don't necessarily live near the schools where they are tutoring…We work really hard at the beginning of each term when we have to place the tutors.

> The challenges come with scheduling and calendaring. [The community partner is] in the field four days a week, so I have [four] groups of capstone [students], each one dedicated to one day of the week. [The community partner is] out every day…coordinating a huge number of teachers and classes and volunteers, and they're very good at it. In fact, sometimes I am amazed at how good they are at [it], but it always means that things are slightly bordering on chaos. The main difficulty is…scheduling.

Aligning organizational timelines. One component of the challenges related to scheduling is aligning the organizational timelines of the campus and the community.

The university's course scheduling process is generally completed nine months before the course offering. Most community partners simply don't work that far in advance, don't know the exact nature of their programming at that time, and can't predict changes in staffing that far into the future. Faculty and community partners seemed to accept this as an ongoing challenge and simply do their best to estimate the schedule that will work most effectively for all parties. As one community partner stated,

> I wish we didn't have to set it up for the catalog so far in advance. It's really hard when [the faculty] has to [plan] it almost a year in advance. We are not sure what we're going to be doing a year from now. I mean we have a really good idea, but that's a little bit difficult.

Of all of the challenges identified by both faculty and community partners, these two (scheduling in general and navigating the differences in the flow of organizational timelines) were far and away the most frequently cited obstacle in campus-community partnerships in capstone courses, which echoes a common theme throughout the research on partnerships. This connects directly to "the problem of time" (Wallace 2000, 133) between university calendars and organizational experiences of time. This incompatibility is cited repeatedly as a major source of challenge to campus-community collaborations.

Communication breakdowns. A third concern in some of the partnerships was communication, often due to a change in staffing at the agency. When the primary contact person at an organization left, it was difficult to establish the same level of communication with the new community representative. Frequently, the new hire didn't know the norms, routines, and schedules that had been established for the partnerships. Sometimes this was due to a lack of communication, and sometimes it became apparent that the new hire didn't value the partnership as a high priority. Faculty revealed that, from their perspective, the primary contact at the agency is the key to a successful student experience. When this person leaves the organization, faculty reported experiencing many unforeseen challenges:

> What ends up happening…is that you have your main contact and that main contact doesn't communicate to the rest of the organization what's going on. It's remarkably changed since [my main contact] was replaced. The community partner wasn't fully communicating and keeping other people in the loop…so my students felt like…outsiders when they were coming in and tutoring…They [have been] over there for two terms and some of them still feel like…outsiders….I'm working with the current contact on ways to remedy that. I think that the communication aspect is really important.

Working on high priority projects: "Does the community really need glasses?" A fourth concern was expressed in terms of the effort it took for faculty and community partners to develop and sustain community partnerships. Both faculty and community members detailed the amount of time it took to communicate in-person, over the phone, and via e-mail. At a deeper level, faculty and community partners documented

that the real underlying issue was making sure that the partnership was addressing the most pressing issues facing a community organization while furthering genuine and meaningful student learning. The time and effort allocated to partnerships was seen as deeply valuable when faculty, community partners, and students knew that the work in the community was real and was considered a priority for the community partner. Faculty and community partners alike were passionate that the investment of time and effort made by community partners be acknowledged, recognized, and honored. Both groups knew that the community partners' time was incredibly valuable and, as a result, that faculty needed to be keenly aware that community-based projects must be deeply valuable to the community partner, as well as to students. Interviewees from each perspective affirmed their beliefs that the processes used to determine what students did at the placement site had to demonstrate respect for the mission, values, resources, and needs of the organization. Nearly every community partner and faculty interviewed stressed this point.

The following quote illustrates the care with which one faculty member discussed this issue of valuing the community partner with her students:

> The three criteria [for the student's final project] are that…[it] furthers the mission of the agency, [it is]…supported by the staff and folks of the agency, and…[it is]…something about which the PSU students are really excited….It needs to be integrated with what [the community partner] believe[s] is a priority right now. I use this…funny example; students get it when I share the story. If you came to our house for dinner, you would see that [my partner and I] have lots of different kinds of glasses…handmade blown glasses, pottery glasses…that kind of thing…When my…sister came to visit…the second time, she…pulled me aside with the equivalent of a Nordstrom bag [and] showed us that she bought us matching glasses, and she made a point to say "I know the last time that we were here, you didn't have glasses that match, and I just wanted you to have these." It sort of typifies that my sister missed the boat and that she was perhaps coming out of a loving place, but nevertheless is giving us something that we didn't really need or want….I tell that story to students so that they can get the idea that you may think [the community partner] needs new chairs, but if they don't think they need new chairs, then they don't need new chairs….Whatever ideas you were coming up with when you think about [whether] this idea furthers the mission of the agency, that is why our second criterion is in there, that it needs to be supported by the folks and the staff of the agency. I want the students to be doing something that is, in fact, meaningful and appropriate and desired by the agency.

Advice for Future Partnerships

In sharing about the challenges they had experienced in partnerships, interviewees also easily related lessons learned through the ways they had addressed those challenges, and they offered advice out of those lessons to faculty, community partners, and students. In fact, interviewees were most keen to share these lessons learned in their

interviews, evidencing a clear sense that communicating these lessons could and would lead to improved partnering in their own and in others' partnerships.

Advice for faculty. The first piece of advice for faculty, shared by both groups of interviewees, was for faculty to be engaged in the process of facilitating the connection between the students and the agency. Community representatives had deep respect for faculty who were actively involved in the work of the agency before students were placed there. Community partners reported that some faculty had previously volunteered, participated on the board of directors or other committee(s), or spent ample time at the agency before requiring their students to perform service at the site. This was seen as a tremendous asset to the partnership because of the deep understanding the faculty had regarding the mission, goals, and inner workings of the organization. Agencies reported having had negative experiences with other institutions of higher education that had simply assigned students to volunteer for a set number of hours in the community but did not facilitate the connection, the logistics, or, especially, the relationship building necessary for a true partnership. One community partner strongly advised faculty in this way:

> Be engaged yourself. Know exactly what the students are doing. [My faculty partner] has even come and worked as a volunteer one summer to see what the experience was like to tutor. Introduce yourself personally….It hasn't happened with PSU students, but…I've had people call me and say, "Gee, my intercultural communication teacher wants me to interview some people about African refugees," or they want us to set up a conversation partner thing, [and], "Could you introduce us to someone from another culture?" That infuriates me….That's a very hard thing for us to be able to do. You know you have to be able to create a relationship with the people with whom you are going to interact….So I find that…having this really good one-on-one relationship between the supervisor who is managing the program and the agency and the [faculty] is always a very good idea.

This sub-theme of faculty engagement also included advice for faculty in building effective relationships with community partners. Faculty suggested the benefit of occasional face-to-face meetings or lunches to develop the partnership and to "check in." Faculty usually tried to meet with the community partner in person to plan for the course and to debrief after the course was over. Ongoing communication with the community partner via telephone and e-mail was advised throughout the term. Experienced faculty frequently stated that it was essential to create systems for regular check-ins with the community partner.

Community partners concurred, saying that their number one piece of advice was for faculty to truly listen to what the community partners' needs are and to balance that with student learning and curricular needs. This feels much better to community partners, in contrast to situations in which a faculty member or administrator goes directly to an agency with a concrete project already established seeking transactional access to the agency and its partners rather than true partnership. As one community partner stated:

I think the faculty has a really good handle on what he wants done. And I think he knows he's working partially for us, and he's willing to listen to exactly what we need and tailor his class to both our needs [and his], and that's really helpful. We've had classes come in the past who've said, "This is what we are doing. Can we do it for you?" And, well, we're like, "Well, you can, but it's not that useful for us." So it's nice to have [the faculty] say…right up front, "What will be useful to you?

Finally, community partners suggested, in varying language, that faculty enter community partnerships with humility. There was a keen sense in many of the interviews that postsecondary educational institutions have a tendency to enter partnerships from a place of privilege, expecting that community partners will enter from a place of gratitude. Community partners vastly articulated a preference for actual collaboration infused with a spirit of humility and reciprocity. As one community representative remarked:

It definitely relates to other faculty that I've interacted with: at times they are a little presumptive. There is this [sense of], "Oh, you should be happy that we are going to have students do things [for] your agency." The difficulty in running a social service agency is that there is so much going on, [that] to absorb some projects can be difficult….There are some faculty that need to approach the organizations with a little more humility. Not just assume that the social service agencies are going to be so grateful that they are going to bend over backwards for you.

Advice for community partners. Experienced community partners and faculty also had suggestions for organizations considering partnerships with postsecondary educational institutions. The first piece of advice was to acknowledge that campus-community partnerships are time-consuming. Most community partners were surprised how much time their partnerships required in order to plan the project, set up viable schedules with students, visit classes for guest lectures, maintain communication throughout the term with faculty, provide feedback to students and faculty, and plan for future collaborations. Faculty and community partners believed it was essential to acknowledge that time commitment up front so that community partners can thoughtfully discern if they want to enter into partnership in the first place. Several participants stated explicitly that community partners need to weigh the benefits the partnership might yield with the time it takes to work thoughtfully with students through community-based learning.

The second piece of advice was to make sure the project has intrinsic value to the community partner. This emerged out of the first acknowledgement of the time involved in these partnerships; community partners must ensure that there is a value-added return on their investment of time, energy, and other resources. Partners were advised to be clear in defining their needs and expectations, as well as flexible and open to hearing innovative ideas for collaboration. As one experienced community partner suggested,

> I think it's important that it be useful for [the community partner]. Make sure you state your case right up front…not the other way around. Not the university coming to [the community partner], saying, "This is the project we are doing; will you be our client?" I think that's probably the most useful thing for a community [partner]: be flexible, but it needs to be useful for you.

Third, if a community partner determines that a partnership seems valuable, they were advised to make sure they had mechanisms in place to manage student volunteers. This included having established structures to orient, train, supervise, and give feedback to students. These processes were described as essential components of effective campus-community partnerships. Both faculty and community partners suggested that agencies most benefit from community-based learners when the agency is organized and has clear expectations for students.

Faculty and community partners both remarked on the unique nature of having college students serve in the community. Community partners urged community organizations *not* to see students as simply "worker bees" or free labor, but rather to recognize students as learners and agencies as co-educators who have the power to inform their learners about important social and political issues. Faculty encouraged community partners to understand the complex lives of and competing demands on the typical urban college student, including the many roles they play in juggling work and family commitments, which frequently require special considerations in the scheduling of their time.

Finally, faculty and seasoned community partners consistently advised new community partners to effectively communicate within their agencies, and with students and faculty. This advice paralleled the suggestion for faculty to be actively engaged in partnerships and to communicate effectively and regularly with their collaborating agencies. Participants suggested that community partners communicate frequently and consistently within their organizations about the role of the students; communicate with students regarding their work and the community partner's expectations around it; and communicate with faculty to keep all parties informed about logistics, insights, and potential changes in the partnership.

Advice for students. Community partners and faculty had four essential pieces of advice for students: discern if this specific community-based project is a good fit in the student's life at this time, be flexible, be reliable, and be open to different ways of learning and contributing to the world. Faculty and community partners wanted students to take greater initiative in learning about the various community-based learning courses offered each term and to be "in choice" regarding how they wanted to spend their time rather than simply defaulting to a schedule-fitting course. This included taking stock of their interests, passions, desired careers, and schedules *before* registering for a course and beginning community work.

The second suggestion was to be flexible and acknowledge that this is a real-world project rather than a lecture-based course or even a controlled case study in a laboratory. Students need to know that in a true partnership, plans, staffing, funding,

and other elements may well change—and that all of these shifts require a high level of flexibility and adaptability on the part of students. One faculty member illuminated this need for flexibility as she described two different capstone course experiences:

> This is the real world. You cannot expect things to go according to a schedule. I just recently finished a capstone class where it became evident after the third week that everything that I had planned had to go totally out the window because of factors that I could not control with the community partner. And [the students] were really, really, very flexible about going with it. And it became the most [Paulo] Freire[-like] class I'd ever taught, because I had to stand up there and go, "Okay, we were just confronted with this new problem. What do you want to do?" And we [had] a huge brainstorming session…and they…[came] up with solutions, and we…[came] up with a plan. I was… basically the facilitator of a staff meeting half the time. That's what it felt like. My students were doing all of this really thoughtful work. [In] another class that I was teaching [with] the same community partner…the students expected me…to fix a lot of these problems they were experiencing….They didn't understand….They kept on blaming the community partner for all these problems….You can't change their nonprofit structure. [It's vital] to really understand what you can control and what you can't control and be flexible.

The third request was for students to be reliable and professional. Community partners were desperate to communicate to students how much they depend on students' showing up and acting professionally. Community partners talked about the importance of "real people," "real issues," and "real money at stake." They were clear that they rely on students to serve clients, to teach children, to assist owners with their small businesses, and to register voters. Each of these tasks requires students to take initiative while acting in mature, responsible, and reliable ways. In the words of one community partner, "Be reliable. We really, really do depend on them. Try to be as reliable and cooperative as possible….Try to understand that the agency is not a university, that we're not a school, that we're not always available for them the way a teacher is."

Finally, community partners and faculty simply asked students to be open to new ways of being of service in the world. They saw great potential for students to contribute their skills, serve as activists, become great teachers, get engaged, and make a difference in the community—but all of these hopes can be achieved only if students are open to moving beyond seeing the capstone as simply a requirement, to understanding it as an opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute. One community member encouraged students in this way:

> Just be open. And recognize that there are different ways of learning. Having the opportunity to learn experientially or learn via relationships can be very powerful, but in that you have to be very open to people who are different than yourself and not be too quick to judge even when you have some initial [difficulty]…. Really take the time to reflect, to question, and [to] challenge yourself.

Discussion

We found the results of the study—the thoughtful and earnest comments of faculty and community partners who have, in some cases, been engaged in community-based learning for many years – to be revealing on several counts. First, in terms of both the tone and the content of the interviews, there was a deep sense of the human element in partnering, in the best possible way. Interviewees spoke about the stakes involved in the partnership equation not only in organizational or institutional terms, but as individuals with their own interests and commitments invested in their partnerships. As reported in the earlier article focused on these data:

> When faculty and community partners were asked to describe their partnerships in a word or phrase, they used language such as "real," "earthy," "organic," "a dance," "good friends," "a positive learning experience," "a tandem," "progressive," "harmonious," "inspiring," "very stimulating," "incredibly rewarding," and "illuminating." One participant said that his community partnership is "a give-give; I always learn and they always learn." (Kerrigan and Reitenauer 2012)

Even in interviews directing participants to share the challenges and difficulties they had experienced in collaboration, there was a genuine sense of mutuality that emerged, which we might hope to find but which practitioners in the field know is not a foregone conclusion.

Indeed, participants offered examples of how avoidable breakdowns in partnerships had occurred because and when relationships had not been sufficiently established, and because and when communication patterns in the partnerships appeared to be merely transactional rather than intended to allow each participant to grow in knowledge and mutual respect for the other. This insight arose in interesting ways when participants discussed their advice for capstone students, as they endorsed the idea that capstone students would be well served to investigate their capstone options and understand their own personal and professional capacities, desires, and growth areas when choosing a course. In so many words, participants understood and articulated that community-based learning courses work best when all parties in them understand that they are engaging in an inter- and intrapersonal dynamic, a course full of moving parts (which is to say, human beings) that finds its fullest expression in an awareness of that relational dynamic and an intentional focus on it.

A powerful expression of the fundamentally relational dynamic of capstones echoed through the interviews when both faculty and community partners discussed the implications to collaborating organizations when the university, for any reason, changes its commitment to an organization, whether through shifts in university priorities, low enrollment in or cancellation of courses, or other factors. Community partners repeatedly voiced how much they come to rely on the presence of students who are fulfilling the mission of the organization and serving clients in both direct and indirect ways. Both the community and the university need to be aware of this

dynamic of impact on capacity and be in constant communication in order to prepare for any fluctuation in the partnership.

In their advice to other potential community partners, organizational representatives who participated in this study firmly communicated the need for agencies to insist that campus-community partnerships benefit them in ways that they self-define as beneficial, and they suggested that faculty (as representatives of their institutions) operate with humility and a true desire for mutuality. They also spoke movingly of their commitment to students and understanding that student learning can and must sit at the center of the community-based learning endeavor. In fact, even while discussing the structural difficulties of partnerships and the ways they reflect the structural inequities built into the institutional systems (resulting in the need for the services those organizations provide in the first place), community partners in this study revealed great enthusiasm for the community-based learning proposition and belief in the possibility of ever more-functional partnerships to emerge from genuinely relational practices.

Conclusion

We find it quite notable that throughout the interviews faculty and community partners regularly spoke to the vital nature of supporting each other's interests in the community-based learning paradigm. Missing from these interviews was a sense of an unbridgeable chasm between campus and community. Instead, even while giving voice to the challenges of partnership, both faculty and community partners expressed personal and organizational desires to work through those challenges, for the benefit of students, faculty members, community partners, and their constituents alike.

Throughout these interviews, both faculty and organizational participants chose anecdotes and used language that supported the idea that true partnership—a situation in which all parties freely choose to come together with mutually-understood needs and goals and communicate sufficiently to support the structures and processes developed to address those needs and goals—has been the form they have aspired to and which has best served all of the stakeholders in the process. Further research into the tensions and challenges involved in building true partnerships—particularly in an unstable economic and political climate in which there is both much competition for funding and other resources and an increased urgency for community problem-solving—will help practitioners and students recognize and share ideas for how we, community members all, might come together with common purpose to co-create the world we want to inhabit.

References

Blouin, David D., and Evelyn M. Perry. 2009. "Whom Does Service Learning Really Serve? Community-Based Organizations' Perspectives on Service Learning." *Teaching Sociology* 37 (2): 120-135.

Bringle, Robert J., and Julie A. Hatcher. 2002. "Campus-Community Partnerships: The Terms of Engagement." *Journal of Social Issues* 58 (3): 503-516.

Bringle, Robert J., and Julie A. Hatcher. 1998. "Implementing Service-learning in Higher Education." *Journal of Research and Development in Education* 29 (4): 31-41.

Cox, David N. 2000. "Developing a Framework for Understanding University-Community Partnerships. *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 5 (1): 9-26.

Creswell, John W. 1994. *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Curwood, Susan E., Felix Munger, Terry Mitchell, Mary Mackeigan, and Ashley Farrar. 2011. "Building Effective Community-University Partnerships: Are Universities Truly Ready?" *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 17 (2): 15-26.

Driscoll, Amy, Sherril B. Gelmon, Barbara A. Holland, Seanna M. Kerrigan, Amy Spring, Kari Grosvold, and M. J. Longley. 1998. *Assessing the Impact of Service-learning: A Workbook of Strategies and Methods.* 2nd ed. Portland, OR: Portland State University.

Kerrigan, Seanna M., and Vicki L. Reitenauer. 2012. "Transformed through Relationship: Faculty and Community Partners Give Voice to the Power of Partnerships." *PRISM: A Journal of Regional Engagement* 1 (2): 130-143.

Leiderman, Sally, Andrew Furco, Jennifer Zapf, and Megan Goss. 2003. *Building Partnerships with College Campuses: Community Perspectives.* Washington, DC: The Council of Independent Colleges.

Littlepage, Laura, Beth Gazley, and Teresa A. Bennett. 2012. "Service Learning from the Supply Side: Community Capacity to Engage Students." *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 22 (3): 305-320.

Morrell, Elizabeth, Janni Sorensen, and Joe Howarth. 2015. "The Charlotte Action Research Project: A Model for Direct and Mutually Beneficial Community-University Engagement." *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 19 (1): 105-132.

Patton, Michael Q. 2001. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sandy, Marie, and Barbara A. Holland. 2006. "Different Worlds and Common Ground: Community Partner Perspectives on Campus-Community Partnerships. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 13 (1): 30-43.

Wallace, John. 2000. "The Problem of Time: Enabling Students to Make Long-Term Commitments to Community-Based Learning." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 7 (1): 133-142.

Author Information

Seanna M. Kerrigan brings over two decades of professional higher education experience to her current position as the capstone program director at Portland State University. In this role, she works collaboratively with scores of faculty, students, and community-based organizations to create partnerships for over 240 service-learning capstones annually. Dr. Kerrigan promotes the concept of community-based learning while publishing and presenting widely on issues related to this pedagogy, as well as civic engagement and assessment. She was named a Rising Scholar by the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good. Kerrigan earned her doctorate in education in 2002 from Portland State University.

Vicki L. Reitenauer serves on the faculties of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department and the University Studies program at Portland State University, specializing in developing and teaching both discipline-specific and general education courses, including community-based learning experiences; building and sustaining community partnerships; facilitating relational faculty support processes; and co-creating faculty-led assessment practices. She has co-authored numerous works on these topics including *Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities* (Stylus, second edition, 2013).

Nora Arevalo-Meier is a masters of public administration student in the Hatfield School of Government. She is specializing in global leadership and management. Nora is interested in the analysis and implementation of public policies related to sustainable development, especially in developing countries.

Seanna M. Kerrigan
University Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: kerrigs@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-8392
Fax: 503-725-5977

Vicki L. Reitenauer
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: vicr@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-5847
Fax: 503-725-5805

Nora Arevalo-Meier
Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
Division of Public Administration
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: meier@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-704-9634

Putting Impact First: Community-University Partnerships to Advance Authentic Neighborhood Sustainability

Michelle L. Holliday, Tony DeFalco, and Jacob D. B. Sherman

Abstract

This article profiles a partnership between the Living Cully ecodistrict and Portland State University's Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative. The case studies presented in this article explore how Living Cully leveraged PSU assets to advance their goals, highlighting successes and lessons learned. This article also addresses how the partnership was formed, what makes the partnership innovative, the role of interdisciplinary/intercommunity organizational strategies, and how the community partner commits to urban sustainability and social justice.

Recently acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for its commitment to community health, economic development, and urban sustainability, the Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) at Portland State University (PSU) collaborates with Living Cully, an environmentally marginalized neighborhood, to create multiple sustainable community engagement projects with students across the university (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] 2015). Ranging from small-scale projects that have short-term objectives to larger projects carried out over several years, the diversity of community-university partnerships reinforces the need to develop an understanding of the nuances associated with forming authentic relationships between communities and institutes of higher learning. Often the subject of scrutiny, previous community-university partnerships teach us that top-down approaches and power imbalances leave community partners with negative perceptions of the university system (Strier 2010; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, and Lewis 2005; Maurrasse 2002). However, there are remarkable examples of successful community-university partnerships, employing a bottom-up strategy in which the community and university work together to develop shared goals (Cooper et al. 2014; Sandy and Holland 2006).

This article examines an example of a community organization utilizing the resources of a university to achieve its objectives and is co-authored by a university, community, and student representative who have all been engaged in the partnership. We will outline the development of this partnership and the main elements allowing it to strengthen over the past four years. Specifically, this article will do the following: 1) provide a description of how two coordinating bodies (community partners and university institute) created an interdisciplinary and multi-level community organization approach to a partnership, 2) discuss how both parties developed a strong commitment to one another's success, and 3) illustrate the depth with which the

community partner strives to achieve equity and social justice within its northeast Portland neighborhood.

Key Elements and Benefits of a Community-University Partnership

Although varied in duration, location, and scope, there are several key aspects to every community-university partnership. Since each partnership must effectively engage university personnel (i.e., students, faculty, and staff) as well as the community (i.e., organizations and residents), both the *approach* to and *execution* of the partnership are critical elements of the partnership's success. Previous research highlights mutuality as primary to the foundation of a good community-university partnership (Jacoby 2003, 14; Enos and Morton 2003, 20-31). When applied in the partnership setting, the concept of mutuality extends beyond respect to include reciprocity in developing shared goals and objectives, and understanding the needs of both the university and the community (Jacoby 2003, 14). In order to accomplish this, every stage of the partnership must rely on interpersonal factors such as mutual respect, communication, and trust (Sargent and Waters 2004, 311-313). With such a dynamic structure, including the initiation of the partnership, clarification of the nature of the project(s), and implementation and completion of the collaboration, creating and maintaining mutuality can be rather challenging (Sargent and Waters 2004, 311). Given the propensity toward asymmetrical partnerships in which the university is presumed the expert, building trust and mutual dependence on one another can help foster a transformative relationship (Strier 2010, 86-88; Enos and Morton 2003, 24-28).

In a transformative relationship, partnerships move beyond instrumental and potentially limited project-based commitments toward engaging experiences with a broader scope beyond what may have been the initial focus of the partnership (Jacoby 2003, 24-25). In this environment, both the university and the community partner are leaders within the partnership (Jacoby 2003, 25). McDonald and Dominguez (2015) suggest that service-learning projects focus on defining the community and establishing a framework for the partnership. Developing strategies for communication between faculty, students, and the community partner is one part of this process (McDonald and Dominguez 2015). To ensure that the overall success of the partnership and that community partner goals are ultimately met, it is vital to create clearly defined roles and responsibilities at the onset of the partnership and to understand the needs and perspectives of the community and its agencies (Buys and Bursnall 2007, 78-79; McDonald and Dominguez 2015).

Engaging in a partnership that evolves into a transformative, rather than transactional, relationship is a significant advantage to any community-university partnership. In addition to the potential to develop a long-term relationship, successful partnerships result in marked benefits to both the community partner and the university. Focus groups with community partners and service-learning coordinators emphasize the direct impact that students are able to have in the community as a result of their

involvement in the partnership, the ability of nonprofit organizations to strengthen their capacity for service in the community, and the garnering of resources for organizational development (Sandy and Holland 2006, 35-36). In many cases, effective partnerships can lead to financial investments in the community (Cooper et al. 2014). An enhanced and transformative learning experience is a noteworthy benefit of a fruitful partnership; analyses of the impact of service-learning on students indicates positive effects on student attitudes toward learning, sense of responsibility to the community, and leadership skills (Fitzgerald et al. 2012; Sandy and Holland 2006; Celio, Durlak, and Dymnicki 2011).

The partnership described in this paper is the result of a longstanding relationship between Living Cully and Portland State University. The nature of this partnership is outlined in the following text, through a description of both the partner and the university, and through discussions of previous and existing projects within the partnership. Central to this partnership are the unique strategies employed by Living Cully to build assets within its organization and community through the utilization of the resources available at PSU.

The Partnership: Living Cully and the Institute for Sustainable Solutions at PSU

The following section outlines how the relationship, illustrated in Figure 1 below, developed. Chronologically, the article describes the formation of Living Cully and PSU's Institute for Sustainable Solutions (ISS) and then brings these two groups together in creating the formal partnership that exists today. With regard to the community, the Cully neighborhood is located in northeast Portland, Oregon. One of Portland's largest neighborhoods (4.5 square miles and 13,300 residents), Cully has clear environmental, economic, and racial disparities when compared to the city as a whole. Residents in the Cully neighborhood are more racially diverse than the city average and are significantly affected by a lack of environmental resources (i.e., parks and greenspaces), in addition to experiencing disparities in transportation and income. For example, households in some census tracts spend the majority of their household income on transportation and housing, contributing to high levels of food insecurity. Children and families within the community often walk along busy, unsafe roads, and Cully's poor transportation infrastructure also has negative environmental impacts such as limited access to safe roads and walkways for pedestrian and bicyclists in the neighborhood.

Getting to Know the Community
Partner: Living Cully: A Cully Ecodistrict

In response to northeast Portland's lack of environmental infrastructure and communities' evident health needs, Living Cully was developed. "Living Cully: A Cully Ecodistrict" is a coordinated effort by Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East, Hacienda Community Development Corporation, the Native American Youth and Family Center, and Verde to drive environmental investments into the Cully neighborhood in response to existing community needs like jobs, education, housing,

and an improved quality of life. Living Cully uses an anti-poverty strategy, focusing on the needs of low-income people and people of color. Living Cully believes that sustainable development efforts focused on neighborhoods (i.e., ecodistricts) can be reconceived as anti-poverty strategies, a means to address disparities in wealth, income, health, and natural resources by concentrating environmental investments at the neighborhood scale, and as a means to prevent displacement of low-income people and people of color. Similar to many cities, Portland has a history of redevelopment that has displaced low-income people and people of color. Living Cully is working to write a new story by building wealth by, and for, low-income people and people of color without displacement. Unlike efforts focused solely on fostering economic development, Living Cully can meet social service and community development goals by building environmental wealth, and can support greater cross-organizational collaborations by combining community engagement, environmental improvements, and economic development under one concept and in one single geographic area.

Living Cully is made up of organizations that provide housing support for families in the community and educational support for the youth in Cully. Hacienda Community Development Corporation (HCDC) develops affordable housing and builds thriving communities in support of working Latino families and others in Oregon by promoting healthy living and economic advancement. Most HCDC residents earn 30-60 percent of median family income, below the poverty line. Another Living Cully partner, the Native Youth and Family Center (NAYA), provides comprehensive wrap-around services to the Native American community: after school tutoring, youth development, emergency housing, energy assistance, employment services, domestic violence prevention, homeownership support, and community economic development. An additional partner is Habitat for Humanity Portland/Metro East (Habitat). With more than thirty years of experience in home construction, Habitat is one of the only organizations consistently building and selling affordable homes, and has chosen Cully for its Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, which is a block-by-block approach to building stronger neighborhoods. As the lead organization to Living Cully, Verde has developed social enterprise programs and outreach-advocacy programs to ensure that low-income people and people of color benefit from sustainability investments. Collectively, these four organizations have more than five decades of experience serving low-income people and people of color in Portland. Additionally, the organizations themselves have developed high-levels of trust among one another which has been facilitated by mission alignment around serving low-income people and people of color, their years of collaboration, and because the organizations are also primarily run by staff and boards composed of people of color.

It is important to note that Living Cully is a collective impact initiative (Kania and Kramer 2011; Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer 2012), which is a shared commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors (affordable housing, cultural identity, environmental wealth, home ownership) to a common agenda (sustainability) for solving a specific social problem (poverty) through collaborative, programmatic, and signature project activities. In this collective impact initiative, Verde functions as the "backbone organization" (Turner et al. 2012) helping to coordinate across different

stakeholders in order to execute on the following collaborative, programmatic, and signature project activities:

Collaborative Activities: Through collaborative activities, the Living Cully partners secure long-term resources to sustain and replicate Living Cully. Examples include the Living Cully Performance Indicators, seventeen economic, social, and environmental metrics that measure collaborative outcomes and support scale and replication.

Programmatic Activities: Through programmatic activities, Cully residents gain economic security and build capacity to design, build, and access new sustainable assets in the Cully neighborhood. Policy activities allow for driving anti-poverty investments into the neighborhood, mitigating gentrification impacts through a cohesive anti-displacement agenda, and reforming public agency practices toward explicit equity outcomes and partnerships.

Signature Projects: Signature projects is a growing series of leveraged investments in Cully that combine economic, social, and environmental justice goals; examples include creating new parkland, green affordable housing, culturally-based habitat restoration, and alternative energy.

Getting to Know the University:
PSU and the Institute for Sustainable Solutions

As noted elsewhere in this journal issue, over the past two decades PSU has developed a strong reputation for excellence in community engagement and faculty-led programs across campus that bring to life the university's motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City." From launching one of the nation's first senior interdisciplinary capstone service-learning requirements at a large public institution in 1996 to implementing graduate-level curricula that actively connect students with municipalities to advance regional planning projects, there are countless examples that demonstrate how PSU is an engaged university. Students, faculty, and staff take the motto at PSU seriously. This is best reflected by our "Community Engagement" classification" in 2005—and re-classification in 2015—from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Community Engagement (Portland State University 2015). At the same time, both the City of Portland and PSU have garnered a reputation for sustainability excellence that continues to shine on the national stage. Portland was heralded as the first US city to create a local plan for reducing carbon emissions in 1993, and as a site for communities that have literally shaped the city through a legacy of neighborhood engagement and effective organizational advocacy on livability issues (Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen 2003; Bureau of Planning and Sustainability 2015).

Given the university's connections with the city of Portland, as described above, it is not surprising that over the past two decades PSU has also developed a national reputation for excellence in sustainability. The Institute for Sustainable Solutions (ISS) plays a critical role in advancing sustainability at PSU. ISS is a hub for sustainability, supporting interdisciplinary research, curriculum development, student leadership, and

meaningful community partnerships that contribute to a just, prosperous, and vibrant future for our region and the world. ISS administers the ten-year, $25 million challenge grant made to the university by the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation in September 2008 which provides funding for ISS-led programs and catalytic resources to other colleges and departments to integrate sustainability across the campus. By using sustainability as a driver for institutional innovation and excellence (Sharp 2015a, 2015b), ISS seeks to unleash the ability of higher education to better address some of the world's most complex challenges in the region and beyond.

In the context of community-university partnerships, ISS has seen the tremendous opportunity to capitalize upon the interests and strengths of the university, city, and local nonprofit organizations to provide rich opportunities for research and teaching while rapidly advancing the sustainability of our region. To date, the primary approach for advancing partnerships across the university has been for each college, its different departments, and its individual faculty members to independently negotiate and sustain a variety of partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit organizations including teaching, research, or internship/practicum-based partnerships (Portland State University 2015). While this approach has allowed myriad partnerships to flourish and for PSU to grow a national reputation for its work, as a result, the university also faces challenges in understanding and communicating the impact and value of these relationships (see the article "From Capstones to Strategic Partnerships: The Evolution of Portland State University's Community Engagement and Partnership Agenda" elsewhere in this issue for more information.) Additionally, the university's dispersed approach to partnerships has presented barriers to the creation of opportunities in which PSU faculty and programs from across different academic and administrative units can better coordinate and organize partnerships in order to more effectively collaborate with one another—and the community—for greater cumulative impact (Portland State University 2014).

The PSU Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative

Recognizing the opportunity for using the Miller gift to address these institutional challenges, in 2013 ISS developed and launched the Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) to test a new model for how long-term, collaborative, place-based community-university partnerships could be leveraged for increased community impact while enhancing student learning by grounding oftentimes abstract discussions about "sustainability" in local sustainability issues. At its heart, the SNI honors PSU's legacy of engagement and the region's strength in sustainability by facilitating applied teaching, learning, and research opportunities that advance sustainability goals in Portland's neighborhoods. Through the SNI, the Institute for Sustainable Solutions functions as a key piece of infrastructure that systematically focuses a portion of the university's community engagement efforts into long-term, place-based strategic partnerships with different organizations working to advance neighborhood-scale sustainability efforts around the city. Figure 1 illustrates the different components that entail the Living Cully-PSU partnership and highlights how Living Cully and the Institute for Sustainable Solutions serve as entities that organize and coordinate the partnership.

Figure 1. Mapping Out the Living Cully-PSU Partnership

Institute for Sustainable Solutions-Living Cully Partnership
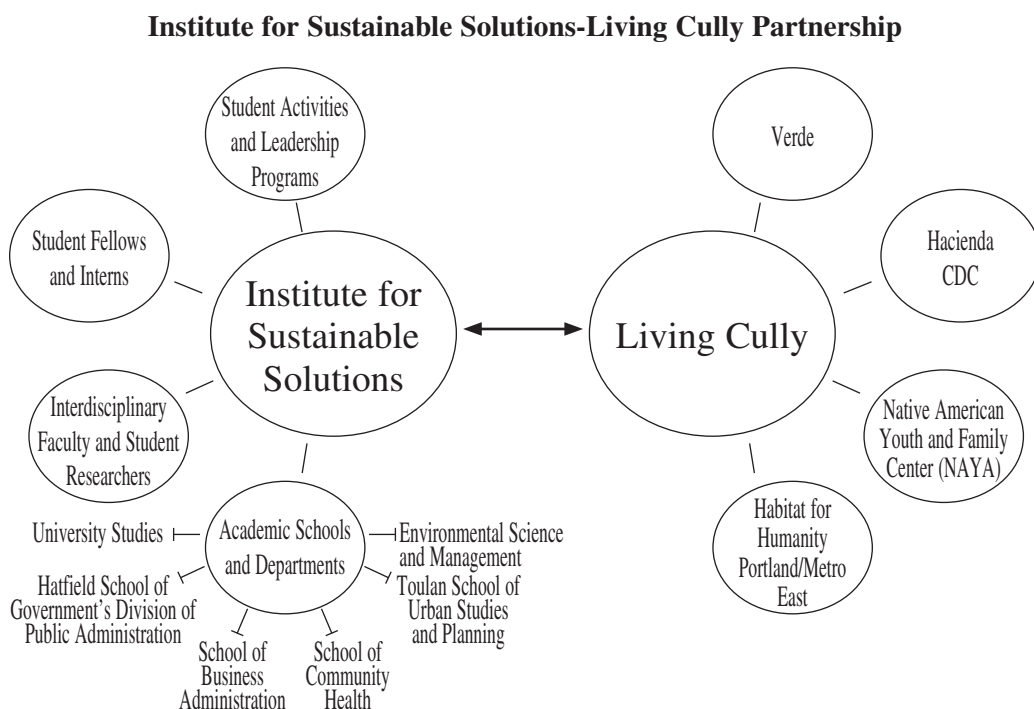
As administrators of the SNI, ISS works closely with these partners to identify important neighborhood challenges that the university might be able to support and then systematically connects faculty experts and motivated students with partners to co-develop research and applied projects that enhance the student experience and increase community capacity to strengthen economic resilience, promote social equity, and restore and enhance ecological systems. To ensure these partnerships benefit both the community and faculty and students at the university, ISS staff function as a broker (Brundiers, Wiek, and Kay 2013) between all parties, working closely with SNI partners to first identify important neighborhood challenges that the university might be able to support through research and applied projects. After understanding local priorities, ISS staff then return to the university and approach faculty who may have research interests that align with community questions or will be teaching courses that could serve as a platform for community-based learning projects. Increasingly, ISS staff also seek out opportunities to deliver on community-identified needs by connecting with PSU staff who administer student leadership programs, pitching projects directly to student groups, or creating internships or fellowships where students can work one-on-one or in small groups with SNI partners outside the classroom.

How the Partnership Was Formed

In launching the Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative, ISS knew early on that it had significant work to do to develop new ways to engage stakeholders, both within the

university and the community. To better understand the community context, ISS conducted informal research on neighborhood-based sustainability efforts, interviewing more than two dozen community activists, nonprofit leaders, and City of Portland staff on the challenges and opportunities to working collaboratively across different organizations at the neighborhood scale. At the same time, ISS felt it was important to quickly establish a working relationship with potential partners. To do so, for example, ISS connected Living Cully with a PSU course to explore some community-based learning projects and funded a graduate student in a paid internship with the community partner as early as September 2013 (Table 1). The ability to financially support a student through an internship helped demonstrate the university's value to a potential partner by increasing their capacity to advance their goals.

To cultivate support within the university, ISS convened an internal advisory board to provide governance and help launch the SNI. This body consisted of supportive faculty and senior leadership with wisdom and experience in community-university partnerships, and it advised ISS and helped refine the concept, connect with key stakeholders, and navigate institutional dynamics. Based on findings from community interviews and guidance from the advisory board, staff and advisors were acutely aware of real and perceived imbalances of power that could exist between the university and community organizations, so ISS determined that extending invitations to organizations to partner with PSU would be a better approach to developing long-term, place-based partnerships than issuing a request for proposals. One reason for this was that an invitation helped balance the uneven power relationship that is naturally present between the university and community, particularly inasmuch as a community organization could readily decline our invitation to partner, or accept but on its own terms.

Before issuing these invitations, though, ISS developed a list of attributes that it felt would be important for organizations to already possess and which would ideally already exist between the university and the community in order to collaboratively developing a unique type of community-university partnership. Criteria included elements such as the pre-existing level of collaboration between organizations, their prior success, capacity to partner with the university, and previous level of experience working with the university, as well as whether or not their project ideas and research questions were ideal for student and faculty engagement. In November 2013, ISS met with seven potential partners to let them know the institute was embarking on a new partnership agenda, seek their feedback, and obtain information about their organization on the aforementioned criteria, as well as their interest in working with the university. After reviewing this information and openly communicating with potential partners, ISS officially launched the Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative in May 2014. Noteworthy aspects of developing this initiative are listed below.

Critical elements for PSU:
• The existing level of collaboration between different organizations focused on neighborhood sustainability issues aligned well with PSU's desire to create partnerships with the community.
• Staff at ISS conducted community research and some PSU organizational leadership

research to come to understand how to effectively construct a partnership.

- Partnership criteria were developed, organizations were vetted, and potential partners were asked to submit letters of interest regarding a partnership with PSU.
- Organizations submitted letters of interest, but took the opportunity to vet a potential partnership with the university.
- The total timeline to develop and fully launch SNI took approximately nine months.

From the outset, it was clear that Living Cully was interested in partnering with PSU but was also skeptical about the demonstrated commitment on the part of PSU and ISS, specifically, to equity and the requisite ability to work effectively with traditionally underserved communities. In their letter of interest, Living Cully insisted that they did not want the partnership to develop into a research project, one in which Living Cully became a subject for study by the university. Living Cully members reinforced the importance of being able to advance their agenda. In addressing their criteria for the partnership, Living Cully laid out the following expectations:

Critical elements for Living Cully:
- ISS would need to be receptive to community needs.
- Increasing the cultural competence of ISS staff was paramount.
- Overall, partnerships with the university should help Living Cully stakeholders acquire additional resources to address poverty, gentrification, and displacement in their neighborhood.

These conversations were important because they laid a foundation for trust and clear communication. While these high-level discussions were occurring between ISS staff, internal advisory board members, and potential partners, on-the-ground collaboration continued through community-based learning projects and the ISS-supported intern.

Focusing on the Impacts: Living Cully and ISS Over the Years

Table 1. Summary of Projects through the Living Cully-PSU Partnership, 2008-2015.

Department/Course Title/Project Format	Project Focus	Project Description(s)
Masters of Urban Planning; ISS paid internships; Health and Social Inequalities course	Anti-Displacement	Development of a "Not in Cully" report that offers strategies for preventing displacement; evaluation of the mental and physical health effects of displacement.

ISS paid internships; Urban Planning and Environmental Issues courses, Business Strategy capstone course	Land banking	Students on these projects conducted research on best practices in promoting affordable housing through public-sector "land banking." Additional research included policy analysis, financial modeling, and real estate identification.
Business Strategy capstone course; Urban Planning and Environmental Issues course; Environmental and Ecological Literacy course	Affordable housing	In this project students developed a business/economic model in order to identify and prioritize properties that could be purchased to preserve low-income housing and/or redevelop to create additional affordable housing. Additional projects included faculty and students engaged with the Cully Weatherization 2.0 project, which is an effort to braid local resources from community-based organizations and government agencies to weatherize homes in the Cully neighborhood so that residents may not only enjoy a healthier place to live but also avoid displacement.
Business Strategy capstone course	Economic development	Project in which undergraduate students conducted a feasibility analysis on a commercial aquaculture venture with Living Cully at the Columbia Biogas site. After reviewing market demand, talking with suppliers/buyers, exploring the legal and financial implications, as well as technical specifications about the facility, students advised Verde that the return-on-investment was low and wouldn't be a financial success. Findings have informed other efforts to launch new social enterprises.

Public Affairs Program evaluation course; ISS paid student sustainability fellows; ISS-supported student research	Health	A group of graduate students worked closely with Living Cully partners to evaluate how their delivery of community-based services under the collective impact model can positively impact the health of local Cully residents. A graduate student team reviewed the possible health benefits of Living Cully programs, as well as developed a process to evaluate any health-related performance indicators that Living Cully might track across their many programs. Additional projects included submitting a grant proposal to Kaiser Permanente's "Healthy Eating Active Living" request for proposals (funding TBD as of this publication).
University Studies senior capstone course; ISS-supported student research	Youth and community education	Projects included facilitating work parties to maintain the tree canopy at the Cully International Grove, coordinating a bilingual book drive, tutoring youth, and organizing a cleanup of the grounds at Rigler Elementary School. In addition, students in the community health department conducted a Photovoice research project with Cully youth to identify safe/unsafe and healthy/unhealthy places in the Cully neighborhood.
Urban Studies and Planning course; community-based participatory GIS mapping research project	Transportation	Project engaged graduate students in modeling transit flow in order to inform community-led efforts to purchase and revitalize a strip club that was a blight on the neighborhood. ISS-supported researchers have also worked with Living Cully to visualize community-collected perceptions on transportation and pedestrian safety issues in the neighborhood.
ISS-paid internship; ISS-paid Student Sustainability Fellow	Financial investments	Projects included extensive searches for additional funding for health and environmental infrastructure projects in Cully.

Student Leaders for Service paid internship; Entomology Club; University Studies course; Urban Studies and Planning	Environmental	Projects included support for the Cully Critter Cruise project that included an interactive naturalist tour of four Cully neighborhood gardens. Participants were primarily local elementary-aged children and their families, and the volunteer teams were composed of various Portland-area experts and enthusiasts of birding, entomology, native plants, mycology, and urban ecosystem sustainability.

Highlighting Exemplary Projects within the Partnership

In the past five years, the extensive partnership between PSU and Living Cully has evolved to produce dozens of projects impacting numerous students, departments, and community organizations throughout Portland. Table 1 effectively, though briefly, captures these intricate relationships by giving an account of several projects that have been conducted since 2008. In the following section, three projects are highlighted as prime examples of service-learning projects in support of a community-driven agenda. The projects included here are divided based on whether or not the project was conducted by undergraduate or graduate students. In each description, we hope to capture the nuances in the project that would make the project replicable in a similar community-university partnership. Each project speaks to the mission of Living Cully to enhance the existing environmental infrastructure in Cully, provide avenues to mitigate the effects of displacement, and ultimately understand the needs of the Cully neighborhood as described by its residents.

In spring 2013, when the SNI was still in early planning stages, Living Cully worked with a group of master's students in urban and regional planning to create a roadmap of strategies to prevent displacement in the Cully neighborhood. The students worked extremely hard over two academic terms in the community, conducting focus groups and one-on-one interviews and co-hosting town halls. In total, the students conducted thirty-seven interviews with community leaders and community engagement practitioners, three walking tours, four discussion groups, and two community workshops, and they received over one hundred survey responses from community members (Banuelos et al. 2013, 37). The result was a comprehensive report, titled "Not in Cully: Anti-Displacement Strategies for the Cully Neighborhood." The depth with which graduate students were able to develop a report and connect to the community reflects the course faculty member's ability to design their class in a way that met the needs of the community. They also did extensive research into the strategies and tactics that worked to prevent displacement in other communities around the nation. The extensive engagement and detailed analysis that the students provided was a resource the Living Cully organization did not have the time to research and produce, and this has proven invaluable to Living Cully's ongoing effort to prevent displacement. Any potential partnership would benefit from taking a similar approach to designing a course.

In 2014 and 2015, several projects worth noting were conducted in courses with both undergraduate and graduate students. In the spring of 2014, PSU and Living Cully created the Cully Neighborhood Youth Project. The project was implemented under the supervision of faculty in PSU's community health department, PSU graduate and undergraduate students, and Hacienda Community Development Corporation (HCDC). The primary purpose of the project was to collect and analyze visual and spatial data on how youth perceive their neighborhood. PSU students led Cully youth in walks around Cully while the youth took photographs of places where they felt safe or unsafe and places that they felt were healthy or unhealthy. GIS mapping was used to cross reference photos to specific locations in the neighborhood. As a whole, the project provided several lasting benefits to the community, partner, and PSU students. (Additional details regarding impacts are described in a subsequent section of this article.) This project is a great example of how university resources (i.e., GIS mapping) can be used to enhance a community's ability to inform its residents about important community needs. Additionally, in 2015 Living Cully worked with a group of master's students in public health to identify the health impacts of displacement. Over the ten-week term, an interdisciplinary group of graduate and undergraduate students performed a literature review on the mental and physical health consequences of gentrification and displacement, while another student team identified potential funding sources for projects that could help to prevent displacement.

Subsequent to the completion of the project in 2015, ISS provided a stipend for one of the students to work with Living Cully partner Verde in writing a grant to improve health outcomes. Having a student on this project was very valuable to Verde, as securing additional funding allows for the ability to enhance the existing infrastructure in Cully and continue to promote the health and well-being of its residents. Subsequent to the completion of the project, ISS provided a paid fellowship for one of the graduate students to continue to collaborate with Verde over the next two academic terms in grant-related work to improve health outcomes. This provided value to the community by enabling Living Cully to extend their fundraising capacity, while offering the students real-world experience in a community setting. The graduate student worked closely with Verde's executive director to pursue two funding opportunities, and Verde's letter of intent was recently accepted, with the organization being invited to submit a full application, which is currently pending. As a whole, the initial commitment to a ten-week course evolved into a paid position for a student, offsetting costs for the community partner and accomplishing valuable work for the community as well as applying for additional funding.

Creating a Cumulative Impact: Negotiating Community and University Needs

While many community-university partnerships have exemplary projects to demonstrate as outcomes, ISS plays a particular role in fostering cumulative impact with partners like Living Cully. The following section outlines how ISS staff and graduate assistants function as brokers to intentionally connect the university and community, and details how—and why—projects were selected for an SNI partnership.

As a broker, ISS works with partners like Living Cully to develop and understand their priorities, which is rooted in the work that they are advancing to meet community needs. Through a series of face-to-face conversations, partner priorities are defined, and university staff are left with a clearer sense of what may, or may not, make sense for an applied teaching or research project. With this understanding in place, ISS staff engage faculty through several means, providing modest incentives to faculty who agree to work with ISS partners. In some instances, ISS facilitates faculty support workshops where faculty can meet with partners to hear about their needs, and in other cases ISS staff independently seek out faculty with expertise or research interests in an area that aligns with a partner's needs and pitch them on the potential project idea. In both of these cases, ISS initially seeks to identify mutual interest and enthusiasm around a project, as it demonstrates possible alignment between university assets and community needs. If alignment does not exist, the lack of fit is acknowledged and the opportunity is shelved until a future date when circumstances might prove different. Importantly, since the relationship between the university and community is grounded in a larger, long-term partnership (the Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative), organizations like Living Cully feel less pressure to work on each and every project idea that presents itself because they are not faced with scarcity, knowing there will be additional opportunities to work with the university in the future.

In determining whether or not a project might make sense, a particular emphasis is placed on the following design elements. First, it is important to balance the need for student learning with a desire to provide use-inspired research (Stokes 1997; Crow and Dabars 2015) or action projects that advance community impact. While the outcomes of research, an internship, or a course project are always uncertain, putting an emphasis on community impact at the genesis of a project helps ensure outcomes are useful to partners at project close. Faculty are particularly adept at finding opportunities to deepen student learning no matter what the project; ISS puts a particular emphasis on utility in order to ensure that partners may also benefit from the collaborative experience. Second, in considering project utility, it is crucial to understand the resources necessary to support a successful project in relationship to its potential impacts.

Table 2. Strategy Screen for Evaluating Potential Community-University Partnerships

Potential Impacts for the Partner	High	1. High impacts, Low resources	3. High impacts, High resources
	Low	2. Low impacts, Low resources	4. Low impacts, High resources
		Low	High

Potential Resources Required by the Partner (human, financial, etc.)

Beyond mutual interest and enthusiasm around a project idea, Table 2 presents a framework that is used to help determine if a project makes sense to pursue and helps identify barriers that it might be necessary to reduce in order to make a project more viable. Ideal projects are well aligned with partner priorities, and they present opportunities for high impact while requiring a relatively low amount of resources (time

or otherwise) from the partner organization (Table 2, Cell 1). Viable projects are those where there is still alignment with partner priorities, but the risks and rewards are less clear (Table 2, Cells 2 and 3). Impractical projects are those where alignment with partner priorities is not clear, or it is present, but the risks clearly outweigh the potential rewards.

ISS staff talk with partners like Living Cully to explore how a project fits within this framework, screening projects based on factors like potential deliverables; how deliverables align with partner needs; the skills, experience, and capabilities of the students that will work on the project; the faculty member's previous experience with community-university partnerships; and the level of resources that might be required from the partner, such as the number of in-class meetings or frequency of communication with students. These factors are determined through preliminary conversations with faculty and partners and are also informed by the experience of staff that have supported faculty in community-university partnerships. Together, these two criteria play a critical role in rethinking the nature of partnerships to privilege community outcomes—in short, to put community impact first.

If there is relatively clear alignment between community needs and faculty expertise/ interest and the project makes sense to pursue, ISS organizes a meeting between both parties to explore project ideas in greater depth. ISS staff facilitate these conversations, asking probing questions to help stakeholders answer the following:

- What are the final project deliverables (physical products like reports, videos, etc., or processes like community engagement, design charettes, etc.)?
- What does each partner need to get out of this collaboration (i.e., how does the project relate to the bottom line of what partners and faculty are hoping to accomplish)?
- What are the learning outcomes for students involved in this project?
- What key resources or background information should students have early on in order to be best informed about the partner and their project?
- Why is this project important (i.e., how does this project help the community organization advance its larger goals, and how does this project contribute to those larger outcomes)?

Through conversations, these questions are answered and both stakeholders (faculty and community partners) play a key role in refining and co-developing the projects, determining scope, and settling on mutually agreed-upon goals or outcomes. ISS staff and graduate assistants then work to formalize answers to these questions in a project scoping document, which faculty typically provide to students early in the term to help them understand the context and expectations around the applied teaching or research project. Once the project is in the hands of PSU faculty, ISS staff typically step into the background, supporting faculty and partners on logistics as needed (e.g., scheduling final presentations, troubleshooting miscommunication, and so on), while starting to cultivate the next round of projects that will begin the following academic term (in approximately two to three months). Near the end of the term, ISS lets students know about the opportunity to highlight their project on the institute's blog, and works with partners and faculty to assess whether or not there might be options to continue to support the project after the term ends.

As a cross-university hub for sustainability, the institute has proven well-situated at working with a partner like Living Cully to start a project in the School of Business Administration, for example, and continue it in other schools, like the Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning, as the project's focus became clearer, the community context changed, and/or additional questions emerged that other disciplines could readily address. Additionally, ISS has leveraged the Miller gift to create opportunities to enrich the student experience and add capacity to community organizations by supporting students in paid fellowships where they continue working on their project after the ten-week term ends. Furthermore, aside from facilitating projects, ISS has also deployed staff with expertise in communications, development, and assessment to work with partners, like Living Cully, to help tell the story of our collaborative work, fundraise around joint opportunities, and assess impacts on the university and community. In short, the Institute for Sustainable Solutions plays a key role in advancing impact-oriented community-university partnerships, shepherding projects across the university, and leveraging assets and engaging new stakeholders in important community work, like making sure the university is an active and productive partner in collective impact efforts to alleviate poverty.

Impacts

Community Impacts: Partner Organizations and the Cully Neighborhood

The primary impact to Living Cully has been added capacity to deliver on community-identified priorities. The community needs are great, and being able to add student capacity to support neighborhood projects has had real benefits. Students engaged in community projects and research have helped Living Cully partner organizations execute programs, enhance projects, and thoughtfully approach the work in front of them. A consistent challenge has been Living Cully's capacity to supervise projects. With help from ISS staff, Living Cully has been able to learn what types of projects work best and share responsibility for supervision of student and faculty projects.

Regarding the community more generally, there have been a number of impacts. The Photovoice project created significant effects for the community: the use of Photovoice and GIS mapping allowed the research team at PSU to provide Living Cully with an idea of the youth perspective on the neighborhood, in addition to locating areas within the neighborhood that needed improvement to increase health and safety benefits for the community. In addition to the Photovoice project, a group of students helped plan for and assist day-of with the Cully Critter Cruise, a neighborhood event to educate young people about the biodiversity in the neighborhood. In a small but important way, the students helped make the project a success, enabling dozens of residents and forty youth to engage in an environmental education opportunity. The work on the "Not in Cully" report discussed in the previous section highlights a larger impact, where the road map that was developed with PSU students is now being deployed through community efforts to prevent displacement. While Living Cully's efforts are ongoing and there is no guarantee of success, the partnership with PSU provided a key piece of analysis to inform the organization's efforts.

Specifically there have been two distinct types of impacts from partnering with PSU. Direct impacts refer to impacts that are explicitly related to the community partner (e.g., improving capacity or ability). Indirect impacts refer to impacts that benefit the partner, but are more distal to the actual community partner's structure, organization, or functioning.

Direct impacts. Direct impacts of the partnership include the following:
- Increased research capability (e.g., answering questions or researching issues that Living Cully does not have the capacity to address);
- Increased capacity to directly engage the community in surveys or community events (e.g., students to assist with planning and day-of logistics for Cully Critter Cruise);
- Creation of a report entitled "Not in Cully: Strategies for Preventing Displacement," a community-based set of anti-displacement strategies for the Cully neighborhood, such as increasing community members' knowledge of sustainable home ownership practices (such as energy efficiency) and increasing financial investments in the neighborhood to bring in job opportunities;
- Market research and analysis to identify urban agriculture market opportunities for a new social enterprise;
- Providing paid interns to Living Cully to work on Living Cully projects (e.g., graduate students to help engage the community in anti-displacement strategies) and providing unpaid students to work on Living Cully projects; and
- Graduate student helped to write a grant to apply for multi-year funding to develop and implement the second phase of a Living Cully program to improve health in the community.

Indirect impacts. Indirect impacts of the partnership include the following:
- Increased capacity to apply for grants and secure additional investments in the Cully neighborhood; and
- Increased competitiveness when applying for grants to bring in additional investments in the Cully neighborhood (as proposals are more deeply grounded in the research and literature).

Impact on the University
Impact on Students. In an end-of-term evaluation, the value of one PSU student's community-based work was reported this way: "I think part of what Living Cully and the PSU research team are trying to achieve is getting the community to work together and supporting them as they keep moving forward on the changes they want to see in their neighborhood."

In the 2014-15 academic year, PSU faculty in eighteen departments collaborated with the four SNI community partners through over forty courses that involved more than one thousand students. Of all the students who responded to our evaluation surveys last year, 80 percent felt that the community partner project deepened their understanding of their course content, and 90 percent agreed that working with

community partners enhanced their understanding of local community issues. In its first year, the SNI supported ten students in paid sustainability fellowships, collectively providing two thousand hours of service to their community partner organizations. In addition to supporting students in their partnership with Living Cully, fellows also support organizations such as Green Lents, a grassroots organization in southeast Portland, which share a similar commitment to community sustainability as Living Cully. These fellows worked to maximize the ease of communication between all of the stakeholders involved, and also compiled data collected by the students in the classes, planned and implemented community events, and presented their work at PSU and in the community. These fellowships provide students with substantive real-world experience to develop and expand their skills and an opportunity to build their professional networks. Anecdotally, faculty also report that students have increased motivation when working on SNI projects. They work harder and are more focused because they are motivated by the community partner's mission and want to provide meaningful work that assists the partner in advancing their mission.

The Student Sustainability Fellows Program emerged out of SNI course collaborations with partners like Living Cully, stemming from the realization that ten weeks is not often long enough to create a lot of value for a partner and to make measureable progress on a community project. Similar to an internship or independent study, this program provides opportunities for select students from SNI courses to continue their work with SNI partners following their original class, picking up where the class left off and extending these projects for an additional ten to twenty weeks.

In the words of an ISS student sustainability fellow, "The fact that students can get involved with a project like this through PSU is phenomenal. Opportunity is everywhere as long as you are willing to accept it. Starting out in [an SNI partner] class last fall, I would have never expected to have the chance to be so involved with my community while also developing professional experience and skills."

Impact on Faculty. One PSU faculty member noted that "ISS was instrumental in connecting the students to the community partners. Without the SNI we would have had several challenges, some as simple as coordinating a meeting time and location, and others as challenging as integrating coursework into ongoing projects. The SNI model is something that can have broad appeal to faculty, students, and community members alike."

PSU faculty also agree on the value and success of collaborating with ISS and the SNI partners. Newly launched efforts to programmatically understand faculty perspectives show that 100 percent of the faculty respondents agreed that students learned skills through the project that they might not have learned in the classroom, and 91 percent of faculty agreed that partnering through the Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative provides more benefits compared to traditional partnerships at PSU. Typically, in these partnerships faculty are solely responsible for identifying partners and managing projects, and the community partnership often ends once the term is over. Notable ways that the ISS and SNI collaboration has enhanced faculty experiences include:

- Increased access to community partners as a result of ISS playing a brokering role, stewarding the relationship to the community partner and helping to manage the project;
- Increased ability to integrate social justice issues into the course curriculum;
- Increased relevance and ability to use a hands-on approach to the classroom; and
- Increased use of place-based pedagogies and diverse perspectives in the classroom.

Aside from larger program impacts, faculty who have worked with Living Cully on applied teaching and research projects have reported they valued the partnerships insomuch as they have created strong opportunities to integrate issues like race, class, and economic inequality into their courses in a real and meaningful way, contributing to student learning about important topics that otherwise might be overlooked entirely or only addressed through an academic case study.

Impact on the Institute for Sustainable Solutions. Through SNI, ISS has become an increasingly valuable resource to faculty and administration due to its role as a broker. SNI has enhanced the university's ability to demonstrate commitment to its motto. Furthermore, the partnership with Living Cully demonstrates how sustainability is more than the dominant discourse of recycling, green infrastructure, and biking, and is instead multifaceted and fundamentally includes social and economic issues (i.e., race, class, privilege, discrimination, equity, etc.), which are areas where Living Cully provides significant leadership. While partners have yet to capitalize on extramural funding, the partnership also provides competitive opportunities to pursue collaborative funding and research since ISS already has a strong relationship with the community partner in place. Rather than seeking out a community partner, attempting to develop a relationship, and potentially forcing a partnership in pursuit of funding, with a mature partnership like this one, ISS and Living Cully simply need to have a conversation about whether or not pursuing an opportunity makes sense for both parties as well as for the partnership as a whole. Additional impacts to the university include fostering a shared commitment to reducing barriers to partnership work for faculty and fostering value in the Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative to further expand as an intellectual community of practice where faculty can gather around shared work, common practices, and a felt sense of belonging in an often siloed and disconnected institution.

Perhaps the most significant impact to the university has been the ability to create tangible impacts through the SNI partnership with Living Cully and other neighborhood partners. Together, the SNI partnerships have served as a platform to develop and test a model for how a cross-university unit, like ISS, can function as an effective broker between the university and community at large in order to better facilitate innovative city-university partnerships. Through these efforts, staff and partners have realized firsthand the level of cumulative impact that is possible when university-community projects are curated and supported by a third party. Recently, PSU was named one of the most innovative universities in the United States; ISS was listed as a contributing factor in PSU's innovation (Pardington 2015). As the central portal and leadership hub for sustainability at PSU, the Institute for Sustainable

Solutions also seeks to maintain PSU's nationally competitive edge, which means staff must be thinking about how to continually improve upon the work at PSU. As noted above, the SNI partnerships have served as a platform for staff to test and learn about assessment and continual improvement, strengthening both SNI and other ISS-supported programs, which enhances our reputation as a university and has a lasting effect on student and faculty recruitment and retention.

Finally, ISS staff members find it personally rewarding to support local sustainability efforts and organizations like Living Cully. Supporting local sustainability efforts by working with organizations like Living Cully is important because these partnerships help redefine how academia conceptualizes sustainability and ensures that issues like race, class, privilege, discrimination, equity, etc. are not only prevalently acknowledged and discussed in the classroom, but that they also remain central to the larger discourse on sustainability. ISS staff have learned that it is critical to maintain an emphasis on the social aspects of sustainability, particularly since ample research shows how people from underrepresented backgrounds are most likely to suffer from poverty, lower educational attainment, and the disproportionate impacts of climate change, among other things.

Discussion: Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

Considering the partnership between PSU and Living Cully, we believe the positive attributes of the partnership are the following: increased development of resources, clear communication between community and university partners, and increased involvement of students in real-world projects. The challenges, however, are more subtle at times and crucial to our success in the future as we seek to improve the partnership. Worth discussing are challenges around establishing trust, remaining sensitive to the wisdom and agency of the community, honoring a commitment to support community leadership, and communication. In the initial stages of developing the partnership, there were evident barriers to building trust because the university was viewed as an outsider that did not represent the Living Cully community. As a predominantly white and middle-class organization, ISS initially struggled to build trust with Living Cully. ISS had to develop trust with Living Cully and show that the university would not enter the community without permission, nor leave in a year when administrators' priorities shifted. Common ground was eventually created in a shared commitment to equity and sustainability for low-income people and people of color, as well as an ISS desire to support sustainability efforts as the community defined it. Importantly, during this time ISS remained sensitive to the wisdom and agency of the community, recognizing the limited experience of ISS staff, as well as the larger university, in working with these populations. During these early conversations, it was also important for ISS to make the commitment that the community would define the priorities and the projects, as opposed to students or faculty with a specific question in mind. Throughout the partnership, communication has remained a critical element of the collaboration, as facilitating good projects between Living Cully and university students and faculty can prove to be difficult. The following summarizes significant lessons learned from the partnership:

- The importance of the university's recognition of the inherent power imbalance between the more well-resourced university and less-resourced community organizations;
- The utility of having a strong community partner that has a clear agenda, understands its needs, and sets boundaries in order to prevent the power imbalance between themselves and the university. For example, to help keep the partnership focused, Living Cully and ISS staff talk frequently and reaffirm the community's needs in light of new interest from faculty researchers or instructors looking for a project to supplement their courses, constantly vetting potential project ideas against community needs. Living Cully is not afraid to say "no" to an expert's idea if it does not have a clear line of sight to their goals, in part because they know they will have a continued relationship with the university through ISS;
- That said, there may be instances where it makes sense to pursue opportunities that arise for students and faculty that do not provide direct benefits to the community, but instead offer indirect value, and vice versa;
- Reciprocity between the university and the community partner must be nurtured over time, but is more easily attainable through a long-term relationship;
- From the university perspective, balancing projects that respond to the needs of the community partner while also providing a substantial learning opportunity for the students;
- Through the history of the partnership, Living Cully has developed a stronger sense of what to expect from course engagements. However, students often have limited prior experience with community-based learning, and as such, they have varied, and perhaps unreasonable, expectations when first encountering the ambiguity posed by any project. For example, students might start researching one question, but then have to pivot because the line of inquiry does not pan out or because the partner's thinking changes in response to new information that presents itself in our dynamic world;
- Communication between students and partners is another challenge, as students often expect a high level of communication, or regular communication, which sometimes is not available given that a nonprofit partner is often juggling competing demands on its time;
- Acknowledging that partners are incredibly busy (one person doing the equivalent of two or three jobs functions is typical) and that the partnership engagements can be the item that partners make a lower priority when overwhelmed with grants, and projects, which are clear priorities;
- At times, faculty experience conflicting priorities in wanting students to pursue their individual interests while also trying to deliver on community needs. This can mean that a professor has to provide students with more direction and guidance in order to ensure that the ten-week term is impactful for both the students and the community partner;
- The university's ten-week academic term poses real challenges to delivering high-quality projects or products to partners. Deep impacts can often be realized by continuing a project from one course into another or by creating co-curricular opportunities (internships and volunteer experiences) for students to continue working on the project after the term has ended (see the article "Connecting Curriculum to Community Research: Professional Services, Research, and Teaching" in this issue for further thoughts on this); and

- ISS, faculty, and partners need to do a better job ensuring that all students reflect on their community-based learning experience in order to make meaning of it and develop a stronger ability to communicate the value of the experience to others, including future employers.

Many of these lessons have begun to inform current practice. Moving forward, Living Cully and PSU are in the process of prioritizing focus areas to guide the partnership. Together, partners are engaging in a series of conversations that will result in a clear framework for what PSU and Living Cully will and will not work on together, which will provide a shared understanding that can be used to screen the viability of potential projects. These conversations will also help clarify each party's commitments to the partnership, whether it be through contributions of financial resources, human resources needed for joint scholarship, or commitments to collaboratively seek extramural funding.

In addition to lessons learned, reflecting on the partnership brings several questions to mind that may prove useful to other communities seeking to connect with a local university. Regarding community organizations, the Living Cully-PSU partnership demonstrates the ability of community organizations to use the assets in a university to meet community needs. Other communities contemplating a similar partnership might want to ponder the following questions before entering a community-university partnership: How can community organizations similar to Living Cully be more intentional about using university partners to advance community agendas? What role should university institutions such as ISS have in working to fill a potential gap between the university and the community? How can community organizations and universities resolve conflicts that arise during a partnership? How can partnerships maintain a level of reciprocity as the partnership evolves and continues as a long-term relationship? How might universities adopt a place-based approach to their community engagement and work to ensure that university efforts are better coordinated, or at the very least, informed of one another?

Conclusion

Contemporary examples of community-university partnerships have emerged out of a commitment to enhance the learning environment of students through engaged service-learning and promote equity and social justice in the communities in which universities reside (Fitzgerald et al. 2012; Sandy and Holland 2006). The partnership between Living Cully and Portland State University serves as an exemplar in the realm of community-university partnerships in both parties' willingness to confront evident differences (i.e., around class and race). The commitment of both partners to erasing the top-down approach in developing effective communication skills regarding the scope of their partnership and expectations has allowed for over one thousand students and several dozen faculty members to be engaged in a community-centered endeavor that has spanned several academic years and continues to date (Strier 2010). ISS has served as a third party, brokering this partnership to ensure that both Living Cully and PSU are effective in promoting the health and well-being of the residents in the Cully neighborhood (Cooper et al. 2014).

These are just a handful of the lessons learned from the Living Cully-PSU partnership that can serve to encourage future partnerships between universities and communities, hopefully fostering a new commitment to egalitarian partnerships with mutualistic goals and structures. These partnerships may then remain viable across time and create measurable impacts within the community and the university. As we look at the future of community-university engagement, the partnership between PSU and Living Cully also illuminates the importance of university peer-to-peer learning communities about fostering community-university partnerships. What level of community and institutional transformation could be realized if a network of universities were to develop and work intentionally with their communities, sharing strategies, challenges, and lessons learned with both one another as well as their community partners?

References

Banuelos, Ricardo, Brooke Jordan, Rebecca Kennedy, Danell Norby, Erik Olsen, and Cary Watters. 2013. "Not in Cully: Anti-Displacement Strategies for the Cully Neighborhood." Accessed August 6, 2015. https://www.pdx.edu/usp/sites/www.pdx.edu.usp/files/A_LivingCully_PrinterFriendly_0.pdf.

Brundiers, Katja, Arnim Wiek, and Braden Kay. 2013. "The Role of Transacademic Interface Managers in Transformational Sustainability Research and Education." *Sustainability* 5: 4614-4636. doi:10.3390/su5114614.

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. 2015. "Climate Action Plan." Accessed July 16, 2015. https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/49989.

Buys, Nicholas, and Samantha Bursnall. 2007. "Establishing University–Community Partnerships: Processes and Benefits." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 29 (1): 73-86. doi:10.1080/13600800601175797.

Celio, Christine I., Joseph Durlak, and Allison Dymnicki. 2011. "A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Service-Learning on Students." *Journal of Experiential Education* 34 (2): 164-181. https://www.tamiu.edu/profcenter/documents/Meta-AnalysisoftheImpactofSLonStudentts_2011.pdf.

Crow, Michael M., and William B. Dabars. 2015. *Designing the New American University.* Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Cooper, Jonathan G., Zeenat Kotval-K, Zenia Kotval, and John Mullin. 2014. "University-Community Partnerships." *Humanities* 3 (1):88-101. doi: 10.3390/h3010088.

EcoDistricts. 2014. "The EcoDistricts Protocol: Executive Summary." Accessed July 16, 2015. http://ecodistricts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/EcoDistricts_Protocol_Executive_Summary_ ISSUE_6.242.pdf.

Enos, Sandra, and Keith Morton. 2003. "Developing a Theory and Practice of Campus-Community Partnerships." In *Building Partnerships for Service Learning*, by Barbara Jacoby and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fitzgerald, Hiram E., Karen Bruns, Steven T. Sonka, Andrew Furco, and Louis Swanson. 2012. "The Centrality of Engagement in Higher Education." *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 16 (3): 7-28. http://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/index.php/jheoe/article/view/861.

Hanleybrown, Fay, John Kania, and Mark Kramer. 2012. "Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work." http://ssir.org/articles/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work.

Jacoby, Barbara. 2003. "Fundamentals of Service-Learning Partnerships." In *Building Partnerships for Service Learning*, by Barbara Jacoby and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. 2011. "Collective Impact." http://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact_.

Maurrasse, David J. 2002. *Beyond the Campus: How Colleges and Universities Form Partnerships with Their Communities.* London: Routledge.

McDonald, James, and Lynn A. Dominguez. 2015. "Developing University and Community Partnerships: A Critical Piece of Successful Service Learning." *Journal of College Science Teaching* 44 (3): 52. http://digital.nsta.org/article/Developing_University_and_Community_Partnerships%3A_A_Critical_Piece_of_Successful_Service_Learning/1889149/239820/article.html.

Pardington, Suzanne. 2015. "*U.S. News & World Report* Names Portland State University among 'Most Innovative Schools' in the Country." http://blog.oregonlive.com/higher-education/2015/09/us_news_names_portland_state_u.html#incart_related_stories.

Portland State University. 2015. "Carnegie Foundation Names Portland State a Leader in Community Engagement." https://www.pdx.edu/news/carnegie-foundation-names-portland-state-leader-community-engagement.

Putnam, R. D., L. Feldstein, and D. Cohen. 2003. *Better Together: Restoring the American Community.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Portland State University. 2014. "Council Charge." http://www.pdx.edu/partnerships/council-charge.

Portland State University. 2015. "PSU Partnership Council." http://www.pdx.edu/
partnerships/psu-partnership-council.

Sandy, Marie, and Barbara Holland. 2006. "Different Worlds and Common Ground:
Community Partner Perspectives on Campus-Community Partnerships." *Michigan
Journal of Community Service Learning* 13 (1). http://hdl.handle.net/2027/
spo.3239521.0013.103.

Sargent, Leisa D., and Lea E. Waters. 2004. "Careers and Academic Research
Collaborations: An Inductive Process Framework for Understanding Successful
Collaborations." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Careers in Academe: A Special Issue
of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 64 (2): 308-19. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2002.11.001.

Sharp, Leith J. 2015a. "Core Business Integration of Sustainability (CBIS)." Lecture,
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, July 2015.

Sharp, Leith J. 2015b. "Put Simply, We Are in the Wrong Organizational Vehicle for
the 21st Century." Executive Education for Sustainability Leadership, Harvard
University. http://www.chgeharvard.org/resource/put-simply-we-are-wrong-
organizational-vehicle-21st-century.

Stokes, Donald E. 1997. *Pasteur's Quadrant: Basic Science and Technological
Innovation.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Strier, Roni. 2010. "The Construction of University-Community Partnerships: Entangled
Perspectives." *Higher Education* 62 (1):81–97. doi: 10.1007/s10734-010-9367-x.

Suarez-Balcazar, Yolanda, Gary W. Harper, and Rhonda Lewis. 2005. "An Interactive
and Contextual Model of Community-University Collaborations for Research and
Action." *Health Education & Behavior* 32 (1):84–101. doi:
10.1177/1090198104269512.

Turner, Shiloh, Kathy Merchant, John Kania, and Ellen Martin. 2012. "Understanding
the Value of Backbone Organizations in Collective Impact: Part 1." http://ssir.org/
articles/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_
impact_1.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). 2015. "Portland State
University: Partnering to Serve the City of Portland with Knowledge." Accessed
August 27, 2015. http://www.huduser.org/portal/casestudies/study_08132015_1.html.

Author Information

Michelle L. Holliday is a doctoral student in the sociology department at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. She holds a master's degree in public health from Drexel University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a research background in health disparities, social inequalities, and the impact of education policy on sexuality and mental health.

Tony DeFalco is the Living Cully Ecodistrict coordinator for Verde in Portland, Oregon, where he coordinates the nation's first equity-driven ecodistrict designed to re-interpret sustainability as an anti-poverty strategy. He holds a master's degree in Natural Resources Planning and Interpretation from Humboldt State University, Arcata, California.

Jacob D. B. Sherman is the sustainability curriculum coordinator for the Institute for Sustainable Solutions at Portland State University. Sherman holds a Master's of Science in Educational Leadership and Policy with a specialization in leadership for sustainability education from Portland State University.

Michelle L. Holliday
Department of Sociology, doctoral student
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: mlh8@pdx.edu
Telephone: 248-214-0307

Tony DeFalco
Living Cully Coordinator
Verde
6899 NE Columbia Blvd., Suite A
Portland, OR 97218
E-mail: tonydefalco@verdenw.org
Telephone: 503-889-0087
Fax: 866-279-8719

Jacob D. B. Sherman
Institute for Sustainable Solutions
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97201-0751
E-mail: jsherman@pdx.edu
Telephone: 971-570-7167
Fax: 503-725-2690

To This Day: College Graduates on the Lasting Significance of Relationality and Experiential Learning

Ann Fullerton and Vicki L. Reitenauer

Abstract

In the past twenty years, much research has been conducted into the effects of community-based learning and service-learning on students, but studies into the long-term impacts that persist after graduation have been fewer in number. In this article, the authors share perspectives from Portland State University alumni on the lasting significance of their participation in a community-based learning course that has been operating continuously for more than two decades and the key features of significant learning experiences more generally.

One of the first capstone courses to be designed and offered at Portland State University (PSU)—and the longest-running capstone at the university—is "Learning from and about Persons with Significant Disabilities," referred to in this article as "Learning from Persons." Since 1993, more than 3,500 students have completed "Learning from Persons." In the course, students prepare for and then spend two weeks as student-counselors with individuals with significant disabilities in an outdoor camp program. Most students who choose this course have never before formed a relationship with a person whom they perceive to be so "differently-abled" than they are. In the final reflections they complete for the course, many students comment that the course was both one of the best and one of the most difficult things they had ever done, as they articulated the ways they accepted and met their responsibilities as student-counselors.

Through these final reflections, the instructors and staff involved in "Learning from Persons" hear every year about the powerful, even life-changing, experiences that capstone student-counselors have during their two weeks at camp. But do these changes constitute the sort of transformative learning that community-based practitioners know is possible through this pedagogy and teach toward in their courses? One purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the relative meaningfulness of the community-based learning experience that is the "Learning with Persons" capstone, both in and of itself and as one among many learning experiences students encounter during their undergraduate careers.

This article is based on a qualitative research study conducted with twenty PSU graduates who completed the "Learning through Persons" capstone. What follows is a description of both the community and the pedagogical contexts for the course, a brief overview of relevant literature, a description of the methods employed by the

researchers, a discussion of one set of findings and the implication of those findings, and some concluding thoughts on the "Learning from Persons" capstone and its power as a model of inclusive community-building.

The Community Context of "Learning from and about Persons with Significant Disabilities"

The "Learning from and about Persons with Significant Disabilities" capstone is offered through a partnership between PSU and the Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp, Inc., of Oregon. The partnership was formed in 1972 as a practicum experience for special education teachers and in 1993 was expanded to support the capstone course by a special education professor (and lead author on this article) who herself enjoyed a longstanding relationship with Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp. As a thirteen-year-old, she began volunteering and working at the camp and today identifies this as a formative experience in which she developed confidence and the ability to work in teams with others, and which eventually led to her career path.

The lessons this now-seasoned professor brought with her from that lived experience from many years ago included the understanding that building reciprocal relationships with persons with significant disabilities is essential for respectful, authentic, and meaningful engagement to be possible across differences related to ability. This informed every aspect of the development of the original capstone proposal and continues to inform the design of the course today.

The Pedagogical Context for "Learning from Persons"

As one of the many dozens of options that students have for their self-selected senior capstone course, "Learning from Persons" appeals to students for a variety of reasons. A small proportion of the students are preparing for careers in education, including special education. Some students have familial relationships with persons with disabilities or have worked or volunteered previously in settings with persons with disabilities. The majority, however, seem to choose the course because of the convenience of its scheduling—requiring a commitment of two weeks in residence at camp, with a weekend break in between, during the summer, when many students have greater flexibility in course scheduling—and because it seems like a fun and easy way to complete one's capstone requirement. Although many students are initially attracted to the course because of convenient scheduling, all students engage in an application process through which they learn what the course requires of them, complete a self-assessment, and discuss the course with faculty or graduate assistants before they enroll so that they may make an informed choice to register for the course. On average, students from more than thirty different undergraduate majors enroll each year.

Given the intensely immersive nature of this capstone experience, students must be fully oriented and supported to plunge in and work through the challenges that await

them at camp. Additionally, students need repeated opportunities in a variety of settings and formats to reflect on what they are experiencing, to connect these experiences to past experience and already-held knowledge, and to transmute these experiences into new learning. Several components of this course converge to provide students with the opportunity to build relationships with persons who are differently abled, to explore the social constructs surrounding dis/ability in our society and the way those constructs create particular realities for persons with disabilities, and to reflect on the current and possible meanings of their developing awareness.

One month before the on-site phase of the course, students attend a full-day orientation in which the faculty and community partner provide an overview of expectations for the students as camp counselors, the learning goals for the course, and the fundamentals of effective camp counseling. Students then read about the experiences and perspectives of persons with disabilities through first-hand accounts, coupled with scholarly material that employs a critical disability lens. Students complete online modules to ensure that they have reviewed and that they understand important information about their role as counselors. Their final preparation before they come to the camp is to write a pre-camp reflection paper, in which they contrast their own lived experiences with those recounted in a young person's first-hand account of living with disability, recall and describe how students with significant disabilities were treated in their middle and high schools, and share their current career aspirations and their connection to this capstone course.

At the start of their scheduled course section, students arrive at Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp for two days of on-site training that includes practicing counseling skills, team building to create a community of counselors ready to help each other, and engaging in simulation activities that give insight into what people with physical, sensory, and neurological challenges often experience. Each capstone student is then assigned to serve as the counselor for one or two camper-participants.

After the training, the camper-participants arrive with their families or caregivers, and the capstone students have an opportunity to ask questions and gain more information before the caregivers leave. Students are organized into groups of eight student-counselors. A masters-level, experienced teacher, working as a counselor-supervisor, along with an assistant, continuously coaches and supports the eight-person groups of student-counselors individually and collectively throughout their two weeks at camp. Additionally, the on-site faculty member also meets with student-counselors, rotating between the groups and checking in periodically with each individual student-counselor. In addition, all of the camp program staff (many of whom began their involvement at Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp as PSU capstone students), who lead the various outdoor activities, are also responsible for teaching and coaching the capstone student-counselors.

No matter how extensive their preparation has been, many students worry that they will not know what to do or how to communicate and connect with their assigned camper(s). The aforementioned coaching and support, along with modeling from

supervisors, helps students confront their fears, move through them, and quickly establish a comfortable person-to-person relationship with the camper-participants.

As students gain confidence and form relationships with camper-participants, a second wave of learning occurs, in which students observe and reflect on the many individual ways that people with significant disabilities overcome personal challenges to live, play, and interact with others. Such experiential learning can be a powerful tool for increasing students' ability to navigate across difference, but only if students have repeated opportunities to reflect on what they are learning and connect that knowledge to larger contexts. At night, after the camper-participants have gone to bed, supervisors meet with their student team to discuss approaches to challenges they are experiencing and reflect on what they are learning about persons with disabilities. Student-counselors have an opportunity to practice understanding, respecting and valuing the role of diverse realities through this practice.

After sharing and reflecting on these experiences, discussions then move to broader topics such as the issues faced by families supporting a child with disabilities; the problems within the foster care and community service systems; the disability rights movement world-wide; barriers in education, employment, and housing; and the right to self-determination. Supervisors guide student-counselors in making connections between what they are learning each day alongside their camper-participants and these broader political and social issues.

At the end of the student-counselor's first week of camp, the student completes a self-assessment, a feedback tool that was collaboratively designed by faculty and camp staff, then meet with their counselor-supervisor to review their ratings and receive the supervisor's feedback. The student and supervisor collaboratively define goals for improvement and enhanced achievement for the student-counselor for the second week. At the end of the second week, the supervisor completes an evaluation and holds a final conference with the student.

After students return home from camp they write a post-camp reflection paper. They begin by re-reading their pre-reflection and consider how their views have changed after the two-week counseling experience. They also reflect on what they have learned about themselves and about groups that society views as different, and they identify what they are taking from this experience and how they might use their learnings post-camp. The student's final reflection paper, combined with the evaluation completed by the supervisor, is used to determine the student's final grade in the course.

After completing the course, many students want and need to continue processing the experience and do so in several ways. The counselor-supervisors and the students they supervised get together informally for a reunion in late summer or fall. The entire camp community (staff, counselors, camper-participants, and their families) is invited to participate in a fundraiser in September. Students also connect with faculty back on campus.

A PSU undergraduate is employed as a social media manager for the "Learning with Persons" capstone, and the course Facebook page and blog provide a place to connect throughout the year. Some students, camper-participants, and their families report that they stay in touch for many years. Students also often report they made lasting friends with their fellow student-counselors.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have confirmed the positive impacts of community-based learning on participants. Bamber and Hankin (2011), for example, use transformative learning theory to investigate impacts of service-learning. Through a meta-analysis of eleven studies, Warren finds that service-learning also "increased multicultural awareness and enhanced social responsibility" (2012, 59) in participants. Pelco, Ball, and Lockeman (2014) offer a complex picture of the beneficial aspects of service-learning for a majority of students alongside the differential impacts experienced by students from varying demographics and the resulting differences in perspectives on their experiences.

Although there are numerous qualitative explorations of the impact of community-based learning courses during the experience or immediately afterwards, few qualitative studies have examined if and how course-embedded community-based learning experiences continue to influence graduates' perspectives or actions. Kerrigan (2004) interviewed twenty graduates three years after participating in a variety of required capstone community-based learning courses in their senior year. In this study, some graduates described how the course had enhanced their communication and leadership skills, appreciation of diversity, and ability to operate effectively in new communities. Others gave examples of tangible professional skills that had contributed to their career development. Still others described a continuing sense of social responsibility and sustained volunteerism after graduation.

Kiely (2005) found that, one to eight years after college graduates had participated in an international service-learning course, each participant experienced one or more forms of perspective transformation (e.g., moral, intellectual, spiritual). Similarly, but at the K-12 level, Laursen, Thiry, and Liston (2012) reported that graduates who had been engaged in a science education outreach program one to eight years earlier reported positive outcomes in personal development, management skills, teaching, communication, and career-related skills. Newman and Hernandez (2011) studied the long-term effects on alumni mentors for a long-running service-learning course focused on personal and vocational development opportunities for urban youth, finding that the service-learning experience "appears to have long-term positive effects on young adults' attitudes, intentions, and behaviors involving their learning experience, career selection, career preparation, skill development, and community service involvement" (2011, 44).

Finally, in determining the methods we would use for data collection and analysis (explored in greater depth below), we chose to use the critical incident technique described by Bycio and Allen (2004) and critical event analysis described by Bowie,

Pope, and Lough (2008). These approaches allowed us to mine interviewees' responses to questions about their most significant learning experiences through probing for rich descriptions of those experiences and then analyzing their responses for themes and patterns.

Methods

In this article, we contribute to the rich literature on community-based learning through a study of the long-term impact of "Learning through Persons," as catalyzed by responses to questions regarding graduates' most significant learning experiences in college. Use of the critical incident technique allowed us to extract insights about the relative importance of this community-based learning experience within the numerous other learning experiences graduates had had in college.

The interview method used in this study was a modification of the critical incident technique described by Bycio and Allen (2004) and critical event analysis described by Bowie, Pope, and Lough (2008). During the interviews, participants were first asked to describe their three most significant learning experiences in college. Then, for each experience, they were asked what was meaningful about that experience for them, and in what ways that experience has impacted their life after college. By asking this question first, before any reference was made to "Learning from Persons," the researchers were able to explore how salient service-learning was among all the learning experiences that occur in college. If a respondent listed "Learning from Persons" among their top three significant learning experiences in college, the interviewer furthered the discussion of the impacts of this course with a number of additional questions about its long-term significance. In the cases in which interviewees did not list this course originally, the interviewer asked respondents directly about the "Learning from Persons" course and the meaning it held for them, both at the time they took the course and in the intervening years.

Potential interviewees were initially located through the PSU alumni database. At the time of the study, more than three thousand alumni composed this group of graduates who had completed "Learning from Persons," with about 60 percent of those being possible participants because a) current contact information was available, and b) they had given permission to be contacted by the university. Stratified random sampling was used to identify sixty potential participants from three time periods (2-5 years after they had completed the course, 6-10 years, and 11-16 years). Potential participants from each time period were randomly selected, called, and asked if they would be interested in participating in a forty-five-minute phone interview about their college experience. If a potential participant could not be reached or if that person declined, the next randomly-selected graduate was called. At the time of the interviews, four participants (19 percent) had completed "Learning from Persons" 11-16 years prior, eight (38 percent) had completed the course 6-10 years prior, and the remaining nine (43 percent) had completed "Learning from Persons" 2-5 years prior. The twenty interviewees had completed eighteen different majors during college,

including business, biology, art, and graphic design, to name a few. A thank-you in the form of a twenty dollar gift card was issued to each participant after the interview.

The interviewer conducted twenty phone interviews with participants. Interviews were audio-taped, and each was transcribed for analysis. The researchers then analyzed the data contained in the transcriptions according to the processes described by Creswell (1994). Two readers read each interview and identified the dominant themes, coded the data according to these themes, compared their results, and reached consensus regarding the coding. A third reader confirmed these themes through an independent analysis of the data.

Findings

Of the twenty interviewees, twelve mentioned "Learning from Persons" explicitly as one of their most significant learning experiences in college. In other words, 60 percent of interviewees cited this community-based learning course—which constituted six credits of their minimum of 180 required for graduation—as a most significant learning experience they had had as an undergraduate. Of the eight other interviewees who did not mention "Learning from Persons" as one of their three most significant learning experiences, six of these graduates made it clear that it had been a significant experience in response to the interviewer's questions about their capstone course. For example, one said, "It was the most important experience of my life," and four described it as a "fantastic" or "incredible" experience that had impacted their life since graduation. In all, 90 percent of interviewees identified that a community-based learning course—their capstone course, specifically—had been a most significant experience in their college education.

Analysis of the data, both with regard to students' most significant general learning experiences and the lasting impact of their involvement in "Learning from Persons," led to insights about what graduates report years later as the most salient and impactful aspects of their college years. Students consistently pointed to two major themes as features of their most significant learning experiences, which cross-cut throughout their commentary:
- Relationality, which included the following:
  - A high degree of interaction with others perceived to be different from themselves, particularly in the community-based setting
  - A high degree of interaction with a teacher (broadly defined) who modeled ways of thinking and working through problems and provided opportunities for continual contact and feedback
  - A high degree of interaction with peers, including through group and team work
- Community-based, experiential, hands-on learning experiences

Relationality

Of the fifty-seven total learning experiences that graduates reported as significant (three experiences for each of seventeen interviews, and two experiences for each of three interviews), 92 percent involved explicitly relational elements, experienced in a

variety of ways. That is, students repeatedly described encounters with teachers, fellow students, student affairs resource staff, guest speakers, and community partners as the most significant elements of their undergraduate education. When a respondent mentioned something that was not overtly relational in nature (and, of these responses, the location of PSU, in the midst of downtown Portland, Oregon, was the most frequently cited factor), the probes that followed the initial questions—namely, "What was important about that experience for you?" and "In what ways, if any, has that impacted you after college?"—typically led to responses that involved the importance of human relationship and connection. In response to these probes, students often mentioned having had the opportunity to connect outside classes with persons working in their chosen field or being able to attend lectures, readings, and other events that furthered what they were learning in the classroom.

One graduate explained that her most valuable learning experiences were ones where people related to one another:

> I like to connect with people. I like to connect with my teachers. I don't…like big lectures and stuff, you know, where there's no personal interaction. I find that hard. So [in college] I really appreciate[d] when there [was] discussion and some type of personal [connection], or personal accessibility.

This student stated that the high degree of relationality in some of her courses, combined with her involvement in student organizations, "opened the door" for post-graduation involvement on projects in small groups and the taking on of leadership responsibilities. This student concluded by saying that she found it extremely valuable to have engaged in this sort of integrative learning, as it helped her relate to different people.

Interaction across difference. Nearly half (45 percent) of the graduates explicitly mentioned the fact of the diversity represented by their instructors and their peers as being central to their most significant learning experiences, which intersects with their more general descriptions of faculty and peer interactions expanded on below. Even more fundamental in graduates' responses was a recognition of the significance of learning from persons formerly thought of as "others" within community-based learning environments.

One graduate who described herself as older than the majority of other students in college noted that interacting with these younger classmates was important for her post-graduation interactions in the workplace. Another graduate said that one of her most significant learning experiences stemmed from the diversity within the group of professors she encountered throughout her studies, who came from many parts of the world and offered her fresh perspectives on issues that she had never examined before. This graduate spoke directly to how this engagement across difference had fostered in her an open-mindedness that she has continued to operate from post-graduation.

Another graduate, who identified herself as a conservative, identified "tolerance" as a most important lesson she took from her interactions with persons from across the political spectrum:

> Being a conservative and being among a lot of liberal students and teachers… it was a really hard thing sometimes to just keep your mouth shut and absorb and listen and appreciate….It really taught me a lot about how…everybody's allowed to have their own opinion, everybody's ideals are different, and you just have to kind of try and see the good in everything, because typically there is something good in all those things….It was really a good thing for me to have gone to a liberal arts college because I got exposed to a lot more, and I think I have a lot more tolerance now because of it….I'm not so close-minded [sic] now. That's probably the one thing I will tell my kids, is that I don't care what they do when they go to college, they can go there for whatever they want, I just want them to learn to live with everybody who's out there, to appreciate everybody who's out there, and to really listen to people, no matter [if] what they think they're saying is crazy, or not, you don't have to…agree with it, but just appreciate it.

With regard to "Learning from Persons" in particular, the way that the capstone was grounded in encounter across difference provided the foundation for students' significant learning in the course. Without exception, interviewees talked about the nature of the "live encounter" (Palmer 1998, 37) and the way it called forth a kind of reciprocity that they were often startled to experience. Indeed, many students spoke to a central paradox in their roles as student-counselors with persons with significant disabilities: that, at the start of the experience, they had had to set themselves and their fears aside simply to do the work of caring for another who was clearly in need of such care, and, in the end, they realized that they had likely gained more from the experience than those they had ostensibly been serving. Respondents spoke to that tension throughout the interviews when they reflected that they had to push through their concerns in order to be effective and fully in service to their campers—to recognize that this experience was "not all about me," as many of them stated explicitly—and that doing so allowed them to realize how they were ultimately changed by the experience and that, in fact (and ironically so), it was all about them.

One particularly powerful example of this kind of recognition, this "ah-ha" moment born of that paradox, was expressed by this participant:

> I [counseled] a thirty-year-old autistic woman who was completely dependent on me [for personal care]…and it was extremely humbling. Had to do everything….When I first started, [I] couldn't believe I was having to do this with my time….Well, by the end of the week, I actually, for the first time since I was probably five years old, wet the bed at camp, because of all the trauma and stress that had happened to me for the four days before that happened. It was like I was so humbled that I got taken back to where they were, and I actually told my thirty-year-old camper what had happened, and

she gave me the biggest hug and said, "It's okay, I wet the bed too."…I was so mortified that it happened to me, I didn't know who to tell, or what to do. But she just totally embraced me and said, "It's okay."…That's why I say it was the most amazing experience of my life. It just totally took me, 360 [sic] to an adult. It was just amazing, overnight….I was so scared when it happened, but looking back, thank God that happened to me….I have to say that was probably the ultimate moment, the one thing that I got out of my entire college career that I will never forget….I would have paid a hundred thousand dollars just to have that experience happen to me, because it has meant so much on how I parent, on how I deal with my husband and my marriage, on how I deal with individuals at the church, at the clothes drive, my neighbors….Sometimes everybody needs to be taken care of. No matter how capable they are. No matter how stubborn, how strong-willed. Sometimes everybody needs to be told that it's okay, no matter what….Even if it's [an] embarrassing thing, or the most awful thing…they just need to be told it's okay...and sometimes that's all it takes.

Interaction with faculty. In recounting their most significant learning experiences, graduates also referred explicitly and often to the power of the modeling provided by their instructors and the value of the high degree of interaction with faculty in those significant learning experiences. One graduate now employed as a social worker indicated that one of the most significant learning experiences happened for her in a class in which she "was [regarded as] a person to the teacher, instead of just another student in the class." Another graduate talked about the importance of his business classes that were taught by instructors with expertise developed through experience in the workforce and the seasoned business leaders they welcomed into the course as guest speakers, and how he draws on the lessons he learned from those instructors and speakers to this day.

Throughout the interviews, when describing the significance of their growth connected to "Learning from Persons," students recognized and identified the camper-participants with whom they worked as the direct sources of their learning—and, in effect, their teachers. One graduate talked about learning a fundamental lesson about communication from the nonverbal young woman that she had counseled. Toward the end of the week, her cabin group was practicing a skit for the final campfire, and the young woman's reaction surprised her:

[She became] really, really, really resistant….I was getting really frustrated, because I thought…what is the deal?....why wouldn't [she] get involved?.... She had a word book with picture-y things, and she showed me the picture of "sad," and it finally clicked to me that the reason she was so resistant was because she had been to camp before and realized that when you started practicing for these little skits, that meant the end of the week was coming.

This graduate said that she had learned not to make an assumption about what a person is trying to communicate, but to draw closer to the person and their communication

style so as to be open to what is being shared—and she learned that lesson directly from her relationship with her camper-participant. She went on to explain how she regularly applies this lesson in the present: "Give people credit, back up from the situation, and don't assume the absolute worse…making sure you've understood what they've communicated."

Interaction with peers. Graduates recognized and included their interactions with their undergraduate colleagues as being significant sources of their learning. A number of interviewees reported that working cross-functionally within student teams throughout their time at PSU and learning the skills and capacities for functional group interactions were essential parts of their memorable learning experiences. One graduate, an accountant, noted that "learning to get along with and work with people you don't want to" was a key feature of her learning from her peers.

Another graduate, a business student, described the value of working closely with peers in this way:

> Learning to work with others in team-based projects…was really challenging for me, and I learned a lot about personal boundaries and other people's boundaries, and it has helped me in the workplace immensely, although I hated it at the time….I have found that there's typically always a way, because there's a middle ground you can meet [on], and I really learned that patience from my college experience, because, you know, you had to get those grades in college, and you really learned how to encourage people versus make people mad. And try and bring out the positive and not necessarily point out the negative….These experiences…really did help me to get through those real-life situations.

Another graduate who had majored in business described two important outcomes of engaging in teams in college: gaining skills in working cross-functionally with different sorts of people and learning how to take individual responsibility for her contribution within a team. This graduate spoke about how she learned to deal with difficulties that arise, personally or professionally, when working with others, and the importance of "being honest, not only with myself, but with the whole group if it's something I can't handle or something I need help with." This interviewee then shared, "I don't think about [this on] a day-to-day basis, but now that we're talking about it, it really is kind of a big part of what I do," suggesting that this learning has been so well integrated as to have become invisibly operational in her professional working style.

Experiential Learning

Interviewees repeatedly mentioned the importance of experiential engagement as cornerstones of their most significant learning opportunities. In fact, under initial questioning about their most significant learning experiences, 55 percent of interviewees explicitly named "hands-on" learning as a critical aspect of these most memorable sources of learning. Internships, practica, field-based science activities, and

study abroad experiences were all cited here, with one graduate, for example, noting that her internship in a business setting helped her determine what work she both wanted to pursue and, equally importantly, didn't want to pursue in the future, while also allowing her to strengthen her resume and build references for later job-seeking.

Graduates repeatedly described post-graduation outcomes resulting from experiential learning in college. For example, one said that his internship "gave me a lot of skills that I actually apply to what I do today." Another graduate recalled that as a sophomore he was the lead electrician in a theater production, supervising twenty other students. He reported that "the leadership aspect [of this role] was really important, [because] I'm actually in a supervisor position now, and it really helped me with my organization and scheduling."

A former biology major, who is now a teacher, described the importance of courses which involved outdoor trips, including one to the Oregon coast to look at fossils and giant rock beds, to the development of his pedagogical approaches today:

> It's…one thing to be in a classroom and talking about it and reading about it, but actually getting out and seeing it…made all the difference….Physically getting your hands dirty….I mean it was so cool….PSU had a big influence on the things I studied and who I am now….I'm actually now a teacher, and I love to take my students out as much as I can get them out….I like to take 'em out and get 'em dirty.

Other interviewees also explicitly identified that certain experiential learning opportunities had been significant because of the connection to their professional pursuits. A graduate in speech and hearing sciences spoke to the value her discipline-specific courses had for her but stressed the importance of her experiential learning through the capstone, saying the following:

> I think…actually getting to be out there in the trenches doing something rather than reading a book or studying for a test, just actually getting out there and doing stuff…really makes a big difference. [It was] a real-life experience that I was then able to apply when I started looking for work, that I had actually done something in that field, because then when I started applying for jobs as an assistant I had some experience.

A graduate serving as an officer in the military also named his capstone as a most significant experience because being a student-counselor at camp required him to demonstrate and expand his leadership skills: "Leadership was…quite a growth for me. It helped me because eventually I became an officer and a lot was expected [of me]."

In fact, of all of the types of experiential learning that students had encountered, the most frequently mentioned type identified by students as most significant was community-based learning. One business school graduate currently working in the high tech industry described community-based learning as central to two of his most

significant learning experiences in college. Through a sophomore-level general education inquiry class, this student volunteered at a local food bank, which, he said, opened his eyes to the personal benefits of volunteering. The student noted that, before this class, he "had given blood, and…[done] civic duty kinds of activities, voting and stuff, but this was the first time I actually got out and volunteered….Arguably it was forced upon me…[but] it actually exposed me to things I wouldn't have been exposed to on my own."

The power in the community-based component in this graduate's inquiry class led directly to his choosing the "Learning from Persons" capstone. The latter learning experience, he said, "opens your eyes to different opportunities, different exposures, different ways of thinking, where a regular classroom environment wouldn't have done so....I wouldn't have tried to spend that time had it not been part of the curriculum." Now, in his corporate position, he serves on his company's team-building committee and regularly schedules group service outings for his colleagues to engage in collaboratively. "You are bagging potatoes elbows to elbows," he reported. "It worked when I was a sophomore, it'll work now that I'm in the professional field…. It's really lived in me to become the person I am today."

In fact, in response to questioning about the "Learning from Persons" capstone specifically, 90 percent of interviewees identified the experiential nature of the course as one reason for its significance. A particular way that interviewees talked about the significance of "Learning from Persons" was in relation to the "24/7" nature of the experience; the fact that they had entered an immersion that essentially forced them to push through their resistances in order to meet their responsibilities. A clear majority of the respondents identified that they had chosen the course because it had seemed like a fun and easy way to meet their general education requirement in a relatively short two weeks and then discovered, upon meeting their campers, the forces of resistance within themselves to being fully present and participatory. If they were to stay, however, they had to figure out how to move beyond their resistances to be useful to another, and the stories of their journeys described, over and over, this trajectory. Despite their making an informed choice to join "Learning from Persons" and the extensive preparation they had received prior to their camp experience, graduates recalled feeling fearful and uncomfortable when faced with the reality of providing care for their camper-participant. If they were to remain in the course, they had no choice but to engage, given the immersive nature of the experience—but they realized that they *did* have a choice about *how* they would engage. And they recognized, upon reflection, that this choice deeply impacted what they took with them from the experience.

One graduate talked about the arc of his experience in this way:

> So the first day, and it's amazing, right?....All of us senior capstone students were all in the lodge, we're all being briefed, we're all being kind of trained with our faculty advisors on how to handle the processes there, and the parents pull up and drop off their children. I got Tad, and he was...a little more of a

challenge, a little more disabled than a lot of the other kids there....He couldn't speak…[and] he couldn't walk, so it was a challenge in the beginning. And I thought, 'Oh, my gosh, I can't do this.' And so the first two days, I have to admit...I was going, 'I'm out of here.' This is too hard, you know. My guy can't tell me when he's hungry, he can't tell me when he needs to be changed....He can't even go swimming, right, and...it's just...really hard. But the third day through, no lie, the third day…after lunch, he had difficulty, so I had to kind of feed [him]...and all of a sudden Tad reached out and grabbed my hand. And I was like, he's in there! Totally in there! He's telling me he wants more…and then he started interacting with me, and....I was so, honestly, ignorant and naive, right, it was subtleties in his face, because he couldn't talk, but then the third day I started to understand him, and I started to connect with him, and...I was like, 'You know what, I like this guy!' You know, he knows I'm there, he knows I've got his back.

Implications

In responding to questions asking them to identify their three most significant learning experiences in college and then probing for the details surrounding that significance, graduates overwhelmingly named relationality (in the form of relationship with others across difference, relationship with faculty and persons serving as teachers, and relationship with peers) and experiential learning as foundational to those experiences. While the preceding sections have discussed these elements separately, there was much overlap in the responses among these factors. Interviewees, for example, spoke of the learning they had gained in numerous and subtle ways through working with camper-participants, who, as co-participants in an immersive experiential setting, had actively taught them and who offered a living source of engagement across difference.

Given the high degree of response indicating the importance of relationality (92 percent of interviewees) and experiential environments (90 percent of interviewees) to most significant learnings, we argue that experiential opportunities within courses— from experiential activities and exercises embedded within more "traditional" courses to the full-on immersive environment of a residential service-learning course like "Learning from Persons"—provide a key to unlocking significant learning for students. Indeed, while a clear majority of interviewees named the capstone as one of their most significant learning experiences, many of them also named plenty of other experiential approaches, too, from place-based activities that took them out of the classroom for relatively brief periods of time to internships, practica, and other community-based learning opportunities.

It is perhaps more likely, as well, that course elements experienced as relational ones will be embedded in or will emerge from experiential learning settings. A team of business students developing a marketing plan for a real community partner, for example, will necessarily engage in multiple forms of relational learning. So will science students exiting the classroom for a place-based study of a local geological feature. Further, interviewees spoke to the power of even a relatively common

classroom-based occurrence—the presence of a guest speaker—as contributing to the significance of their learning, as the speaker offered something within the course that was seen and experienced by students as relationally-based and particularly memorable.

While clearly not all courses, and not even all community-based courses, can or should be structured like "Learning from Persons," the data from this study suggest that it is not only such profoundly immersive courses that contribute to students' experiences of significance, but also it is both large *and* small relational elements, and both fully enveloping *and* small-in-scope experiential opportunities, that persist as significant for graduates over time. Certainly most, if not all, instructors, course designers, and program administrators, including those that operate in online contexts, might consider how to further embed relational and experiential elements in their courses and programs, as these elements pay dividends for graduates long after they leave the institution.

Conclusion

On thirty beautiful acres in the Mt. Hood National Forest, fifty staff, fifty-five university students, and fifty-five to sixty camper-participants come together every week and create a positive, accepting, fully inclusive community. While camp directors, staff, and faculty put a lot of work into creating the right structure and support so this can happen, there is camp director and staff turnover, a new cohort of university students every time, and a mix of new and returning camper-participants. Yet even though the players might be new, the same positive community recreates itself year after year.

Faculty, staff, and students come to camp thinking we are going to be the ones that are in service, the ones that will be doing the giving. But when the camper-participants arrive, the real faculty have shown up, and they teach us how openly and without judgment to welcome a new relationship, accept another person fully and without condition, have fun in any situation, and co-exist just exactly as we all are.

This community that is continually making and re-making itself does not have to be sustained beyond a week, and thus does not have to grapple with the tensions and inequities ongoing communities face in the "real world." Why, then, would students report, both in their reflection papers and course evaluations and in the interviews conducted for this study, that "Kiwanis Camp was *real*"? When students comment that camp was one of the first "real" communities they ever experienced, one in which everyone, including each of them, felt welcome to be who they are, and when graduates report that this experience, out of so many others, was among their most significant ones in college, we know that we are in the presence of the transformative possibility of education.

Not every learning setting can be as fully immersive and experiential as the one established by the "Learning through Persons" capstone. Yet the insights shared by graduates about their most significant learning experiences offer practitioners guides for the sorts of learning approaches and strategies that will resonate long after the end

of college. Graduates repeatedly told us that it was the learning experiences marked by relationality, involving meaningful interaction across difference, and offering opportunities for hands-on work that have continued to echo for them and inform their perspectives and actions to this day.

References

Bamber, Phil, and Les Hankin. 2011. "Transformative Learning through Service-Learning: No Passport Required." *Education + Training* 53 (2-3): 190-206.

Bowie, Paul, Lindsay Pope, and Murray Lough. 2008. "A Review of the Current Evidence Base for Significant Event Analysis." *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 14 (4): 520-536.

Bycio, Peter, and Joyce S. Allen. 2004. "A Critical Incidents Approach to Outcomes Assessment." *Journal of Education for Business* 80 (2): 86-92.

Creswell, John W. 1994. *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fullerton, Ann, Vicki L. Reitenauer, and Seanna M. Kerrigan. 2015. "A Grateful Recollecting: A Qualitative Study of the Long-Term Impact of Service-Learning on Graduates." *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 19 (2): 65-92.

Kerrigan, Seanna M. 2004. "Perspectives of College Graduates on the Experience and Effect of Capstone Service-Learning Courses: A Qualitative Study." EdD diss., Portland State University, ProQuest. (AAT 3169484).

Kiely, Richard. 2005. "A Transformative Learning Model for Service-Learning: A Longitudinal Case Study." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 12 (1): 5-22.

Laursen, Sandra L., Heather Thiry, and Carrie S. Liston. 2012. "The Impact of a University-Based School Science Outreach Program on Graduate Student Participants' Career Paths and Professional Socialization." *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 16 (2): 47-78.

Newman, Cynthia M., and Sigfredo A. Hernandez. 2011. "Minding Our Business: Longitudinal Effects of a Service-Learning Experience on Alumni." *Journal of College Teaching & and Learning* 8 (8): 39-48.

Palmer, Parker. 1998. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of the Teacher's Life.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pelco, Lynn E., Christopher T. Ball, and Kelly Lockeman. 2014. "Student Growth from Service-Learning: A Comparison of First-Generation and Non-First-Generation College Students," *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 18 (2): 49-66.

Warren, Jami. 2012. "Does Service-Learning Increase Student Learning? A Meta-Analysis." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 18 (2): 56-61.

Author Information

Ann Fullerton is a professor of special education at Portland State University where she teaches capstone courses and prepares teachers in a merged program of special and secondary education. Her research interests include service learning, youth transition to adulthood, and teacher preparation. Fullerton earned her PhD in psychology and special education from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

Vicki L. Reitenauer serves on the faculties of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department and the University Studies program at Portland State University, specializing in developing and teaching both discipline-specific and general education courses, including community-based learning experiences; building and sustaining community partnerships; facilitating relational faculty development processes; and co-creating faculty-led assessment practices. She has co-authored numerous works on these topics including *Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities* (Stylus, second edition, 2013).

Ann Fullerton
Special Education
Graduate School of Education
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: fullertona@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-4254
Fax: 503-725-5529

Vicki L. Reitenauer
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: vicr@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-5847
Fax: 503-725-5805

"Contagious Co-Motion": Student Voices on Being Change Agents

Vicki L. Reitenauer, Tetiana Korzun,
Kimberly Lane, and Melinda Joy Roberts

Abstract

Designed in response to students' requests for a capstone where they could form their own individual partnerships in the communities of their choosing, Effective Change Agent offers a structure for community-based learning that allows for high levels of student choice-making and agency. In this article, the authors describe the course; connect it to literature on grassroots change-making, integrative learning, and service-learning; and, through the inclusion of student authors, allow the sharing of insights in the students' own voices.

From the earliest days of the capstone program at Portland State University (PSU), a trickle of students would find its way to the program director's office to ask how they could work with their own community partner as part of their capstone. Some students wanted to parlay longstanding volunteer connections into their capstone, while others had new partnerships in mind that they wanted to pursue. The director would explain that capstones are courses, not independent study opportunities, and that each course came with a pre-selected community partner and a project furthering the mission of that community partner already in place. The director would acknowledge each student's commitment to working for positive change in their community of choice and encourage the student to continue that engagement, while assisting the student to find a capstone course that would be a fit for their interests.

After several years of fielding these requests, the program director had an idea: She would recruit and support a faculty member to propose a course that would allow students to form their own partnerships and complete projects connected to those partnerships while participating in a course populated with other students doing the same. Collectively, the students would investigate theories and perspectives on change-making, drawing on their individual experiences as places of knowledge-making, and would collaborate on a class-wide project. In this way, the Effective Change Agent capstone was created.

In this article, a longtime capstone faculty member contextualizes Effective Change Agent within other capstone course offerings, offers information about the structure and approach of the course, and reviews relevant literature (including a text used within the course) associated with both the content and the import of this course. Then, three students from Effective Change Agent share about the challenges, the joys, and the takeaways from their experiences in the course. The faculty member then returns with concluding thoughts.

The Effective Change Agent Capstone

Offered each term since 2005, the Effective Change Agent capstone currently carries this course description:

> This course is for students interested in being effective change agents for the public good. Students are given the opportunity to create meaningful relationships with a specific community organization/partner of their choice and work towards effecting positive change within their working environment. Students are supported and challenged to develop skills in building relationships and coordinating action grounded in evidence and deep personal understanding. Through volunteering, class discussions, practices, reading, and self-observations, students explore the meaning of their work and the impact on both themselves and their community. Service opportunities are structured to promote a sense of civic and social responsibility, provide exposure to diverse populations, implement effective communication practices, instill critical thinking skills, and present an opportunity to apply classroom learning with real world activities. (Petzold 2015)

During class sessions, students co-create the collective learning experience through completing presentations which address the underlying social context and meaning of their chosen work with their community partners, the histories and missions of their agencies, their community partners' multiple stakeholders, and the impact of their service on those stakeholders, including themselves (Petzold 2015). Students also contribute their own blog and photos to a course website (http://ecapdx.weebly.com/) that has operated since early 2014 and serves to connect students of the course (and other interested visitors to the site) over space and time. Students working in small multidisciplinary groups also develop collaborative presentations in which they connect their growing expertise in community engagement with the university's general education goals (communication, critical thinking, appreciation of the diversity of the human experience, and social and ethical responsibility). The class-wide project requires students to work in multidisciplinary teams to complete a final product that is beneficial for capstone students to produce and useful for the community to receive (as with all capstone courses). Class projects in Effective Change Agent have included the establishing of a computer lab and lending library at an agency providing support to persons experiencing homelessness, creating a community garden at an elementary school and community center, and making critical improvements to a toy room at a program that serves children undergoing chemotherapy.

Relevant Literature

A variety of texts are incorporated into the Effective Change Agent capstone, including the book *Walk Out Walk On* by Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze (2011). In this book, the authors provide case studies of seven communities around the world in which community members have "walked out" of oppressive ideological perspectives rooted in structural inequities and "walked on" to new ways of relating to the challenges within their communities in order to transform them (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 4).

Chapter titles suggest to the reader what sorts of perspective shifts Wheatley and Frieze will ask the reader to make: "From Scaling Up to Scaling Across," for instance, invites the reader into the community of Unitierra, Mexico, and considerations of how small changes become large ones. For example, the authors focus attention on the Red Autónoma para la Soberanía Alimentaria (RASA or, in English, the Autonomous Network for Food Sovereignty), whose members collaborated in the invention of a bicycle-powered water pump that is helping to irrigate rooftop gardens throughout the region (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 26). The growing of food apart from mass-marketed production chains allows community members to practice food sovereignty as they plant, grow, and then eat what they choose to, rather than what is made available to them through sources beyond their sphere of influence. In keeping with the spirit of the invention, the spread of the water pump occurs through curiosity and shared interest, rather than through force. As the authors say,

> What RASA is up to is *co-motion* rather than *promotion*: spreading ideas through contagion rather than pushing people in a particular direction. Co-motion is walking at the pace of the other, rather than at whatever pace you want to go. It is a horizontal movement that begins with being rooted in your own purpose and place, and then connects with others who are rooted in theirs. There is no monolithic approach to this work, there is no centralization of power, there is no ownership of ideas. Instead, the network is engaged in continuous creation and re-creation, in self-discovery, and in adaptation. (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 26)

This description of RASA's philosophy aligns with the approach of the Effective Change Agent capstone. While students in the course may be serving with organizations that represent a wide variety of ideological and organizational perspectives on change-making, within the community of the class there is a decided emphasis on "co-motion" and the sort of "contagion" it can engender.

In order to participate in this sort of contagious co-motion, students must enter a course either with a sense of self-efficacy already intact or with opportunities within a course to build it. The authors of *The Learner-Centered Curriculum* assert that "most difficult to recognize and perhaps the most powerful belief that affects learning is the student's belief in his or her ability, or self-efficacy" (Cullen, Harris, and Hill 2012, 16). While some students certainly enter Effective Change Agent as seasoned, self-identified, and self-aware leaders, many others must discover their capacities for leadership through fresh experiences offered by the class on multiple levels (i.e., within the communities from which they come, the communities in which they serve, and the learning community created within the course) and through reflection on those experiences. The authors of this book note the importance of reflective practices in the learning process by referring to the work of Jerome Bruner (1996) and Donald Schön (1983) and quoting their commenter David Scott (2008), asserting the primacy of a curriculum that is "an interactive process of assimilation, with the capacity of the human agent to reflect on what they receive from their environment and in the process change it" (Cullen, Harris, and Hill 2012, 70; Scott 2008, 115). In the view of these

authors, curricula composed of "community-building strategies, sharing power with students to develop learner autonomy, and ongoing assessment to monitor growth and to make learning an intentional activity" are best positioned to further students' integrative learning and position them for their future endeavors (Cullen, Harris, and Hill 2012, 62).

In the service-learning literature, Theresa Ling Yeh presented results from a qualitative study that examined the service-learning experiences of six low-income, first-generation students and asserted that service-learning empowered these students to "develop self-efficacy and autonomy by providing opportunities to engage in self-defined and self-directed projects" (Yeh 2010, 59). For instance, some students reported that their service-learning experiences "enhanced their knowledge and learning in the classroom, enabled them to further develop academic skills, and linked them to new educational opportunities" (Yeh 2010, 55). Others said that "their service-learning experiences helped to bring their academic studies 'to life' by enabling them to personalize theories and concepts" (Yeh 2010, 55). Many of the students described how their service-learning experiences helped them to learn about themselves, their values, and their motivations, namely through the acts of engagement and reflection on engagement, and served as a turning point in their education (Yeh 2010, 55-56). Yeh contends that the service-learning courses the students completed may well have contributed to their persistence in college (2010, 50).

Students Reflect on Effective Change Agent

In the following sections, three students from the Effective Change Agent capstone lend their voices to this conversation. In analyzing and reflecting on their service experiences, these students share how they entered Effective Change Agent from within specific communities, how they came to recognize new opportunities for their community-based efforts at making change, and how they emerged from those experiences at course's end.

As a framing device for their work, we have selected principles of effective change-making from *Walk Out Walk On* as the titles of their sections. First, biology and Russian language major Tetiana Korzun's experience tutoring students in the Russian language immersion program at Lane Middle School speaks quite literally to Wheatley and Frieze's assertion that successful change-makers "start anywhere and follow it everywhere" (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 220). Next, Kimberly Lane, a child and family studies major, addresses how operating from a sense that "we have what we need" (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 221), "working with what is present, instead of what's absent" (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 92), and walking out of "a problem-based approach…and…on to a place-based approach to problems" (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, p. 94) allows us to experience abundance in both material resources and in human connection. Finally, health science and community health education major Melinda Roberts shows us that "the leaders we need are already here" (Wheatley and Frieze 2011, 222)—and not only here, but are each and every one of us.

Start Anywhere, Follow It Everywhere:
Tetiana Korzun and Lane Middle School

My learning journey started in June 2006, when my family arrived in Maryland from Ukraine, and continued as we made our way to Portland in 2012. My six years of working closely with Baltimore's Slavic community always reminded me about my roots and made me feel closer to home despite the difficulties and obstacles I faced. The Slavic immigrants I met after I moved to Portland exposed all the pitfalls of living far away from my native land. Here in Portland, I clearly saw how Russian and Ukrainian immigrants and their children were and are progressively losing connections with their roots. The large and old Slavic community of Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, and Belorussian refugees and immigrants in the Northwest was struggling to maintain its bicultural identity as it forgot its language and traditions. Parents, having come to the United States as refugees, usually didn't speak English. Working in jobs requiring hard labor, and having few skills to communicate with the larger community, they became secluded in small Russian native-speaking enclaves, literally isolated from the outside world.

With so much of their own communication made through translators, lawyers, and other language-related service providers, parents pushed their children to be receptive to the English-speaking environment. In turn, I witnessed children, ashamed by their parents' illiteracy in English, becoming even more separated from their families. While children became better English speakers at school and enjoyed a greater sense of being open to the world (compared to parents that stayed in the closed communities), their children's lives at home suffered a lot. As their communication with parents lessened, their emotional connections and the intimacy that comes from those connections often got lost. Based on my experience and observations, it seemed that the first immigrant generation struggles to adjust to everything new and the second generation fights to forget the past.

Having started there—as a Ukrainian immigrant to the United States curious about how those in the Slavic community navigate change across the generations—I started volunteering as a tutor in the PSU Russian Flagship Program, a four-year undergraduate program that permits students to receive a certificate of advanced proficiency in the Russian language while completing a degree in any other discipline. There I met many students who were considered Russian heritage speakers, but who, in fact, had poorer language skills than American students who had just started learning Russian.

When I became aware of the possibilities to pursue my own community partnership in the Effective Change Agent capstone, I developed a project in conjunction with Portland Public Schools and, specifically, Lane Middle School, which offers students a dual-language program in Russian and English. Ethnically diverse Lane Middle School is an educational home for 40% white, 25% Latino, 17% Asian, 10% African American, and 5% Native American students, with roughly 80% eligible for free or reduced lunch. The school, serving a large number of historically underserved students

and immigrants from the states of the former Soviet Union, already has two classes of sixth- and seventh-grade students participating in Russian immersion, making it a perfect setting for my project.

In my role at Lane, I worked on school projects that prioritize learning about Slavic culture and language, as well as strategic long-term planning focused on the expansion of the Russian immersion program and its integration with the Russian Flagship at PSU. On a daily basis, I created presentations and assignments, helped with homework, and set up group and individual mentoring projects to encourage students to stay in the immersion program and continue further education. In particular, the "Think College" mentoring project exposed students to diverse perspectives and experiences on the pursuit of higher education, enhancing their confidence to navigate their futures.

Toward the end of the school year, I worked with students on a class project dedicated to the seventieth anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War. Students were asked to interview members of their families and community and to collect unique war stories and photographs, which were then featured in a poster exhibition and presented in class. About three-quarters of the students interviewed their own elderly family members who had experienced wartime. These students shared how they had researched and developed projects that centered on personal family histories, rather than just presenting dull memorized facts from a history book. These presentations of the stories from the past heard by today's young people tightened family connections and built new bridges across existing communication gaps.

Volunteering at Lane was exciting and rewarding, but there were serious obstacles to overcome. One of them, the clash of Russian and American cultures, raised questions about the diminishing of one culture while protecting another. This challenging tension showed me that multiculturalism and its opposite, assimilation, both have their own cultural costs. Secondly, the immersion program, while having positive effects on the Russian-speaking community by ensuring successful and sustainable development of bilingual students, was also a site of conflict involving both culture and religion, as public education came up against Orthodox Christianity. A large majority of students' parents, who had been religious refugees in the United States, tended to be representatives of the more closed-off community revolving around the church, and they expressed concerns about the teaching of ancient world history and culture, including Greek and Roman mythology. These issues required an enormous amount of debate and discussion with parents and adaptations to the curriculum, and they have left many unanswered questions for me, questions that I will pursue as my studies and my community engagement continue.

My capstone experience didn't stop with getting a grade in the class. From where I stand at this moment, I see the opportunities of further engagement with Portland Public Schools' immersion program, which offers immersion education in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish, in addition to Russian. As PSU has majors in each of these languages, I intend to pursue the facilitation of further partnerships between PSU

language undergraduate students and Portland Public Schools. I'm not exactly sure where that facilitation will lead, but I'm prepared to "follow it anywhere."

We Have What We Need: Kimberly Lane & The Confederated Tribes of Siletz, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the communities of people experiencing homelessness in West Salem, Oregon

I never knew I would become a social worker. I never knew I would become a domestic violence and sexual assault victim advocate. I never pictured myself standing in front of groups of people armed with PowerPoints full of statistics and my own powerful perspectives.

I started this journey with big ideas and feelings about oppression. Over the years I have grown closer to my own identification as a Siletz tribal member and that really ignited my desire to be an agent of social justice education. I originally expected to volunteer with a Portland-based organization like Dignity Village, a self-determined community of persons experiencing homelessness. But then my partner Alex and I moved to West Salem, a suburb in northwest Salem, Oregon, and immediately began experiencing implicit segregation via explicit classism, racism, and ableism. As we settled into our new community, we witnessed several instances of social injustice, identified the effects of gentrification, and encountered xenophobia.

I brought those experiences with me into my capstone, where I chose to focus on tribal communities, communities of people experiencing homelessness and displacement, and communities experiencing gentrification and the resulting forms of oppression through the displacement and segregation caused by gentrification. The organizations I began my work with were my own tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz; the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; and the community residents and people experiencing homelessness residing in West Salem.

I started out meaning only to volunteer at these organizations. By the end of the capstone, my relationship to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz had changed from volunteer to contracted employee. My internship at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde resulted in an expansion in the projects and issues I addressed, including the prevention of domestic and sexual violence and the support of Two Spirit persons. And my endeavor to start a community garden in West Salem along the Willamette River at Wallace Marine Park resulted in developing not only a garden, but also a food pantry and community board within my own apartment complex to gain support and build alliances in my continued effort to provide people with access to healthy food. Through the remainder of this reflection, I will focus on the food pantry, but information about my other projects is accessible through our course website (http://ecapdx.weebly.com/community-gardens-and-food-shares-domestic-violence-and-sexual-assault-prevention-program-two-spirit-support-group.html).

Alex and I have been those people who could not afford real food at certain points in our lives. At the time, we felt ostracized by community gardens in our area because they were religiously affiliated and we were not. We felt like we shouldn't have to exchange our identities as non-spiritual people in order to obtain access to a community-based resource. Also, it felt like charity to have to ask to join a garden rather than being invited. We believed that many of the people in West Salem also felt this way, and it turns out we were right.

Alex and I have no money. But we had lots of seeds and a bunch of corkboards lying around. So we put up a community message board and a sign jotted sloppily on white copy paper in permanent marker that read "Food Pantry: Take and Leave Food." We left some canned and boxed foods we had lying around in a storage bin. It didn't look like much, but it was all we had. But within an hour there were about fifty pounds of donated food overflowing the storage bin. Within another hour most of the food was gone, along with our bins. (Lesson learned: Make a sign about the bins *not* being up for grabs!)

As I reflect on the meaning this course has had for me, I realize that what really drew me to it in the first place was the aspect of self-determination. I have always felt like volunteering was a great cause, but that doing it for short stints and letting others do the heavy work of identifying problems, problem-solving, and instigating change wasn't true community action. Taking on an injustice can feel intimidating and make working toward effective change seem impossible. This class allows students to try this out on their own while having grounded weekly support. Hearing other people discuss their projects and causes was inspiring. I think we can often feel very alone in our causes and being a part of a group really combated those feelings.

This experience allowed me to initiate several agendas within my own communities and to push for expansion within organizations I was already affiliated with. In this work, I was inspired to address not one but several issues in communities where members of target identities—indigenous, economically disadvantaged, Two Spirit—encounter oppression, identify the source of the structural inequality, and formulate a plan to enact change and incite awareness around these issues. Taking on a task of this magnitude was scary for me, as it meant having to be self-disciplined in my time management, trust in my education and intellect, and interact with professionals as their equal.

At the end of our course we were asked what metaphor comes to mind in relation to being an agent of change. I couldn't think of an inspiring or creative metaphor. I couldn't really think of a metaphor at all. What I *did* think of is what it feels like to be a genuine and true citizen. At times I felt like the Queen of Red Tape, and other times I felt like a workhorse. Mostly, though, I felt things changing. My outlook on life was changing. My partner and I were becoming just that—true partners—in every sense of the word. Other people were starting to listen, share, and reach out, and we practiced listening, sharing, and reaching out, too.

Having gone through this capstone and having the chance to initiate projects as I went along gave me a real sense of what it means not only to be an agent of change, but to be someone who works from their own moral center to effect that change. It is hard to move on from this class. A grouch by nature, I will genuinely miss what came to feel like a center of mutual support for so many good causes, so many examples of effecting positive change in our world.

The Leaders We Need Are Already Here: Melinda Roberts and the Portland State University Student Alliance for Ending Rape

A leader is just a fancy title for someone who isn't satisfied with the status quo and refuses to be defined by it.

In a way we're all trying to change "what is" to what we think "should be." Who am I to change society? I believe Desmond Tutu put it best when he said, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor" (Brown 1984, 19). To me, choosing not to act is tacit approval of society's inequities. Through the Effective Change Agent capstone, I expanded my role as a leader on campus to further develop the skills I need to be an effective health educator, community organizer, and ongoing agent of change, particularly around issues related to sexual violence.

A cisgender biracial woman of Native American heritage, I grew up poor and spent time in foster care. I am a first-generation college student who independently took on the decision—as well as the debt—to pursue my education. As a feminist, I am committed to asking different questions in the work to end sexual assault: that is, how can we stop perpetrators from victimizing others, rather than blaming the victim and assuming it's a victim's job not to be assaulted.

For my capstone project, with the help of my community organization and pulling from my education as a health promoter and my role as a senator within student government, I developed a campus sexual assault prevention toolkit for student advocates and campus leaders. This toolkit reflects my experience as a student organizer to highlight specific issues surrounding prevention efforts and the need for policy reform. In the course of doing this work, I had countless conversations with individuals from all walks of life, and I met hundreds of survivors who told me about their experiences and the barriers they had faced as survivors, allowing themselves to be vulnerable in the hopes of preventing sexual violence from happening to someone else. Hundreds participated in our campus events, signing cards and petitions, offering words of support, pushing for cultural competency training around sexual assault services, and participating in the review of PSU's sexual assault policy and the drafting of new recommendations.

The sense of common cause I experienced within our class meetings led to incalculable benefits to my sense of well-being. It begins with a committed instructor who takes genuine interest in students' individual projects, someone who can encourage people to participate in conversations and can teach how to facilitate those

conversations in the field. Students need a sense of ownership, but they also need to feel the support of an instructor who is actively involved. The feedback, evaluation, and mentorship professors impart are extraordinarily beneficial; to be effective change agents, we need instructors who can help us process a diversity of topics and perspectives and develop the capacity to act.

Ground rules are critical. If the class doesn't have them, it's impossible for individuals to hold each other accountable, and that makes it harder to remain interested and invested. In every possible way it is important to maintain an atmosphere of learning while not tolerating hate. Respect, understanding, and forgiveness go a long way to creating an atmosphere where we can explore concepts openly, without fear of reprisal, while also challenging oppressive views.

In hindsight, I realize that in a lot of ways I was already a leader long before I thought of myself as one. I had started out my college career as a seemingly ordinary student who refused to accept the dominant culture's support for domination and sexual violence. As I became more aware of the dynamics of interpersonal violence, I became more passionate about protecting my rights and the rights of those around me. We are all part of the human community, and, while injustice threatens us all, justice benefits just as many.

As a result of working on this project, I learned about my capacity to empower myself and deepened my sense of self-determination. It's easy to feel like one in an ocean of many and to allow that thought to dissuade us from attempting to change; in working on this project, however, I've seen actual success and that has positively affected my self-esteem. I gotten really good feedback from friends I developed along the way and felt supported by, as I supported the issue and them in return.

At the same time, within the community, I've developed real connections with survivors, public officials, teachers, administrators, other student activists, and community organizations—a truly diverse set of stakeholders and individuals. These connections will benefit me, but, equally importantly, these connections make up a network that will continue to build and strengthen a community-based response to sexual violence, with or without me.

Conclusion
The Effective Change Agent capstone constitutes a place where grassroots change-making; personal, academic, and professional skill-building; and integrative learning meet. As our authors attest, the investment made by students in course settings where their actions have consequences—not only to each of them individually, but to their learning communities, as well as to the larger communities to which they belong and which they serve—yields powerful dividends in many ways. For individual students, dynamic learning occurs at many points of intersection: in the integration of past experience with present forms of engagement and with future aspirations; in the recognition of the many teachers and forms of instruction offered by both the

community and the academy; and in the encounter between one's own desire to make positive change and the recognition of the leadership skills that have been waiting to be put to use all along. For learning communities, courses like this serve as containers for both action and reflection, and as real-time examples of how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. For the communities lived in and served by our students, the Effective Change Agent course centers a vibrant experiment in "walking out and walking on" that makes real differences in our individual and communal lives.

References

Brown, Robert. 1984. *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes.* Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press.

Bruner, Jerome. 1996. *The Culture of Education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cullen, Roxanne, Michael Harris, and Reinhold R. Hill. 2012. *The Learner-Centered Curriculum: Design and Implementation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Petzold, Heather. 2015. "About the Effective Change Agent Capstone." Portland State University. Accessed September 16. http://ecapdx.weebly.com/about.html.

Schön, Donald. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner.* London: Temple Smith.

Scott, David. 2008. *Critical Essays on Major Curriculum Theorists.* London: Routledge.

Wheatley, Margaret, and Deborah Frieze. 2011. *Walk Out Walk On: A Learning Journey into Communities Daring to Live the Future Now.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Yeh, Teresa Ling. 2010. "Service-Learning and Persistence of Low-Income, First-Generation College Students: An Exploratory Study." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 16 (2): 50-65

Author Information

Vicki L. Reitenauer serves on the faculties of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department and the University Studies program at Portland State University, specializing in developing and teaching both discipline-specific and general education courses, including community-based learning experiences; building and sustaining community partnerships; facilitating relational faculty support processes; and co-creating faculty-led assessment practices. She has co-authored numerous works on these topics including *Learning through Serving: A Student Guidebook for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement across Academic Disciplines and Cultural Communities* (Stylus, second edition, 2013).

Tetiana Korzun grew up in Cherkasy, Ukraine, and graduated from Cherkasy Lyceum of Humanities and Law. At Portland State University, Tetiana double majors in biology and Russian language with a chemistry minor and serves on the faculty of the department of World Languages and Literature as a peer-to-peer volunteer tutor. She also volunteers at PeaceHealth Hospital Emergency Department, serves as a research and academic volunteer at Oregon Health and Science University in the Northwest Clinic of Voice and Swallowing, studies the cognitive neuroscience of second language acquisition and bilingualism, and builds relationships and working connections within the Slavic community.

Kimberly Lane now works as a domestic and sexual violence advocate for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. She and her fiancé Alex continue to keep in contact with the West Salem Apartments complex.

Melinda Joy Roberts is originally from the southern Oregon coast. She graduated from Portland State University in 2015 with degrees in health science and community health education in the College of Urban & Public Affairs' School of Community Health. As an engaged student on campus, she held two leadership positions: the first as the administrative liaison for the PSU Student Alliance for Ending Rape, and the second as a senator with Associated Students of Portland State University.

Vicki L. Reitenauer
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: vicr@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-5847
Fax: 503-725-5805

Online Community-Based Learning as the Practice of Freedom: The Online Capstone Experience at Portland State University

Deborah Smith Arthur and Zapoura Newton-Calvert

Abstract

Given the design of Portland State University's (PSU) undergraduate curriculum culminating in a capstone experience, the dramatic growth in online courses and online enrollments required a re-thinking of the capstone model to ensure all students could participate in this effective learning model and have a powerful learning experience. In recent years, a number of capstone courses have been developed that are offered fully online. This article examines PSU's development of and institutional support for community-based learning (CBL) capstone courses in a fully online format. Emerging best practices and lessons learned may be useful for other institutions seeking to integrate experiential elements into online learning at any level, including capstones.

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* [New York: Bloomsbury, 2000], 34)

In recent years, in response to the growing demands of students and the desire of the university to design more online certificate, minor, and degree pathways for PSU students, a number of capstone courses have been developed and offered in a fully online format. As part of this online course development process, program staff, administrators, and instructors have been exploring ways of translating what we have done for so many years in our rich practice of offering on-site community-based learning (CBL) courses to the online classroom without losing the powerful community partnerships, deep reflective opportunities for students, and social justice framework for teaching and learning. Indeed, this work revealed that online CBL is positioned well to provide a platform for education "as the practice of freedom" as described by Freire above. PSU faculty worked to discover and develop online CBL designs that support transformative learning experiences and address the potential barriers to student access and student learning and engagement presented by capstone courses in an online format. Clearly, online community-based learning has both challenges and rewards. This article examines the literature in this fairly new and

developing field, and looks closely at PSU's trajectory. Potential areas for continued growth and improvement of online CBL are also identified.

Literature Review

As Portland State University's capstone program team began to realize how the institution's strategic push toward increased online curricular delivery would potentially impact or alter a key pillar of our four-year core curriculum for students, we looked to the field for research regarding online community-based learning as an emerging practice. Also referred to in the literature as service-learning, PSU more frequently uses the term community-based learning (CBL). What we found was a small but important body of literature in this area starting in the early 2000s and extending to the present. Our research questions were as follows:

- What best practices and challenges are documented in this emerging field?
- Which of these models can best inform, support, and help us further develop our current practices?
- What gaps are there in the literature that we may be able to address based on our own experience in the capstone program?

The themes that emerged were threefold:

1. The potential of online CBL to benefit a disrupted university that is grappling with digital learning in general;
2. Limitations and challenges both on the administrative and faculty levels and in the online classroom itself;
3. Promising practices and models (both administrative and instructional).

Because CBL online is such a new practice (or newly documented practice) and because the number of institutions and instructors attempting such a practice is small, we were able to conduct thorough research and were in the unique position of being able also to study current practice while simultaneously developing our own practices side-by-side.

The Position and Role of CBL in Our Current Disrupted University Setting

The intersection between CBL and "e-learning" can be articulated as an opportunity to expand the definition of "classroom" and disrupt traditional models of teaching and learning. Carver and her co-authors (2007), in their article "Toward a Model of Experiential E-Learning," speak to the potential of community-based learning to enrich and even challenge traditional modes of online instruction by asking students to connect to real-world locations and current issues in a way that is not insulated. While traditional models of online instruction often privilege the online mode as a place for publication or a place to experiment with communication, community-based or experiential opportunities may give online students an anchor as they experiment with having more agency (expected in most online courses) and taking more initiative over

their own learning experience. Indeed, "successful learners are active, goal-directed, self-regulating, and assume personal responsibility for contributing to their own learning" (Zlotkowski and Duffy 2010). Carver and associates outline a taxonomy of experiential e-learning that starts with "content sharing" and ends with "direct experience/action learning" (1997). While the authors describe the challenging nature of bringing these complex pieces together in the online classroom, they reflect that building the learning community is a key element in overall learner and class success and see experiential learning as a solution to the sometimes alienating or disconnected placement of the learner in an online learning environment that requires student agency without helping the learners connect to fellow students or to the outside world.

Hamerlinch and Houle, in a 2012 presentation for the Minnesota Campus Compact, echo some of these themes framing two different modes of online experience: passive/apathetic (students as media consumers) or active/engaged (students as media participants and creators). They also point to attitudes of instructors about online instruction, citing a 2010 statistic from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article "Faculty Views about Online Learning": 82.1% of faculty members (from sixty-nine colleges/universities, based on 10,720 faculty member interviews) view online learning as inferior to face-to-face learning. This attitude alone frames the way our institutions may view online learning even in the face of a push to digitize our curriculum and to invite more students to attend our schools and even earn their degrees via distance education. Much like the Carver and others (2007) piece, these authors emphasize a necessary social presence as important to successful engagement of students online; unlike the Carver piece, these authors emphasize the social presence of the online instructor in their role as facilitator. With this focus on the faculty role, Hamerlinch and Houle also point to the need for traditional community-based learning or service-learning practitioners to re-envision what "service" can and should mean in an online space.

Echoing this theme, Waldner, McGorry, and Widener (2012) describe online learning as a "facilitator rather than a barrier to service-learning" and state that "e-service-learning" holds the potential to transform both service-learning and online learning by freeing service-learning from geographical constraints and by equipping online learning with a tool to promote engagement (123). Waldner and her co-authors describe an emerging e-service-learning typology with a spectrum of service learning, from traditional on-site service all the way to what they term "extreme e-service-learning," which takes place entirely online. The importance of these pathways lies in the flexibility both for instructors and students of this potential teaching and learning model.

In *Community Engagement 2.0? Dialogues on the Future of the Civic in the Disrupted University*, Crabill and Butin (2014) dig deeply into the tension and the possibility between the digital and the civic. This book is framed by the overarching question of the role of community-based and placed-based learning in higher education, which is becoming increasingly less place-based itself and more virtual. Other questions raised include the issue of the heavy labor and deep relationships of CBL, in contrast to an online format that can trend toward the mechanical/impersonal. The question also arises: How does CBL transform online classrooms for the better or the worse? Can

the disruption of technology in higher education serve as an opportunity to rethink civic engagement and the way we use it in our pedagogy? CBL may be the way to firmly ground online learning.

Limitations and Challenges

Because this body of research and writing on online CBL is still young, there is a great sense of optimism and hope described in the literature that often details new courses running online and using CBL as a pedagogical framework. The extant literature also alludes to the challenges and limitations that face instructors, students, and institutions in this work. Capstone courses are a required course for PSU undergraduates, so both institutional and instructor motivation exists to undertake the heavy redesign and critical thinking processes required to create an effective online CBL course. In institutions where CBL is not required, faculty may be more hesitant to take on the demands necessitated by this process.

These challenges can inform us in our own work and also point to future research that is needed on this emerging teaching and learning pedagogy. Major challenges arise around the difficulty of moving beyond a simple translation of the face-to-face course into an online offering, the workload/time commitments of online students, the community partnership, geographical limitations, and technology training for all involved parties. Again, since the research is still young, sample sizes and longevity of studies are still small or limited.

Strait and Sauer (2004) offer some of the earliest research on models of e-service-learning, with special focus on a model where students each have a different community partner. Here, the challenge is managing each community partnership, verifying volunteer work, and supporting each volunteer in his or her unique work. Another challenge in e-service-learning, as described by Strait and Sauer, is the self-selected student population in online classes and their personal work and family loads. They estimate that most of their online students work a forty-hour work week. Similarly, Waldner and others (2011) describe the challenge of online students who carry a heavy workload outside of the classroom and the often accelerated pace of online courses.

Carver and co-authors (2007) emphasize the challenge of breaking out of the traditional classroom course design, mindset, and teaching methods in order to liberate our thinking in online learning spaces for the best outcomes. They find this traditional mindset to be one of the most challenging obstacles. They point to the need for more instruction and facilitation around "agency, belonging, and competence" as key to facing and meeting these challenges.

Waldner, McGorry, and Widener (2010) note small sample size in online CBL (as is the case in much of the early research) and lack of comparison in outcomes between face-to-face offerings and their online counterparts. Training for all involved parties (instructor, community partner, student) is recommended; again, compressed term

length and the increasingly busy schedules of students may prevent full participation in these efforts. Technology barriers themselves, such as lack of adequate access to technology at home and lack of training in video/chat, can prevent full meeting of learning outcomes.

Promising Practices and Models

Gaytan and McEwen (2007) discuss effective models for assessment, encouraging multiple examples and examining the intersection between effective assessment and overall effective online teaching in a community-based course. Using faculty and student surveys, the researchers conclude that (a) training for instructors specifically in online teaching techniques is a benefit to any online CBL course; (b) assessment is most meaningful when it comes in different modes (synchronous, asynchronous, peer, self, and instructor); and (c) assessment in online courses should be very timely, with a quick turnaround, so that students may draw the most meaning out of feedback. The authors recommend additional research into innovative uses of technology for assessment and increased student learning as part of the feedback loop.

In "Teaching and Learning Social Justice through Online Service-Learning Courses," a touchstone article by Guthrie and McCracken (2010), the authors delve into the question of how to create a space to connect and collaborate on the deep level needed for a transformative learning experience online. They recommend on-site service, rather than virtual, and encourage instructors to make technology a focus of discussion in terms of its possible role in reflection, connection, and social justice work. Malvey, Hamby, and Fottler (2006) found that the use of synchronous learning opportunities (video streaming and text-based chat rooms) benefited the learning community as a whole and deepened learning outcomes. And Pearce (2009) adds an important piece to this puzzle with his study of non-geographically based CBL partnerships, focusing on using Appropedia (www.appropedia.org) as a virtual space to collaborate and meet deeper community needs while being geographically dispersed.

The role of the community partner in transformative online CBL is also examined in the literature. Waldner and her co-authors (2011) present a case study in their article "Serving Up Justice: Fusing Service Learning and Social Equity in the Public Administration Classroom," describing a partnership with a local government agency as transformative to the way students engaged with and understood the course content through a social justice and cultural competency lens. A key recommendation is joint development of the content and the syllabus with the community partner and engaging the community partner in recorded or real-time learning activities/discussions. Likewise, Kane and Lee (2014) encourage development of a close working relationship and good communication between the instructor and community partner, finding digital means of documentation of the work (video/photo). They use a digital storybook as the primary means for both reflection and documentation/verification of the actual community work.

Historical Framework of Online Capstones and Institutional Support for Online CBL at PSU

In the late 1990s, PSU established the Extended Campus Center, located in Salem, Oregon, which offered online options for students to complete courses and degrees in the social sciences and liberal arts. Over the years, this center was the primary administrative home for online course offerings. In 2013, because of what Kaur (2013) described as "a consistent migration of students to online classes," this center was officially closed in favor of focusing on university-wide support for online learning.

A limited number of capstone courses have been utilizing technology for some time now. In the mid-2000s, courses began to move to a hybrid format, and a few additional courses began to be offered fully online. The earliest online capstone offerings were grant writing or media-based capstones, with the community-based element of the course happening online, as opposed to on-site. Faculty with an interest in moving to an online format or creating a new course online developed these courses without much formal institutional support. Technologies utilized at that time tended to be restricted to the learning platforms adopted by the university, starting with WebCT, then Blackboard, and currently Desire to Learn (D2L). Additionally, some instructors began to use YouTube as a delivery platform. These online capstone course offerings were few, and the instructors designing and instructing them were in many ways "flying solo." Capstone faculty involved in teaching hybrid or online courses did, in fact, take advantage of some of the earliest online professional support opportunities offered by the university, including workshops supporting hybrid teaching and learning. However, even with the professional support that was available, so little was known then about teaching and learning CBL online that in many ways these early pioneers were breaking into new territory.

In June 2013, the Office of Academic Innovation (OAI) was created at PSU. Prior to that time, technology support as well as teaching and learning support was available for faculty, but these services were provided by three separate and distinct offices: the Office of Information Technology (OIT), the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE), and the Center for Online Learning (COL). Support for faculty teaching CBL online was available, but scattered. Faculty members were often left to search out and familiarize themselves with new technologies on their own, reaching out to OIT for technical support as needed and/or arranging separate consultation meetings with CAE or COL staff.

Following an extensive consultation process with faculty and staff across the institution, the new, comprehensive Office of Academic Innovation was formed. Under the direction of the vice provost and OAI directors, OAI provides leadership and support for campus activities that explore and promote excellence in teaching and learning, innovative curricular technology use, and CBL. Many instructors who now teach online CBL courses found the merger of technology support with teaching and learning support into one office to be a very helpful development. OAI supports

campus initiatives that respond to changing curricular and educational delivery models; improve student success; and value the importance of teaching, learning, and assessment. In practice, this includes offering frequent workshops for faculty focusing on a variety of new technologies, CBL course syllabi development, creating accessible course videos, timing and logistics for online and hybrid courses, and screen casting, to name a few.

In addition to hosting these frequent drop-in workshops, from time to time OAI offers the opportunity to participate in more intensive work groups, in which a small group of instructors work closely together, with a facilitator, on specific skills that support successful online CBL courses. OAI instructional designers are available for one-on-one consultation as well, and many faculty have found it helpful to work with an online course designer in the development of and the maintenance of their online community-based capstones. OAI also boasts a robust faculty-in-residence program, through which a full-time faculty member is engaged with OAI in a part-time appointment, in order to focus on providing leadership on strategic initiatives that are a priority for the university. In the past several years, these roles have included Faculty-in-Residence for Engagement, collaborating with OAI to explore new modalities for online CBL, and Faculty-in-Residence for Learning Technology, collaborating with OAI staff to explore innovative technology tools for student success, among others. Finally, OAI recently created the position of Teaching, Learning, and Engagement Associate to develop, implement, and evaluate teaching, engagement, and CBL programming sponsored by OAI. This is a unique position that focuses on faculty support in both the implementation and assessment of CBL both in traditional and online settings. The development of OAI and all that it offers is a great benefit to the whole campus, and faculty teaching CBL online courses are especially excited about this new office and the tremendous support and innovation it provides.

Also in 2013, Portland State University launched its reTHINK PSU project, to "deliver an education that serves more students with better outcomes, while containing costs through curricular innovation, community engagement, and effective use of technology" (https://www.pdx.edu/oai/rethink-psu). This initiative funded projects that would enhance online learning and the innovative use of technology in advancing and supporting student success and graduation rates. University Studies (UNST), the four-year general education program at PSU and home of the Senior Capstone, was awarded a grant to create online general education pathways. Because of increased degree and minor pathways online, the capstone program anticipated increased need for online capstone offerings and asked instructors with strong course evaluations in on-site capstones to pilot online versions. From this initiative, in addition to positive outcomes at other levels of the University Studies program, six new online capstone courses were developed. Project facilitators worked closely with OAI from project inception to completion. Additionally, a point person for continued support of online pedagogy, an experienced capstone faculty member with extensive experience in teaching and learning online, is employed through University Studies.

While there is a good amount of institutional support for online CBL pedagogy available from the wider university, OAI, and University Studies, additional supports could make online capstone courses even stronger. Additional resources for technology for both faculty (including adjunct faculty) and students are recommended. Faculty would benefit from a university-wide adoption of enhanced technology tools, such as VoiceThread to complement D2L. (Currently VoiceThread licensure is offered to only a select few faculty). While a satisfactory "home base" for online courses, D2L does not allow for the deeper, face-to-face connection that other platforms can provide. The creation of a strong classroom community is enhanced with additional audio and visual options. Also, it takes a substantial amount of time to develop and revise online courses in order to keep current with the latest technological advances. Faculty would benefit from temporal and fiscal support to sustain this work. Later in the article we address the need for better technology access and supports for students. These supports could include practice courses in order to familiarize students with the technology; clear, across-the-board expectations for what online learning is and is not; and better access to the technology tools necessary to engage in a deep level with online learning. Online CBL would also benefit from an overall shift in institutional attitude about the validity of online learning. While reTHINK and the accompanying projects did a great deal to enhance positive attitudes about online learning, there are still segments of the PSU campus, and indeed, many higher education faculty nationally, that view online learning as somehow less rigorous than, and inferior to, face-to-face learning, for both faculty and students, which, indeed, is not the case (Hamerlinch and Houle 2012).

A Closer Look: Case Studies

Reporting Live: A Study Abroad Capstone

Reporting Live is an international capstone course that, via blog, connects Oregon middle school classrooms with study abroad students while they are overseas. Grounded in peace journalism and intercultural competence theory, this capstone consists of a pre-departure orientation, ten weeks of interactive blogging, and a final in-person celebration with the partner middle school classroom when the student returns from study abroad (or online if the student remains abroad).

As made clear on the course website, http://www.pdx.edu/capstone-reportinglive/:

> There are two program objectives. The first is to supplement middle grade social studies, language arts, and/or foreign language curriculum, and to support state learning standards with a fun and easy-to-use social media tool. The goal is to maximize experiential learning while minimizing outside teacher prep time.

> The other program objective is to enrich the overseas experience of the participating study abroad students. By framing these students as peace journalists and providing them a readership of young learners, the students are poised to approach their new context with sharpened senses and a critical mind. Observation, asking questions, suspending judgment, building

relationships, and seeking out voices that are missing from the dominant discourse are all attributes of peace journalism, the practice of which will enable the study abroad students (and middle school students back home) to meaningfully connect across cultural difference.

This online course was developed by a new instructor in 2011. The instructor had no online teaching experience but had a background in international conflict resolution, had studied online, had previously taught middle school students, and had lived and studied abroad. All of these lived experiences culminated in this course proposal to the capstone committee, which was accepted and supported.

In this capstone, which operates in partnership with the Office of International Affairs Education Abroad office at PSU, students must apply to participate. Requirements to enroll include studying or interning abroad at time of participation and having regular access to the Internet while abroad. Beyond that, the application process examines study abroad destinations and logistics, a survey of previous travel experience, and an examination of online communication skills. A statement of intent is also required, which gives the student an opportunity to discuss why they want to participate, how they plan to engage middle school students, what aspects of their host country they think will most interest middle school students, and how their major will inform their reporting. All of this information helps the instructor to include students that are well prepared for this international learning-through-serving experience.

In most cases, the instructor arranges partnerships between middle school teachers and the capstone students. There is an ever-evolving pool of participating classrooms, some of which have partnered with the program from the beginning and others trying it out for the first time. Originally, all partner teachers were within the Portland Public School district, but the program expanded outside the city, and even the state, with the realization that partnerships between students and their own former teachers were much more robust and interactive. For students who work with teachers that they themselves had in middle school, there is an added personalized and special experience, an extra sense of giving back.

Students in this online CBL capstone are required to attend one in-person meeting together prior to the start of the term. This is the pre-departure orientation. As part of this orientation, the instructor invites previous participants to share their stories and experiences with the incoming students. This one face-to-face meeting helps students begin to feel connected to one another in this experience, which supports a strong sense of community among students throughout the term. Additionally, prior to the start of the term, students are required to meet in person or virtually with the middle school teacher that they are paired with to discuss the upcoming term and the use of the blog in the middle school classroom. There are a great variety of classrooms that participate, so it is essential that capstone students learn and understand the unique needs and interests of their audience to enable them to successfully customize their blog. This pre-term meeting allows them to do that.

The CBL aspect of this course is almost entirely virtual. Each week of the ten-week term, students are required to make a blog post, sharing stories about their adventures abroad and highlighting various aspects of culture and geography. The instructor developed the assignments for the posts around state standards for middle school learning in order to make the posts most useful for the middle school teachers. Teachers engage their students with the posts in a variety of ways. Additionally, capstone students are required to read a minimum of two of their colleagues' blogs each week and respond to one another. This also contributes to a strong community feel among capstone students. In addition to their blog posts, capstone students are required to complete assigned readings and to reflect and respond in an online discussion forum utilizing the D2L platform. Finally, at the end of the term, and upon the capstone students' return home, there is a celebration with the partnering middle school classroom. These in-person gatherings provide valuable closure for both the classroom and the capstone student, allowing them to commemorate their learning experience together through cultural song, dance, food, and other activities. For those unable to return within the K-12 academic school year, students hold the celebration virtually, finding creative ways to make the experience special.

The Reporting Live capstone is a successful offering, attracting full enrollment each term with study abroad students who want to simultaneously complete their capstone requirement. A review of the capstone students' blogs (available on the course website) indicates that most capstone students find that the experience of framing their travel and study abroad in a way that is also informative and useful for middle school students and teachers enriched their own experience. Additionally, course assignments are consistently updated to align with changing state standards. From the instructor's perspective, the most challenging aspect of the course is managing the variety of community partnerships, which involve different teachers, schools, and districts. Indeed, research confirms the challenge of a multi-community partner model (Strait and Sauer 2004).

Mobilizing Hope Capstone: Engaged Spirituality

This online capstone course was developed in the summer of 2013, during the early stages of the reTHINK PSU project mentioned previously which encouraged and supported the development of increased online capstone offerings. After thorough review of the course proposal by the capstone committee, the course was accepted, with the recommendation to work closely with other faculty and instructional designers from OAI for assistance in developing the fully online course format. At the time that the course was developed, support for online CBL instruction was not yet established in a uniform manner, but was available ad hoc. The instructor worked individually with an instructional designer, as well as with the Faculty-in-Residence for Community-Based Online Learning in the OAI, to become familiar with a variety of teaching and learning online tools and to develop the online course structure.

Despite several years of teaching hybrid courses using the D2L format, this fully online capstone was a new experience for the instructor (who at one point in time would have described herself as a "technophobe"). Teaching fully online meant that

the instructor could not rely upon those once a week face-to-face sessions to build a relationship with students that she was familiar with in-person or through hybrid teaching. Additionally, while the instructor was acquainted with and had been using D2L for a number of years in hybrid courses, she felt that the ability to engage with students on a deep level and to support them in engaging and collaborating with one another, as is required for successful and transformative online community-based teaching and learning (Guthrie and McCracken 2010), would be limited by using only that tool. Identifying and becoming adept with other technology tools that would allow for deeper engagement and relationship building was an initial hurdle. Thankfully, other, more seasoned online faculty members were available for support and ideas. A series of work sessions one-on-one with the Faculty-in-Residence for Community-Based Online Learning was also extremely helpful in this regard.

The Mobilizing Hope capstone course asks students to examine and discuss their own spiritual traditions, beliefs, and wonderings, and use this set of traditions and beliefs as a springboard and a foundation for social justice activism on an issue of their choosing. Additionally, this course empowers students to become involved in social justice work in the community, addressing a wide variety of issues and areas, depending on their passions and interests. Students are required to develop their own partnerships and/or social justice projects and to work during the course of the term on these. As mentioned by Strait and Sauer (2004), managing multiple community partnerships can be challenging for faculty, but also has its rewards. The wide variety of CBL work allows students to examine varied content associated with that work and provides for a rich learning environment. As recommended by Guthrie and McCracken (2010), the CBL is on-site in the community rather than virtual in this course.

A great deal of work happens prior to the start of the term beyond typical course preparation. The instructor must assist with the development of, and approve, all CBL partnerships and projects. This requires that the instructor be in communication with students well before the start of the term (in fact, shortly after students' registration in the course) to work with students in developing appropriate projects for the upcoming term, so that their CBL can begin at the start of the term. Additionally, students must review and sign an Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability form for PSU as well as a Partnership Agreement, the latter of which is also signed by the faculty member and a representative of the community partner, so all expectations and requirements are clearly delineated.

Two main technology tools for teaching and learning online are utilized in this course: D2L and VoiceThread. The combination of these tools seems to work well together, allowing for a basic course shell, or "home base," with announcements, assignments, and similar items housed on D2L, and a deeper engagement with one another as a class community and with course material and content through VoiceThread. Clear guidelines and structure are especially important in an online classroom space so that students feel connected and understand the flow of the course (Palloff and Pratt 2007), and the Mobilizing Hope capstone is set up with expectations that are the same each week. Students are expected to complete roughly twenty hours of CBL over the course

of the term. Each week, using VoiceThread (which allows for audio and video posting, along with a text option), students are required to report to the class community an update about their CBL for that week. In addition to their own report, students are required to reply to the postings of two colleagues, at a minimum, in a meaningful way: to support them, brainstorm an issue, congratulate them, ask a question, make a connection, or whatever makes sense in the context of that week's blogs.

VoiceThread is also used for the weekly discussion regarding the assigned readings. These discussions are asynchronous, and as previously mentioned, text, audio, and video responses are permitted, with most students utilizing the audio and video options. Each week, as with the CBL reports, students are asked to respond by making an original post in response to the question(s) posed by the instructor, and then also to reply to a minimum of two colleagues in a meaningful way, referring to the readings in the discussion.

Finally, there is the group work aspect of the course. In small groups based upon the nature of their CBL projects, students find and post articles, videos, discussion questions, and other material, allowing them to delve deeper into the content of their particular social justice issue. These discussions take place on D2L. These smaller group discussions are surprisingly rich and diverse and are a favorite aspect of the course, based on student evaluations.

The level of engagement of students in this online capstone has been impressive. While a few students each term inevitably fall into the "passive/apathetic" category (Hamerlinch and Houle 2012), the majority of students seem to appreciate the use of VoiceThread and engage quite well, as if they were in a classroom discussion. The only difference is that the discussion takes place over the period of a week, asynchronously, and from different places, free from geographical constraints, instead of over an hour in a classroom.

From the faculty perspective, one aspect of this course that should be highlighted and celebrated is the fact that students are able to participate in so many different CBL projects in a variety of geographical areas, adding a rich dimension to the course discussions and student learning. For example, a student developed a partnership with an equine therapy group, developing a project whereby she brought horses into a youth correctional facility in Oregon to provide equine therapy for incarcerated young men. Another example involves a student who partnered with Stand Up 4 Kids in Houston, Texas, for his CBL, working to end the cycle of youth homelessness. He had recently moved to Texas and wanted to finish his PSU degree, and this online capstone was a perfect fit for him. Another student also had recently moved away from Portland and needed to complete his capstone; he worked for an after-school mentoring program in California to engage in his community-based work. Several students have completed the course from abroad, conducting CBL in another country. These diverse CBL opportunities from various geographical areas could only happen in an online CBL course, and they add richness to the course and to the discussion that is not found in a traditional CBL classroom.

This course could continue to be improved by developing more interaction and course involvement with each of the community partners. Currently, there is interaction between the community partners and the instructor before the start of the term, at the set-up phase, and again at the close of the term, at the review-of-the-term stage, but an ongoing relationship throughout the term and participation in the course activities and dialogue, in general, is lacking and could add a rich element to the teaching and learning (Kane and Lee 2014). Additionally, synchronous learning opportunities have not yet been incorporated into this course, which according to Malvey, Hamby, and Fottler (2006) could serve to deepen the learning outcomes.

Social Justice in K-12 Education:
Addressing Opportunity Gaps and Advocating for Change

The Social Justice in K-12 Education capstone was transformed from a traditional face-to-face offering to a fully online model in winter term 2014. This course focuses on public conversations, policy, and practices surrounding the concept of "opportunity gaps" for students in the Portland metropolitan area. In this capstone, we frame our exploration by looking at four wealth/opportunity gaps (international, racial, economic, and systemic) as students work in community education sites with the goal of ultimately becoming more deeply engaged in local and national communities through their social change work. The focus is on current local and national education issues, educational equity in public education, and hands-on and virtual tools for transformative social action. Capstone students work either on-site, engaging directly with youth (recommended), or virtually, with an education advocacy organization (under special circumstances).

The instructor, who has a longstanding partnership with several local organizations, arranges on-site CBL placements for students in the Portland area. Remote students completing on-site CBL, as well as students needing virtual online placements, are supported through various volunteer guides and search engines to find their own placement with a local education nonprofit or school, or with an education advocacy organization. Students are given email and phone scripts in addition to information on other protocols for contact and modes of introduction/communication to assist them in connecting with potential community partners. Additionally, the course is currently exploring a virtual relationship with the writing center at Roosevelt High School in north Portland. In all cases, on-site and virtual, a CBL agreement letter is signed and submitted to the instructor from the student and community partner. A mid-term email check-in and a final feedback form submitted by the community partner directly to the instructor are also required to verify and evaluate the CBL work.

The students who register for this course are approximately 75 percent local and 25 percent outside of the Portland metro area. Because issues of educational equity are fairly consistent across states in the United States, it is often fairly easy to identify community partners in any state where a student may reside or any city outside of the Portland metro region. Thus, on-site volunteering is the norm for students outside of the local area. In general, two or three students each term choose a virtual option.

Being able to incorporate students from multiple geographical areas and to embrace students who may have to volunteer via a virtual option (due to work, home, or other factors) encourages equity in access to this social justice topic and allows us to have a diverse student population (parent students, working students, and others) participating in a dynamic way.

As with the Mobilizing Hope capstone, this online capstone course was developed through the reTHINK project's "pathways" initiative. With over ten years of online teaching experience, the instructor was a strong candidate to bridge the gap between CBL and online learning and was able not only to develop this course but also to serve as a faculty-in-residence for OAI, supporting other faculty during their online course development processes. While the Social Justice in K-12 Education capstone was already an approved face-to-face offering, moving it online did require that a revised proposal be submitted to the capstone committee. Instructors proposing to move a traditionally face-to-face capstone online are asked to detail changes to community partnerships, how reflection/group work will be incorporated online, and in what ways students will be provided ample spaces to discuss and engage with each other in the learning community. The capstone committee offers feedback and recommendations and is particularly careful in the approval process for online courses, as the program has been very strategic in creating its online offerings to the same standard of engagement as hybrid or face-to-face offerings. After feedback and approval from the capstone committee, the instructor worked with instructional designers at OAI to create course modules and to discuss the "look" of the course. Due to years of online experience, pedagogy training, and teaching, the instructor was able to design the course with little outside technical support. This background in teaching with technology has been invaluable to the success of the course and the ease of transition. Even with a strong background and years of experience in teaching with technology, the instructor found the issues of making contact and setting up community partnerships early (before the term's start date), creating multiple volunteer pathways/ community partnerships, and making space for a highly engaged discussion forum to be the most challenging aspects of the design process.

Because PSU runs on a quarter system, it is a challenge to establish community partners with geographically dispersed students quickly. It is important to communicate with students both about their community work and about the virtual nature of the class before the term begins. This instructor created a virtual "toolkit" for students that resides on her blog, "PDX Education Action Network" (www.pdxean. wordpress.com). The toolkit is password protected, and students are given access via a "welcome" email distributed to them upon registration for the class. Inside the toolkit, students find information about the instructor, the history of the class, the context for community partnerships, the CBL agreement form, and a test forum for VoiceThread, the primary discussion tool in the course. Students are also asked to contact the instructor prior to the start of the term, and a brief phone conversation orients them to the details of the course. The combination of the toolkit and early phone and email conversations to set up the partnerships and to discuss the way the course works gives students a running start to the course.

In terms of creating spaces for the deep reflection and discussion that is the heart of this kind of learning, the instructor uses a formula of optional synchronous discussion sessions three times each term in Google Hangouts and weekly asynchronous discussions using VoiceThread as the forum. The three synchronous sessions include the optional course orientation in the first week of the course, a community volunteer work check-in in the fourth week, and a CBL check-in and discussion of privilege in the seventh week. PSU uses Google as its email platform, so each student in the course has a Gmail account and easy access to Google Hangouts. All students are invited to participate in an evening discussion from 8:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. This ensures that most students are home from work and school and that parenting students have settled their children for the night. In the orientation session, the discussion covers the course syllabus, course components, tips for success, and ample time for introductions and a question-and-answer session. In the check-ins during weeks four and seven, there is a simple agenda, and the conversation evolves, naturally, around questions arising from the CBL work, feedback, the need for advice/troubleshooting, and so on. In general, two-thirds of the class participates in each Google Hangout. An alternative asynchronous VoiceThread forum for students who are unable to participate is also provided.

The weekly discussion forums take place using VoiceThread. This tool allows students to post their thoughts not only in text form but also, and primarily, in video or audio form. The instructor facilitates the discussions in the first and second weeks of the course to model best practices. In the second week of the term, the class participates in a meta-discussion about what VoiceThread does best, as well as its limitations, and authors guidelines for discussions through this course. These guidelines are then used to assess engagement in the weekly conversations throughout the term. By the third week of the term, students begin to co-facilitate discussion by submitting their own prompts and serving as facilitators throughout the week, checking in each day to make connections, ask questions, bring in resources, and so on. Because discussions are student-led, there is a higher level of engagement both from facilitators and participants. Participating students want to support their peers in their efforts and feel more motivated by discussion that is arising from their fellow students. Each facilitator submits a self-evaluation of engagement after their week of facilitation; the student discusses their strengths and areas for growth, in addition to how to be a strong participant in discussions led by their fellow students going forward.

Group work, another required element of all capstone courses, takes place in the form of the Participating in Community (PIC) team project. While the primary CBL placements are arranged by the instructor, the PIC is an opportunity for students to push themselves to grow and to act with Mitchell's (2008) three critical service-learning goals in mind: building authentic relationships, redistributing power, and working from a social change perspective. These PIC team projects can take very different end-product forms. All must include 1) a positive direct or indirect impact on kids/families to support educational equity in some way; 2) hands-on (face to face or virtual) engagement of people outside of the PSU classroom; and 3) analysis of the process, the end result, and future possibilities for continued work/engagement. At the beginning of the term, students self-select into one of three umbrella themes

addressing school inequities. Team composition is determined based on student schedules and availability. Teams define their own project work, goals, and actions; past teams have initiated work with local nonprofits, libraries, schools, and grassroots organizations to take action on issues related to educational equity that are important to the team. The end product of the PIC is a video story showcased within a blog post that is shared publicly on the course blog.

Common Themes

As indicated by these case studies, online capstone faculty agree upon some essential common elements and practices in their work.

1. Faculty should expect to spend substantial preparation time prior to the start of the term, even more so than for a face-to-face course. Early communication with community partners and students, distributing and gathering all the necessary paperwork, and familiarity with the best use of various technology platforms are all elements to be handled before the term begins.
2. Online CBL students need access to technology tools and platforms that allow for deep engagement with each other, with the course material, and with the instructor. Visual and audio contact develop stronger online learning communities.
3. Online CBL students need easy and frequent access to personal communication with faculty. Indeed, online capstone faculty often comment that they are more frequently and deeply engaged with and connected to their online capstone students than they are with students in an in-person classroom setting. A great deal of one-on-one communication takes place, both electronically and telephonically, and, at times, face-to-face. Undoubtedly this requires a great amount of time and availability from the instructor throughout the term, but the rewards of this connection are great.

Assessment of Online Capstones: The Student Experience

Assessment of online capstone courses currently involves three aspects, including both formative and summative processes. As addressed in the article focused on faculty support, the formative assessment used is the small group instructional diagnostic, or SGID (see "Cultivating Community: Faculty Support for Teaching and Learning" in this issue). In an online setting, these feedback sessions happen using two different methods: (1) asynchronous group sharing by students in a VoiceThread forum or (2) a link to a student survey, whereby the link is provided to students, and the faculty member overseeing the SGID summarizes the feedback. Some faculty members provide incentives for a certain percentage of students to complete the surveys. Results are shared in an anonymous and general way with the faculty member, in order to assist them in strengthening the course and improving teaching and learning, as well as with the director of the capstone program and the director of University Studies. Instructors are encouraged to close the feedback loop by creating a space to debrief and discuss the feedback in order to strengthen the course through the end of the term.

Additionally, in terms of summative assessment, students complete end-of-term evaluations, again in an online survey format. Results are shared with the faculty member, the directors of both the capstone program and University Studies, as well as with the assessment coordinator for University Studies. The data are also considered when making decisions about future offerings of the course. Finally, instructors are asked to participate in work sample assessments, typically every other year, as described in the above-mentioned article.

Data collected from 223 students who were enrolled in and completed online capstone courses during 2013-2014, indicates that PSU is doing well in offering compelling and transformational online CBL courses and that there is also room for continued growth. With regard to the effective use of technology, over 63 percent of students agree that instructors use technology effectively to engage students. However, roughly 29 percent of students were at best neutral about the instructor's effective use of technology to engage students, with the highest portion of those (15.84%) strongly disagreeing that technology was used effectively to engage students. Clearly, there is additional work to do in training and supporting online CBL faculty to use technology in more engaging ways in their courses.

Likewise, a large percentage (over 65 percent) of students found their instructor to be easily accessible by phone, email, or through other means, while over 26 percent reported a neutral, or worse, experience in the accessibility of their instructor. If a quarter of students felt that they enjoyed less than adequate access to their instructor, this can certainly be improved upon.

In terms of group work, over 70 percent of students reported neutral or better in terms of their experience working in groups. The highest percentage of students did feel that the group work in the online capstones helps them to feel connected to their classmates. However, roughly 20 percent had a negative experience with online group work. A common theme was that "group work is easier in person," but, of course, in today's world so much work and collaboration does happen online, so we should be doing a better job of supporting students in effective online collaboration. This is an additional place where continued faculty and course development support is needed. With a growing offering of online capstone courses, additional research and assessment are needed and would assist the online CBL courses to continue to work toward meeting the needs of students and providing rigorous and transformative learning experiences online.

Areas for Growth: Practices for Equity in Access to Effective Online CBL Experiences

The capstone faculty at PSU are fortunate to have many avenues for faculty support and conversations about online learning as we embark on this process to increase our online CBL offerings. We are uniquely positioned to simultaneously participate in the disruption of what we have considered traditional CBL teaching and learning and have

administratively supported space to reflect on, challenge, and innovate our practices. Yes, higher education is changing; the "disrupted university" is a place where our assumptions about students must change. Scobey (2014) explores this topic in "Technology, Education, Democracy: Elements of an Emerging Paradigm," calling us to question the meaning of the "public good" and the core belief that the goal of education is to emancipate our students in the face of efforts to digitize our curriculum and offer so-called access to all potential students. He challenges us to reframe our conversations about online learning to consider the implications of our use and promotion of emerging technologies while critically thinking about the many and sometimes conflicting realities in emerging technologies with and among our students.

One of the most important pieces of our practice involves developing communities of practice; gathering with our colleagues to share, reflect, and innovate. These forums support practitioners, allow for the exchange of ideas to aid in the teaching process, promote the development of scholarship related to the work, and allow those who are interested but have little experience to learn from their colleagues. One of the forums for this collaboration took place in partnership with OAI. In the last three academic years, we have co-hosted two reading groups with faculty, primarily from the capstone program but also from across the university, with the themes of CBL online (2013) and social justice in online learning (2014 and 2015). Based on the experiences of our program directors, faculty, and students, we draw from the larger research base to select pertinent findings in order to answer and discuss bigger questions arising in our teaching practice.

It is the 2014 and 2015 reading groups that allowed us the space and the time to really grapple with questions arising around access, equity for online learners, and social justice (both as a topic in our courses and as a practice in our university for our learners). The barriers to successful online learning that our students face are often directly related to technology training (whether students have been trained as consumers or as creators of technology), access to technology tools (e.g., up-to-date laptops), and the ability to form a real relationship with their instructor and fellow learners. In "Democratization of Education for Whom? Online Learning and Educational Equity," Jaggers (2014) raises the basic question: Are we really "democratizing" education with technology? Beyond MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), how do online degree pathways and offerings improve access to higher education for students who would otherwise be unable to attend? And how can we in the capstone program, with a built-in social justice framework, start more conversations and practices that work toward serving our most underserved students?

In a study titled "Online Learning: Does It Help Low-Income and Underprepared Students," Jaggers (2011) focuses on community college students in online courses and identifies three reasons why our most underserved students struggle in online courses: technical difficulties, increased "social distance," and a relative lack of structure inherent in online courses (Jaggers 2011, 19). While the University Studies program at PSU has a very strong and well-developed relationship with OAI, support for instructors with technology, and a help desk for students, the issue of "social

distance" and any technology issues related to lack of access to updated technology tools are beyond the reach of our technical support. Instructors themselves must seriously consider what course design elements can reasonably be developed and used by our students. The institution at large may be the only entity that could make change in terms of access to technology tools. Jaggers also posits that providing tools for technology to students, offering courses to prepare students to be successful in online learning, and studying when/how online learning improves low-income student success are imperative next steps in providing true access.

We can look to the literature to find additional practices that we must consider in order to better support low-income students, first generation students, and students of color. As social justice practitioners, it is imperative that we find ways to understand and integrate the research and our own experiences with students to provide social justice learning that provides access to those who need it the most. Some best practices gleaned from the literature on this topic include the hiring of student advocates to engage with a caseload of students whom they support as they participate in their courses online (Garcia 2006). These advocates are not technology experts but instead individuals with skills around mentoring, understanding university resources, and relationship building. In addition, Garcia suggests integration of a practice of peer review by instructors of each other's course shells prior to teaching their courses and throughout the life of each course (Garcia 2006). Jantz (2010), in her article "Self-Regulation and Online Developmental Student Success," advocates for offering instruction on self-regulation for online success and incentives for students (including technology or financial incentives for completing training to catalyze success in online learning). Finally, Okwumabua and co-authors (2011), in "An Exploration of African American Students' Attitudes Toward Online Learning," indicate that we must address the roots of the digital divide and the lack of confidence in using technology to further academic learning, and engage in more work around showing students explicitly how technology can be a tool for research, connection, and even social justice work.

Through their online CBL teaching experiences, capstone faculty have found that the greatest challenges they face as instructors (beyond training in innovative uses of technology to connect with students) are not assisting students in meeting the learning outcomes of deep social justice learning, reflection, and working on real social problems, but rather truly serving students equitably, giving our most underserved students meaningful access to higher education and rich online educational experiences allowing room for social justice learning and thinking. If CBL and critical discourse around social justice issues are pillars of what is considered to be a well-rounded higher education experience, PSU must offer rich CBL experiences to all of its online students. We agree with Guthrie and McCracken (2010) that experiential education is at the heart of social justice pedagogy. These authors call us to consider the social justice framework as we apply it to our online students and offerings, stating that "teachers instructing curricula that involve multiple levels of learning are challenged to maintain their focus on the social realities demonstrated in their online classrooms and the ways in which they impact the integration of overall learning and the application of technologies" (Guthrie and McCracken 2010).

Conclusion

The capstone program at Portland State University is committed to "education as the practice of freedom," as described by Paulo Freire. Capstone courses offered in an online setting are no different. As online capstone faculty, we seek to provide course structures, access to technology platforms, and deep engagement with students that allow and encourage them to "deal critically and creatively with reality and to... participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire 2000, 34). Indeed, liberating our thinking and teaching from the traditional CBL in-person courses and classrooms and toward a different model for online learning spaces allows for the best transformational learning experiences for online capstone students (Carver et al. 2007). Finally, providing equity and access for underserved students is imperative for us as a faculty, and the next phase of our development must focus on additional practices and resources that we will consider and adopt in order to better address true educational equity through our online teaching and learning. We are grateful as a faculty for a visionary and immensely supportive capstone program director; a collaborative, innovative and reflective faculty; and the strong programmatic and institutional support that we receive. Our guiding principle is that we must translate all of that into deep and transformative learning experiences for all students.

References

Carver, Rebecca, Robert King, Wallace Hannum, and Brady Fowler. 2007. "Toward a Model of Experiential E-Learning." *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* 3 (3). http://jolt.merlot.org/vol3no3/hannum.htm

Crabill, Scott L., and Dan Butin, eds. 2014. *Community Engagement 2.0? Dialogues on the Future of the Civic in the Disrupted University.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9781137441065.0007.

Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th anniversary ed. New York, Bloomsbury.

Garcia, Maricela. 2006. "Supporting First Generation Online Students." *Online Student Support Services: A Best Practices Monograph.* http://www.onlinestudentsupport.org/Monograph/firstgen.php

Gaytan, Jorge, and Beryl McEwen. 2007. "Effective Online Instructional and Assessment Strategies." *The American Journal of Distance Education* 2 (3): 117-132.

Guthrie, Kathy, and Holly McCracken. 2010. "Teaching and Learning Social Justice through Online Service-Learning Courses." *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* 11 (3): 78-94.

Hamerlinch, John, and Lisa Houle. 2012. "Service-Learning in Online Courses: Practical Considerations and Strategies." Presentation at Minnesota Campus Compact.

"Faculty Views about Online Learning." *Chronicle of Higher Education* October 31, 2010. http://chronicle.com/article/faculty-viws-about-online/125200.

Jaggers, Shanna Smith. 2011. "Online Learning: Does It Help Low-Income and Underprepared Students?" Community College Research Center. Columbia University. ERIC (ED 219 025).

Jaggers, Shanna Smith. 2014. "Democratization of Education for Whom? Online Learning and Educational Equity." *American Association of Colleges and Universities, Diversity and Democracy* 17 (1). https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2014/winter/jaggars.

Jantz, Carrie. 2010. "Self-Regulation and Online Developmental Student Success." *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* 6 (4): 852-857.

Kane, Jennifer, and Jason Lee. 2014. "The Perfect Marriage: Community-Based and Online Learning." Presented at the UNFIS Academic Technology Innovation Symposium, University of North Florida, November 2014. http://digitalcommons.unf.edu/unfis/UNFIS14/Presentations/8/

Kaur, Ravleen. 2013. "PSU Closes Salem Extended Campus Program." *PSU Vanguard*, May 29. http://psuvanguard.com/news/psu-closes-salem-extended-campus-program/.

Malvey, D. M., E. F. Hamby, and M. D. Fottler. 2006. "E-Service Learning: A Pedagogic Innovation for Healthcare Management Education." *Journal of Health Administration Education* 23 (2): 181-198.

Mitchell, Tania D. 2008. "Traditional vs. Critical Service-Learning: Engaging the Literature to Differentiate Two Models. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 14 (2): 50-65.

Okwumabua, Theresa, Kristin M. Walker, Xiangen Hu, and Andrea Watson. 2011. "An Exploration of African American Students' Attitudes toward Online Learning." *Urban Education* 46 (2): 241-250. DOI: 10.1177/0042085910377516.

Palloff, Rena M., and Keith Pratt. 2007. *Building Online Learning Communities: Effective Strategies for the Virtual Classroom*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.

Pearce, Joshua. 2009. "Appropedia as a Tool for Service Learning in Sustainable Development." *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development* 3 (1): 47-55.

Portland State University. "Office of Academic Innovation." Last modified 2015. https://www.pdx.edu/oai/rethink-psu.

Portland State University. "Reporting Live." Last accessed August 7 2015. http://www.pdx.edu/capstone-reportinglive/.

Portland State University. "ReTHINK PSU." Last accessed August 7, 2015. https://www.pdx.edu/oai/rethink-psu.

Portland State University. "University Studies General Education Online Pathways." https://www.pdx.edu/oai/provosts-challenge-projects-63.

Scobey, David. 2014. "Technology, Education, Democracy: Elements of an Emerging Paradigm." *American Association of Colleges and Universities, Diversity and Democracy* 17 (1). http://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/vol17no1/scobey.cfm.

Strait, Jean, and Timothy Sauer. 2004. "Constructing Experiential Learning for Online Courses: The Birth of E-Service." *Educause Review Online* 1: 62-65.

University Studies Program and Center for Academic Excellence. 2008. *Capstone Handbook.* Unpublished document last modified August. http://capstone.unst.pdx.edu/sites/default/files/FacultyHandbook8-12_0.pdf.

Waldner, Leora, Sue McGorry, and Murray Widener. 2010. "Extreme E-Service Learning (XE-SL): E-Service Learning in the 100% Online Course." *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching* 6 (4): 839-851.

Waldner, Leora S., Sue Y. McGorry, and Murray C. Widener. 2012. "E-Service-Learning: The Evolution of Service-Learning to Engage a Growing Online Student Population." *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 16 (2): 123-150.

Waldner, Leora, Kristie Roberts, Murray Widener, and Brenda Sullivan. 2011. "Serving Up Justice: Fusing Service Learning and Social Equity in the Public Administration Classroom." *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 17 (2): 209-232. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23036112.

Zlotkowski, Edward, and Donna Duffy. 2010. "Two Decades of Community-Based Learning." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2010 (123): 33-43. DOI: 10.1002/tl.407

Author Information

Deborah Smith Arthur, MA, JD, developed and teaches the Mobilizing Hope capstone, and has been teaching capstones at PSU since 2003. She is a former criminal defense attorney, and, in addition to teaching and learning, she is passionate about the intersection of juvenile and criminal justice and educational equity issues.

Zapoura Newton-Calvert, MA, developed and teaches the Social Justice in K-12 capstone and has been teaching capstones at PSU since 2008. She is also Faculty-in-Residence for Community-Based Learning in PSU's Office of Academic Innovation and is committed to teaching, learning, and activism around removing barriers to educational equity in the Portland Metropolitan area.

Deborah Smith Arthur
University Studies Program
Portland State University
Cramer Hall 117
1721 SW Broadway
Portland, OR 97207
E-mail: debs@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-5831

Zapoura Newton-Calvert
University Studies Program
Portland State University
Cramer Hall 117
1721 SW Broadway
Portland, OR 97207
E-mail: zapoura@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-5890

From Capstones to Strategic Partnerships: The Evolution of Portland State University's Community Engagement and Partnership Agenda

Erin Flynn

Abstract

Portland State University's (PSU) reputation as an engaged, urban-serving university continues to distinguish it both nationally and locally. Key partnerships with local, public, and private partners provide students, faculty, and staff with remarkable opportunities to contribute to the physical, social, and economic development of the Portland metropolitan region. This article traces the evolution of PSU's engagement and partnership agenda and shares lessons learned by PSU as it seeks to better coordinate and centralize key components of its vast engagement and partnership portfolio. This reflection describes why and how PSU created an Office of Strategic Partnerships and the role of the newly formed PSU Partnership Council, and explores the challenge of striking a balance between the grassroots level of engagement and partnership activity and the need to take a larger, institution-wide view.

Portland State University's (PSU) motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City," exemplifies the institution's commitment to community engagement and partnership. For over two decades, community engagement and partnership have been distinguishing characteristics of PSU's mission, strategies, and operations at every level. Historically, the clearest manifestation of this commitment has been the senior capstone requirement. The capstone is the culminating, senior-level course in PSU's University Studies general education program, consisting of teams of students from different majors working together and collaborating with one or more community partners to complete a project addressing a real-world problem in the Portland metropolitan region.

Community engagement and partnership emerged as a centerpiece of the PSU faculty and student experience due, in part, to the university's central, urban location. PSU anchors the south end of downtown Portland, occupying fifty city blocks. It is a dense urban campus within walking distance from City Hall, most major downtown employers, and a short bike, bus, or car ride from myriad government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. Proximity was not the sole factor driving community engagement, however, as PSU evolved from a teaching college established in 1952 as part of the GI Bill to a full-service research university offering a range of graduate certificates and degrees. By the mid-1990's, engagement and partnership, grounded in the capstone requirement, were celebrated and highlighted as a strategic

advantage by senior administrators who sought to forge a distinct identity for PSU as an urban-serving research university (Ramaley 1996, 1997).

Since AY 1992-93, when the capstone requirement was established, many other forms of community engagement and partnership have taken root across the university. Examples include a large body of professional service and sponsored research delivered by various colleges and institutes across campus to a range of local, county, and state government agencies, particularly in the health, education, and social service fields; a wide range of partnerships with local businesses and industry related to workforce development (e.g., internships and employment); and continuous professional application opportunities for fine and performing arts students with local nonprofit organizations. More recently, a significant body of engagement and partnership work has emerged related to city and regional planning and environmental sustainability.

"Civic Leadership through Partnership"

For the better part of the past twenty-five years, the vast majority of PSU's engagement and partnership work was initiated by individual faculty members, staff, and/or administrators who had personal relationships with nonprofit, business, and government leaders. Historically, the engagement and partnership agenda relied on *individual* rather than *institutional* relationships.

In 2008, when Wim Wiewel became the eighth president of PSU, he established five guiding themes for the university, one of these being "provide civic leadership through partnerships." As a scholar of city-university relations, Wiewel was well versed in the concept of universities as "anchor institutions"—that is, large, place-based organizations (public or private) advancing long-term, strategic goals related to urban innovation, economic and workforce development, community health, education reform, and real estate development in metro regions (Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and CEOs for Cities 2002). Upon arrival, he charged PSU to do the following:
• Lead as a civic partner
• Deepen engagement as a critical community asset
• Demonstrate leadership in regional innovation
• Serve as an anchor institution in the metro region

To deliver on these goals, Wiewel established the new executive-level Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), organizationally situated within Research and Strategic Partnerships (RSP). In addition to raising the research profile of the university, RSP was created to develop and advance "strategic partnerships" and serve as a front door for community engagement. PSU defines strategic partners to be business and civic partners that typically involve multiple colleges and tap into a range of university assets, including faculty research, student labor, workforce development units, contract research and service, demonstration projects, and planning and development initiatives. These multi-faceted partnerships require coordination, management, and regular reporting due to the complexity and strategic and political import of the partners.

Three strategic partnerships had been identified and were under development in some shape or form when the Office of Strategic Partnerships was created in 2011. These included Intel, Portland General Electric (PGE), and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU).

Getting Organized

What became clear upon creation of the new Office of Strategic Partnerships in 2011 was that PSU had little institution-wide understanding of its partnership landscape. Two decades of active partnership development had led to a tremendous amount of engagement and activity, but there had been little structured attempt at cataloging, documenting, or measuring the quantity, quality, or impact of this activity. While the capstone program had developed a structured process for tracking community partnerships and courses, other forms of engagement and partnership were not formally tracked or documented. The formation of OSP highlighted the need to develop a more comprehensive and systematic method for understanding and tracking partnership activity. Another realization was that the lack of protocol regarding outreach to strategic partners had resulted in a mishmash of overlapping requests from PSU to partners. Partners complained about the lack of coordination within PSU and expressed the desire for a "one-stop" point of contact that could vet requests and help partners navigate PSU.

A first step for the newly formed office was development of an inventory methodology to enable internal and external stakeholders to quickly see the nature of an existing partnership. The inventory process included a five-year look at the following:

- Identification and documentation of all sponsored research and service activity between PSU and each partner
- Identification and documentation of all workforce development-related activity (e.g., internships, number of alumni employed by partner, and curriculum-related engagement with partner)
- Capstones courses sponsored by partner
- Philanthropic gifts and in-kind sponsorship from partner
- Key faculty and administrative relationships with partner

The process of creating strategic partnership inventories proved challenging and time-consuming because of the highly decentralized nature of the required pieces of information. Building a comprehensive inventory required data collection from multiple units on campus, extensive face-to-face interviews with relevant faculty and staff, and fact-checking with partners. The inventory process quickly revealed that "strategic partnerships" were composed of myriad formal and informal partnerships and relationships (e.g., research, technical assistance, service, capstones, internships, demonstration projects, philanthropy, etc.), and that it was extremely difficult to capture all related activity. This realization led to a broader, university-wide effort to better categorize, coordinate, and communicate PSU's partnership agenda writ large.

Development of the "PSU Engagement and Partnership Spectrum"

In the fall of 2013, OSP teamed up with PSU's Office of Academic Innovation (OAI) to tackle several interrelated engagement and partnership challenges. OAI is responsible for grounding curriculum design and faculty support for the development of community-based learning courses. A "challenge statement" was circulated among deans and key staff, and a series of interviews was held to determine how to best forge collective solutions (Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships 2013). The "challenge" was articulated in the following way:

> Despite deep experience and expertise in community engagement and community-university partnerships, PSU has yet to organize, cohere, measure, or communicate its partnership agenda effectively. Year after year, PSU administrators struggle to answer basic questions about community partnership and engagement. PSU's inability to readily gather information to answer these questions is problematic on multiple levels. It presents challenges for students who seek information about partnership-based courses; for faculty who seek to conduct partnership-based scholarship; for department chairs and deans who want to publicize accomplishments associated with partnership-based teaching and research; and for senior administrators who are frequently asked by the media, legislature, and donors to share partnership stories, data, and outcomes.
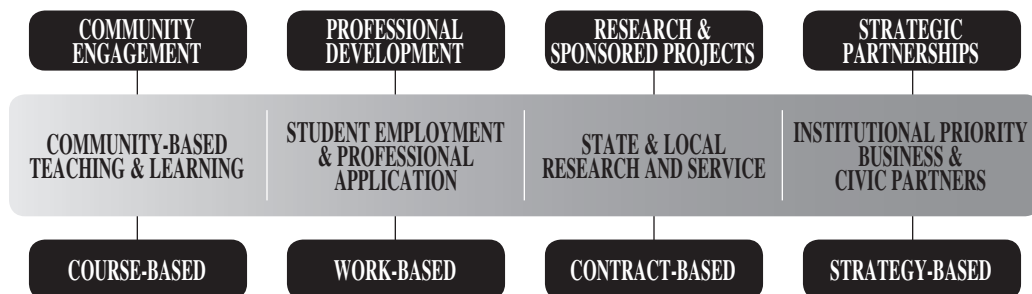
> Because of the decentralized growth of partnership activity at PSU, the people who do this work are often isolated within their colleges, units, and divisions. Faculty and staff fail to identify synergies with others doing similar work; duplication of effort and outreach occurs as a result. This is both inefficient and unproductive as partners often complain about PSU's lack of coordination regarding community outreach.

> The current state of partnership also creates challenges for external stakeholders seeking to recruit students and/or work collaboratively with the university on critical issues. External stakeholders aren't clear how to navigate the tangled web of departments, colleges, and administrative units that make up PSU. External stakeholders must often make multiple contacts within the university before they find the appropriate individual who can provide relevant assistance.

Structured interviews with representatives from all seven of PSU's colleges revealed that the word "partnership" was being used to describe everything from a one-day student volunteer project to multi-year research projects with state agencies. To gain a full accounting of the partnership landscape, it became clear that a more nuanced understanding of community engagement and partnership was required. Through campus interviews and inventory work, partnership patterns emerged that led to the development of a partnership typology (Figure 1). The goal of the typology was to

clarify the major categories of engagement and partnership at PSU and to begin to build an institutional view of partnership activity.

Figure 1: PSU Engagement and Partnership Spectrum

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	RESEARCH & SPONSORED PROJECTS	STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
COMMUNITY-BASED TEACHING & LEARNING	STUDENT EMPLOYMENT & PROFESSIONAL APPLICATION	STATE & LOCAL RESEARCH AND SERVICE	INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITY BUSINESS & CIVIC PARTNERS
COURSE-BASED	WORK-BASED	CONTRACT-BASED	STRATEGY-BASED

The following definitions were developed to clarify each category:

- **Community Engagement**
  Activities in this category engage students and faculty in co-curricular student work or community-based teaching, learning, and research activities. These partnership activities are typically initiated and sustained by an individual faculty member or student group.

- **Professional Development**
  Ongoing professional development opportunities and partnerships occur at the college and department level. These opportunities may be required for degree completion or may be designed to produce "work-ready" graduates. This category includes practicum (required for graduation/certification), structured internships, and professional application.

- **Research and Sponsored Projects**
  A significant share of PSU's research and sponsored projects portfolio consists of long-term research and professional development partnerships with state and local government. These partnerships are characterized by research and program evaluation, database development, service delivery, staff training, and professional development.

- **Strategic Partnerships**
  Strategic partnerships typically involve multiple colleges and tap into a range of university assets, including faculty research, student labor, workforce development, contract research and service, demonstration projects, and planning and development.

PSU Partnership Council Launch

In the fall of 2014, with support from the president and provost, PSU launched the PSU Community Partnership Council. Utilizing the Engagement and Partnership Spectrum as a unifying framework, the PSU partnership council was charged with the following:

> The general purpose of the Community Partnership Council is to fulfill PSU's goal of civic leadership through partnerships. Specifically, the council seeks to better organize, coordinate, and report on significant partnership activity. In addition, the council will identify administrative barriers that prohibit successful implementation of partnership activities and seek to address them. The council will identify, organize, and leverage PSU assets and expertise to deliver on regional strategic partnerships that include, but are not limited to, urban sustainability, economic development, educational reform, and community health. The council is intended to act as a value-added, campus-level forum for identifying strategies to enhance the overall PSU climate for growing and sustaining community partnerships (Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships 2014).

The overarching goal of the partnership council was defined in the following way:

> PSU seeks to be at the cutting-edge of "community-university" engagement and partnership work nationally. While honoring the personal relationships upon which many partnerships are built, PSU seeks to build campus infrastructure and support systems that lead to greater standardization and an ability to more readily assess and communicate the impact and value of this work. The end goal is to provide more consistent and better engagement and partnership opportunities to more faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders (Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships 2014).

The associate vice president for strategic partnerships and the dean of the College of Urban and Public Affairs were appointed co-chairs of the Community Partnership Council. Council membership consists of twenty faculty and staff representing each college. The committee membership intentionally does not include students or community partners. Recognizing that many of the initial challenges identified with PSU's unorganized partnership agenda had to do with the lack of systems from within PSU, council leadership decided to limit the initial sphere within which the work would be done to committee members drawn from PSU faculty and staff. Committee members were identified using the following criteria:

1. At least one representative of each school or college at PSU;
2. Both faculty and staff with experience/expertise in partnerships, including faculty members from different ranks;
3. Directors of centers and institutes that engage in research, sponsored projects, and/or professional development; and
4. Representatives of varied disciplines and approaches to partnerships to promote diverse perspectives on engagement issues.

In year one, Community Partnership Council members self-organized into teams organized according to the PSU Engagement and Partnership Spectrum categories. Each team explored and identified challenges and opportunities related to their specific aspect of engagement and partnership work, and the teams each produced a briefing paper that identified strategic actions to advance their work. A significant amount of the first-year agenda became a component part of a campus-wide, five-year strategic plan that places partnership and engagement at its core.

Building Strategic Partnerships: A Bottom-up, Top-down Approach

Gaining a comprehensive view of PSU's partnership activity and establishing the Engagement and Partnership Spectrum helped organize the work, clarified the ways that partnerships were playing out across campus, and distinguished the role of strategic partnerships as a distinctive form of PSU partnership. Strategic partnerships are not separate from PSU's traditional partnership and engagement work. In fact, they are typically composed of all of the partnership and engagement activities represented on the Engagement and Partnership Spectrum. These partnerships are unique because they cut across multiple colleges and require a level of central coordination to ensure that various units on campus understand institution-level partnership goals, and interdisciplinary teams may be formed to deliver on these goals. Strategic partnerships encompass bottom-up and top-down activity simultaneously; they are composed of myriad discrete partnerships knit together with intention and governance to advance the articulated strategic goals of PSU and the partner. Unlike individual departments or colleges, OSP takes a university-wide view of engagement and seeks to facilitate efficient matchmaking between strategic partners and campus units to increase the quality and quantity of engagement between PSU and strategic partners and to measure and communicate the overall impact of portfolio activity.

In addition to the three original strategic partners identified when the office was established (Intel, PGE, and OHSU), PSU has identified four additional strategic partners that meet the criteria outlined in the Engagement and Partnership Spectrum. These include Portland Public Schools, Multnomah County, Metro Regional Government, and Technology Association of Oregon. Today, OSP is working with each of these partners to advance a coordinated, strategic, and mutually beneficial relationship. In the following section, one of these strategic partnerships is examined in depth.

PGE-PSU Strategic Partnership

PSU's strategic partnership with Portland General Electric is a good illustration of PSU's strategic partnership approach. PSU and PGE have been working with focused intention on this partnership as a strategic partnership for five years. The level of communication, coordination, and engagement grows each year as the partnership develops and delivers results. PGE is Oregon's largest electric utility, serving 840,000 customers in fifty-two Oregon cities. The company headquarters is located a few

blocks from PSU. Recognizing a history of collaboration in applied research, PSU's president and PGE's CEO signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2010, pledging mutual commitment to showcase PSU and PGE as regional anchor institutions and leaders in renewable energy and urban sustainability. Specifically, the MOU stated that PGE and PSU would do the following:

• Build on the region's reputation for green leadership by developing and implementing innovative demonstration projects;
• Capitalize on the Portland metro region's leadership position in urban innovation and sustainability;
• Leverage existing strengths, capacity, and expertise, and align research and philanthropic investments.

The lofty goals contained in the MOU did not provide an implementation road map for the PGE-PSU strategic partnership. In fact, the partnership stalled the first year, as there was little clarity among the initial team about how to move forward, alongside no record of what the university and PGE had actually done together in the past. In August 2011, the partnership publicly kicked off, to great fanfare, with the opening of "Electric Avenue," an all-electric, one-block street on the PSU campus that featured free electric vehicle battery charging and a range of charging stations. Electric Avenue was a demonstration project created by PSU, PGE, and the City of Portland to highlight the city's commitment to transportation electrification. The demonstration site has been a great success, as measured by press coverage, new product rollouts, and local use.

But other aspects of the partnership failed to get off the ground. For example, PSU was not able to deliver on an anticipated electric vehicle research agenda, as it could not identify faculty with a research focus on transportation electrification. Likewise, a planned "sustainability center" at PSU that was to be financed through state bonds and would feature PGE smart grid technology did not materialize. These challenges were exacerbated by the fact that OSP had not yet been established, and PSU had not designated a lead staff person to manage the PGE-PSU partnership.

When a new associate vice president for strategic partnerships was hired at PSU in the spring of 2011, three key steps were taken to set the partnership on the right track: first, a formal governance structure was established, with designated members from both PSU and PGE assigned responsibility for setting goals and moving the partnership forward; second, a comprehensive inventory of how PGE and PSU work together (on research; community-based learning, including capstones; philanthropic giving; and boards and committees) was conducted; and third, clarity regarding PSU's faculty expertise in renewable energy and power engineering was established, and hiring plans were shared.

Through a disciplined process of quarterly meetings, documentation, and regular communication, the PGE-PSU strategic partnership began to take shape, deliver consistent results, and build momentum. A turning point in the partnership was the appointment of a new faculty member in the engineering school with expertise in

power engineering and a passion for applied learning. Another faculty member was hired to build PSU's power engineering program, which quickly became a centerpiece of the partnership, as PGE provided financing for a new power engineering lab. The lab was created to provide a real-world engineering setting for students. Within three years of its founding, the Power Engineering Lab had secured over $500,000 in sponsored projects and research grants from PGE.

In June 2015, the PGE-PSU strategic partnership held a five-year review session. The partnership has evolved dramatically and is producing strong results for both institutions. The strategic partnership has resulted in twenty-six sponsored projects (involving five PSU departments) with a dollar value of approximately $730,000; eight capstone projects involving thirty-two students; and an electric vehicle demonstration project and conference series that has garnered international attention. The next iteration of the strategic partnership will work on a regional energy workforce continuum and smart grid research and development.

The evolution of the PGE-PSU relationship over the past five years illustrates the power of a campus-wide, coordinated approach to engagement where appropriate. By gaining a clear understanding of the discrete ways in which PGE and PGE already partnered (e.g., in capstones and through sponsored research), establishing an accountable governance structure, and establishing ambitious and mutually beneficial goals, the PGE-PSU partnership has delivered more significant results and more value to students, faculty, and PGE than a decentralized approach could have yielded. The strategic partnership has provided PGE with strong confidence in PSU and its ability to be responsive to its needs. This, in turn, has resulted in greater financial investment by PGE in the partnership and PSU.

Lessons Learned

The Office of Strategic Partnerships is now beginning its fifth year. The experience of building central capacity to support and advance university-wide strategic partnerships has been challenging, but ultimately rewarding, as the results of better coordination, communication, and higher expectations between PSU and partners are realized. On a daily basis, OSP must navigate and balance the tension inherent in more centralized documentation, reporting, and communication, and the highly decentralized and individual nature of relationships between faculty, staff, and partners that yield the real, day-to-day results of partnership. Sometimes the centralized aspect of strategic partnerships can be viewed as threatening. While the intent of OSP is to advance partnership work occurring at the unit and college level, faculty may suspect that OSP is trying to take over the work and/or claim credit for it. Building trust with faculty and staff who have spent years cultivating relationships with partners is key. An important step in building trust is to meet with individual faculty to learn about their work and to make clear that the goal of strategic partnership is not to claim credit for faculty work but to enhance and build upon it by bringing additional resources to bear in the form of staff and organizational capacity, resources, and relationships.

Engagement and partnership activities are an important contribution of urban-serving universities. At many universities, however, it is difficult for internal and external stakeholders to navigate the partnership landscape. Today, public universities are under considerable pressure to demonstrate results, not just in terms of graduation rates but in how they contribute to the vitality of their metropolitan regions. Engagement and partnership is a demonstrable way that universities create value. As more and more urban-serving universities seek to build, improve, and communicate their engagement and partnership agendas, we offer the following lessons learned:

- **Make Partnership and Engagement Visible**
  It is critical to make partnership and engagement work visible and transparent to internal and external stakeholders. Because the information required to do this is very often decentralized, a data collection process needs to be established and put in play. To start, form a team of people who are responsible for key aspects of partnership and engagement and work to define common categories. At PSU, we developed the Engagement and Partnership Spectrum to facilitate organization of the agenda. Begin regular reporting at established intervals to gain a quantitative view of partnership.

- **Tell the Partnership Story**
  Build capacity for regular storytelling to capture the qualitative and inspirational aspects of the engagement and partnership work. PSU is currently working to launch a partnership newsletter for consistent and regular reporting on the engagement and partnership work across campus. An easy-to-access website with all relevant partnership information is also central to partnership infrastructure.

- **Engage Faculty and Staff in the Partnership Capacity-Building Process**
  Gaining the trust and buy-in of faculty and staff requires respect for all aspects of engagement and partnership work. Build trust with faculty and staff by bringing them into the partnership capacity-building process and keeping them informed about what you are doing. Recognize and celebrate all different types of partnerships, as each has an important role to play for students, faculty, partners, and the institution as a whole. Acknowledge and honor the work of individuals who have built discrete programs. Strategic partnerships are additive, not competitive. Done well they strengthen existing programs and bring more resources to bear.

- **Strike a Balance between Centralized and Decentralized Roles and Responsibilities**
  A centralized partnership function is critical for certain aspects of the partnership agenda (e.g., campus-wide coordination, documentation, reporting, and matchmaking). Strategic partnerships are arguably best led through a central office, but recognize that the vast majority of partnership and engagement work will occur at the level of individual faculty, departments, institutions, and colleges. Do not try to control all aspects of the engagement and partnership agenda. It is not possible or desirable. Regarding strategic partner outreach, it is desirable to have some type of communication protocol and/or to work through a central office. Partners can become annoyed when random requests are made that are not part and parcel of agreed-upon goals.

- **Delight Partners by Exceeding Expectations**
  Build trust with partners by being responsive, communicating regularly, and following through on commitments. Partners often complain that universities are hard to work with. Change their perception by exceeding expectations.

Conclusion

The highly decentralized and entrepreneurial nature of universities creates challenges for building partnership capacity. At the same time, without some level of central coordination, documentation, and communication, it is extremely hard for internal and external stakeholders to understand what is happening in the partnership realm or to measure impact. This is important for public universities, in particular, as they strive to demonstrate their value to the community at large as well as to legislative bodies. With the PSU Community Partnership Council as a key structure bridging bottom-up, top-down approaches, PSU has continued the strides it has made in striking a balance between grassroots engagement work and institutional-level, strategic partnership work.

References

Afshar, Anna. 2005. "Community-Campus Partnerships for Economic Development: Community Perspectives." *Federal Bank of Boston/Public and Community Affairs*, Discussion Papers 2.

Buys, Nicholas, and Samantha Bursnall. 2007. "Establishing University-Community Partnerships: Processes and Benefits." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 29 (1): 73-86.

Holland, Barbara A. 2002. "Every Perspective Counts: Understanding the True Meaning of Reciprocity in Partnerships." Keynote address presented at the Western Regional Campus Compact Conference, Portland, OR, April 17.

Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, and CEOs for Cities. 2002. "Leveraging Colleges and Universities for Urban Economic Revitalization: An Action Agenda." Boston: Initiative for a Competitive Inner City; CEOs for Cities. Accessed September 22. http://www.icic.org/ee_uploads/publications/UIFINAL.PDF.

Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships. 2013. "Challenge Statement." Portland State University. Unpublished internal document.

Office of Research and Strategic Partnerships. 2014. "Partnership Council Charge." Portland State University. Accessed September 22. http://www.pdx.edu/partnerships/council-charge.

Peters, Scott J., Nicholas R. Jordan, Margaret Adamek, and Theodore R. Alter, eds. 2005. *Engaging Campus and Community: The Practice of Public Scholarship in the State and Land-Grant University System.* Dayton, OH: The Kettering Foundation.

Ramaley, Judith A. 1996. "Large-Scale Institutional Change to Implement an Urban University Mission: Portland State University." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 18 (2): 139-151.

Ramaley, Judith A. 1997. "Shared Consequences: Recent Experiences with Outreach and Community-Based Learning." *Journal of Public Service and Outreach* 2 (1): 19-25.

Sandy, Marie. 2008. "More Communication, Collaboration Needed, Say Community Partners in Nation's Largest Study. *Compact Current*, Winter. http://www.compact. org/current/ issues/2008_Winter.

Wiewel, Wim, and Michael Lieber. 1998. "Goal Achievement, Relationship Building, and Incrementalism: The Challenges of University-Community Partnerships." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 17 (4): 291-301.

Author Information
Erin Flynn, PhD, is associate vice president for strategic partnerships at Portland State University. Prior to joining PSU in 2011, she served as urban development director at the Portland Development Commission, the City of Portland's economic and urban development agency.

Erin Flynn
Research and Strategic Partnerships
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
E-mail: eflynn@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-403-9886

Beyond the University: An Initiative for Continuing Engagement among Alumni

David Osborn, Jennifer Alkezweeny, and Kevin Kecskes

Abstract

In an effort to leverage students' positive community engagement experiences as they transition to and become alumni, Portland State University (PSU) embarked on a pilot "Continuing Engagement Program." This article provides a rationale for this effort, an overview of the programmatic elements, lessons learned, and future engagement strategies. The authors situate the Community Engagement Program (CEP) in the current alumni engagement literature, share findings from the PSU program, and hope to inspire additional creative thinking and action to support alumni and other community members' persistent engagement for positive community change.

There is tremendous potential for leveraging students' college and university-based community engagement experiences as they transition to and become alumni. While much has been studied and written about the impact of community engagement on student learning (Astin et al. 2000; Musil 2003; Colby et al. 2010; Boyte 2008; and others), there is a dearth of research about how to sustain this community engagement for alumni. In 2012, while others in the field were also recognizing the absence of alumni in the student engagement conversation, Portland State University (PSU) launched a pilot program to explore ways to extend the transformative experiences of students in University Studies capstone courses. Program designers developed strategies to increase student motivation, skills, and agency to sustain their engagement as alumni and to encourage existing alumni to be more civically active. This programming, referred to here as the Continuing Engagement Program (CEP), consisted of a series of initiatives designed to support the ongoing engagement of students, alumni, community members and partners, and faculty in intentional, life-long community-based work for positive change.

Quality Programs, Persistent Engagement

We are in an era of "wicked" unscripted problems that challenge our society and globe in new ways and require us, as scholar-educators, to support the development of our students to be high-capacity civic agents who can address the most pressing social and ecological issues present today (Geary Schneider 2015). Responding to this need for deeper engagement, over the past three decades, the community engagement movement in higher education has shifted in focus from volunteerism to service-learning to community engagement (Harkavy 2015). There have been many positive impacts of this movement; still, there remain important opportunities to embrace and

expand institutional community engagement, defined by Carnegie as "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (New England Resource Center for Higher Education n.d.).

In their comprehensive review of three well-established postsecondary community engagement programs, Mitchell, Visconti, Keene and Battistoni (2011) determined that (1) students' civic identity (Knefelkamp 2008) developed in well-formulated undergraduate programs persists in their lives after college, and (2) that engaging in collaboration with others, specifically as a cohort, positively affects student learning. Mitchell and co-authors (2011) cite several studies that demonstrate the need for persistent engagement, a sustained accumulation of community experiences over time, in order to deepen students' knowledge of and commitment to civic action and leadership. The study determined that participation impacted career choice for over half of the students in these programs; indeed, the researchers found that at the time of the study 39 percent were in community-connected jobs and an additional 26 percent were employed in K-12 schools (Mitchell et al. 2011). This study adds significant empirical weight to the increasing body of literature that discusses and explores the impacts of curricular community engagement in higher education (Astin et al. 2000; Musil 2003; Colby et al. 2010; Boyte 2008; and others). Looking forward, Mitchell and co-authors (2011) make a strong appeal for (1) developing engagement programs that go well beyond the current practice of one-time service-learning experiences in order to connect students with their civic passions repeatedly over time, in part by (2) helping students create more sustained cohort communities, particularly among themselves, as well as with off-campus partners (Mitchell et al. 2011).

Portland State University—
Let Knowledge Serve the City

PSU has achieved widespread success with student engagement and is recognized as a national leader in service-learning/community-based learning (CBL) practices. Nearly thirteen thousand students engage in CBL at PSU annually; the University Studies capstone program (the interdisciplinary general education program at PSU that has been discussed throughout this special journal issue of *Metropolitan Universities*) (http://capstone.unst.pdx.edu/) alone offers over 240 community-based, seminar-style courses partnered with 130 community organizations involving over 4,300 students annually.

Extending and deepening student interest and commitment to important public issues has guided PSU's capstone courses and other community-based learning efforts for decades (Kecskes, Kerrigan, and Patton 2006; Kecskes and Kerrigan 2009; Wiewel, Kecskes, and Martin 2011). However, until the inception of the Continuing Engagement Program, PSU had not tested the idea of systematically supporting alumni to continue their engagement after graduation.

The CEP required planners to conceptualize engagement approaches on a larger scale than previously undertaken, given its goal of encouraging engagement among tens of thousands of PSU alumni, 65 percent of whom remain within the metropolitan region after graduation (Portland State University 2015a). Building on the nearly quarter century of PSU experience with community engagement, CEP designers chose to focus on how to support the *continuation* of engagement of students as they transition to alumni, thus increasing civic activity in communities as well. Specifically, designers aimed to a) connect current students to engaged alumni in theme-based communities of practice, b) provide training and support for both groups to engage in social change actions, and c) sustain continued engagement going forward by creating digital communities and providing other electronic information resources.

Alumni: An Untapped Resource for Sustaining Engagement

While civic engagement efforts have been increasing nationally in scope and depth, these efforts have been largely focused on students currently enrolled in the university. Vogelgesang and Astin's (2005) comprehensive national study clearly demonstrated that undergraduate community engagement activities were associated with stronger civic values and dispositions during the college years; however, their study also showed that, for some students, engagement activity just after the college years decreases. Of the alumni who did continue to engage with the community post-graduation, this study found that most (82.5%) do so to help other people, while only 6.9% report working to change laws or policies. While helping people is honorable and important, the community-university partnership and engagement efforts at PSU intentionally aim to move students beyond service activities toward a deeper contribution to community progress and systemic change. Encouraging and facilitating the persistence of deep engagement for positive social change beyond graduation was the primary focus of the CEP pilot project.

Much of the historic literature about "alumni engagement" focuses on fundraising. In the last few years, growing interest has emerged in viewing alumni as vital "public workers" (Boyte, 2013). Additionally, alumni have been envisioned as resources to enhance the education of current students, thus moving "beyond the tokenism and the momentary feel-good payoff of the standard alumni association day of service" (Ellison 2015, 53). Individual universities are exploring the idea of alumni engagement as community engagement, such as the Princeton AlumniCorps (http://home.alumnicorps.org/), St. Olaf College's "Community Connection" effort (http://wp.stolaf.edu/president/about-main-street/), Rochester Institute of Technology's focused community engagement effort for its alumni (as included in their 2015-2025 strategic plan, https://www.rit.edu/president/pdfs/greatness_through_difference_long.pdf), and others (http://www.citizenalum.org/membership/member-campuses-and-centers/). Additionally, the Kettering Foundation has explored the potential benefits of alumni interaction with currently enrolled students in its 2014 Higher Education Exchange publication, in which Adam Wienberg raises the question, "Why not expose students

to alumni who are working throughout the professions to build meaningful lives where public work is infused throughout their work lives?" (Boyte 2013, 39).

The most prominent and wide-reaching alumni community engagement effort, "Citizen Alum," was initiated in 2011 at a meeting for the American Commonwealth Partnership. Citizen Alum targets alumni as "doers, not (just) donors" and provides a framework for a national network of campus teams focused on "building multi-generational communities of active citizenship and active learning" (Regents of the University of Michigan n.d.). Citizen Alum aims to serve as a national civic engagement initiative, now reaching alumni from thirty colleges and universities around a "common goal of reframing their approaches to public engagement in ways that support robust intergenerational connections–civic engagement" (Regents of the University of Michigan n.d.). Citizen Alum cites five goals for this engagement: (1) deepen and broaden campus cultures of engagement, (2) enrich student learning, (3) support college-to-life transition, (4) benefit alumni and the localities and regions where they live and work, and (5) value the civic agency, diversity, and creativity of alumni (Ellison 2013).

Hearing the Call for Continued Engagement

Concurrently with these national conversations, PSU was developing its own innovations that align with and extend the national movement. While the primary focus of Citizen Alum seeks to highlight the experiences of alumni as points of reference and inspirational models of engagement, CEP was designed to provide direct support (i.e., skill development, resources, analysis, etc.) in order to foster the continued engagement of alumni, as well as to formally connect current students and alumni in thematic communities of practice focused on creating positive social change. PSU's motivation for launching the CEP was similar to that of the Citizen Alum initiative: both programs seek to "strengthen communities by identifying ways to support the situated lives of publicly active graduates who reside in them" (Ellison 2015, 53).

PSU's Continuing Engagement Program was envisioned as part of a broader effort to create an integrative approach to community engagement within and beyond the context of University Studies, PSU's general education program. The working hypothesis undergirding this initiative is that the development of lifelong change agents requires continuity of community-based activity in the curriculum from the first year onward. The CEP was designed to provide that continuity for students around community engagement experiences that might otherwise seem fragmented. This conceptual framework and its associated set of activities support PSU's institutional goal of graduating empowered and activated citizens who have a well-formulated toolkit to act as change agents in the world.

The overarching strategy of CEP was to mobilize and create new connections among faculty, students, alumni, and community partners in order to sustainably address the most pressing issues facing our region. Toward that end, and drawing on extensive community-engagement experience, CEP developers sought to answer these questions: How can PSU structurally facilitate and encourage the engagement of students and

alumni, who have previously completed community-based learning courses, in ways that will continue to catalyze their passion for community change-making? How can PSU create resources to support their ongoing engagement? How might PSU engage students and alumni through the use of new technologies and social media that encourage community engagement?

Building the Foundation

To lay the foundation of the program, initiative architects developed two models based on community engagement experience: "Theory of Agency" and "Continuum of Social Change."

Theory of Agency

Before implementing the CEP, it was necessary to identify and formalize a working "theory of agency." Guiding reflective questions included the following: How do people move from passivity to action? What are barriers to doing so? What motivates persons to act? What components are required for individuals to remain engaged in social change work on an ongoing, sustained basis? The working model (Diagram 1: Theory of Agency) that was developed includes four critical components necessary for sustained participation in social change:

• Examples: Individuals must encounter examples of effective action.
• Agency: There must be a (re-)discovery of personal agency; an understanding and an experiencing of one's actions as affecting and shaping the world in which we live.
• Community: Finding and actively building a sense of community with others is critical to experiencing a collective space in which effective social change may happen, as well as receiving the support that is needed to sustain participation.
• Analysis: A clear analytical lens must be developed, allowing for individuals and groups to understand their successes and failures and to be able to reflect on them in generative ways.

Diagram 1: Theory of Agency

WHAT SUSTAINS OUR INVOLVEMENT?

These four foci were utilized to establish CEP components during the developmental phase. The program was designed to intentionally support ongoing community engagement as a counter-weight to one-time, or episodic, community engagement experiences. This theory and the underlying conceptual framework addressed below were developed through engaged reflection in an iterative, collaborative design process.
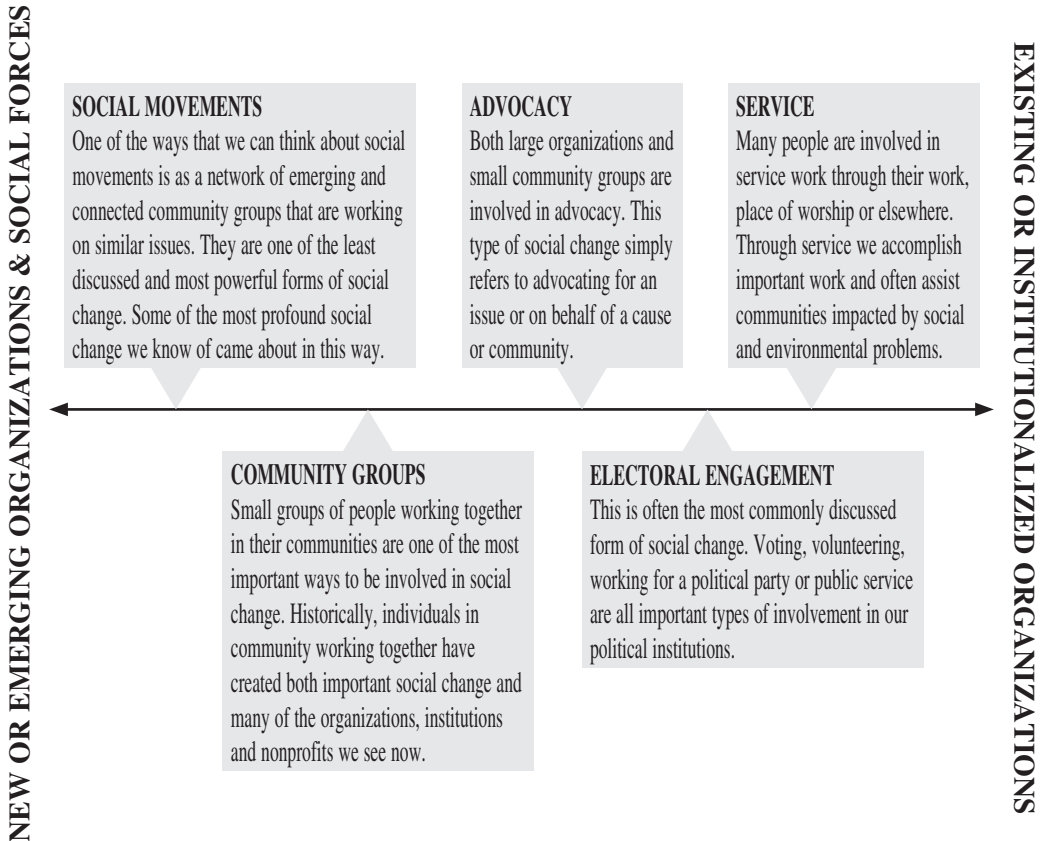
Continuum of Social Change

To help students (future alumni) begin to understand the more complete set of engagement options open to them, the "Continuum of Social Change" model was developed (Diagram 2). This spectrum illustrates examples of engagement strategies, ranging from direct provision of social service to emerging grassroots forms of involvement, including social movements for change.

Diagram 2: Continuum of Social Change

CONTINUUM OF SOCIAL CHANGE

This continuum helps us think about the different ways to be involved in social change. Over time it is natural to move from one place to another along the continuum. Sometimes it is necessary to shift your position to be able to do the work you want to do. Different types of involvement are placed on particular parts of the continuum to reflect the places where they typically arise. However, it is important to keep in mind how they can shift and might be placed on different parts of the continuum depending on how we engage in them.

NEW OR EMERGING ORGANIZATIONS & SOCIAL FORCES ← → **EXISTING OR INSTITUTIONALIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
One of the ways that we can think about social movements is as a network of emerging and connected community groups that are working on similar issues. They are one of the least discussed and most powerful forms of social change. Some of the most profound social change we know of came about in this way.

ADVOCACY
Both large organizations and small community groups are involved in advocacy. This type of social change simply refers to advocating for an issue or on behalf of a cause or community.

SERVICE
Many people are involved in service work through their work, place of worship or elsewhere. Through service we accomplish important work and often assist communities impacted by social and environmental problems.

COMMUNITY GROUPS
Small groups of people working together in their communities are one of the most important ways to be involved in social change. Historically, individuals in community working together have created both important social change and many of the organizations, institutions and nonprofits we see now.

ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT
This is often the most commonly discussed form of social change. Voting, volunteering, working for a political party or public service are all important types of involvement in our political institutions.

On the right end of the continuum, activities include attending events and volunteering or otherwise supporting the work of pre-existing organizations. This form of action is generally non-controversial, featuring little to no participation in significant decision-making or initiation of work or projects, nor significant ownership over work that occurs. At the left end of the continuum, actions generally include starting new groups or initiating focused action with other community members; issues at this point of the continuum may also be more contentious in nature. Individuals tend to have a higher involvement in decision-making, and the innovative nature of the public work may require more of an individual's agency and abilities (i.e., civic skills) to act upon and shape the world in which they operate. These forms of participation often take place within the context of new or emerging organizations and social forces. This is where the CEP focused its engagement efforts.

The theory of agency and the continuum of social change informed the CEP's approach and served to emphasize the dynamic nature of engagement as an individual moves around the spectrum, as their engagement in a particular issue is sustained and deepened, and/or as they encounter new areas for engagement. These two models were used as a springboard for discussing community experiences and supporting engagement with social issues at increasingly deep levels. Building from these two models, programmatic elements of the CEP were crafted to encourage sustained engagement along the continuum of change.

Program Design

The CEP pilot evolved over a period of two years, beginning in 2012. While the primary motivation was to engage alumni, there was also a desire to enhance current PSU students' engagement experiences by improving their connection to engagement-related resources and opportunities within and beyond the university, as well as to provide continuing education for community members seeking to deepen their own community engagement. Elements of the program included communities of practice, workshops, a two-credit seminar, and the use of particular communication tools. These elements are discussed below.

Communities of Practice

In order to move beyond direct service to focus on continuing engagement that leads to community change, faculty, students, alumni, and community partners engaged in thematic groups called Communities of Practice (CoP). Building from community psychology theory, Lawthom (2011) argues that CoPs can shed light on engaged relationships between community and university members. In general, CoPs are described as an aggregation of participants with common goals and practices who learn together by working collectively on matters of consequence. The CoP was the overarching structure for supporting thematic continuing engagement work in the program.

In AY 2012-2013, two CoPs, "Educational Equity/Development" and "Social Justice/Engagement," were initiated. The Educational Equity/Development CoP consisted of a cluster of five faculty focused on shaping curriculum to include a continuing

engagement focus (purposefully identifying how students could sustain engagement throughout their education and as alumni), developing cross-curricular products (such as common learning goals across their courses and common assignments), and identifying opportunities to engage alumni within their current classes (both directly and through social media). In the Social Justice/Engagement CoP, a group of students and faculty explored the theme of social justice.

During AY 2013-14, three interns (one undergraduate student, one graduate student, and one alumnus) worked with the program coordinator to facilitate CoPs for students, faculty, alumni, and community partners. These thematic CoPs centered around issues of social justice and de-gentrification, transportation equity, and food equity. The interns added significant capacity to this work through meeting with faculty, facilitating CoPs, and otherwise assisting in program implementation. This resulted in heightened impact of the CoPs and an expansion of the model. For example, the social justice and de-gentrification CoP engaged a group of a dozen students and community members in multiple meetings in which they explored plans for community engagement and collaboration. Within their thematic areas, the interns also engaged with forty faculty via class visits and spoke to approximately four hundred students about these issues, while sharing their personal stories of engagement. Each intern completed their own continuing engagement work within their CoP theme.

Workshops

Observing that alumni and students need to be directly supported to develop their capacities for sustained civic engagement, skill-based workshops were designed on a range of topics. These workshops were advertised to students, alumni, faculty, local activists, and community members via departmental listservs and through the distribution of a printed resource guide. The majority of the workshop facilitators were experienced community leaders for social change. Topics ranged from basic engagement strategies and structures, culturally specific topics, collaborative approaches, and leadership development. Select topics included the following:

• So You Wanna Change the World: Understanding Social Change
• Process as Practice: Honing Your Facilitation Skills
• Legislative Advocacy: When and How to Turn a Good Idea into Law
• Weaving a Strong Web: Values, Agreements, and Accountability Culture for Groups
• Skills for Strong Groups and Collectives
• Getting in the Way: Ways for Artists and Activists to Work Together
• Why Should I Care? Stories for Social Change
• Developing and Sustaining a Global Perspective through Solidarity and Collaboration
• Finding Ourselves in Charge: Collective Leadership and What We Need to Know to Build Progressive Movement in the Pacific Northwest
• Building Leaderful Movements
• Refugee and Immigrant Solidarity

Two-Credit Seminar

A two-credit seminar was developed to build students' skills in transitioning from the highly structured and supported community engagement courses at PSU to more autonomous and independent engagement. The description of the seminar is as follows:

> UNST 407 Skills for Social Change is a two-credit, 400 level seminar to support you and your continuing engagement in social change. The course is designed to build on previous and ongoing community engagement, such as that which begins in a capstone course. Current involvement in some form of social change work (volunteering, community group, activism, advocacy, etc.) is required to participate in this course.
>
> This course is a space in which to continue the "What's next?" conversation in regards to continuing to be effectively engaged in creating positive change in our world. The first half of the course will explore different understandings and analyses of social change, case studies, and skill-building opportunities that seek to complement the work you are engaged in outside of the course. The second half of the course will be designed based upon the needs and interests of the students enrolled. Throughout the course we will create a space to reflectively look at and bring into the classroom the work we are doing so that we can create community to support one another in our continued engagement both at and beyond the university. (Portland State University Communities of Practice for Social Change n.d.)

Participants were recruited to this seminar primarily through email outreach and distribution of a printed resource guide. The primary goals of the workshop were to provide a supportive environment to deepen community engagement skills and foster continued engagement. Assessments of the seminars were consistently positive. In the second year of programming, the seminar was opened to alumni and community members at no cost.

From this seminar, a new student-organized community engagement group developed, in which participants shared and received feedback on specific aspects of their social change work in ways that harnessed the collective knowledge and experience of the group. One participant shared confidentially that the experience created "a foundation to continue learning about social change...[giving me] the perspective needed to learn a lot from my future experiences in order to keep improving and developing my talents and perspectives."

Communication Tools

Complementing the CoPs and seminars were various tools supporting communication and the exchange of ideas connected to the CoPs and seminars.

- **Website**
  The website (socialchange.pdx.edu) provides a virtual location for digital community to develop. Included on this site are a blog platform for the sharing of information connected to the CoPs; a calendar of program workshops; a database of community organizations doing work connected to the CoP themes; a listing of relevant on- and off-campus community engagement organizations, books, and resources; and the resource guide (see below) in an online format.

- **Listserv**
  The CEP listserv was created to enable targeted communication regarding events, CoPs, and the broader alumni engagement effort.

- **Resource Guide**
  The "Resource Guide for Continuing Engagement in Social Change" (Osborn n.d.) was developed to present the foundational framework pieces (Theory of Agency and Continuum of Social Change) and resources for engagement beyond the university (i.e., the programmatic elements described above). This guide was written primarily for PSU seniors completing their capstone courses in order to support their transition from students to alumni, with a target to engage them in the Continuing Engagement Program.

Results

Over the first two years of implementation, the CEP experienced enthusiastic interest and engagement from faculty, students, alumni, and community partners. For example, the Educational Equity/Development CoP engaged five faculty members. Asking faculty to take on this new, innovative approach to collaboration required time that was in short supply. While some success resulted from giving small stipends to participating faculty as a way to initiate the work, it did not translate into sustained engagement despite their recognition of the high value of the collaboration and subsequent curricular engagement. In the second year, in which there were no stipends for faculty participation, the Educational Equity CoP did not convene. The Social Justice and De-gentrification and other CoPs engaged several dozen participants and began a collaborative process among students, alumni, and community activists. While we believe there would have been significant interest in continuing this programmatic element, funding did not exist to continue to support the interns who convened the CoPs. Therefore, the CoPs are no longer meeting, although some documentation of CoP work is available on the program website (socialchange.pdx.edu).

During the implementation period, over thirty-five skill-building workshops were delivered to over 525 participants. Clearly there is interest among students, alumni, faculty, and community partners in the topics addressed by the workshops. To sustain program activity once financial resources were exhausted, three of the seminars were recorded and can be viewed on the program website. These online seminars have benefited an additional 329 individuals. The two-credit seminar was offered four times, involving forty-five students, alumni, and community members.

To date, the website has had 6,598 visits and thirty-one entries on the blog from participants. Interestingly, 60 percent of the listserv membership's 850 registered users are from non-PSU email addresses. This may be an indicator of both community and alumni interest in the program. In addition, over four thousand copies of the resource guide have been distributed to PSU students. While hard copies are still available at PSU, the guide can also be accessed from the program website as an interactive document for alumni and the general public.

Lessons Learned

As can be the case with pilot programs, funding for the CEP lagged compared to growing interest. The program is currently sustained through its website presence. Program leaders recognize through reflection that there was valuable support offered for the development of these new models and strategies initially, but that much of the intensive programming needed to match participants' interest will require additional infusions of resources. This work has sparked continued interest in alumni civic engagement at PSU; as of this writing, for example, the current working draft of the 2015-2020 PSU President's Strategic Plan (Portland State University Office of the President 2015) includes a significant provision for attention to alumni engagement strategies.

Benefits

The following components of the program functioned well and may be of interest to the national conversation on alumni engagement:

"Skills for Social Change" seminar. The semi-structured format of the seminar provided a critical opportunity for students to continue and to deepen civic engagement work as they prepared for graduation and alumni life. Participants were students, alumni, and community members who were highly engaged and had some critical experiences that activated their civic agency but who needed on-going support to nurture and develop their engagement.

Use of student interns. The interns added tremendous value to the communities of practice. Utilizing support in this way throughout the year added administrative capacity for CEP and deepened on- and off-campus connectivity.

Resource guide and communication tools. The resource guide and communications infrastructure were essential in making visible these new, and sometimes unexpected, opportunities, and reaching large numbers of students, alumni, and the public.

Challenges

Two things in particular did not work as well as anticipated by program designers. The Communities of Practice were a useful structural tool and began to take on a more dynamic life with the addition of the interns. However, they did not take on their full

form as quickly or effectively as hoped. The amount of coordination required to identify, recruit, and provide programmatic support for the students, alumni, faculty, and community members was a significant challenge. Caution is also warranted regarding the website, digital CoP engagement, and other online components. While essential and effective at some level, they are inserted into an oversaturated landscape of online resources and information, making it difficult for participants to find and use the resources. In addition, online resources can operate in conflict with and draw energy away from the important face-to-face direct engagement that is essential to ongoing community-based social change work.

Another primary challenge for this type of innovation is located in higher education's intense focus on curricular engagement among current students. As noted earlier, alumni engagement has historically been approached as a fundraising endeavor, facilitated largely by development professionals who often oversee alumni association activities. New efforts to direct university resources to the community at large (as was accomplished through opening up the seminar and on-going workshops to alumni and other public community members) can be difficult in the context of traditional views of alumni involvement. However, it is clear that opportunities to foster collaborations with alumni and development offices by using engagement activities to deepen and cultivate alumni relationships are gaining interest and will continue to grow.

Hope for the Future

Through the Continuing Engagement Program, PSU piloted approaches to extend the impact of civic engagement by encouraging and supporting continuing involvement of students as they become alumni. These nascent efforts may help to inform a field that is poised to take its next evolutionary steps at the same time that social and ecological issues on a global scale demand that higher education direct its intellectual resources towards addressing "wicked" problems. Fortunately, civic engagement in higher education has evolved to a current, stronger position of acceptance as an important mechanism of scholarship and institutional strategy. Perhaps this greater level of legitimacy, coupled with the desire to engage alumni beyond donor status, will be the basis for a concentrated agenda that responds even better to the challenges of the times in which we live.

This initiative included the direct investment in supporting the continuing engagement of not only students as future alumni, but also existing alumni and community members. Looking ahead, we at PSU intend to explore areas that may be of interest to the larger civic engagement community interested in deepening alumni engagement. Specifically, we anticipate the following:

• Developing and maintaining an alumni speakers bureau (similar to that of Citizen Alum), with individuals who would be available to address classes, speak about how they continued their engagement after it was initiated at PSU (or elsewhere), and be available as mentors;

- Collaborating with community activists and organizers so that, with support from faculty, they can write and publish on areas of their social change experience and expertise as well as interact directly with students and alumni; and
- Exploring funding possibilities to design and implement mini-grants for students and alumni that incentivize and support their joint participation in a variety of pre-existing social change and civic engagement opportunities in the local region and beyond.

Conclusion

The Community Education Program pilot expanded Portland State University's community engagement model to include continuing alumni engagement. The experience demonstrated the demand for this approach among faculty, students, alumni, and community members. Students and alumni participating in the program offered insights through program feedback that the components they had participated in "ensure[d] that [I'm] able to stay involved in the long-term" and have "given me encouragement to feel empowered to help make the positive changes that I wish to see in my lifetime."

The continued expansion of community engagement beyond the university has the potential to create a more holistic student and alumni experience that can further empower individuals to be change agents in their communities. It also works toward ensuring that engagement begun in university-based civic engagement experiences becomes more of a lifelong pattern, an impact that amplifies existing programmatic outcomes. We have offered our experiment with the hope that others may learn, as we have, from our experience in and reflection on these efforts to help push and expand civic engagement in higher education beyond the university, and that it may be a resource for innovation and action in the challenging times in which we live.

References

Astin, Alexander W., Lori J. Vogelgesang, Elaine K. Ikeda, and Jennifer A. Yee. 2000. "How Service Learning Affects Students." *Higher Education.* Paper 144. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California. http://digitalcommons. unomaha.edu/slcehighered/144

Boyte, Harry C. 2008. "Against the Current: Developing the Civic Agency of Students." *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 40 (3): 8-15.

Boyte, Harry C. 2013. "Reinventing Citizenship As Public Work: Civic Learning for the Working World." In *Higher Education Exchange*, edited by David W. Brown and Deborah Witte, 14-27. Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation. Accessed November 1. https://www.kettering.org/wp-content/uploads/HEX-2013-Boyte.pdf

Bringle, Robert G., Morgan Studer, Jarod Wilson, Patti H. Clayton, and Kathryn S. Steinberg. 2011. "Designing Programs with a Purpose: To Promote Civic Engagement for Life." *Journal of Academic Ethics* 9 (2): 149-164.

Cohen, Jonathan. 2006. "Social, Emotional, Ethical, and Academic Education: Creating a Climate for Learning, Participation in Democracy, and Well-Being." *Harvard Educational Review* 76 (2): 201-237.

Colby, Anne, Elizabeth Beaumont, Thomas Ehrlich, and Josh Corngold. 2010. *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement.* San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Ellison, Julie. 2013. "Civic Engagement in the Fourth Dimension: The Real Time of Real Lives." Presentation at North Carolina Campus Compact Civic Institute, Elon, NC, February 2013. Accessed November 1. http://www.citizenalum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Citizen-Alum-Presentation-red-March-2013.pdf

Ellison, Julie. 2015. "Happy Graduation. Now What? From Citizen Students to Citizen Alums. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 47 (1): 51-53. Accessed November 1. http://www.changemag.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/2015/January-February%202015/perspectives-graduation-abstract.html

Geary Schneider, Carol. 2015. "The LEAP Challenge: Transforming for Students, Essential for Liberal Education." *Liberal Education* 101 (1/2). Accessed June 25. https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2015/winter-spring/schneider

Harkavy, Ira. 2015. "Creating the Connected Institution: Toward Realizing Benjamin Franklin and Ernest Boyer's Revolutionary Vision for American Higher Education." *Liberal Education* 101 (1/2). Accessed June 26. https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2015/winter-spring/harkavy.

Kecskes, Kevin, and Seanna Kerrigan. 2009. "Capstone Experiences: Integrating Education for Civic Engagement." In *Civic Engagement in Higher Education*, edited by Barbara Jacoby. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kecskes, Kevin, Seanna Kerrigan, and Judy Patton. 2006. "The Heart of the Matter: Aligning Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Engagement in Higher Education." *Metropolitan Universities* 17 (1): 51-61.

Kirlin, Mary. 2002. "Civic Skill Building: The Missing Component in Service Programs?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35 (3): 571-575.

Knefelkamp, L. Lee. 2008. "Civic Identity: Locating Self in Community." *Diversity & Democracy*, 11 (2): 1-3.

Lawthom, Rebecca. 2011. "Developing Learning Communities: Using Communities of Practice within Community Psychology." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 15 (1): 153-64.

Mitchell, Tania D., Virginia Visconti, Arthur Keene, and Richard Battistoni. 2011. "Educating for Democratic Leadership at Stanford, UMass, and Providence College." In *From Command to Community: A New Approach to Leadership Education in Colleges and Universities*, edited by Nicholas V. Longo and Cynthia M. Gibson, 115-48. Lebanon, NH: University of New England Press.

Musil, Caryn McTighe. 2003. "Educating for Citizenship." *Peer Review* 5 (3): 4-8. Accessed April 2. https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/educating-citizenship

New England Resource Center for Higher Education. n.d. "Carnegie Community Engagement Classification." Accessed November 4. http://nerche.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=341&Itemid=92

Osborn, David. n.d. "Resource Guide for Continuing Engagement in Social Change." University Studies, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon.

Pittman, Karen, Merita Irby, Joel Tolman, Nicole Yohalem, and Thaddeus Ferber. 2003. *Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement: Competing Priorities or Inseparable Goals?* Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc.

Portland State University Communities of Practice for Social Change. n.d. "Skills for Social Change Seminar." Accessed October 7. http://socialchange.pdx.edu/

Portland State University Office of the President. 2015. "Let Knowledge Serve the City: The Strategic Goals of Portland State University—2015-2020." Portland State University. Accessed October 7. http://www.pdx.edu/president/sites/www.pdx.edu.president/files/SP%20Public%20Outreach%20Draft%20%20%281%29.pdf

Portland State University. 2015a. "Profile." Accessed October 7. http://www.pdx.edu/profile/snapshot-portland-state

Portland State University. 2015b. "Topic Team Report: Community Partnerships, Engagement and Civic Leadership." Accessed October 7. http://www.pdx.edu/president/sites/www.pdx.edu.president/files/CPECL%20Topic%20Team%20Draft%20for%20Review.pdf

Regents of the University of Michigan. n.d. "Citizen Alum." Accessed October 31. http://www.citizenalum.org/.

Vogelgesang, Lori, and Alexander Astin. 2005. "Research Report: Post-College Civic Engagement among Graduates." Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California.

Weinberg, Adam. 2014. "A Vision for the Liberal Arts: An Interview with Adam Weinberg." In *Higher Education Exchange*, edited by David W. Brown and Deborah Witte, 31-41. Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation. Accessed November 1. https://www.kettering.org/sites/default/files/product-downloads/HEX-2014-final_0.pdf

Wiewel, Wim, Kevin Kecskes, and Sheila Martin. 2011. "Portland State University's Second (R)evolution: Partnering to Anchor the Institution in Sustainable Communities." *Metropolitan Universities* 22 (2): 8-20.

Author Information

David Osborn teaches at Portland State University and has been involved in a wide variety of social movements, including his current engagement in the climate justice movement. Osborn created and launched the Continuing Engagement Program at PSU in 2012 to support the continued engagement of students, alumni, and community members in community-based social change.

Jennifer Alkezweeny is the teaching, learning, and engagement associate for Portland State University in the Office of Academic Innovation. Jennifer has over a decade of experience creating and institutionalizing community-based learning programs, providing professional development and coaching for faculty, supporting capacity-building opportunities for community partner organizations, and designing curricular service opportunities for students.

Dr. Kevin Kecskes is associate professor of public administration and serves as faculty adviser for the undergraduate civic leadership academic program. In addition he teaches graduate students in the MPA program in the Hatfield School of Government. Previously, Kecskes served at PSU for a decade in the university-wide positions of director for community-university partnerships and associate vice provost for engagement.

David Osborn
University Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207
E-mail: dosborn@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-208-6775

Jennifer Alkezweeny
Office of Academic Innovation
Portland State University
PO Box 751-OAI
Portland, OR 97207
E-mail: alkez@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-2752

Kevin Kecskes
Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
College of Urban and Public Affairs
Portland State University
PO Box 751-PA
Portland, OR 97207
E-mail: kecskesk@pdx.edu
Telephone: 503-725-8136

CUMU
Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

U.S. Universities

Buffalo State College (SUNY College at Buffalo)
California State University, Dominguez Hills
California State University, Fresno
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Los Angeles
California State University, San Bernardino
California State University, San Marcos
Cleveland State University
College of Staten Island, CUNY
Coppin State University
Drexel University
Florida International University
Indiana University Northwest
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Marquette University
Maryville University
Medgar Evers College
Metropolitan Community College of Omaha
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Metropolitan State University
Miami Dade College
Missouri State University
Morgan State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Oakland University
Ohio State University
Old Dominion University
Pace University
Portland State University
Rhode Island College
Robert Morris University
Rutgers University, Camden Campus
Rutgers University, Newark Campus
Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Syracuse University
Temple University
Texas State University-San Marcos
Towson University
University of Arkansas Fort Smith
University of Arkansas Little Rock
University of Baltimore
University of Central Oklahoma
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
University of Colorado, Denver
University of the District of Columbia
University of Houston Downtown
University of Houston System
University of La Verne
University of Louisville
University of Massachusetts – Boston
University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth
University of Massachusetts – Lowell
University of Michigan – Dearborn
University of Michigan – Flint
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri – Kansas City
University of Missouri – St. Louis
University of Nebraska at Omaha
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
University of North Carolina at Wilmington
University of North Florida
University of North Texas at Dallas
University of Pennsylvania
University of South Carolina Upstate
University of Southern Indiana
University of Southern Maine
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
University of Wisconsin – Green Bay
Valdosta State University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Wagner College
Washington State University – Tri-Cities
Washington State University – Vancouver
Wayne State University
Weber State University
Widener University
Worcester State University
Wright State University

International Universities

MacEwan University (Canada)
York University (Canada)

For information about membership in the Coalition, please contact:
Bobbie Laur, Coalition Administrator
CUMU Headquarters, Towson University
8000 York Road, Towson, MD 21252
410-704-3700
cumu@towson.edu • http://cumuonline.org/