Using Assessment for Accountability, Accreditation & Institutionalization of Civic Engagement

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Indianapolis, IN

Assessment, Accreditation, Accountability = Quality, Achievement

Assessment for Us
Assessment for Them

What do we know?
- Stock-taking study on nature/extent of assessment in civic engagement

How do we know it?
- Assessment strategies/tools

So what?
- Principles for theory, practice application
- Questions/challenges as pathway forward

Community Engagement...
describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2006

Pathways to Engagement
- Improved Teaching and Learning Pedagogical Pathway
- Connecting to the Community Partnership Pathway
- The New Production of Knowledge Epistemological Pathway
- The Civic Mission of Higher Education Pathway

John Saltmarsh, NERCHE UMass-Boston

Community Engagement...
2006/2008 Classified Institutions

196 of 235 applicant institutions were classified

112 public/84 private institutions

- 74 doctoral granting universities
- 73 master’s colleges and universities
- 31 baccalaureate colleges
- 14 community colleges
- 4 specialized focus (arts, medicine, technology)

Benefits of the CE Classification

“Overall, it challenged us to question ourselves from the inside out, and to recognize areas of strength, weakness and opportunities for growth. The framework provided a valuable guideline for our dialogue, an opportunity to review our policies, procedures and curricular offerings with a different eye. It has given us another baseline to use to determine if we are honoring our commitment to community engagement.”

Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

- An elective classification—voluntary, additional data collection and documentation
- Recognizes important aspects of institutional mission & action that are not represented in the national data
- The term, community engagement, is proposed because it offers the widest coverage, the broadest conception of interactions with community, and promotes inclusivity in the classification
- Classifies institutions in ways that avoid ranking and comparisons

Benefits of the CE Classification

- Defining institutional identity
- Public recognition and visibility using legitimacy of Carnegie
- Benchmarking & accountability
- Strategic planning—internal/self assessment, recognize good work, encourages ongoing dev., creates operational goals

Intentions of Classification of Community Engagement

- To affirm & document the diversity & scope of campus approaches to C.E.
- To encourage inquiry & learning in the process of documentation
- To provide instrumentation & documentation that provide useful data to the institution
- To foster a documentation process that is practical & makes use of existing data

“Despite our commitment to community engagement, we had not previously compiled information about the many types and examples of community engagement that occur here. The self-study tells us that we have much to celebrate. It also provides us with a tool for analyzing where we can further increase and improve our efforts.”
**Documentation Framework**

**Measurement Indicators**
- Institutional Identity and Culture
- Institutional Commitment
  - Curricular Engagement
  - Outreach and Partnerships

http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/index.php

The documentation process is extensive and substantive, focused on significant qualities, activities, and institutional provisions that insure an institutionalized approach to community engagement.

**Strengths of Successfully Classified Institutions**
- Alignment of institutional identity, culture, and commitments
- Common definitions, language, and priorities
- Service-learning
- Attention to record keeping and reporting

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**Analysis of First Wave**

- 2006 Classified
- 76/56
- Analysis by framework question
- General state across institutional types, functions, best practices

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**Areas Challenging Institutions**
- Assessing community perceptions of institutional engagement
- Assessing impact of institutional engagement on faculty, community, and institution
- Initiating, maintaining, assessing mutuality and reciprocity in partnerships
- P&T

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**Analysis of the First Wave**

- Leadership
- Faculty Roles and Rewards
- Service Learning and Curricular Engagement
- Community Campus Partnerships
- Benchmarking and Assessment
- Institutional Advancement
- Institutionalization

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**Assessment—Lessons Learned**

- Assessment process is essential to measure and benchmark
  - Components important for the institutionalization of engagement's (mission/leadership/plan/resources/infrastructure; faculty involvement/support; student opportunities; mutually beneficial partnership=culture)
  - Structure, framework for collecting/reviewing information
  - Decision making regarding status of CE overall/strengths/weaknesses
**Assessment—Lessons Learned**

- Dozens of tools have been used for assessing/benchmarking community engagement—vary in terms of purpose, level of complexity, scope, process, structure, focus.

  *Furco & Miller, 2009*

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**Issues: Defining Terms**

- Effective assessment requires a shared understanding of concepts and terminology.
- Definitions influence both the processes and measures in their respective assessment strategies.

  *Ex. NCSU, U of Alaska*

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**Issue: Purpose**

- Engagement assessed as part of continuous improvement, action planning, accreditation, impact, reporting.
- Purpose of assessment influences—approaches, data procedures, regularity, scale and scope.

  *Ex. Tufts*

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**Issue: Timing**

- When the assessment should be conducted.
  - Decentralized/program level
  - Fully integrated, routine systems/institutional level.

  *Ex. VA Tech, MSU*

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**Issue: Assessors**

- Existing internal capacities/External review team.
  - Skillful and knowledgeable.
  - Must understand community engagement and how it is operationalized.
  - Must understand nature of communities.

  *Ex. Widener, UW-Parkside*
**ISSUE: ADAPTING TOOLS**

- Numerous assessment tools available
- Careful consideration in selecting/adapting not to change the intent
  - Checklists
  - Indicators
  - Benchmark approach
  - Rubrics
  - Matrices
  - Systems

**BENCHMARK APPROACH**

- Distinguished from checklist and instruments as it calls for more formalized assessment procedure, requires presentation of more empirical data
- Introduces notion of performance expectations that can be establish through internal and external comparison
  - Ex. Benchmarks on Engagement, Committee on Institutional Collaboration

**ASSESSMENT TOOLS REVIEWS**

Assessing the Institutionalization of Civic Engagement
  - Burack & Saltmarsh, 2006

Issues in Benchmarking and Assessing Institutional Engagement
  - Furco & Miller, 2009

**RUBRICS**

- Inherently two-dimensional
- Offers more than one point of reference
- Works well to measuring changes over time
- Depth loss to comprehensive nature
- Require investment of time and energy to complete
- Assessor familiarity with the instrument is necessary
  - Ex: Self-Assessment Rubric for Institutionalizing Service-Learning in Higher Education Furco, 1998

**CHECKLISTS/INDICATORS**

- Quick/ Easy to use
- Composed of set of components deemed essential for advancing community engagement
- Greater number of components = more institutionalized engagement
- Highly subjective to assessor's interpretation
- Underestimates levels of engagement
- Inappropriate for measuring progress over time
- Provides no information on extent or degree of institutionalization

**METRICS**

- Two-dimensional instrument with a set of engagement factors
- Distinct from rubrics as factors are not constructed with consistent descriptions across the different stages or levels of institutionalization.
- Especially useful for action planning
  - Ex. Levels of Commitment to Engagement Holland, 1997/ 2006
### Levels of Commitment to Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level One: Low Relevance</th>
<th>Level Two: Medium Relevance</th>
<th>Level Three: High Relevance</th>
<th>Level Four: Full Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Engagement is part of what we do, but not central to our mission</td>
<td>Engagement is central to our mission and central to community well-being</td>
<td>Engagement is central to our mission and central to community well-being, and also central to our institution’s success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Engagement is supported by the president, but not a core priority</td>
<td>Engagement is supported by the president and senior leadership, and is a core priority</td>
<td>Engagement is supported by the president and senior leadership, and is a core priority, and also central to our institution’s success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion, Tenure, Hiring</td>
<td>Engagement is not a formal or informal criterion for promotion, tenure, or hiring</td>
<td>Engagement is a formal or informal criterion for promotion, tenure, or hiring</td>
<td>Engagement is a formal or informal criterion for promotion, tenure, or hiring, and also central to our institution’s success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Structure and Funding</td>
<td>Engagement is not a formal or informal criterion for funding or support</td>
<td>Various efforts are coordinated to support engagement and funding, and are formally recognized</td>
<td>Engagement is a formal or informal criterion for funding and support, and also central to our institution’s success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Assessment Initiatives
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching - Community Engagement Classification
- APLU - Council on Innovation, Competitiveness and Economic Prosperity (CICEP) - Institutional Assessment Tool to Enhance Regional Innovation and Prosperity
- APLU - Council on Engagement and Outreach (CEO) - Benchmarking Engagement Initiative
- Transformative Regional Engagement (TRE) - Regional Engagement Toolkit (Website)

### CICEP Institutional Assessment Tool

**Characteristics to help universities become the best possible partner in regional economic growth & development**

**Questions:**
1. Assess the institution’s current performance
2. How important is this activity to the institution’s role in regional economic development?

**7 Dimensions:**
- Engage & Assert Institutional Leadership
- Create & Support Culture
- Ensure University Activities Benefit the Public
- Develop an Innovation Economy
- Provide Relevant Educational Opportunities and Programs
- Promote Openness, Accessibility and Responsiveness
- Communicate Contributions, Successes, Achievements for Benefit Region

**How do you assess the institution’s current performance?**

Scale: 1 = Poor 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Superior N = No Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>How do you assess the institution’s current performance?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Engage and Assert Institutional Leadership</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Articulate mission expectations that encourage and promote engagement, scholarship and innovation by faculty, staff and students that contribute to economic growth in the community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work closely with government and businesses to understand regional economic development priorities.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify key research strengths in the university and, where appropriate, align them with the strengths and innovation needs of regional industry, expectations of government leaders and the economic development priorities of the community.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cultivate an active focus on the training and education of unemployed and underemployed workers to create the skills necessary for competitiveness in the 21st-century.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Carnegie – AS Assessment Tool
- Mainly descriptive
- Self-reported data/information
- Documents activity: does not measure quality
- Institutions evaluate various aspects of their processes in relationship to standards of best practice (Documentation Framework)
- Not a ranking tool – no hierarchy or levels of classification

### TRE Toolkit (Website)

**Compendium of Tools and Resources for:**
- Assessing Institutional Capacity
- Planning Regional Engagement

**Incorporates Key Principles, Definitions & Guidance**

**Focus on University, Region, Interface:**
- Define
- Align
- Connect
- Plan

[http://sites.google.com/site/trepartneringtoolkit/home](http://sites.google.com/site/trepartneringtoolkit/home)
"How are we Doing?"

"...need an überdashboard, and smaller ones that power it, because 'how the university is doing' is no longer merely a private conversation..."  
Torp & Goldstein, 2010
What are OEMI data used for?

- Centralized data about a university’s outreach and engagement can serve a variety of purposes
  - Documenting the salary investment of a university’s contributions of scholarship for the public good
  - Describing the university’s outreach and engagement activity to the public (telling the engagement story)
  - Communication and recognition programs
  - Identifying good stories and exemplars
  - Responding to accreditation and other institutional self-studies
  - Assessment and strategic planning
  - Supporting faculty development efforts
  - Possible cross-institutional analyses and benchmarking
  - Research studies

Implications for...

- Theory and practice
  - Are we assessing the right dimensions/components?
    - What about assessment of quality/outcomes of civic/community engagement—longitudinal?
    - What about sustaining institutionalization?
  - What about mechanisms for sharing the results (not just the tools) of assessment, so that institutions can more readily learn from each other?
  - What are the implications for your Institution?
What Do We Know?
Large-scale “stock-taking” study about the nature and extent of assessment in the institutionalization of civic and community engagement in higher education comes from analyzing 56 of the first 76 institutions classified as community-engaged institutions by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In addition to assessing community engagement, the work also examined the dimensions of leading, student learning, partnering, funding, and rewarding engagement, consistent with the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification documentation framework.

Definition
“Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”

http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community_engagement.php

Key Measurement Indicators of Framework
- Institutional Identity and Culture
- Institutional Commitment
  - Curricular Engagement
  - Outreach and Partnerships

Carnegie as a Benchmarking Tool
- Mainly descriptive
- Self-reported data/information
- Documents activity: Does not measure quality
- Institutions evaluate various aspects of their processes in relationship to standards of best practice (Documentation Framework)
- Not a ranking tool – no hierarchy or levels of classification

Strengths of Successfully Classified Institutions
- Alignment of institutional identity, culture, and commitments
- Common definitions and priorities emerging
- Service-learning
- Attention to record keeping and reporting

Areas Challenging Institutions
- Assessing community perceptions of institutional engagement
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- P & T
Lessons Learned—Assessment Itself is Important Part and Indicator of C.E. Institutionalization

- Carnegie components important for the institutionalization of engagement (mission; plan; resources/infrastructure; faculty involvement/support; student opportunities; mutually beneficial partnership; =culture)
- Structure, framework for collecting/reviewing information
- Catalyzed discussions and provided data about
  - Optimum/desired level of engagement activity aligned with institutional purposes and capacities
  - Aspects of the academic organization that are essential to quality engagement
  - Areas of weakness where organizational change and capacity improvements are needed
- Regardless of assessment type + action plan = Decisions to advance engagement

How do we know it?

Issues in Assessment for Civic/Community Engagement

- **Defining terms**—North Carolina State University, University of Alaska
- **Timing of assessment** decentralized/centralized & integrated systems—Michigan State University, Virginia Tech, University of New Hampshire (2008)
- **Purpose** of engagement assessed as part of continuous improvement, action planning, accreditation, impact, reporting—Tufts
- **Assessors** internal capacities, external review team, skillful, knowledgeable, understand engagement, nature of communities—Widener, UW-Parkside
- **Assessment strategies & tools** Dozens tools have been used for assessing/benchmarking community engagement—vary in purpose, level of complexity, scope, process, structure, focus
  “Assessing the Institutionalization of Civic Engagement,” Burack & Saltmarsh, 2006

  **Newer/developing tools**
  - Institutional Assessment Tool to Enhance Regional Innovation and Prosperity
  - Regional Engagement Toolkit [http://sites.google.com/site/trepartneringtoolkit/home](http://sites.google.com/site/trepartneringtoolkit/home)
  - Outreach and Engagement Measurement Instrument
    [http://outreach.msu.edu/oemi/enterprise/requestgustaccount.aspx](http://outreach.msu.edu/oemi/enterprise/requestgustaccount.aspx)

What are the Implications?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Assessment?</th>
<th>Type of Measures?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External – Local/Regional Impact Institutional -- Faculty, Students, Administration Teaching and Research, Outreach/Service</td>
<td>Quantitative/Objective Qualitative/Interpretive Collaborative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Assessment?</th>
<th>Value of National Efforts?</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Demonstrate the Outcomes/Value of Engagement  
  o Community Partners  
  o University Leaders  
  o Policy Makers  
| Institutional Planning  
| Institutional Distinction  
| Common Tools  
| Shared Results  
| Research—quality/outcomes longitudinally |