Council on Engagement and Outreach
Association of Public and Land Grant Universities

White Paper

Centrality of Engagement in Higher Education

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Core Principles

The centrality of engagement is critical to the success of higher education in the future.

- Today's higher education leaders find themselves at a difficult and important decision point.

- A coalescence of political, social and economic pressures may push institutions to consider disengaging from their communities.

- However, a more comprehensive level of engagement between the university and its many communities will foster stronger support from multiple sources for the future of higher education and society.

- Through engagement we can shift the established framework of higher education to a stronger level of societal relevance that transforms us into a stronger, wealthier and more equitable society while advancing institutional goals.

- Engagement is essential to most effectively achieving the overall purpose of the university which is focused on the knowledge enterprise. The university, within the broader societal system, has responsibility to fuel knowledge creation, transfer and application to enhance societal purposes.

Today's engagement is scholarly; is an aspect of learning and discovery; and enhances society and higher education.

- Through the engagement model, the community and university partners work to co-create solutions on a local, national and global level.

- Undergirding today's approach to engagement is the understanding that not all knowledge and expertise resides in the academy, and that both expertise and great learning opportunities in teaching and scholarship also reside in non-academic settings.

- Engagement is an umbrella that covers every good practice in teaching, research and service. By recommitting to fulfilling their societal contract, public and land-grant universities can fulfill their promise as institutions that truly produce knowledge that benefits society and prepares students for productive citizenship in a democratic society.

- This new engagement also posits a new framework for scholarship that moves away from emphasizing products (e.g., publications) to emphasizing impact.

New approaches must be taken to embed engagement into the central core of the institution.

- To thrive in the 21st Century, higher education must move engagement from the margin to the mainstream of its research, teaching and service work.

- To fully embed engagement into the central core of the institution, it must be scholarly; cut across the mission of teaching, research and service; be reciprocal and mutually beneficial; and embrace the process and values of civil democracy (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011).

- Engagement should be aligned with key institutional priorities.

- Engagement projects and initiatives should be viewed as mechanisms for making engagement an essential vehicle to accomplish higher education's more important goals.

- For institutions to fully incorporate engagement into all aspects of the institutional mission it must fully address issues related to structure, budget and operation.

- Faculty involvement and support for engagement are essential for furthering the institutionalization of engagement.

Introduction

Commentary on American public higher education describes a landscape beset by challenges and opportunities related to its relevance and cost. This paper proposes that community and public engagement, as aspects of learning and discovery, are central to addressing these challenges and opportunities. Through engagement with local and broader communities, we seek a means to expand and shift the established internally-focused, discipline-based framework of higher education to one that focuses on a stronger level of societal relevance that improves both society and the overarching goals of higher education.

Historically, in a different societal context, higher education reached out to communities in an expert model of knowledge delivery. That connection with communities has transitioned over the years to a more engaged model where community and university partners co-create solutions. This occurs at local, national and global levels. Today and in the future, public universities need to build upon their experience of university-community relationships and transition to engagement being more central to the core of the institution. Consequently higher education can continue to contribute fully to the advancement of the United States as a stronger, wealthier and more equitable country.

This white paper offers a historical and philosophical context that can be used by higher education institutions to have a deeper conversation regarding community engagement and its role in informing the discovery and learning missions. Initially we describe historical adherence to this principle and then define engagement among current higher education communities. Next we discuss the role of the engaged university in a dynamic future society which is dependent upon new and advanced sources of knowledge.

Today's higher education leaders find themselves at a difficult and important decision point. A coalescence of political, social and economic pressures may push higher education institutions to consider disengaging from their communities as they must find ways to reduce staff, consolidate programs, and focus energies on particular legislative agendas. However, we posit that a more comprehensive level of engagement between the university and its many communities will foster stronger support from multiple sources for the future of higher education and society. This will encompass new forms of diverse partnerships across the breadth of the economic, social, educational, health and quality of life societal concerns that exploit and enhance our discovery and learning expertise. We also posit that this imperative to make engagement a more central feature of higher education is perhaps strongest for public and land grant institutions.

Historical Framework

The Morrill Act initially was grounded in the idea that an educated public was essential for sustaining democracy (Bonnen, 1998). It was an idea and a set of core values (Fitzgerald & Simon, under review) about the ability of society to provide broad access to education, to generate the professional workers needed for an expanding industrial society, and to improve the welfare of farmers and industrial workers (Bonnen, 1998). These values were grounded on the assumption that knowledge is a primary foundation for the creation of wealth and prosperity. America was crafting a unique system of higher education, focused on efforts to develop the agricultural and manufacturing needs of an expanding nation in a maturing industrial and market economy. Public land grant college faculty, students, farmers, and business owners were invested in generating the infrastructure necessary to transform an emergent nation into an industrial and technologically based economy.

The full story of the value and uniqueness of public land-grant universities is told within the context of the additional acts that set the stage for their impact upon society. The 1887 Hatch Act supported and emphasized the importance of research in meeting the needs of a growing society. Through research in agriculture and related fields new knowledge is created, not only to advance both the production of food and agricultural products but also to improve the health of Americans through our understanding of food consumption. The Smith Lever Act of 1914 created a system and infrastructure for sharing such discoveries with the public. Through the Extension system, a formal infrastructure for outreach in agriculture, home economics and related subjects was established.

These three acts (Morrill 1862, Hatch 1887 and Smith-Lever 1914) created a public system for connecting universities and citizens to build a stronger democratic society. But as our society evolved and grew more complex, knowledge discovery in the form of applied research was inadequate to answer many core questions in the biological, natural and social sciences, and the importance of advanced studies began to emerge.

Because there was little structure and few working examples to guide nascent graduate programs, presidents of 11 private and three public universities met in 1900 and created the American Association of Universities (AAU). Their goal was to establish regulatory coherence and standards for advanced degree programs, with particular attention given to the sciences, and to motivate students to seek advanced degrees at American universities rather than those in Europe. It was not long before American higher education adopted the German model of advanced study and laboratory research, which gave priority to knowledge creation rather than to resolution of societal problems.

This new attention to the generation of disciplinary knowledge also created different expectations for faculty, and in turn, established new criteria for faculty evaluation and retention. By the end of World War II, the AAU membership was nearly balanced between private and public institutions. The goals set forth by the pioneers of 1900 were achieved, but after World War II faculty increasingly became viewed as "experts" whose knowledge was widely seen both as having limited applicability beyond the area of their specialization and being disconnected from community context and community input.

Following World War II, the relationship among universities, their science faculties, and the federal government changed, partly in response to the establishment of the National Science Foundation, the expansion of the National Institutes of Health, and the need for new technologies to support an emergent world power. The post-war military industrial complex had deep connections to America's research universities, especially its public and land grant universities. These connections exacerbated the impact of the German model for graduate education and laid the groundwork for transforming the criteria for evaluating faculty performance. Disciplinary rather than social needs drove faculty and students into well defined and increasingly bounded disciplinary units. Research universities increasingly shifted public higher education's focus on the resolution of societal problems to that of achievement within academic disciplines, and society shifted its focus away from viewing higher education as a valued public good (Pasque, 2006).

A New Kind of Engagement

Attention to the origins of the land grant idea resurfaced toward the end of the 20th century with assertions that higher education had drifted too far from its public purpose, especially in regard to its teaching mission (Boyer, 1990) and the preparation of students for productive citizenship. Although the mission statements of colleges and universities continued to purport a commitment to social purposes, higher education's commitment to addressing current and important societal needs did not occupy a prominent or visible place in the academy (Votruba, 1992). Critics called for renewed emphasis on the quality of the student experience; a broader definition of scholarship-based teaching, research, and service; implementation of true university-community partnerships based on reciprocity and mutual benefit (Ramaley, 2000); and an intentional focus on the resolution of a wide range of societal problems. This contemporary approach of serving the public good brought to the academy a new kind of engagement. The new model has required institutions of higher education to rethink their structure, epistemology, pedagogy; integration of teaching, research and service missions; and reward systems.

Undergirding this renewed approach to engagement is the understanding that not all knowledge and expertise reside in the academy, and that both expertise and great learning opportunities in teaching and scholarship also reside in non-academic settings. This broadened engagement philosophy is built on understanding that most societal issues are complex and inherently multidisciplinary. The kinds of specialized knowledge that dominated the latter part of the 20th century are inadequate to address fully today's complex societal issues.

This new engagement also posits a new framework for scholarship that moves away from emphasizing products (e.g., publications) to emphasizing impact. Boyer (1990) suggested that the definition of scholarship should be reframed as consisting of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. The intent was to alter faculty roles so that teaching and application were viewed as equal to research. Others argued that faculty performance should be assessed along a continuum of behaviors and social impacts, rather than by the number of publications that appear in a restricted set of perceived tier journals (Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997). Glassick et al. identified six standards for assessing faculty performance: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective

critique. Boyer challenged higher education to renew its covenant with society and to embrace the problems of society in shared partnerships with communities. He targeted land-grant institutions in particular because the land grant idea intimately embraced knowledge application and service to society (Bonnen, 1998). Shortly after Boyer's clarion calls for reform in higher education, the Kellogg Commission (2000, 2001) issued a series of reports challenging higher education to become more engaged with communities through collaborative partnerships rather than as experts with pre-conceived solutions to complex problems.

The Commission's challenge requires enormous change within higher education. As Boyte (2002) points out, "to create serious change at a research university requires change in the culture and understanding of research," and in institutional values related to teaching and service. For example, it speaks to the need to "embed change priorities in core reporting, budgetary, and accountability structures of the university" (Boyte, 2002).

From their definition of engagement, members of the Kellogg Commission generated seven characteristics of effective societal engagement, which included: being responsive to community concerns; involving community partners in co-creative approaches to problem solving; maintaining neutrality in order to serve a mediating role when there are divergent community views; integrating engagement with the institution's teaching, research, and service missions; aligning engagement throughout the university; and working with community partners to jointly seek funding for community projects.

> By engagement, we refer to a redesign of basic university functions so the institution becomes even more productively involved with communities, however community is defined. Going well beyond most conceptions of public service, which emphasize a one-way transfer of university expertise to the public, the engagement ideal envisions new public/university partnerships defined by mutual respect for what each partner brings to the table.
>
> – Kellogg Commission, 2000, p. 22

Definition of Engagement

Shortly after the final Kellogg Commission report was published, other definitions of engagement were developed. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation's Committee on Engagement defined engagement as "…the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good" (Fitzgerald et al., 2005). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching defined community engagement as "…the 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" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 39). In addition, national higher education associations and organizations such as the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the American Association of Community Colleges, the Council of Independent Colleges, Campus Compact, Imagining America, and others have developed and formalized similar definitions of engagement.

The collective impact of these definitions implies that if engagement is fully embedded within the core teaching, research, and service missions of the institution it must be distinguished by at least four foundational characteristics:

1. It must be *scholarly*. A scholarship-based model of engagement embraces both *the act of engaging* (bringing universities and communities together) and the *product of engagement* (the spread of scholarship focused, evidence-based practices in communities).

2. It must *cut across the mission* of teaching, research, and service; rather than being a separate activity, engaged scholarship is a particular approach to campus-community collaboration.

3. It must be *reciprocal and mutually beneficial*; university and community partners engage in mutual planning, implementation, and assessment or programs and activities.

4. It must embrace the processes and values of a *civil democracy* (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011).

Thus, engaged scholarship embraces knowledge discovery, application, dissemination and preservation. Engaged scholarship is about knowledge "that continually pushes the boundaries of understanding; that is at the frontier of relevancy, innovation, and creativity; that is organized and openly communicated to build capacity for innovation and creativity; that creates energy, synergy, and community independence to assess projects and processes, providing a reason and a capacity to gain new knowledge; and that is accessible across the chasms of geographic boundaries and socioeconomic situations" (Simon, 2011, p. 115).

A Seven-Part Test of Engagement

1. *Responsiveness*
   We need to ask ourselves periodically if we are listening to the communities, regions, and states we serve.
2. *Respect for partners*
   Throughout this report we have tried to…encourage joint academic-community definitions of problems, solutions, and definitions of success.
3. *Academic neutrality*
   Of necessity, some of our engagement activities will involve contentious issues disputes (that)…have profound social, economic, and political consequences.
4. *Accessibility*
   Can we honestly say that our expertise is equally accessible to all the constituencies of concern within our states and communities, including minority constituents?
5. *Integration*
   A commitment to interdisciplinary work is probably indispensable to an integrated approach.
6. *Coordination*
   A corollary to integration, the coordination issue involves making sure the left hand knows what the right hand is doing.
7. *Resource partnerships*
   The final test asks whether the resources committed to the task are sufficient.

– Kellogg Commission, 2000

In 2005, the American Council on Education (ACE) launched a campaign to reclaim for public higher education the identity as a public good worthy of public support. The ACE survey and

campaign were not specifically aimed at promoting the concept of engagement, yet their conclusions offer strong support for the centrality of its role.

Engagement is an umbrella that covers every good practice in teaching, research and service:

- It enriches the learning experience for students.

- It improves research by broadening academic thinking and creating results with greater impact and relevance.

- It supports a curriculum that improves student development as scholars, researchers, leaders and engaged citizens.

- It advances opportunities for interdisciplinary research and teaching.

- It advances opportunities for internationalizing the university through shared research, scholarship, and service.

- It helps universities demonstrate accountability in an era replete with calls for greater scrutiny and demands for return on investment.

- It improves relationships between universities and their communities.

- It expands innovative practices by allowing researchers to test ideas in a real-world setting.

- It generates unforeseen outcomes that stimulate creativity and innovation.

According to one university president, a fully engaged university "…would be grounded in a strong intellectual foundation that relates it to the other mission dimensions. The voice of the public would be institutionalized at every level. Key institutional leaders would be selected and evaluated based, in part, on their capacity to lead the public engagement function. Faculty and unit-level incentives and rewards would encourage and support the scholarship of engagement. Faculty selection, orientation, and development would highlight the importance of the public engagement mission. The curriculum would include public engagement as a way to both support community progress and enhance student learning. Institutional awards and recognitions would reflect the importance of excellence across the full breadth of the mission, including engagement. The planning and budgeting process would reflect the centrality of public engagement as a core institutional mission. And the university would take seriously its public intellectual role and have the courage to be a safe place for difficult public conversations" (Votruba, 2011, p xii).

The Engaged University

The engaged university is one that produces research of significance that benefits the society and educates students for productive roles in a modern and diverse world. These goals are achieved

by maintaining high standards for scholarship and through expanded collaboration and partnership with entities and organizations outside of the academy.

Extant definitions do not fully clarify the covenantal relationship between higher education and society called for by the Kellogg Commission, nor do they easily translate into issues related to institutional alignment of engagement (Klein & Sorra, 1996; Meyerson & Martin, 1987). For higher education to fully incorporate community engagement into all aspects of institutional mission, it must openly address issues related to faculty roles and responsibilities, student learning environments, institutional benchmarks and outcome measures, institution-specific definition(s) of engagement, rewards for exemplars of engaged teaching/learning, research, and service, and community involvement in community engagement (Austin & Beck, 2011, p. 247).

Among the many characteristics of highly engaged institutions that Stanton (2007) has identified are the following. Such institutions:

- Have a firmly held shared belief that improving the life of communities will lead to excellence in the core missions of the institution—research, teaching, and service—and improvements in community life.

- Seek out and cultivate reciprocal relationships with the communities of focus and enter into "shared tasks"—including service and research—to enhance the quality of life of those communities.

- Collaborate with community members to design partnerships that build on and enhance community assets.

- Encourage and reward faculty members' engaged research, community-focused instruction (including service-learning, professional service, and public work) in institutional recognition, reward, and promotion systems.

- Provide programs, curricula, and other opportunities for students (undergraduate and graduate) to develop civic competencies and civic habits, including research opportunities that help students create knowledge and do scholarship relevant to and grounded in public problems within rigorous methodological frameworks.

- Promote student co-curricular civic engagement opportunities.

- Have executive leaders and high administrators who inculcate a civic ethos throughout the institution by giving voice to it in public forums, creating infrastructure to support it, and establishing policies that sustain it.

The advancement and institutionalization of engagement within higher education can be organized by five dimensions: philosophy and mission; faculty involvement and support; student leadership and support; community

> Faculty involvement and support for engagement are the strongest predictors for furthering the institutionalization of engagement.

partnership, involvement and leadership; and institutional support and infrastructure (Furco, 2010). Embedded in these dimensions are 23 components that include alignment of engagement efforts with key institutional priorities, having in place a coordinating body that sets standards of excellence, and strong support for engaged scholarship within academic departments and disciplinary cultures. Studies have found that when these essential components are in place, the institutionalization of engagement is more likely to be advanced (Bell et al., 2000; Furco, 2010).

Institutional Alignment

The challenges for higher education involve changes in how discovery and learning are valued within the context of institutional mission, student educational experiences, and faculty rewards (O'Meara, 2011). As communities of scholars, universities must seek solutions to enhanced engagement that are consistent with their scholarly purposes. Within the context of community engagement, student experiential learning, and scholarship-driven service, university-community partnerships pose difficult challenges. As has been implied in the aforementioned sections, they demand interdisciplinary cooperation, rejection of disciplinary turfism, changes in faculty reward systems, a refocusing of unit and institution missions, and the breakdown of firmly established and isolated silos. Simultaneously, higher education must continue to focus on the hallmarks of scholarship, accountability and evidential criteria.

Systems change is not new for higher education as witnessed by the shifts referred to previously. The systems change of today does not involve abandoning standards of evidence or rigor of inquiry. It does demand a more inclusive approach to methodology, the recognition that one's scholarly work is defined more broadly than by peer-reviewed articles, and the recognition that knowledge within community is different from knowledge within discipline and that sustainable community change requires the integration of each knowledge source. Holland (2006) observes

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Five Dimensions and 23 Components Related to Institutionalization of Engagement

I. **Philosophy and mission of community engagement**
   Definition of community engagement
   Strategic planning
   Alignment with institutional mission
   Alignment with educational reform efforts
II. **Faculty support for and involvement in community engagement**
   Faculty knowledge and awareness
   Faculty involvement and support
   Faculty leadership
   Faculty incentives and rewards
III. **Student support for and involvement in community engagement**
   Student awareness
   Student opportunities
   Student leadership
   Student incentives and rewards
IV. **Community participation and partnerships**
   Community partner awareness
   Partnerships built on mutual understanding
   Community partner voice and leadership
V. **Institutional support for community engagement**
   Coordinating entity
   Policy-making entity
   Staffing
   Funding
   Administrator support
   Departmental support
   Evaluation and assessment
   Long-term visioning and planning

− Furco (2010)

that "Too often, faculty assume that in a campus-community partnership, the faculty role is to teach, the students' role is to learn, and the community partner's role is to provide a laboratory or set of needs to address or to explore." In fact, successful university-community partnerships will involve all participants as learners and teachers in shared efforts to seek solution-focused outcomes to society's intractable "wicked" problems.

Institutional Alignment: A Managerial Perspective

Within the constructs established by an organization's purpose (as variously described by mission and vision statements, strategic plans, and most importantly its actual pattern of strategic behavior), managers continually must strive to align streams of revenue with the organization's categories of expenditures. Doing this requires that, over time, total expenditures don't exceed total revenues. Further, the justification of the amount expended within each category needs to be "in synch" with organizational purpose as well as with the types of revenues earned. For managers of universities, as well as most other organizations, alignment of revenue and expenditure streams is a critically important managerial responsibility.

Financial alignment becomes operational through two types of interrelated management tactics: differential allocation across units and/or functions and cross subsidization. Differential allocation occurs when senior managers distribute funds available that are not directly earned by specific functions and units. General funding from the state and some of the revenues from donors are sources of funds for differential allocations. Cross subsidization (using excess earnings from one type of activity to offset deficits in another type of activity) commonly occurs and certainly can be appropriate in well run organizations. The test of whether cross subsidization is appropriate hinges upon its justification, typically couched in terms of organizational purpose and the long run viability of the entity.

When the amount of the state's general funding was large relative to the other revenue streams, nagging questions about cross subsidization existed but were generally muted. However, as the state's share of total revenues has plummeted, the managerial challenge of keeping outflows in check with inflows and of addressing the appropriate type and amount of expenditures has become a daunting task. The difficulty of this task is intensified within academia because oftentimes the organization's managerial information systems are insufficient to deal effectively with such management issues. Existing financial accounting systems tended to be geared to documenting that funds were spent appropriately but not necessarily whether the expenditures were organizationally most effective.

Making the Case for Engagement

In financially stressful times, it is necessary and appropriate for senior university managers to critically examine funding allocations to all of the organization's functions. Scrutiny of the role of the engagement function clearly will be part of that agenda. Of four types of responses to such scrutiny, the first three are important but are not critical to achieving the institution's fundamental purpose:

- U.S. public higher education and, in particular, the historic mission of the land grant universities, has a heritage of service.

- Efforts within the engagement function demonstrate to stakeholders in the state that the general public funding provided to the university is delivering value to taxpayers, beyond those who are parents of students currently attending the university.

- The university has a role as a good neighbor similar to the concept of corporate social responsibility within the private sector.

The fourth rationale is that engagement is essential to most effectively achieving the overall purpose of the university which is focused on the knowledge enterprise. The university, within the broader societal system, has responsibility to fuel knowledge creation, transfer, and application to enhance societal purposes. A robust engagement function is necessary to most effectively achieve that knowledge system responsibility.

While universities today, especially public and land grant universities, are key players in the creation of new knowledge processes, the university is not the sole or even primary source of knowledge. Therefore a framework is needed that assists us in describing knowledge processes, one that transcends the notion of what is required to move one innovation from the lab to the marketplace. A more useful perspective frames the enterprise as one that is focused on continual knowledge creation, transfer, and implementation. That framework must recognize the systematic need for creation of the next discovery as well as application of current innovations.

> Engagement is essential to most effectively achieving the overall purpose of the university which is focused on the knowledge enterprise. The university, within the broader societal system, has responsibility to fuel knowledge creation, transfer and application to enhance societal purposes.

Knowledge creation and knowledge management became managerial buzzwords in the 1990s. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) provided a particularly useful evaluation of the process by which firms employ systems to generate decision-relevant knowledge. Although their approach was illustrated within the context of the commercial firm, the underlying processes are relevant to non-commercial knowledge advances as well. Central to their analysis is the identification of two types of knowledge (explicit and tacit) and the realization that the interaction of both types is critical to a knowledge system.

Explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that is transmittable in formal, systematic language. Definitions, equations and theories in journal articles and textbooks are examples of explicit knowledge. Structured educational experiences typically emphasize the value of explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge refers to the "mental models" that all decision makers possess of "how the world works." Tacit knowledge also can be thought of as know-how, experience and skill that we all use.

Figure 1 illustrates the knowledge spiral associated with effective knowledge systems (Sonka et. al., 2000). This figure stresses the necessary interaction of explicit and tacit knowledge to form a

system for continual knowledge creation, application and renewal. The upper left-hand quadrant, labeled *observation*, focuses on the decision maker's ability to recognize problems and opportunities, often from subtle, non-written cues. The experienced manager (whether a farmer, social worker, or researcher) who seemingly can sense that performance problems exist even when they are invisible to others exemplifies this tacit, observation phase. The *documentation* (upper right-hand) quadrant recognizes that tacit observation by itself often is insufficient. The process of making tacit knowledge explicit, which occurs in the documentation phase, is necessary for effective communication but this step also results in problem clarification. The lower right-hand quadrant, *analysis*, refers to the type of intensive study and investigation that we typically assign to analytical problem solving and research. The fourth section of Figure 1, labeled *implementation*, recognizes that there are tacit knowledge creation opportunities associated with the application of recommendations and technologies that result from formal analysis.

The circular set of arrows shown in Figure 1 illustrates the knowledge spiral concept and emphasizes that effective knowledge creation is a continual process, incorporating both tacit and explicit knowledge. This illustration appears, at least partially, to explain the historic effectiveness of the land grant university/U.S. Department of Agriculture research/extension system in U.S. agriculture.

Figure 1. Knowledge Conversion in a Knowledge Creating System
(Adapted from Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995)
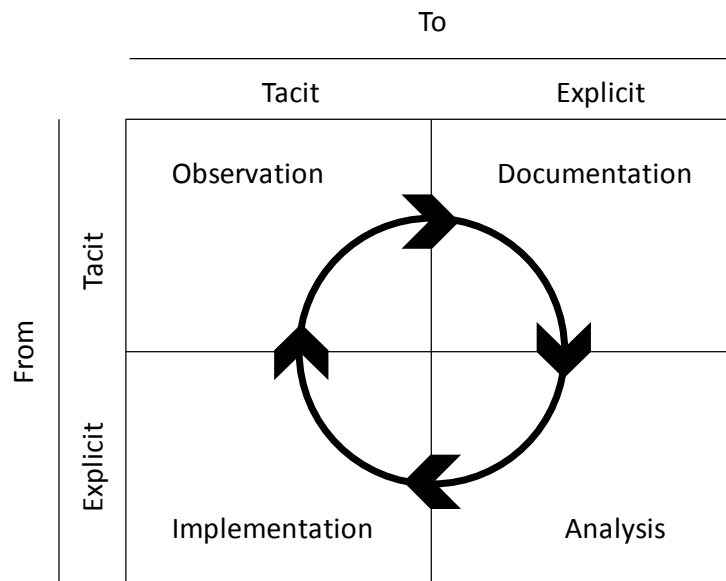
The functions of the university can be linked to the four quadrants of Figure 1. The lower right-hand quadrant aligns with a traditional research perspective, where the scholar's analysis begins with explicit knowledge expressed in journal articles and ends when the results of that analysis are detailed in a new journal article. The lecture mode of teaching similarly can be linked to the lower right hand quadrant, with the process of transferring knowledge in textbooks to students

being assessed by performance on written examinations. Experiential and service learning activities, however, align directly with the lower left hand quadrant of Figure 1. In such settings, students can learn how explicit textbook knowledge applies in their domain of interest. Engagement is the connector function that enables the "spiral" in Figure 1 to tie the overall process together. The feed forward portion of the loop (the upper right quadrant) relates to a key aspect of engagement: providing the mechanisms which increase the likelihood that the next analysis will respond to pressing societal needs as well as advance explicit scholarship.

The knowledge spiral notion illustrates to some extent how an engaged university should function. Ideally, discovery and learning are integrated and enriched through engagement to allow for more effective creation, application and then re-creation of knowledge that serves society's needs. Therefore the reason to strive to be an engaged university is that the engaged university performs its fundamental purpose more effectively because of its engagement capabilities. We posit that this type of institution is one that reflects the goals and purposes of public and land grant universities.

Institutional Assessment

Because engagement is about doing scholarly work, it can be assessed, measured, and counted from both university and community perspectives. Ultimately, the measurement of engagement can provide evidence about the institution's fulfillment of its commitment to engagement scholarship. It can be used for institutional planning and provides a tool for assessing the degree to which engagement is aligned throughout the university. It can provide evidence of the organization's support for engagement by detailing its involvement with community, business, and economic development; technology transfer; professional development; enhancements to the quality of life; and transformational changes in education. And, to the extent that faculty have opportunities to tell qualitative stories, the engagement mission can help build public support for higher education as a public good (McGovern & Curley, 2011).

In addition, measuring engagement activities can provide units and departments with criteria for including scholarly engagement as part of the tenure and promotion processes, thereby achieving and fostering institutional change at the level of individual faculty and staff. As such, benchmarks may ultimately provide evidence of reward systems for faculty and staff that include an engagement dimension; curricular impacts of student engagement; applications of the dissemination of research and transfer of knowledge; meaningful engagement with communities; and applications of the evidence of partnership satisfaction.

Charting the Future

American higher education continues to evolve as it seeks to meet the demands of these new times. Today's colleges and universities must adapt to new technologies and maintain standards while resources dwindle during a challenging economy, incorporate emerging and innovative research methods, and respond to a substantial turnover in personnel as retirements hit an all time high. In addition, they must also respond to the increased calls to serve and address society's most challenging needs. This is evidenced by the increased focus on engagement among regional accreditation boards, federal funding agencies (such as the National Science Foundation and

National Institutes of Health), college ranking systems, disciplinary associations, alumni, and students.

The challenge for higher education is to find ways to make engagement central to their work in ways that avoid tokenism. Already, too many institutions have responded to the call for engagement by building programs and initiatives that have had little or no real effect on the broader, overall mission and work of the academy. Most, if not all, institutions of higher education support a broad range of community engagement projects and initiatives. Yet, to make engagement a more central feature of the academy, these engagement projects need to be viewed less as discrete, short-term efforts that function alongside the core work of the academy and more as mechanisms for making engagement an essential vehicle to accomplish higher education's most important goals.

> To thrive in the 21st Century, higher education must move engagement from the margin to the mainstream of its research, teaching, and service work.

To thrive in the 21st Century, higher education must move engagement from the margin to the mainstream of its research, teaching, and service work. No place is this more essential than within public and land grant universities. By recommitting to fulfilling their societal contract, public and land-grant universities can fulfill their promise as institutions that truly produce knowledge that benefits society and prepares students for productive citizenship in a democratic society.

Next Steps

Aligning engaged scholarship with existing university structures is no easy task. It requires a deep look at funding models, reward systems, and policies governing relationships with external organizations. To achieve the goal of making engagement central to the university's discovery and learning missions we recommend that APLU should:

- Adopt the principles laid out in this white paper.

- Approve a resolution in support of engagement scholarship as defined and illustrated in this white paper.

At the institutional level, we recommend that administrators should take responsibility for:

- Fostering conversations within their institutions that support and lead to centrality of engagement.

- Recognizing and leveraging forces that will move the institution toward the centrality of engagement as an integral part of discovery and learning. These forces may include economic development needs, student commitment to applied learning, faculty who desire to change from the status quo, and stakeholders outside the institution committed to shared societal or economic outcomes.

- Evaluating the merits of engagement within historically prominent outreach units (i.e. extension, continuing education, agricultural experiment stations, public media and medical centers) and their contributions to an engaged institution. These and many other organizations have a strong history of work with the community. Many have had successes in transitioning from outreach to highly engaged community work. In other instances there is potential for substantive elevation of their impact within the university and community.

- Facilitating cultural change that supports the centrality of engagement as a contributing factor to the effectiveness and viability of higher education. This can be done by:

    - ☐ Creating opportunities for engagement to be embraced by faculty
    - ☐ Stressing the scholarly characteristic of engagement efforts
    - ☐ Clarifying the distinction between outreach and engagement
    - ☐ Ensuring that faculty governance is involved in determining the role of engagement scholarship in the promotion and tenure process
    - ☐ Supporting student, faculty and staff professional development that will socialize and empower them to conduct scholarly engagement
    - ☐ Providing infrastructure support for community/university partnership development
    - ☐ Developing an understanding of the different norms of engagement and engaged scholarship across the disciplines
    - ☐ Celebrating and leveraging success

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Resources

APLU National Conference
Council on Engagement and Outreach
Dallas, Texas
November 2010

Session on: Centrality of Engagement in Higher Education
Convener: Hiram E. Fitzgerald
Session Moderator: Andrew Furco

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APLU Council on Engagement and Outreach
Summer Meeting
Portland, Oregon
June 2011

Session on: Centrality of Engagement in Higher Education
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        …and many other colleagues who shared comments during and after the session.

APLU National Conference
San Francisco, November 2011
CEO Session on Centrality of Engagement in Higher Education
Chair & Facilitator: Karen Bruns, The Ohio State University

Presenters:
        Hiram E. Fitzgerald   Michigan State University
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This session was the final public vetting of the White Paper and many fine-tuning edits from the
audience were incorporated into the final document.