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Reports

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Resource Guide and Recommendations for Defining and Benchmarking Engagement

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CIC Committee on Engagement
in collaboration with
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Colleges: Council on Extension, Continuing Education, and
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the late 1990's the NASULGC Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities called upon public universities to renew their commitment to society and to redesign their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become more productively involved with their communities within the context of the institutional mission and faculty reward structure.

The Commission concluded that "our tried-and-true formula of teaching, research, and service no longer serves adequately as a statement of our mission and objectives." The growing democratization of higher education, the greater capacity of today's students to shape and guide their own learning, and the burgeoning demands of the modern world require us to think instead of *learning, discovery, and engagement*.

However, this conceptualization of engagement does not easily translate into clear objectives relative to faculty roles and responsibilities, student learning environments, or institutional benchmarks and outcome measures. Thus, in 2002, the CIC appointed the Committee on Engagement to define engagement and identify a set of benchmarks member institutions can use in demonstrating their goals and values as "engaged universities." The Committee developed the following definition of an engagement:

Engagement is 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.

In spring 2003, the CIC Committee and the NASULGC Council on Extension, Continuing Education, and Public Service of NASULGC agreed to work together to generate benchmarks that all universities can use to assess institutional effectiveness and service to society. Further, the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission revised its "Criterion 5: Engagement and Service" accreditation standards by developing operational components and definitions of engagement, and by establishing engagement benchmarks.

The CIC Committee believes the following seven suggestions for establishing engagement benchmarks and measures can allow universities to assess fulfillment of their engagement/public service missions, as well as serve as a basis for gathering economic development and technology information and building support for higher education among legislators, donors, and the public. Such measures also provide departments with criteria for including scholarly engagement activities for faculty and instructional academic staff as part of the tenure and promotion processes.

1. Evidence of Institutional Commitment to Engagement
2. Evidence of Institutional Resource Commitments to Engagement
3. Evidence that Students are Involved in Engagement and Outreach Activities
4. Evidence that Faculty and Staff are Engaged with External Constituents
5. Evidence that Institutions are Engaged with their Communities
6. Evidence of Assessing the Impact and Outcomes of Engagement
7. Evidence of Resource/Revenue Opportunities Generated through Engagement.

THE ENGAGED UNIVERSITY: DEFINING AND BENCHMARKING ENGAGEMENT

Universities increasingly seek ways to be more relevant and to bring their knowledge base to bear on social and economic problems. Politicians and educational critics seek evidence that public universities are able to elevate their research to inform teaching missions and fuel their historical commitment to help meet the needs of society. Faculty and students are equally committed to translating research to practice and to integrating teaching, research, and service to better serve the needs of society.

Within this context, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation funded a National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges Commission in the mid-1990s to examine whether Land Grant and public universities were prepared to meet societal needs for the 21st century. The so-called Kellogg Commission, consisting of current and former university presidents, also called for America's public universities to renew their commitment to society and to redesign their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become more productively involved with their communities within the context of the institutional mission and faculty reward structure.

To this end, the Commission challenged higher education to: refocus its scholarship agenda to place students at the forefront; to elevate the status of teaching; and to elevate public service well beyond the current conception of public service that emphasizes a one-way transfer of university expertise to the public. The Commission stated that "our tried-and-true formula of teaching, research, and service no longer serves adequately as a statement of our mission and objectives." And it emphasized that the growing democratization of higher education, the greater capacity of today's students to shape and guide their own learning, and the burgeoning demands of the modern world require us to think instead of *learning, discovery, and engagement*.

This charge necessitates enormous change within universities. Building successful university-community collaborations poses difficult challenges. Such collaborations demand interdisciplinary cooperation, changing the faculty reward system, refocusing unit and institution missions, and breaking down firmly established and isolated organizational and disciplinary "silos."

The challenge is clear. But the Kellogg Commission's conceptualization of engagement does not easily translate into clear objectives relative to faculty roles and responsibilities, student learning environments, or institutional benchmarks

and outcome measures.

In order to encourage CIC institutions to become more engaged, the CIC Committee on Engagement was established in 2002 to provide strategic advice to the CIC Members (chief academic officers) on issues of public engagement. Its charge was to: 1) Frame what is meant by engagement; 2) Benchmark strategies for public engagement across the CIC; 3) Identify performance measures; and 4) Advise CIC Members' Committee on collaborative opportunities that could be included in the CIC strategic plan.

The Committee on Engagement also outlined the following objectives: 1) Emphasize the important function of relevant scholarship on engagement both within and across disciplines to direct the definition of engagement activities and to contribute to the development of measures for the efficacy of those activities; 2) Identify strategies to embed engagement into the student's experience, including identifying activities that are not classroom-based that can be reflected on the student's transcript; 3) Identify strategies to build engagement into the faculty reward system; and 4) Establish benchmarks that will help define higher education's contributions to society.

Fundamental to defining engagement and development of performance measures and institutional benchmarks is a commitment to anchor institutional engagement activities in scholarship. That is, the committee affirms that research, teaching, and service engagement activities should be outcome- or evidence-based using the full range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies from across the diverse disciplines that comprise the academy. In many respects, scholarship is the defining characteristic of higher education. If engaged research, teaching and service are to be valued within institutions as well as by society, such activities must provide the kinds of evidence that register accountability. This common understanding guided the committee as it sought to develop a definition of engagement that would spark the generation of scholarship-based indicators leading to possible institutional benchmarks.

To provide a basis for generating benchmarks to allow CIC institutions to monitor their effectiveness in achieving the goals of "engaged universities," the Committee drew on several member institutions' definitions of outreach and engagement and other national resources to develop a definition of engagement to which all institutions can aspire. The defini-

tion provides a model from which each institution can develop a definition that provides an appropriate institutional fit.

Engagement is 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.

In spring 2003, the CIC Committee on Engagement and the Council on Extension, Continuing Education, and Public Service of the National Association for State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges agreed to work together. Our goal is to assist all universities to generate benchmarks that can be used to assess institutional effectiveness in meeting commitments to engagement in the service of society.

Recently, the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission revised its "Criterion 5: Engagement and Service" accreditation standards by developing operational components and definitions of engagement, and by establishing engagement benchmarks. The Higher Learning Commission is the accrediting body for the largest number of American higher education institutions (including most of the Big Ten). The creation of a set of university benchmarks and outcome indicators consistent with the new standards, as the Committee on engagement is undertaking in this document, will also make it easier to adequately document institutional engagement and public service during the re-accreditation process.

Measurements of outreach/engagement activities can also provide central administration and schools/colleges with:

- ◆ A means of assessing an institution's fulfillment of its engagement/public service mission;
- ◆ A management and planning tool for ensuring that academic units contribute to the institution's overall engagement commitment;
- ◆ Evidence of organizational support for engagement;
- ◆ Economic development and technology transfer data;
- ◆ A basis for telling the engagement story and building support for higher education among legislators, donors, and the public;
- ◆ A new engagement rubric for comparing peer institutions nationally; and
- ◆ A means of assessing student awareness of civic responsibility

In addition, measuring outreach/engagement activities can provide units and departments with criteria for including scholarly engagement activities 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 will provide evidence of:

- ◆ Reward systems for faculty and academic 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT BENCHMARKS AND OUTCOME INDICATOR CATEGORIES

Linking engagement to the North Central Association's revised criteria, specifying scholarly engagement qualities, and providing a conceptual model for assessing engagement within and between institutions and disciplines provides the framework for the following recommended engagement benchmarks and outcome indicators.

These benchmarks and outcomes are meant to be indicators to which all CIC institutions can aspire as they advance their engagement commitments. In this regard, each institution will be at a different place in realizing its goals. The benchmarks themselves are intended to fit all CIC members. However, the outcome indicators are meant to be illustrative and their relevancy will vary by CIC member.

1. Evidence of Institutional Commitment to Engagement

- 1.1. The institution's commitment is reflected throughout its administrative structure.
- 1.2. The institution's commitment is reflected in its reward structure for faculty and staff.
- 1.3. The institution's commitment is reflected in its policies and procedures designed to facilitate outreach and engagement activities.
- 1.4. The institution's commitment is reflected in its policies and procedures that are responsive to students.

2. Evidence of Institutional Resource Commitments to Engagement

- 2.1. The institution shows evidence of leadership for engagement and outreach activities.
- 2.2. The institution shows evidence of financial support for engagement through its budgetary process.
- 2.3. The institution shows evidence that faculty and staff time is devoted to outreach and engagement activities.
- 2.4. The institution includes engagement activities as part of its programs for faculty, student and staff development.

3. Evidence that Students are Involved in Engagement and Outreach Activities

- 3.1. The institution shows evidence that engagement is both an implicit and an explicit component of the curriculum and co-curricular activities.
- 3.2. The institution shows evidence that it attends to diverse communities, peoples and geographic areas.
- 3.3. The institution shows evidence that students are engaged in projects and programs that are centered in communities.
- 3.4. The institution provides educational opportunities that clarify the engaged nature of research and scholarship.

4. Evidence that Faculty and Staff are Engaged with External Constituents

- 4.1. The institution shows evidence that faculty and staff are involved in scholarly activities related to the institution's engagement mission.
- 4.2. The institution shows evidence that faculty and staff are engaged in community well being and economic development initiatives in partnership with external constituents.
- 4.3. The institution shows evidence that there is translation and transfer of new knowledge to external audiences.
- 4.4. The institution has policies regarding intellectual property rights that foster the availability of knowledge and research as a public good.

5. Evidence that Institutions are Engaged with their Communities

- 5.1. The institution shows evidence that it has established university-community partnerships with diverse entities.
- 5.2. The institution shows evidence that it participates in environmental scanning in order to determine critical social needs.
- 5.3. The institution shows evidence that communities have access to and use university resources and programs.
- 5.4. The institution shows evidence that its partnerships strive to improve community well being.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CIC MEMBERS' COMMITTEE

6. Evidence of Assessing the Impact and Outcomes of Engagement

- 6.1. The institution shows evidence that it has assessment tools and assessment plans developed in collaboration with external partners.
- 6.2. The institution shows evidence that its experiential learning programs are evaluated in partnership with constituents served.

7. Evidence of Resource/Revenue Opportunities Generated through Engagement

- 7.1. The institution shows evidence that it generates additional tuition and fee revenues from educational experiences that serve external audiences.
- 7.2. The institution shows evidence that it generates economic impact from its engagement activities.

The Committee on Engagement believes that much more needs to be done to advance the benchmarks and outcome indicators. The Committee therefore urges the CIC to charge the Committee on Engagement to complete the following objectives and to submit a final report detailing recommendations for action no later than August 2008. If so charged, the CIC Committee on Engagement will invite the CECEPS Task Force on Engagement to continue its partnership with the CIC so that the specified tasks can be assessed nationally within the context of a broader range of institutions.

Recommended objectives for the Committee on Engagement:

Objective 1: Complete a three-year evaluation of a selected set of benchmarks. An explicit outcome for this objective will be the identification of the most effective benchmarks for cross-institution comparative analysis of engagement and outreach activities. The result will be a narrowly tailored, tightly focused and tested set of benchmarks that could be used by all research universities.

Objective 2: Identify “best practices” related to the scholarship of engagement, including support mechanisms for and barriers to outreach and engagement activities, and including “best practices” related to effective involvement of students and student resources for the institution’s overall engagement mission. An explicit component of this objective will involve comparative analysis of accreditation standards from all higher education accrediting bodies in the United States.

Objective 3: Develop web site resources consisting of scholarship of engagement published literature and links to outreach and engagement web pages, including on-line approaches to publishing and information exchange.

Objective 4: Support and pursue opportunities for external funding and support of CIC-wide engagement initiatives and efforts.

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APPENDIX 1: CORE IDEAS UNDERLYING CIC COMMITTEE ON ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS

The Higher Learning Commission North Central Association Criterion 5: Engagement and Service

The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations

The organization's commitments are shaped by its mission and its capacity to support those commitments.

The organization practices periodic environmental scanning to understand the changing needs of its constituencies and communities.

The organization demonstrates attention to the diversity of the communities it serves.

The organization's outreach programs respond to identified community needs.

In responding to external constituencies, the organization is well-served by programs such as continuing education, outreach, customized training, and extension services.

The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

The organizations' structures and processes enable effective connections with its communities.

The organization's co-curricular activities engage students, staff, administrators and faculty with external communities.

The organization's educational programs connect students with external communities.

The organization's resources (physical, financial, and human) support effective programs of engagement and service.

Planning processes project ongoing engagement and service.

The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service

Collaborative ventures exist with other higher learning organizations and education sectors (e.g., K-12 partnerships, articulation arrangements, 2 + 2 programs).

The organization's transfer policies and practices create an environment supportive of the mobility of learners.

Community leaders testify to the usefulness of the organization's programs of engagement.

The organization's programs of engagement give evidence of building effective bridges among diverse communities.

The organization participates in partnerships focused on shared educational, economic, and social goals.

The organization's partnerships and contractual arrangements uphold the organization's integrity.

Internal and External constituencies value the services the organization provides.

The organization's evaluation of services involves the constituencies served.

Service programs and student, faculty, and staff volunteer activities are well received by the communities served.

The organization's economic and workforce development activities are sought after and valued by civic and business leaders.

External constituents participate in the organization's activities and co-curricular programs open to the public.

The organization's facilities are available to and used by the community.

The organization provides programs to meet the continuing education needs of licensed professionals in its community.

CECEPS Benchmarking Task Force: Qualities of Engagement

Engagement brings the university's resources to bear on societal needs.

Engagement is a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service.

Engagement implies reciprocity, whereby both the institution and partners in the community both benefit and contribute.

Engagement blends scientific knowledge from the university with experiential knowledge from the community to establish an environment of co-learning.

Engagement involves shared decision making.

Engagement is a practice that strengthens faculty, enhances the education experience for students, and multiplies the institution's impact on external constituencies.

Engagement is actively listening to all stakeholders that reflect the diversity of our communities—especially including those stakeholders who have not been engaged before.

A university is engaged when stakeholders see the institution as the “resource of choice” when dealing with an issue or problem.

Engagement measures its effectiveness through traditional measures of academic excellence, but also evaluates its work resultant to the impact and outcomes on the communities and individuals it serves.

American Association of State Colleges and Universities:

Community Engagement: The publicly engaged institution is fully committed to direct, two-way interaction with communities and other external constituencies through the development, exchange, and application of knowledge, information, and expertise for mutual benefit.

Questions for campus leaders (Votruba, 2003).

1. To what extent is community engagement part of the campus mission/vision statement (including mission statements of the college, department, and school)?
2. Is campus and community interaction institutionalized? Are campus leaders active and visible in community educational, civic, and cultural life?
3. Is the ability to lead in the community engagement arena a criteria for the selection and evaluation of key campus leaders including the president, provost, deans and chairs?
4. Does the campus have adequate infrastructure to support the community engagement mission?
5. Do campus policies and procedures serve to either enhance or inhibit faculty involvement in community engagement efforts?
6. Do faculty and unit-level incentives and rewards support community engagement?
7. Is there a clear expectation that each academic unit is responsible for serving the full breadth of the teaching, research, and engagement mission?
8. Does the process of faculty recruitment, orientation, and on-going professional development make clear that community engagement is an important element of the overall academic mission?
9. Does the campus planning and budgeting process reflect the importance of the community engagement process?
10. Is community engagement build into the curriculum?
11. Do campus communications and key communicators reflect the importance of community engagement?
12. Are campus facilities and environment designed to welcome community involvement?

Definitions of Engagement Activities Michigan State University Outreach Measurement Instrument

Outreach Research: Applied research, demonstration projects, participatory action research, capacity-building, evaluation and impact assessment studies and services, policy analysis, consulting and technical assistance, and technology transfer.

Experiential Research Activities. Student involvement in outreach research programs either as part of independent research credit courses, specialized courses in the undergraduate curriculum, or as volunteers. Examples include research programs in which students serve as trained data collectors, interventionists, instructors, or in other roles, with the common elements involving supervised training and on-going oversight by research faculty.

Outreach Teaching: Credit Courses and Programs. Courses and instructional programs that offer student academic credit hours and are designed and marketed specifically to serve those who are neither traditional campus degree seekers nor campus staff. Such courses and programs are often scheduled at times and in places convenient to the working adult. Examples include: a weekend MBA program, an off-campus course in Nursing offered in a rural area, an online doctoral program in beam physics for laboratory professionals, etc.

Outreach Teaching: Non-Credit Classes and Programs. Classes and instructional programs, marketed specifically to those who are neither degree seekers nor campus staff, that are designed to meet planned learning outcomes, but for which academic credit hours are not offered. In lieu of academic credit, these programs sometimes provide certificates of completion or continuing education units, or meet requirements of occupational leisure. Programs designed for

and targeted at faculty and staff (such as professional development programs) or degree-seeking students (such as career preparation or study skills classes) are not included. Examples include: a short-course for engineers on the use of new composite materials, a summer writing camp for high school students, a personal enrichment program in gardening, leisure learning tours of Europe, etc.).

Experiential/Service-Learning Civic or community service that students perform in conjunction with an academic course or program and that incorporates frequent, structured, and disciplined reflection on the linkages between the activity and the content of the academic experience. Other forms of experiential learning may include career-oriented practica and internships, or volunteer community service.

Clinical Service All client and patient (human and animal) care provided by university faculty through unit-sponsored group practice or as part of clinical instruction and by medical and graduate students as part of their professional education. For example, this may include medical/veterinary clinical practice, counseling, clinical or crisis center services, and tax or legal clinic services.

Public Events and Information Resources designed for the public include managed learning environments (museums, libraries, gardens, galleries, exhibits); expositions, demonstrations, fairs, and performances; and educational materials and products (e.g., pamphlets, websites, educational broadcasting, and software). Most of these experiences are short-term and learner-directed.

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