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Becoming an Engaged Institution: A Multi-Case Study of Carnegie Community-Engaged Institutions (0137)

Abstract:

This research presents a multi-case analysis of seven institutions that were rewarded the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement and deemed as exemplars of institutional community engagement in earlier phases of the research. Provosts and academic leaders involved in changing promotion policy were interviewed to gain understanding of the process that unfolded on campuses to revise tenure policies and guidelines to explicitly reward community engaged scholarship in teaching and/or research and creative activity as well as in the faculty service role. Findings present lessons learned regarding institutional change and transform toward an increased recognition and reward of community engagement.

Background

The Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement's framework requires self-reported documentation from institutions that demonstrate 1) institutionalization of community engagement "through indicators of institutional identity and culture and institutional commitment" (Driscoll, 2009, p. 7) and 2) the focus of their engagement either in terms of the curriculum or in terms of outreach and partnership with community or both.   In 2006, one of the optional application questions assessed institutional policies for promotion and tenure by asking "Do the institutional polices for promotion and tenure reward the scholarship of community engagement"? A 2009 study of the institutions that were successfully awarded the Classification and answered *yes* to this optional question found dissonance between the self reported data in the application and the institutional reality in terms of actual promotion guidelines rarely did the guidelines reflect recognition of community engaged scholarship as research in its own right. This question cuts to the very core of academic culture and shows how self perception may not reflect the actual academic values of the institution.

The institutions that did answer the optional question on the recognition of community engaged scholarship in promotion and tenure review, where then assessed in terms of the depth and pervasiveness (the fourth quadrant) of the transformation of academic culture (Eckel, Hill, and Green, 1998) as evidenced through content and language analysis of the promotion and tenure guidelines. Only seven of the original 33 institutions that elected to answer the optional question provided sufficient evidence to be located in the fourth quadrant, demonstrating transformation change reflected in institutional reward policies that are artefacts of an academic culture that authentically values community engagement.

We had the self-reported data from the application giving a current assessment of community-engagement and for these particular institutions an independent assessment of their promotion and tenure guidelines corroborated their self-reported data. Yet we had no understanding of the process of change on these highly engaged campuses. How did these institutions become exemplars of institutional engagement? We don't know the story behind the levels of engagement and want to understand the change process related to revision of promotion and tenure guidelines toward a greater

recognition and validation of community-engaged research and scholarship as a legitimate form of scholarship in its own right.

Therefore the purpose of this study was to explore the emerging changes as seven universities moved forward a process for the reward of faculty engaged scholarship.

Conceptual Framework

Approaches to implementing change processes are likely to vary from institution to institution so a broad conceptual model is required to allow understanding across institutional types and contexts. While a phased model might indicate that change takes place in a linear fashion this is not the case. Even so, Kotter's model for transformational change has a number of elements that help us understand the process of change (1996). The phases of the change process that are particularly useful for raising questions related the institutionalization of community engaged scholarship include – Is there a sense of urgency on campus or in the community that proves to be a catalyst for the change? Is applying for the Classification generating a sense of urgency? Where is the motivating force? Is there a guiding coalition? What is the vision and strategy of the institution? How is broad-based action encouraged? Are there evidence of short-term wins? How are gains used to produce more change? And finally, how are new approaches anchored in the culture of the institution?

Research Questions

The central question guiding our inquiry is:
> What was the process that unfolded at your campus to revise promotion and tenure policies and guidelines to explicitly reward community engaged scholarship in teaching and/or research and creative activity as well as in the faculty service role?

Sub-questions include:
When did the change take place? Why? How?
Who were the key players involved in the change and what roles did they play?

Methods
A multi-case study was conducted.
Data sources or Evidence
We arrived at the data source for this study through earlier research. In 2006, the Carnegie Foundation awarded 76 campuses with its Community Engagement Classification. Of those campuses, 5 received the classification for Curricular Engagement only, 9 received the classification for Outreach and Partnerships only and 62 campuses received the classification for both Curricular Engagement and Partnerships. Before analyzing the applications, we disaggregated the data to look at the campus context of the campuses that chose to answer the question on institutional reward policies and those that chose not to. We looked at the institutional characteristics of each campus, its Basic Carnegie Classification, and whether it received Corporation for National and Community Service, Learn and Serve Higher Education program, or the US Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) program funding.

For the purposes of this study, we focused on the seven campuses that emerged as the most engaged: those that received the classification for both Curricular Engagement and Outreach and Partnerships, answered the option question, and articulated the reward of community engaged scholarship in

institutional reward policies. Twelve semi-structured interviews with chief academic officers and institutional were conducted.

Analysis of the data provide understanding about the process of institutional change related to
- o how institutional leaders are initiating, supporting, and managing community-engagement change strategies on their campuses
- o who are the key people involved in the change process and their roles in the institution and the
- o individual and institutional motivators for the desired change.

Findings also illuminate whether or not there are
- o common characteristics across institutional types related to community-engagement change strategy
- o whether or not there are characteristics of the change process unique to certain institutional types
- o whether or not timing is a key factor in the change process
- o if there are catalysts that are common across institutions or if there indeed are any commonalities among the change strategies employed.

This study makes a significant contribution both to the literature on institutional change and transformation as well as the community-engagement literature.

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