
Benchmark Standards for Engagement Across the Mission:

Dilemmas Provoked by Intra- and Inter-Institutional Diversity

Committee on Institutional Cooperation - Committee on Engagement
Pennsylvania State University
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Victor Bloomfield	University of Minnesota
David J. Nordloh	Indiana University
John C. Burkhardt	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Hiram E. Fitzgerald (Chair)	Michigan State University
Victor L. Lechtenberg	Purdue University
Howard Martin	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Bobby D. Moser	Ohio State University
Chet D. Rzonca	University of Iowa
Steven F. Schomberg	University of Illinois, Urbana- Champaign
Craig D. Weidemann with Trevor Brown	Pennsylvania State University
Don K. Gentry	Indiana University
Karen S. Bruns	Purdue University
Peyton Smith	Ohio State University
Barbara Allen	University of Wisconsin, Madison
	Committee on Institutional Cooperation

Council on Extension, Continuing Education and Public Service: NASULGC

Sharon Anderson	North Dakota State University
Linda K. Benning	NASULGC
Bob Bringle	Indiana Univ.-Purdue Univ. Indianapolis
Nikki L. Conklin	Ohio State University
Carolyn C. Dahl	University of Alabama
Hiram E. Fitzgerald	Michigan State University
Lyla E. Houglum	Oregon State University
Franklin Jackson	Alcorn State University
Stephen B. Jones	North Carolina State University
Paul McCawley	University of Idaho
Krista K. Rodin	University of Connecticut
Lorilee Sandmann	University of Georgia
Steven F. Schomberg	University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Patrician M. Sobrero	University of Missouri
Craig D. Weidemann	Pennsylvania State University
Richard Wooton	NASULGC

Who Assigned Our Task

The Committee on Institutional Cooperation

- The CIC is the academic consortium of the Big Ten Universities and the University of Chicago.
- The CIC is committed to advancing academic excellence through research sharing and collaboration among its member universities.
- The CIC is governed by the Provosts of the member universities, who act as the “board” and who convene three times annually to set direction for the consortium.

What Was Our Task?

- Frame what is meant by engagement
- Benchmark strategies for public engagement across the CIC
- Identify performance measures
- Advise CIC Members' Committee on collaborative opportunities



**We Searched for Direction on Benchmarking
and Found the Kellogg Commission**

The Kellogg Commission Report on Engagement

- Make engagement a priority on every campus
- Develop plans for engagement
- Encourage interdisciplinary work
- Create new incentives to advance engagement
- Generate stable and secure funding



and the Higher Learning Commission

The Higher Learning Commission Accreditation Core Component 5

- 5A.** The organization learns and analyzes the needs and expectations of the communities it serves
- 5B.** The organization has the capacity and demonstrates the commitment to engage the communities it serves
- 5C.** The organization connects with and engages those communities that depend on it for service
- 5D.** Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides



**and the American Association of State
Colleges and Universities**

Questions for Campus Leaders

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?

Questions for Campus Leaders

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 reaching, 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?

Questions for Campus Leaders

9. Does the campus planning and budgeting process reflect the importance of the community engagement process?
10. Is community engagement built 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?



and the CECEPS Task Force on Benchmarking

CECEPS Benchmarking Task Force: Qualities of Engagement

1. Engagement brings the university's resources to bear on societal needs
2. Engagement is a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service
3. Engagement implies reciprocity, whereby both the institution and partners in the community both benefit and contribute
4. Engagement blends scientific knowledge from the university with experiential knowledge from the community to establish an environment of co-learning

CECEPS Benchmarking Task Force: Qualities of Engagement

5. Engagement involves shared decision making
6. Engagement is a practice that strengthens faculty; enhances the education experience for students, and multiplies the institution's impact on external constituencies
7. Engagement is actively listening to all stakeholders that reflect the diversity of our communities—especially including those stakeholders who have not been engaged before

CECEPS Benchmarking Task Force: Qualities of Engagement

8. A university is engaged when stakeholders see the institution as the “resource of choice” when dealing with an issue or problem
9. 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



We Constructed a CIC Definition of Engagement

Engagement is the partnership of university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors

- to enrich scholarship and creative activities,
- to enhance curriculum, teaching & learning,
- to prepare educated, engaged citizens,
- to strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility,
- to address critical societal issues,
- and to contribute to the public good.



**We Constructed a Justification for Measuring
Outreach/ Engagement**

Why Measure Engagement Activities?

1. A means of assessing an institution's fulfillment of its engagement/public service mission
2. A management and planning tool for ensuring that academic units contribute to the institution's overall engagement commitment
3. Evidence of organizational support for engagement
4. Economic development and technology transfer data
5. A basis for telling the engagement story and building support for higher education among legislators, donors, and the public
6. A new engagement rubric for comparing peer institutions nationally

Benchmarks of Engagement can Provide Evidence of...

- Reward systems for faculty and staff that include an engagement dimension
- Curricular impacts of student engagement
- Applications of the dissemination of research and transfer of knowledge
- Meaningful engagement with communities
- Applications of the evidence of partnership satisfaction



The Proposed Benchmark Matrix

Evidence of Institutional Commitment to Engagement

- The institution's commitment is reflected throughout its administrative structure
- The institution's commitment is reflected in its reward structure for faculty and staff
- The institution's commitment is reflected in its policies and procedures designed to facilitate outreach and engagement activities
- The institution's commitment is reflected in its policies and procedures that are responsive to non-traditional student needs

Evidence of Institutional Resource Commitment to Engagement

- The institution shows evidence of senior leadership for engagement and outreach activities
- The institution shows evidence of financial support for engagement through its budgetary process
- The institution shows evidence that faculty and staff time is devoted to outreach and engagement activities

Evidence that Students are Involved in Engagement and Outreach Activities

- The institution shows evidence that engagement is an implicit component of the curriculum and co-curricular activities
- The institution shows evidence that it attends to diverse communities, peoples and geographic areas
- The institution shows evidence that students are engaged in applied projects and programs

Evidence that Faculty and Staff are Engaged with External Constituents

- The institution shows evidence that faculty and staff are involved in scholarly activities related to the institution's engagement mission
- The institution shows evidence that faculty and staff are engaged in community vitality and economic development initiatives in partnership with external constituents
- The institution shows evidence that there is translation and transfer of new knowledge to external audiences
- The institution shows evidence that there are policies regarding intellectual property rights that foster the transfer and application of knowledge and research

Evidence that Institutions are Engaged with their Communities

- The institution shows evidence that it participates in environmental scanning in order to determine critical social needs
- The institution shows evidence that it has established university-community partnerships with diverse entities
- The institution shows evidence that communities have access to and use university resources
- The institution shows evidence that it improves community vitality

Evidence of resource/Revenue Opportunities Generated through Engagement

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

Evidence of Assessing the Impact and Outcomes of Engagement

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

Focal Issues

- Developing metrics for engagement activities:
 - scholarly and reviewed articles on engagement
 - publications highlighting university engagement
 - direct communications (speeches, panels, workshops and public broadcasts)
- Disciplinary criteria for promotion and tenure

Focal Issues

- How to anchor the university's full research (basic and applied), instruction, and service mission in a scholarship focused effort?
- How to involve community partners in a way that maintains academic standards?
- How to involve professional societies in changing academic culture?