

# CALLING THE QUESTION:

Is Higher Education Ready to Commit to Community Engagement?

**A Wingspread Statement 2004**

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*On behalf of Wingspread Conference Participants*

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## ***A Larger Purpose***

### ***A Wingspread Statement***

On April 18 and 19, 2004, 41 leaders and practitioners from engaged institutions across the country assembled at Wingspread in Racine, Wisconsin. Hosted by The Johnson Foundation in the magnificent Frank Lloyd Wright-designed conference center, we gathered for two days to assess progress and look forward.

This document reflects the collaborative work of the assembled participants of the Wingspread conference: Institutionalizing University Engagement. We also thank Ira Harkavy, Elizabeth Hollander and Judith Ramaley for their thoughtful counsel and for the insights of their work, from which they have graciously allowed their ideas to be shared.

We thank the staff of The Johnson Foundation, especially Carole Johnson, for their invaluable help in shaping the conference and creating an environment in which our best work was possible. To learn more about the Foundation, and about Wingspread, see [www.johnsonfdn.org](http://www.johnsonfdn.org).

We also thank our funders, The University of Cincinnati and The Milwaukee Idea of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, without which the conference would not have been possible. Our conference hosts, President Nancy Zimpher and Interim Chancellor Bob Greenstreet set the bar high from the beginning both for substantive discussion and concrete outcomes. Special gratitude to Stephen Percy, facilitator extraordinaire, who brought focus and coherence to our deliberations at Wingspread and continuing conversations. And, finally, many thanks to Mary Jane Brukardt who took the lead in organizing and drafting this report.

## Summary

### *Half full, half empty or shaken up?*

For those who seek to measure the health of higher education in this new century, the proverbial glass may be half full or half empty. Half full as evidenced in the trend to increasing enrollment, expanding fields of study at home and abroad, and new opportunities for commercial partnerships and technology transfer. Or it may be half empty, with decreasing public support, mission drift and growing competition from for-profit and international institutions. There is a third viewpoint, however, that suggests the glass may just need to be shaken up a bit—and community-university engagement may be the best way to do so.

Since Ernest Boyer called for higher education to claim a "larger clarity of direction in the nation's life" colleges and universities across the nation have found in community engagement a unique opportunity to renew the civic mission of higher education and to strengthen and expand on the learning and discovery mission that has been at the foundation of the academy. Faculty and staff are energizing their scholarship and research through community collaborations, students are discovering the value of experiential and service-learning, and academic and civic leaders are finding new, mutually-beneficial partnerships that unite town and gown in enriching the common good.

### *The challenge of engagement*

Unfortunately, a decade of "calls to action," begun by the Kellogg Commission's report on university engagement and the 1999 Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University, has not produced a flowering of transformed institutions. While 500 presidents and chancellors have signed the Campus Compact Declaration to commit higher education to the democratic ideal and many institutions have created centers for outreach or encouraged professional faculty to partner in new and creative ways, engagement has not become the defining characteristic of higher education's mission nor has it been embraced across disciplines, departments and institutions.

*Our goal in calling the question is nothing less than the transformation of our nation's colleges and universities. We believe engagement is the best hope for the future of higher education.*

This is not because engagement does not work—an increasing body of scholarship demonstrates overwhelmingly that it both benefits the academy and community. And it is not for lack of knowledge on how it can be implemented—case studies for institutions large and small, public and private, provide a wealth of information on how to form partnerships, integrate engagement into curriculum and assess progress. Rather, engagement is difficult work. It gets to the heart of what higher education is about and as such, it requires institution-wide effort, deep commitment at all levels, and leadership by both campus and community.

This report is therefore not another call to action. Instead, we call the question: Is higher education ready to commit to engagement? Our goal in calling the question is nothing less than the transformation of our nation's colleges and universities. We believe engagement is the best hope for the future of higher education. A return to a mission in which the advancement of discovery, learning and the common good is fueled by collaborative partnerships is a vision that is right for our time and for a world that looks to higher education for clear direction.

### ***Six promising practices***

Answering this call to commitment, however, is not easy. Those institutions who do will be distinguished by six practices that help to institutionalize engagement in sustainable ways. These practices are:

1. Integrate engagement into mission
2. Forge partnerships as the overarching framework for engagement
3. Renew and redefine discovery and scholarship
4. Integrate engagement into teaching and learning
5. Recruit and support new champions
6. Create radical institutional change

The rewards to commitment, however, are great: Better student learning, discovery connected to social need, enhanced institutional identity, new connections to resources and funding. Key constituencies that support higher education expect no less than active engagement appropriate to an institution's mission and capacity. The imperative is there. Is higher education ready to respond?

### ***We call the question***

And so we call the question. We ask presidents and chancellors to take the lead in supporting institution-wide change, raising up new leaders and articulating a vision for how engagement will invigorate their institutional mission. We call on provosts, deans and department chairs to support engaged faculty, encourage interdisciplinary efforts and expand disciplinary assessment models. We call on students to demand of higher education new pedagogy in support of learning that is connected to community and prepares citizens for our democracy. We ask members of our communities to hold higher education to high standards of partnership that can transform the academy and benefit society. And we call on funders to make engagement a national priority.

The promise of engagement lies in its potential to rejuvenate the academy, redefine scholarship and involve society in a productive conversation about the role of education in a new century. University-wide, institutionalized and sustained commitment to engagement is a necessity and a priority if American higher education is to continue its global leadership role. Engagement is higher education's larger purpose.

"I have this growing conviction that what is needed [for higher education] is not just more programs, but a larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction in the nation's life."

*-Ernest Boyer*

More than a decade ago Ernest Boyer surveyed the future of higher education in America and saw potential for great change. His call for a "new American college"<sup>1</sup> distinguished by engaged scholarship and engaged teaching was amplified by the Kellogg Commission in 1999 and continues to be advanced by a range of public and private institutions, funders and advocates. Growing numbers of colleges and universities are strengthening their teaching, research and service missions through active and collaborative partnerships with their neighborhoods, communities and regions.

Many institutions see in the movement to engagement an opportunity to renew the civic mission of higher education. Through service learning, moral and civic education, and research derived from and applied to community issues, colleges and universities are reclaiming their responsibility to prepare students to be active and engaged citizens and to contribute productively to their local and global communities. They find in engagement a potent antidote to the rising tide of commercialism and corporatism that threatens to erode the heart of higher education's compact with society.<sup>2</sup> As Derek Bok, former president of Harvard, notes, universities can no longer be cloistered institutions. "They have become too important to society."<sup>3</sup>

Other institutions find engagement to be an exciting way to strengthen and expand on the scholarship and teaching that have been the foundation of the academy. Linking discovery and learning to the real needs of a local or worldwide community invigorates the work of both faculty and students and re-connects colleges and universities to expertise and resources outside the campus gates. University engagement is both a renewal of the civic mission of higher education and a bold direction for academic practice. Together these two complementary strands have intertwined to create a growing momentum for change. But even as increasing numbers of institutions explore engagement, questions remain. The tenor of the conversation has changed as institutions experience budget constrictions that have led to declines in discretionary dollars available for new partnerships

or engagement initiatives. Faculty must try to balance the demands of promotion and tenure criteria against involvement in community engagement efforts that may not be rewarded by their discipline or departmental peers. And administrators and boards face conflicting messages from business leaders, parents, students and donors about the purpose and mission of higher education. Increasingly education is seen solely in terms of a private benefit to be consumed by students who want to compete in a competitive job market.<sup>4</sup>

While many faculty, administrators and students acknowledge that efforts to engage universities more directly with their communities have met with success, they are also facing the hard realities of integrating engagement into institutional structures that were not designed to facilitate cross-disciplinary initiatives and partnerships that extend across campus and into the community.

### ***How Far Have We Come?***

Despite these challenges, the movement to engagement has created change in higher education institutions and has stimulated new organizations to grow and initiatives to thrive.

Two- and four-year institutions—both public and private—have joined with their communities to revitalize neighborhoods, create innovative P-16 models, tackle the challenges of urban health-care, transform undergraduate and graduate learning, and redefine the nature and rewards of faculty scholarship, research and creative endeavor. Institutions across the country—from the University of Pennsylvania and Trinity College to Portland State University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee—have created models for integrating engagement into all facets of higher education. A 2002 Urban Institute report on 25 universities involved in the Community Outreach

Partnership Center program identified eleven different categories of community engagement, that ranged from community development technical assistance and life skills training to graduate students providing professional services in health-care, social work, law and even engineering.<sup>5</sup> And these engagement efforts are being mirrored abroad—in Canada, England, South Africa and Australia,<sup>6</sup> amplifying our understanding of the challenges and producing scholarship that enriches understanding and measures success.

*"The scholarship of engagement and the idea of community partnerships are not about service. They are about extraordinary forms of teaching and research and what happens when they come together."*

Barbara Holland,  
National Service Learning  
Clearinghouse

Thanks largely to the efforts of Campus Compact, presidents from more than 900 colleges and universities in the United States are committed to the civic purposes of higher education. A 2003 survey by Campus Compact indicated that four out of five of their member institutions have an office that supports community service and/or service learning and an impressive 93% have partnerships with one or more P-12 schools.<sup>7</sup> Federal funding through the Department of Housing and Urban Development has logged a decade of providing seed money for university and community partnerships that tackle shared urban concerns. Major initiatives by national foundations have helped to advance the conversation, including the Pew Partnership for Civic Change's "Solutions for America,"<sup>8</sup> and the Kellogg Foundation's landmark Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, among others.<sup>9</sup>

A wide range of academic associations have brought engagement into the mainstream and provide valuable benchmarking tools. These include: the American Association for Higher Education, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the American Association of Colleges & Universities, and the American Council on Education, to name a few. The Council

of Independent Colleges published a report on how universities and colleges can create more effective community partnerships and the National Clearinghouse and Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement provides informed assessment of faculty engagement portfolios. And The Association for Community and Higher Education Partnerships (ACHEP) now advocates to impact national policy on behalf of and for engaged institutions. (See the Resources section for useful publications, websites and references). What began as an isolated call for change has swelled to a chorus of colloquia, conferences and commissions focused on supporting practitioners and advancing the scholarship of engagement.

### **Why Does Engagement Make Sense?**

The movement to university engagement has come this far because it resonates with administrators, faculty and staff, students and civic leaders. As Colby and others demonstrate, it has its roots in higher education's historic ties to educating students for democratic citizenship and advancing social and economic progress.<sup>10</sup> Engaged teaching and research make sense in a world where systemic problems, conflicting demands and radical advances in communication technologies require new ways of discovering, integrating and applying knowledge. And, most important, university engagement is grounded in a growing body of scholarly research that demonstrates its effective impact on teaching, learning and community-based problem solving.<sup>11</sup>

**Faculty and staff** who have forged community partnerships understand how their scholarship and research are validated in the real world, and are enriched by community expertise in many and varied contexts. They have discovered new directions for their scholarship and research as they partner with faculty in other disciplines to address complex community challenges, in the process revitalizing their own disciplinary perspectives. They have experienced how engagement enlivens teaching and learning by fostering interdisciplinary perspectives and demanding of them new pedagogy, new ways of discovery and new approaches to knowledge integration and application. They have seen how engagement provides students with opportunities to acquire invaluable content knowledge, as well as leadership and civic skills.

*"Research is changing, largely driven by globalization, the Internet and the computer. The interactive nature of sharing information encourages interdisciplinary approaches. And when you get interdisciplinary groups together, it challenges people to explore why it is that what they do matters."*

Patrice Petro,  
University of Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee

**Students** engaged in service learning or community-based courses know the added benefits to such learning and are demanding it in growing numbers. They are learning how to collaborate, to synthesize, to respect and celebrate diversity in the context of reflective scholarship, research and experience that not only prepares them for citizenship and the workplace, but also allows them to learn they can make a difference in their communities. Students realize that their contributions have consequences for their learning and community development. They are discovering local communities and the strong sense of place and values that will shape the futures they choose.

**University administrators** are developing new town-gown relationships, connecting to community resources and the sometimes hidden assets that are vital to community and institutional renewal. They are creating institutional structures that support community partnerships, facilitate effective communication and empower staff skilled in "understanding communities and acting as liaisons among diverse constituencies."<sup>12</sup> In the process, administrators are increasingly invited to the decision-making tables of civic life. This involvement increases the value of higher education in the eyes of the community, a value that, in turn, strengthens the ability of colleges and universities to



ask for public dollars in support of their engaged activities. Such value goes beyond local or regional perspectives but can also set institutions apart on the national stage. Engagement holds promise to help institutions craft a distinctive vision and culture that can set them apart as national or

even international leaders. As Steve Garlick, a consultant and former executive with the Australian government notes, "Universities have been slow to recognize that regions, because of their diversity, provide a potential global platform to aid their own distinctiveness and competitiveness in research and teaching."<sup>13</sup>

*"How do we know we are doing well as engaged institutions? When our students experience deep and powerful learning. When diversity and cultural context is integrated into our teaching. When we develop the skills of collaboration—which is not a natural act."*

Kenneth Howey,  
University of Cincinnati

**Community partners** are forming creative and supportive relationships with academic colleagues because, as David Maurrasse writes, "they make sense."<sup>14</sup> Community leaders are abandoning their suspicions about the relevance of the university as engaged partners replace images of isolated ivory-tower academics. As universities create offices and institutions to provide portals to campus, community leaders are able to navigate the complexities of the academic world to find the right people and the campus connections they need. They have experienced the valuable ways that universities can help to create intellectual and social capital essential to the future of our cities, towns and regions. They are connecting with students and faculty to identify new research agendas and together find solutions to community problems relevant to their culture and place. They understand the critical and positive roles

that students can play in reducing community needs and contributing to community services.

Community partners also see how student community engagement can lead to careers in social agencies and civic engagement throughout their lives.

### ***Running Start or Hitting the Wall?***

While the movement to engagement has made significant progress, there is concern—especially among many of the conference participants at Wingspread—that the momentum needed for engagement to become fully identified with the mission of higher education needs a new boost. The heady call to community partnerships at many institutions has given way to the hard work of maintaining partnerships over the long haul, after the initial seed funds that stimulated new partnerships run out. The honeymoon period for engagement is over; the difficult task of creating a lasting commitment has begun.

Integrating engagement into the mission and practice of colleges and universities will involve expanding participation across campus and revising institutional structures, policies and culture to reflect the collaborative nature of engagement. It is a process, at this critical juncture in the life of higher education, which faces formidable obstacles.

Shifting institutional leadership and grant-based funding often relegates community partnerships to boutique initiatives, paraded out when the university needs to demonstrate its engagement bona fides. We have created a "thousand points of light" that have not always produced the concentrated heat needed for institutionalization. Many community engagement offices are tucked away in outreach centers or isolated in a single school or college, outside the mainstream of the university's priorities.

The "early adopter" faculty continue to embed engagement in their research and teaching but there remains the challenge of involving faculty and staff beyond the "usual suspects" in the professional disciplines of healthcare and education. Judith Ramaley estimates that while 10 to 15 percent of faculty are "committed to engagement," almost two thirds are interested but looking for institutional

support or waiting to see if engagement will be a long-term university priority. For many faculty, disciplinary barriers to anything but traditional academic models limit venues for dissemination and, thereby, legitimate tenure and promotion options. Other faculty may express interest in engaged scholarship but lack institutional commitment and interdisciplinary infrastructure to support their work.

While a growing number of institutions are incorporating some form of community engagement into strategic planning efforts and mission and vision statements, few institutions have made the significant, sustainable structural reforms that will result in an academic culture that values community engagement as a core function of the institution. We are only beginning to walk the talk.

Even as institutions face challenges to expanding engagement, the pressures from external groups for more civic participation by universities and colleges is growing. Accrediting bodies have been instrumental in encouraging the engaged agenda. Both the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, for example, have specifically built engagement into their assessment criteria.<sup>16</sup>

In difficult budget times, colleges and universities are being asked by legislators, funders, the media and the general public to justify their investment with social results. University-community partnerships at an individual model P-12 school or isolated student-staffed urban clinic are seen as insufficient responses in the face of a national school crisis, systemic healthcare inequalities and the crumbling neighborhoods or rural poverty that lie just outside the gates of many colleges and universities. When increasing numbers of community leaders see engagement as a valid part of higher education's mission, it also raises expectations for university contributions. "What have you done for us lately?" ask business leaders who cannot find competent workers, politicians who look to the academy for help with economic development, and technically savvy students who demand new teaching and learning options. Falling state investment, increasing civic accountability and the rise of alternative learning systems has traditional higher education struggling to find 21st century solutions. While engagement is increasingly understood to be an effective tool for connecting academic work to public issues in ways that are mutually beneficial to both campus and community, many institutions and faculty still question the scholarly rigor and legitimacy of engagement.

### ***Is It Time to Call the Question?***

It is against this background of promise and challenge that the Wingspread participants assembled to assess and determine what comes next. We agreed that the movement to integrate engagement into teaching, research and service does not need more persuasive argument or preaching to the converted. The rationale for engagement has been articulated eloquently and broadly, and the first wave of champions has advanced the field.

By now, most members of the academy and our community partners understand the "whys" for engagement. What is needed is not another call to "give engagement a try." Instead, we believe it is time to call the question: The question of commitment.

### ***Are We Ready to Commit to Engagement?***

If engagement is to fulfill the promise we believe it holds—to invigorate higher education's understanding of its relationship to civic life, to rejuvenate learning and discovery, and to help create the academic template for leadership in a new century—it will require a new and deeper level of commitment across the academy to move beyond model programs, first adopters and pilot projects. It will require institutionalizing engagement in ways that are pervasive, creative and sustainable.

This kind of commitment can only come from a clear understanding of what the truly engaged institution is—and is not. Engagement is not a prescriptive model but a distinguishing practice each institution can shape to a unique vision for its time and place. Each institution can and must find its own path to an engaged mission. Engagement is not an alternative mission for higher education, but central to and supportive of the historic goals of education, discovery and serving the public good. Because of this, engagement can be a powerful means for higher education to refocus and strengthen its mission amid conflicting demands for commercialization and privatization.

Realigning the future of higher education may be the single most important task for its leaders today. As Clark Kerr noted, the number one challenge facing higher education is the need "to help find a new set of urgent priorities in service to society."<sup>17</sup> The movement to university engagement holds promise to do just that because it is based on the fundamental value of collaborative service to the common good. Changing higher education, says Nancy Kari, a participant in the national leadership dialogues of the National Forum for Higher Education for the Public Good, will require thinking about our work "in public terms."<sup>18</sup>

Thinking publicly—and broadly—about the mission and future of higher education requires a willingness to move beyond the status quo to the possibility of radical change. Barbara Holland has defined community-university engagement as a "mutually transforming relationship." Our goal in calling the question is nothing less than transformation. We believe engagement is the best hope for the future of higher education in a rapidly changing world. A return to a mission in which the advancement of discovery and learning is fueled by public service is a vision that has never been more right—or more needed—by both higher education and the world we serve.

### ***Is higher education ready to commit to community engagement?***

To answer that question, each institution must first examine and renew its commitment to:

1. Integrate engagement into mission.
2. Forge partnerships as the overarching framework.
3. Renew and redefine discovery and scholarship.
4. Integrate engagement into teaching and learning.
5. Recruit and support new champions.
6. Create radical institutional change.

## 1. Integrate Engagement Into Mission

If engagement is to become institutionalized it must be recognized as central to the purpose of higher education. It cannot be just an add-on to an existing mission to "strive for excellence" or to "be distinguished for teaching, research and service," but instead becomes the animating core, where "service [engagement] is a central and defining characteristic," as Barbara Holland wrote in a 1997 comparative study of 23 engaged institutions.<sup>19</sup> University mission is where engagement must become imbedded because it is through active engagement that university mission comes alive and takes on real meaning for campus and community.

This vision of institutionally integrated engagement, while challenging, is not a new one. It has its seeds in America's colonial colleges, founded to train the pastors and teachers who would help to create the country's frontier towns and cities. It is a vision that was alive at the turn of the century, when America's leading research institutions: Columbia, Johns Hopkins and the University of Chicago, took as their central tenet they should "make for less misery among the poor, less ignorance in the schools, less bigotry in the temple, less suffering in the hospitals, less fraud in business, less folly in politics," as President Daniel Coit Gilman stated in his inaugural address at Johns Hopkins in 1876.<sup>20</sup>

*"Each campus has its own values, mission and culture. Each needs to go through a process to decide what engagement means for that institution."*

Service to society as a fulfillment of its democratic mission was core to the founding purpose of the land-grant universities established by the Morrill Act of 1862. When Wisconsin Governor Robert La Follette proclaimed what he called "The Wisconsin Idea"—the notion that the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state—he gave voice to the progressive idea that placing knowledge in service to the common good was the primary mission of higher education in a democratic society.<sup>21</sup>

Lorilee Sandmann,  
University of Georgia

In the century since these progressive ideals were spoken and penned American higher education has been smothered by what Ira Harkavy terms "traditional academic scholasticism,"<sup>22</sup> by the dominance of the research institution model and by increasing disengagement from real-world problem solving to the isolation of ever-more-specialized disciplines. This has been reinforced by a consumer society that sees education as a private benefit rather than public good.

It is against this current—and limiting—mission for higher education that we return to the idea of the university in service to society: supporting our democratic fabric by preparing students to be active, principled citizens and by linking knowledge to the public good through engaged scholarship. The 1999 Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University articulates the case, and to date, more than 500 presidents and chancellors from higher education have signed the Campus Compact Declaration to re-examine higher education's "commitments to the democratic ideal."

We join them in reiterating that if higher education is to take its place as a leader in the life of our country and in advancing social good, we must commit ourselves to leadership in—not above or outside—the world we serve.

**What does an institution with an engaged mission look like?**

Engagement is one of the defining characteristics of institutional mission. It is central to the vision the university has for itself in relationship to its teaching, research and service. It applies across the institution, not only to university outreach or the professions and disciplines for which engagement has historically been important. It will be recognized and communicated in word and deed by university leaders, faculty, staff, students and supporters.

While engagement is a defining characteristic for university mission, what it means for each institution will be shaped by the unique history, assets and needs of both the institution and the community it serves. The mission of a private liberal arts college in the suburbs or a metropolitan community college will, of necessity, look different from that of a research-intensive university. But for each, engagement offers the opportunity to create a distinctive institution because it ties the academy to real problems in a real world. This means, of course, that the mission will and must evolve with the institution and with its partners.

Renewing the mission is a collaborative act. Institutions with an engaged mission will reflect the voices of constituents on and off campus. Creating mission will be an ongoing process that involves society in a thoughtful and informed consideration of the purposes of education and how society is best served. Engagement's transforming impact on higher education will lead to the development of more responsive, adaptable modes of organizing and planning academic work in public contexts.

Accountability for the success of the university will be shared. While higher education must embrace its responsibility for discovery, teaching and application of knowledge, it also must evaluate its practice, its performance and its results in relationship to and with its partners.

***What is needed to support colleges and universities in creating their own engaged mission?***

- New models and analyses of successful mission development processes
- Deep historical understanding of each institution's role
- Success stories that document ways in which engagement has helped to distinguish institutions
- Diverse pathways to recognize institutional missions that support engagement

***2. Forge Partnerships as the Overarching Framework***

Partnerships are the currency of engagement—the medium of exchange between university and community and the measurement of an institution's level of commitment to working collaboratively. Committed engagement requires authentic or "deep" partnerships. By this we mean mutually reciprocal collaboration that is acknowledged by all participants and that generates the best outcomes for all partners. Within the partnership, "we all feel right" as one Wingspread participant described—whether we are a tenured professor, a parent, a governor or a student.

While collaboration is as much an art as a science, recent efforts have undertaken to assess more closely what makes for successful partnerships and what defines an engaged campus. Campus Compact is currently documenting best practices of engaged institutions as part of its Indicators of Engagement project, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and has also created Benchmarks for Campus/Community Collaboration.<sup>23</sup>

But more needs to be done to determine how successful partnerships are created and nurtured. Wingspread participants were adamant that their work was only half complete because the conference focus on institutionalizing engagement in the community requires equal focus on the role of the community in sustaining collaboration.

### What does commitment to partnership look like?

Partnerships are learning environments. Too often the university arrives with the answers. True partnerships are spaces within which questions are created, there is genuine reciprocal deliberation and the work to find the answers is begun. It is within the partnerships that expertise both inside and outside the university is valued and honored.

Partnerships will be alive across the institution, but for each institution they must also be attached to its critical areas of interest—the academic priorities it has set. For each institution these will be different: a focus on teacher education, major investments in the professional schools, a well-earned reputation for distinguished research in a particular discipline. At the engaged institution, partnerships will be most active and supported around what the institution deems most important, priorities that are rooted in institutional history and in its unique sense of place.

*"Once you're involved in the community it opens so many doors. It becomes very exciting and it engages faculty. If you want to attract new, young, dynamic faculty, this is the way to do it. It's active, it's real world. . . . putting your research into practice."*

As Bringle and Hatcher note, engaged institutions will always support a spectrum of active partnerships—shifting patterns of engagement.<sup>24</sup> There will be a mix of small-scale, faculty/community relationships that may involve a volunteer project that focuses on immediate needs. There will also be emerging and start-up partnerships around critical issues identified and shaped by the partners. Service-learning opportunities geared to short- or long-term needs may be a hallmark of these partnerships. And there will be the "essential relationships" as Judith Ramaley calls them, the significant collaborations that are institutional priorities. P-16 partnerships, healthcare or community revitalization efforts are examples of long-term, multi-dimensional and all-university efforts that require significant leadership and investment. A rich array of such partnerships characterizes the engaged institution.

Jane Moore,  
The Milwaukee Foundation

University partnerships respect and build community capacity. The university sees the community as the source of multiple assets, not overwhelming problems. Success will be measured by the partnership, not by the research or learning goals and outcomes of the university. The university will ask "Does this work for you?" when assessing progress.

Authentic partnerships are best when they are not dependent on the vision of a single individual but when partnership structures offer multiples ways for engagement by diverse members of the community and the university.



*"The notion of engagement is about creating spaces where applied and theoretical issues come together to create different research agendas and different ways of thinking about learning and education."*

Judith Ramaley,  
National Science Foundation

Authentic partnerships involve an exchange of human and financial resources under the shared control of the partnership, not the university alone. This means that the university may not have a leadership or controlling role in all partnerships, even those to which it contributes significant dollars or expertise. This will necessitate creative new ways to manage and account for university resources that recognize interdisciplinary realities and ensure responsible but flexible stewardship.

Effective partnerships demand reflection and continuous improvement by all collaborators to improve practices, policies, services and capacity. In this regard, faculty and staff are well qualified to bring their intellectual, human and financial resources to benefit the collaboration.

### *What is needed to encourage partnerships at engaged institutions?*

- A merging of theory with practice: new theories of community engagement coupled with practical examples.
- Indicators for healthy partnerships. We need to know more about what is needed for collaborations to evolve and succeed.
- Evaluation models that include community partners in creating and assessing community success.
- Models for encouraging a spectrum of partnerships that include new ways of managing human and financial resources within the partnership.

### **3. Renew and Redefine Discovery and Scholarship**

We believe it is time to move beyond the traditional tripartite mission of the academy—teaching, research and service. It is a construct that is often more honored in name than in practice. At too many universities today, the balance among these three tips toward research, with the caveat to "publish or perish."

We propose, instead, a new couplet—*engaged* teaching and learning, and *engaged* discovery and research scholarship—which recognizes that connections to society are integral parts of these two core functions of the contemporary college and university.

This new model does not supplant the old triad, but expands it. It celebrates the historical connections the academic disciplines have to the world at large. It values all scholarship but particularly that within a context of contemporary need. Engaged research provides incredible benefits to faculty who link their work to their communities. They are able to see the impact of their research result in social good.

The nature of research and scholarship has changed significantly over the past two decades, driven, in part, by the growth of globalization, the Internet and the computer. The questions of research—its

sources of expertise, its ends and its audiences—have been transformed beyond the narrow confines of the academy, offering limitless possibility for work that has potential to impact our communities and the world. Michael Gibbons, Secretary General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities in Great Britain calls for "multi-sided conversations" between the research community and the practitioner community to widen horizons and improve lives.<sup>25</sup> The result will be engaged scholarship that is heterogeneous, multi-dimensional, collaborative, serves multiple audiences and involves a range of participants, supported by new technologies and driven by advanced communications.

### **What does commitment to engaged discovery and scholarship look like?**

The work that has begun on redefining and re-conceptualizing the scholarship of engagement must be continued and expanded. New definitions will evolve through collaborative efforts on three levels: 1.) nationally, as part of the engagement movement; 2.) within disciplines to define how engagement can be integrated into individual disciplinary traditions; and 3.) on each campus, within schools, colleges and, most important, departments, as a reflection of its unique culture and community of learning. The engaged university will support efforts at all three levels through ongoing dialog and also through its financial and resource priorities. Such dialog will be inclusive of students and the community.

*"For engagement to work, we need to look at how we have affected the decision-making structure in our community context so that it is sustainable beyond a single project or an individual. After all, it is the decision-making structure that affects funding, legislative activities, and policy. If you can institutionalize a structure both within the university and community, then you have a true partnership."*

Bob Greenstreet,  
University of Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee

Engaged discovery and research scholarship is relevant and essential beyond the metropolitan and urban universities where it has already found a fruitful environment. Community colleges, private suburban as well as research-intensive institutions have much to contribute to wide-ranging social challenges, each according to their missions and their strengths.

Engaged discovery and scholarship will address faculty recruitment, recognition and reward structures and the means to assess engaged discovery and scholarship. To date, the means to evaluate such scholarship has been outside the conventional mechanism of peer review. Much constructive work is being done by the National Clearinghouse and Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement to critically assess faculty portfolios using trans-disciplinary guidelines. Commitment to such scholarship will also need to recognize and create mechanisms to assess the interdisciplinary role of such efforts, its integration with teaching and learning, its problem-based rather than theory-based impetus, the nontraditional timeframes for such work, and the role of community partners and students in its outcomes. Leaders of engaged institutions must strive to make useful resources such as the National Clearinghouse more visible within their institutions.

New conceptions of engaged discovery and scholarship will be shaped by a recognition of the critical importance of community partners to determining research goals, setting parameters, defining success and providing the resources and networks needed. Determining how to structure and assess accountability will be a key concern.

Critical to new notions of engaged research will be the involvement of deans and department chairs and other leaders within individual disciplines in expanding the conversation. Engagement offers substantial benefits to these leaders, including access to new revenue streams, improved



*"Two important groups that have often been left out of the discussion on engaged scholarship is deans and department chairs. They have a vital role to play in helping people do what they want to do and integrating it into the budgeting processes of the institution."*

David Cox  
University of Memphis

and revitalized scholarship opportunities and new links to teaching and learning. Their leadership is only the first step in supporting advocates at all levels of the academy to build a supportive network.

Individual disciplines also have a vital role to play in convening and advancing national and international conversations around integrating engagement into reconceptualized notions of scholarship. Campus Compact for example, has created institutes for engaged departments that assist faculty, students, community members and department chairs to integrate engagement more effectively.

Opportunities for new ways of doing research and scholarship will be embedded into the mission of the institution and validated by the institution's board so that they can become a part of the culture of the institution's learning community. Engaged discovery and scholarship will not determine all academic endeavors, but it will offer new avenues for exploration by faculty determined to advance knowledge in the ways now open.

#### *What is needed to encourage engaged discovery and research scholarship?*

- A national forum for peer institutions to discuss and share new approaches for engaged research and create venue for dissemination
- Faculty development to assist faculty in integrating community partnerships into their research efforts.
- Financial investment in engaged discovery from the institution and outside funders, including major governmental organizations.
- Assessment and evaluation models, tools and assistance around a range of focus areas, including program improvement, teaching and student learning, community participation.

#### **4. Integrate Engagement into Teaching and Learning**

If university-community partnerships can be seen as a learning environment, then engaged pedagogy within the university should be a model of the best of shared learning on which such partnerships draw. Unfortunately at too many institutions, the methods by which knowledge is communicated can be described as uninspiring at best and Dickensian at worst. The principal desired outcome—citizens prepared to participate in a civil democracy—requires a pedagogy and a curriculum that is collaborative, problem-based, interdisciplinary, intentional and respectful of students as producers as well as recipients of knowledge. The community has a wealth of expertise to contribute as co-educators in this enterprise.

But the rationale for a new pedagogy and curriculum is not just that it supports and reflects the engaged mission of higher education. It also produces deeper and more productive learning—for faculty, students and community. The growing body of research around the effectiveness of service- and experiential-based learning underlines the powerful role such pedagogy can have to enrich and extend cognitive learning.

### What does commitment to engaged teaching and learning look like?

An engaged mission is important to universities and colleges, but it will become part of the campus culture only when it is integrated into curriculum and teaching. The important collaborative understandings necessary for effective engagement must be fostered and reinforced throughout a spectrum of courses and through diverse means. To this end, engaged teaching and learning is an institutional priority, across all disciplines.

Engaged teaching is supported by the institution, through faculty and staff development programs, centers for teaching and learning, and financial support for community partnerships. Engaged teaching and learning is not intuitive—faculty require technical and instructional assistance to create active learning groups or video-anchored portfolios. While faculty and staff development is important, so also is financial recognition. Institutions must invest in a reward structure for faculty, administrators, departments and colleges that recognizes the importance of engagement to the university.

*"Teaching and learning are at the core of the institution. How we teach and how we believe students learn imply an epistemology that needs to be aligned with the values and desired outcomes of engagement."*

If we demand engaged teaching from faculty, they will require more than remedial support once on the job. Wingspread participants expressed deep concern about the inadequate state of teacher training for graduate students. Engaged teaching will require new kinds of training for graduate students that recognizes the value of collaborative, experiential learning in addition to specialization in a discipline. Such training has powerful implications for higher education overall and for its leadership.

Anthony Ciccone,  
University of Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee

A defining attribute for engaged teaching and learning is the integration of multi-cultural understanding into the curriculum. If students and faculty are to be engaged with diverse communities they must be prepared to acknowledge cultural context and deepen their own understanding of what they can learn and what they can contribute.

Engagement integrates graduate and undergraduate students by facilitating peer learning at all levels. For most universities, this requires creating space and time for students at all levels to interact and learn from each other.

Engagement integrates community-based research into learning by involving students, faculty and community in problem-solving together. Engagement breaks down the false division between learning and discovery and provides constructive ways in which civic capacity can be encouraged.

The engaged institution facilitates teaching and learning by community partners as well as faculty and students. This may involve creating boundary-crossing mechanisms that facilitate community-campus collaboration: team teaching, master teachers drawn from community leaders, community teachers-in-residence who help create curriculum as well as provide instruction, etc.<sup>26</sup>

### *What is needed to encourage engaged teaching and learning?*

- A new commitment from higher education to radically overhaul graduate education in support of engaged teaching and learning.
- Ongoing research on how engagement supports better learning.
- Models of interdisciplinary and diversity-rich curriculum and pedagogy.
- Expanded assessment and portfolio review options for faculty.

## **5. Recruit and Support New Champions**

If engagement is to become a driving force in the transformation of higher education and the possibilities it offers society, it must be championed both in the community and on campus. The voices that have been spreading the word must be amplified by university presidents and chancellors, by community leaders, by boards of directors, by deans and department chairs and by students, faculty and staff who have experienced its benefits.

*"There is a distinct quality to working deeply in a place, over time, with a community where learning is ongoing. This kind of engagement, of necessity, connects research activities with teaching and learning so that faculty and students make qualitative contributions to the community they become part of."*

Ira Harkavy,  
University of Pennsylvania

Presidents, chancellors and provosts have an important role in championing engagement, not only as a result of their position at the nexus of campus and community, but also as those individuals most vested in the leadership and success of their institutions. University engagement offers new resources, creative new research directions, national leadership opportunities and the potential to attract high-caliber students who demand learning based in experience.

The task for such academic leaders is to provide the institution with a vision for an engaged university and to critically reflect on the process of moving toward it—facilitating a renewed mission, mirroring collaboration, encouraging a culture of experimentation and innovation, and communicating with audiences inside and outside the university.

New champions also must be found beyond the presidential office. Learned societies, department heads and deans are important connecting points between disciplines and the faculty, best suited for communicating the benefits of university engagement.

And voices outside the academy must also share the message. Community leaders who have participated in reciprocal partnerships can add a credible call to others inside the university and throughout the community. Legislators, trustees and other opinion leaders have networks of influence that can effectively support and enlarge engagement efforts.

### **What is the task for new champions of engagement?**

Engagement champions answer "why." They connect the often unspoken and deeply felt culture and traditions of the academy to the benefits of engagement. They "de-mystify" engagement by providing the rationale for how engagement can distinguish the institution, support faculty research, improve learning and enrich students.

Engagement champions hold all levels of the institution accountable through the questions they ask, by the priorities they set, the process by which resources are allocated, by what activities are measured and what are rewarded. This requires university faculty and staff to be engaged in policies and practices that encourage, support and reward engagement, through financial aid, work-study and admissions priorities, for example.

Engagement champions are inclusive. They seek out and support engaged leaders at all levels (both through promotion and through strategic hiring), so that participation in engaged efforts is encouraged by a spectrum of champions—faculty, students, community members and staff.

Engagement champions are mentors and role models. They demonstrate different approaches to incorporating engagement into research and teaching. They partner across disciplines and departments and find ways to connect new faculty to engagement efforts.

Engagement champions connect the institution to national leaders to provide peer mentors, new models and assessment tools.

Engagement champions help to free up faculty time to work on engagement agendas. Freeing up time for faculty is a major issue in promoting more engagement. Champions encourage new ways of organizing and structuring academic time while still providing students with a quality education.

Engaged champions connect to community and campus, creating a vital link for both.

### *What is needed to encourage new champions?*

- Continued support by current champions of engagement, tried and true.
- A national platform, such as ACHEP, on which new champions can be groomed and from which they can enlarge the discussion and advocate for engagement.
- A peer network of engaged leaders to share resources and scholarship.
- A re-examination of how academic leaders are recruited, trained and rewarded.

## **6. Create Radical Institutional Change**

The structures and processes of the academy are both the framework for how higher education operates and metaphors for what it values. Today's hierarchical, elitist and competitive environment not only is vastly at odds with higher education's professed ideals, but also is increasingly anachronistic in a world that values collaboration, entrepreneurship, and flexibility.

The organizing rationale for engagement holds promise to be a productive model for higher education as a whole. By encouraging networks of inquiry and learning, by developing capacity across disciplines and in community partnerships, and by sharing resources and accountability, engagement creates

new relationships and ways of operating that will be essential if higher education is to compete in this new century.

Translating the habits and patterns of engagement more broadly into the academy—renewal by transposition—requires leadership from presidents, chancellors and provosts; tenacity and experimentation from faculty, staff and students; patience from community partners; vision from deans, department chairs and boards; and daring from funders and supporters. But what an inspiring alternative it offers!

### How can radical change be encouraged?

Radical change requires clear insight into current barriers. Departments and shared governance can be both enablers and barriers to institutionalizing engagement. Each institution needs to assess what is working, what confounds the ideals of the university mission and what needs to be changed.

*"While internal new champions must be encouraged, we must also seek new champions from the community. Authentic engagement is a reciprocal act. Our community partners may well be the 'tipping point' in determining how and in what form engagement continues to flourish."*

Joan Prince,  
University of Wisconsin-  
Milwaukee

Interdisciplinary relationships are a priority and should be encouraged. This may involve the creation of new structures—councils that link disciplines or forums that facilitate networking. Or, it may involve the devolution of existing structures that confound collaboration.

Formal and informal recognition systems will be essential to encouraging and reinforcing patterns of engagement. Such systems must be at the departmental and institutional level but also more broadly, across higher education. This will include rewarding engagement as essential to the mission of higher education through accreditation and in our national rankings.

"Green carrots"—financial incentives—can energize re-organization and creativity, especially in regard to how programs are organized or reporting structures implemented. Dollars are important to the success of engagement and institutional investment will signal to outside funders the seriousness with which the institution intends to act.

Community-university partnerships create new relationships with which the conventional academy has no experience. Partnerships involving large grants or shared resources require new governance structures to assure accountability. The engaged institution will support authentic structures that acknowledge the shared nature of the partnership.

Engagement has real potential to connect higher education to critical public issues (e.g., preparation of teachers who can teach effectively in urban schools, or the economic revitalization of urban cores) as well as to diverse streams of external collaboration and financial support.

For the engaged institution, assessment and change will be a priority. Research-based, scholarly evaluation is essential to winnow the practices that do not further the institutional mission, enrich faculty and staff work, foster student learning and participation, and reinforce community collaboration.

A rigorous allegiance to the university mission is essential. If engagement is truly its animating value, then internal structures and policies that hinder the vision will change.

People are more likely to subscribe to a set of policies, processes and procedures when they are part of the decision-making process. Creating high-quality opportunities for all stakeholders to engage in critical decision is an essential practice.

*"The coin of the realm in higher education is governance. If engagement is going to matter, we must treat it the same way we do other major issues, such as approval of a bond levy or revisions to the general education curriculum. It must go through governance."*

### **What is needed to encourage radical institutional change?**

- Courage!
- New models appropriate to the diversity of academic institutions.
- Serious, substantial and sustained funding of new engagement structures.
- New links between academic work and critical public issues that attract the interest and support of public policy leaders.
- Institutional flexibility and willingness to experiment—and to fail.

Nancy Zimpher,  
University of Cincinnati

### ***And So We Call the Question...***

Is higher education ready to commit to community engagement? Is it ready for the radical, institutional change such a commitment will require?

Engagement is not a passing fad nor for the faint of heart. If the movement is to advance, leaders and practitioners throughout higher education must acknowledge what is involved in moving to the next level. We have outlined that commitment in this document and painted a picture of what institutions will need to do to integrate engagement in sustainable, university-wide ways. Engagement will be at the core of institutional mission. Partnerships will redefine how colleges and universities are organized and relate to their communities. Scholarly research and teaching will be transformed and champions nurtured to make it so.

Engagement is motivated from within and without the academy. From within, instructors who utilize service learning recognize, and can document, that experiential learning adds value to student learning and achievement. Scholars undertaking research with community partners understand the value that collaborative research design, data collection, and data interpretation provide to inquiry as well as the potential for research to inform and improve communities.

Expectations from outside the academy are compelling as well. Grant making institutions seek not only path-breaking research but also the application of that research to improve lives and communities. In much the same way philanthropic organizations value the expertise and knowledge-creation capacity of universities but expect that knowledge will be put to use for the betterment of society and future generations. State legislatures and alumni, other key financial contributors to higher education, too, want the academy to be more relevant in both its learning and research missions. In sum, key constituencies that support higher education expect no less than active engagement appropriate to an institution's mission and capacity. The imperative is there. Is higher education ready to respond?



And so we call the question. We ask presidents and chancellors to take the lead in supporting institution-wide change, raising up new leaders and articulating a vision for how engagement will invigorate their institutional mission. We call on provosts, deans and department chairs to support engaged faculty, encourage interdisciplinary efforts and expand disciplinary assessment models. We call on students to demand of higher education new pedagogy in support of learning that is connected to community and prepares citizens for our democracy. We ask members of our communities to hold higher education to high standards of partnership that can transform the academy and benefit society. And we call on funders and policy leaders to make engagement a national priority.

Creating sustainable engagement will not be easy for it faces considerable resistance by institutional inertia, traditional definitions of scholarship and pressures from a market-based economy. The promise of engagement, however, lies in its potential to rejuvenate the academy, redefine scholarship and involve society in a productive conversation about the role of education in a new century.

Not only is this the right time for such a conversation, it is an imperative. If higher education is to serve our students with deep learning, our faculty and staff with opportunities for integrated scholarship, and our communities with our creative and intellectual resources, it will require broad support in making possible the kinds of institutional transformation that only engagement can provide.

University-wide, institutionalized and sustained commitment to engagement is a necessity and a priority if American higher education is to continue its global leadership role. Engagement is higher education's larger purpose.

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### **Case Studies on University-Community Engagement**

*Lasting engagement: Building and sustaining a commitment to community outreach, development, and collaboration: Springfield College*. (2002). Washington, D.C.: U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development. Available at [www.oup.org/pubs/engagement/vol1.pdf](http://www.oup.org/pubs/engagement/vol1.pdf).

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A more comprehensive bibliography of literature on University-Community Engagement can be found at [www.uwm.edu/MilwaukeeIdea/publications/revised\\_amy\\_biblio.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/MilwaukeeIdea/publications/revised_amy_biblio.pdf)

## Organizations

The Association for Community and Higher Education Partnerships is a national membership organization that promotes, enhances and sustains community-higher education partnerships aimed at improving the quality of life and opportunities available to residents of economically distressed communities through (1) the production and exchange of knowledge, (2) advocacy for resources to support partnerships, and (3) promotion of significant change within institutions of higher education, government, and communities. Contact: ACHEP, 2520 Campus Postal Station, University of Memphis, Memphis, TN, 38152-3824, (901)678-3809, email: [achep@achep.com](mailto:achep@achep.com), website: [www.achep.com](http://www.achep.com).

The Clearinghouse & National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement has been created to review and evaluate the scholarship of engagement of faculty who are preparing for annual review, promotion and tenure. Contact: Lorilee R. Sandman, Co-Director, Georgia Center for Continuing Education, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 (706) 542-3451, [Lorilee\\_Sandman@gactr.uga.edu](mailto:Lorilee_Sandman@gactr.uga.edu).

The Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities is a consortium of metropolitan universities that strives to be responsive to the needs of communities, to include teaching that is adaptable to the diverse needs of metropolitan students, and build close working relationships with elementary and secondary schools so as to improve the overall quality of education (<http://cumu.uc.iupui.edu>).

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of University Partnerships is a rich resource of information on university-community partnerships as well as grant funding opportunities offered by HUD ([www.oup.org](http://www.oup.org)).

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health is a nonprofit organization that promotes health through partnerships between communities and higher education institutions ([www.ccph.info](http://www.ccph.info)).

The National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good is dedicated to encouraging a national movement to strengthen the relationship between higher education and society. The Forum has held a series of conferences to convene educators, funders, legislators and students around this issue. See <http://www.thenationalforum.org> for publications and more information.

## Journals

Metropolitan Universities: An International Forum, published by the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, provides a valuable source of research on university-community engagement and serves as an important vehicle for researchers who wish to publish research in the field ([www.muj.uc.iupui.edu](http://www.muj.uc.iupui.edu)).

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- <sup>7</sup> 2003 Campus Compact Annual Membership Survey available at <http://www.compact.org/newssc/highlights.html>.
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