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Community engagement as a cornerstone enabling learning and teaching and research in the post modern world

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Publication Details

This article was originally published as Collins, R, Curtis, O, Curtis, S and Stevenson, L, *Community engagement as a cornerstone enabling learning and teaching and research in the post modern world*, The Australasian journal of university community engagement, 2(1), 2007, 2-32. Original journal article available here

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Disciplines
Arts and Humanities | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Recommended Citation
Collins, Robbie; Curtis, O.; Curtis, S.; and Stevenson, L.: "Community engagement as a cornerstone enabling learning and teaching and research in the post modern world." 2007.
http://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers/59

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Other author's name (if applicable)	Owen Curtis, Sue Curtis, Laurie Stevenson
Title of Paper	"Community engagement as a cornerstone enabling learning and teaching and research in the post modern world."

Published in

THE AUSTRALASIAN JOURNAL OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Vol 2, No 1 Spring 2007

Published by
The Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance Inc.
PO Box 928
KYNETON VIC 3444

Editor: Prof Barbara Van Ernst AM

ISSN 1833-4482

And first presented at:

4th Annual AUCEA Conference
2 – 4 JULY 2007
Charles Darwin University, Alice Springs

A U C E A Inc.

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This paper demonstrates how community engagement can provide a cornerstone enabling research and learning and teaching to meet the challenges of relativity and uncertainty in a post modern world. In the field of education, the question of relevance is a constant criticism. If relevance is to be achieved, research and learning and teaching need to be interwoven with community and community concerns, in ways that enhance the outcomes for all stakeholders. The paper examines an academic's university community engagement practice from a reflexive and cross disciplinary perspective. It seeks to identify the characteristics and qualities that define successful university community engagement practice while identifying that there needs to be recognition and reward for universities to have more academics involved in such successful and sustainable university community engagement practice.

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Introduction

Increasingly, the relevance of education and specifically university education, to life and to vocation is questioned. There is doubt about the relevance of the skills and abilities of students and thus the learning and teaching processes in the institutions of education and about the kinds of research institutions of higher education undertake. The graduate outcomes discussions in the past five years foreground these questions. (BHERT 2003). Universities are encouraged to develop linkages with businesses and the community in order that they operate beyond their traditional ivory towers (Bishop, 2006) and university policy is moving toward raising the profile of community engagement. This paper seeks to develop the notion of community engagement as a valid practice of academics and as such the need for appropriate reward and recognition systems to be structured into the way universities operate. To explore this idea the paper seeks to understand the activities of an academic who has invested many years in university community engagement. From this rich and reflective analysis bedded in an understanding of the post modern world, the paper considers the notion that without community engagement, universities in such a world, will fail to meet the needs of a range of stakeholders. Embracing community engagement as an academic practice, the traditional academic activities of learning and teaching and of research, can gain perspectives which serve to develop academic practice and augment the possibilities of linkage with the community. The paper begins by developing an understanding of the post modern world in which such activities become important for both the operation of traditional research activities and for the facilitation of work ready graduates. Graduates who are ready and prepared to take their part in the professional activities for which their studies

have prepared them become excellent ambassadors for the processes and experiences gained through their tertiary education.

A little definition

'Community engagement' is taken to mean those activities undertaken by universities which develop and nurture links with the community and which benefit both the university and the community or region in which they are located. Such a definition acknowledges that the words 'community' or 'region' are fraught with many problems. Community engagement is, however, a process requiring the investment of energy by all parties involved. In understanding both the meaning of 'community' and working with the community, any university community engagement practitioner will need to identify the specific stakeholders of initiatives to engage effectively and appropriately with the community. This process will include identification of university stakeholders as well as representatives of interest groups who are the community stakeholders of mutually beneficial initiatives. Community engagement activities can only be effectively and sustainably developed on a foundation of trust, mutual respect and understanding. This foundation provides assurance that the activities proposed are part of relevant development and ongoing changes in the community and recognition that these changes and developments are part of a shared process and mutual understanding. Community engagement is not about 'doing to' the community, but about engaging with and empowering the community. Inherent in the community engagement process is both initial and ongoing involvement of community stakeholders in the decision making processes that constitute collaborative activity.

To foreground the importance of the learner in the practice of education, this paper uses the notion of 'learning and teaching' rather than simply 'teaching' in its

discussion of academic practice. This is consistent with the notion of education that engages the learner in a range of activities including those that might be undertaken in a community engagement activity.

The methodology of the paper

Much of this paper uses the community engagement, learning and teaching and research experiences of Owen Curtis, one of the writing team of the paper, to provide examples through which to examine the detail of university community engagement in action. Owen Curtis is a university community engagement practitioner in the model of academic practice described in this paper. In using his experience as a case study and because of his membership of the writing team for the paper, the paper itself models reflective practice (cf. Schon 1993). The development of quality processes through action learning – the 'plan, do, check, act' process - is an essential part of reflective practice. At the same time, by writing in a team, the authors access the skills, research background and practical experience of all team members to develop the reflections of one university community engagement practitioner. With this approach we can gain rich detail in the narrative of the community engagement practitioner and a broad understanding of education, innovation and organisational process from the breadth of the research team. Indeed, the research we are discussing is "community based, … collaborative, change-oriented and finds its research questions in the needs of communities" (O'Connor 2006:6). Reflection on the process, on community engagement in action, is a continuous cycle that is necessary to further innovation in the institution of higher education and its accepted social purposes related to this particular aspect of activity.

Such a methodology is also appropriate in considering the issue of where community engagement fits in the roles of the academic and in the practices of the university.

Some of the challenges in researching and writing the paper come from the tension between Mode 1 and Mode 2 research (Gibbons 1994) and writing about Mode 2 practice for a Mode 1 publication. By electing to write in a team, as is appropriate and relevant in the post modern context, a range of cross disciplinary perspectives are accessed. Members of the team do not work on the same campus of the University of Wollongong and the linkage across the campuses comes from mutual interest in the scholarship of engagement and in the understanding developed through the collaboration. Fogel & Cook (2006:9) claim that community engagement literature needs "discussion of how the interpersonal aspects of partnership between key stakeholders either hinder or promote success" in engagement activities. The methodology behind this paper allows for this kind of reflective appreciation and at the same time, for team members' understandings to be developed. This process supports a focus on the needs of community engagement practitioners in universities for recognition and reward. O'Connor (2006) suggests that community based research and the scholarship of engagement breaks into two categories; how to do it and how to be recognised for it. There seems to be less addressing the latter and indeed, it comes as no surprise that community engagement recommendations continue to identify the need for universities to define their commitment to engagement in ways that include "reward systems for faculty and academic staff that include an engagement dimension" (CIC 2005). These engagement dimensions offer as one performance measure or desired outcome, the "number of faculty tenured and promoted on engagement activity". (CIC2005) While this example is US in origin, the aims of bodies like AUCEA, include; "promot[ing] the recognition of the scholarship of engagement as a valid pedagogy". As well, an AUCEA position paper suggests that "engagement is … a core activity of a university and should not be considered a separate undertaking. Community engagement should be a key component in a university's staff promotion and performance review programs and feature in the annual Institutional Assessment Framework Information Collection" (AUCEA 2006). If

Australian universities aim to develop their community engagement these proposals all parallel the need for reward and recognition structures which assist academics to identify community engagement as a valid and valuable activity and one which will foster career development.

Following is the citation of Owen Curtis for a University of Wollongong Community Engagement Award. We provide this as evidence of the university's regard for Owen's work. While Owen is not the lead writer in this team, he embraced the notion of a collective reflection on community engagement activities because of his personal belief in the need to develop recognition and reward systems for such practitioners in universities. Such recognition will encourage academic involvement in community engagement as a legitimate and worthwhile career choice. His experiences demonstrate one university community engagement practitioner's work

- as a resource for developing ways of learning and teaching in a university community engagement framework,
- has served to develop research linkages of significant value for the university,
- has supported graduate outcomes, and as well,
- has informed curriculum development both within the university and nationally.

This activity has not, as yet, been recognised as part of the Faculty and University mainstream reward structures.

University of Wollongong Citation http://www.uow.edu.au/about/community/staffawardrecipient06.html accessed 7/12/06

Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement - 2006

The inaugural Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement for 2006 was awarded to Owen Curtis from the School of Health Sciences in the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences.

Citation for Owen Curtis

Owen Curtis receives this inaugural award for his significant and sustained contribution to community engagement over a 15 year period. He has developed what has been described as a "living laboratory" for staff and students of the School of Health Sciences which have brought mutual benefits for the University and the community alike.

Owen has been instrumental in establishing close ties with strategic allies within the region and beyond and through these connections has supported student involvement in a wide range of exercise intervention and rehabilitation programs. Such programs have resulted in increased health and wellbeing for indigenous populations and the elderly, in particular, and have helped to ensure that our graduates are skilled, competent and responsive to local needs and issues.

The colleagues who nominated Owen for this award listed many examples of initiatives that he has contributed to which have brought real and tangible benefits for the community. While these are too numerous to mention here, some of the highlights include:

> The introduction of an exercise intervention program at Port Kembla Hospital – which has now developed into a stand alone department within the hospital;
> Development of the Exercise Science and Rehabilitation Clinic on campus which provides the opportunity for the community to access University staff and student skills;
> Development of the Workfit Model at the Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital;
> Development of Self Management Education Camps for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people with Diabetes in conjunction with the Aboriginal Medical Service; and
> Delivery of the exercise component of the Care for the Carers Program sponsored through NSW Health (with the support of his students).

His colleagues also speak of the tireless and self-effacing manner in which he has developed and implemented the programs noted above.

Finally, as a testimony to his community engagement, Owen has been able to attract grants and scholarships from community groups and foundations to support student involvement in these programs over many years.

The respect afforded Owen as a result of his efforts is evident in the ready access he has to the medical and allied health professions, to the indigenous populations, and to those involved in aged care. It is also reflected in this award.

Universities and the post modern world

The post modern world is characterised by ▓ Accelerating change ▓ The growth of the knowledge economy ▓ The increasing diffusion of Information technology ▓ Networked Connectedness ▓ The need for continuous innovation ▓ Globalisation and internationalisation ▓ The relativity of knowledge

Each of the above elements of the post-modern world impact on the practices and policies in universities. One of the earliest academics to recognise and document this shift was Gibbons in his 1994 work 'The New Production of Knowledge' where he distinguished between Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge generation. Mode 1 is represented by the traditional university, disciplinary research paradigm while Mode 2 is identified as multi- and trans- disciplinary, problem focussed and targeted to meet identified needs in specific contexts. The consequences of the post modern recognition of the possibility of multiple valid explanations for a single phenomena are still filtering through university practices and policies and it could be asked whether universities would more appropriately be named 'multiversities' in recognition of this seismic shift in our understanding of knowledge and its production. In a world where knowledge is no longer fixed, institutions of higher education are defining new ways of being and doing to maintain relevance and legitimate their role in society.

One of the outcomes of this shift in our understanding of knowledge production and distribution has been the embracing of the principle of 'Community Engagement' by the university sector. In Australia, Federal Government research funding bodies have increased the emphasis on university research being conducted with external partners in applied contexts. That is, research that is 'community engaged'. Federal Minister for Education, Julie Bishop, in her keynote address to the Sydney 2006

Knowledge Transfer and Community Engagement Forum suggests that each university "needs to adapt its structures, processes and operations to the needs of it particular stakeholders".

The Recognition and Reward Problématique

However, when one considers the reward and recognition structures of the university system which are strongly biased towards a peer-reviewed publication record, a tension becomes apparent between the Mode 1 knowledge production method, based on disciplinary peer review and a Mode 2 community engagement context, based upon multi and trans disciplinary contexts, which may not be recognised as legitimate by the 'Mode 1' peers. This situation has obvious implications in reward and recognition structures based on criteria from a 'Mode 1' paradigm. This problem is not confined to universities policies alone, it could be said to be systemic, in that the funding body DEST, only recognises certain Mode 1 publications in their funding equations. Although academics may be fulfilling the university's mission of active community engagement, appropriate 'weighting' may not be available for this activity in the context of promotion which requires extensive 'Mode 1 publications' in recognised 'Mode 1' journals. 'Mode 2' publications, in unrecognised and 'unweighted' Mode 2 media, do not earn DEST points and therefore do not earn universities funding.

The practice for which Owen Curtis received the above Community Engagement award fits the Mode 2 paradigm and is the culmination of more than fifteen years of networking in the community and developing his professional contacts for the benefit of his students, the community and the university. The motivation for this community engagement was the need for students to develop reflective practice in a relatively safe, but not simulated environment; something that was closer to an experience of

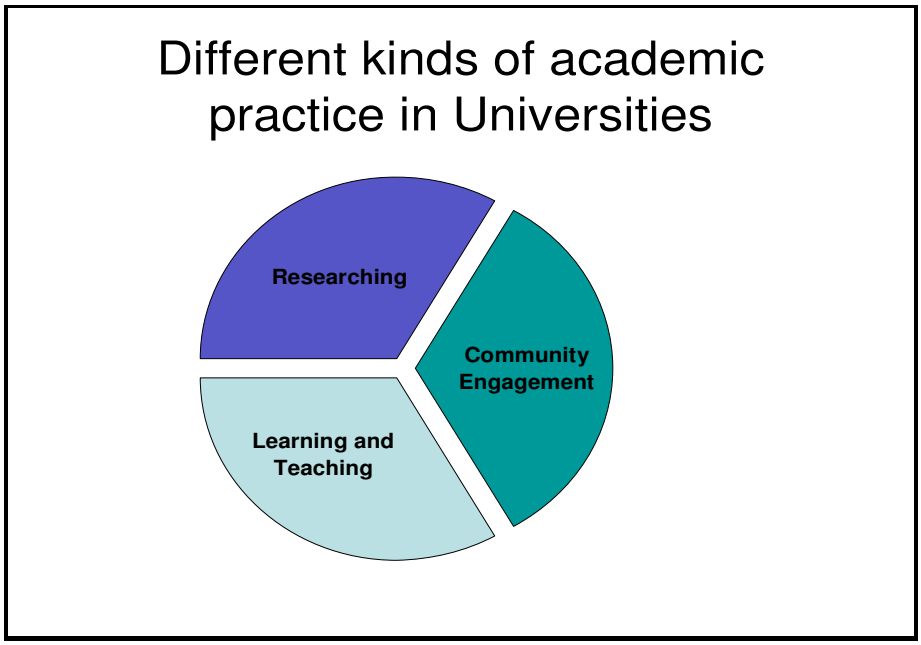
the ‘real world’, than they would otherwise be able to achieve. The Living Laboratory and other initiatives which grew out of the drive for ‘real world’ experience, are the kind of initiatives that bring university learning and teaching into the post modern world. The most recent result of this lifetime commitment has been the awarding of a federally funded research grant to a team in which Owen is the principal researcher. Owen, as university community engagement practitioner, is the key link between community and university environments in this grant funding. This is both, through his ability to create linkages, and, through the respect with which he is regarded in both of these environments. Such initiatives cannot be initiated or sustained without community engagement and a long-term commitment to the needs of the local community. Owen’s experience is an example demonstrating that to make community engagement flourish universities need reward structures which develop and recognise university community engagement practitioners who can work effectively in the boundary-spanning role of relationship and program development facilitators. Such professionals will be mindful of both the limitations of experiential learning venues like the Living laboratory and of the leadership styles relevant to the processes and methods under investigation

Community engagement: an academic practice

In the university, as suggested in Diagram 1, academics can be modelled as having three different kinds of academic practice. Community engagement on the part of academics is not a new practice. Researchers, like Teather & Teather (1999) for example, have pointed out the long history of academics engaging with their communities. The rise of the Australian University Community Engagement Association (www.aucea.net.au) can for example, be seen in terms of the need to develop understandings of engaged academic activity and in particular of those activities which foster understanding of the kind Boyer (1996) envisaged. Boyer

advocated a new appreciation of knowledge generation and application and an "integration of student learning and discovery" which might straddle the silos of teaching, research and service as described by Wallis (2006).

Diagram 1



In such a view of academic practice the three relevant pursuits are viewed as elements of the range of activities possible and not as mutually exclusive domains. Rather they work symbiotically in the range of doings of universities. The model in Diagram 1, suggests the interwoven nature of all three activities. If we begin to reward community engagement, as we have now begun to reward learning and teaching, and have always rewarded research, we will need to identify the knowledge, skills and competencies of university community engagement practitioners, promote their successes and publicise the outcomes resulting from the projects with which they have been involved. This will provide opportunities for young academics to identify and develop similar qualities, safe in the knowledge that their investment of time and energy in community engagement will be considered as supporting their career path. Such identification has the potential to develop

strategies for collaboration with others whose orientation is other segments of the model of academic practice in Diagram 1.

Toews &Yazedjian (2007) suggest that academics are ringmasters in a three ringed circus and use this analogy to explore the American orientation to research, teaching and service. Service in the US includes both community engagement and involvement in governance of the university. This analysis is useful in the possibilities for an academic profile it raises for community engagement, providing as it does strategies for meeting all three areas of academic practice. However, its analogy places community engagement as a lesser element of the three, when the post modern world practice of education clearly foregrounds the needs of the university for community engagement. Toews & Yazedjian perspective matches that of writers such as Fogel & Cook (2006:10) when they identify the rewards of community engagement to students, community, faculty and university, but Fogel & Cook question whether "this activity will provide the professional material necessary to launch or sustain a career." Such an awareness deals with the pragmatic reality that universities currently do not recognise or reward community engagement in ways which will encourage its take up by those who seek rewards other than the intrinsic ones which characterise its practice

For Owen, there were rewards other than the intrinsic ones. Early in his career, the living laboratory was the focus, providing as it did, the opportunity for students and members of the community to benefit from the learning/teaching environment. The laboratory was often developed on University property, utilised teaching space and equipment, and invited members of the community to attend for mutual benefit. Within a short number of years, early in 1990's, it became evident to Owen that the field of Human Movement Science was creating graduates who could provide a

valuable service for members of the community. Much of the evidence for this in Australia arose from community service initiatives that provided on campus clinics for children with neurological disorders, people requiring cardiac rehabilitation, elite athlete assessment and programming, corporate health and wellbeing and enhancement of functional fitness. The creation of the Australian Association of Exercise and Sports Science in 1991 provided an extra stimulus for community engagement. The living laboratory scenario had provided the community with evidence of the benefits resulting from safe and effective exercise interventions (even developed and delivered by final year students). As well, more intensive engagement with individuals, organisations and government was needed to develop the framework in which employment of these graduates could be implemented. Furthermore, continued investment of time and effort was required to then convince the employers that these graduates required career opportunities for them to remain with the field of exercise science/rehabilitation. These outcomes, which benefit the community and the University, augment the intrinsic rewards associated with knowing that there are positive benefits flowing from the work but do not create a focus on the enhancement of the career of the individual. Toews & Yazedjian (2007) note that " while service is an integral part of faculty life, it is also the least important for receiving tenure" or other rewards of university career enhancement.

This is the conundrum for a university community engagement practitioner and one towards which this paper seeks to orient its discussion. Community engagement has intrinsic rewards for those who focus on it. Universities need what community engagement can develop in linkages that lead to research and learning and teaching outcomes and as writers like Toews & Yazedjian suggest community engagement can augment and be augmented by learning and teaching and research. However, universities still do not have either the necessary or sufficient built in community engagement recognition and reward processes which encourage neophyte university

community engagement practitioners to both pursue and to develop their practice. Those involved in university community engagement practice are the converted; they know and have experienced the intrinsic rewards of community engagement and are well aware of the rewards for their students, the university and the community. Universities in Australia are moving to meet these issues at a leadership level with some universities appointing high level community engagement positions and creating awards like the one Owen Curtis achieved at University of Wollongong. However, until the need for legitimating university community engagement in recognition and reward systems is acknowledged in the mainstream of promotion and tenure, we are likely to limit the full potential for community engagement.

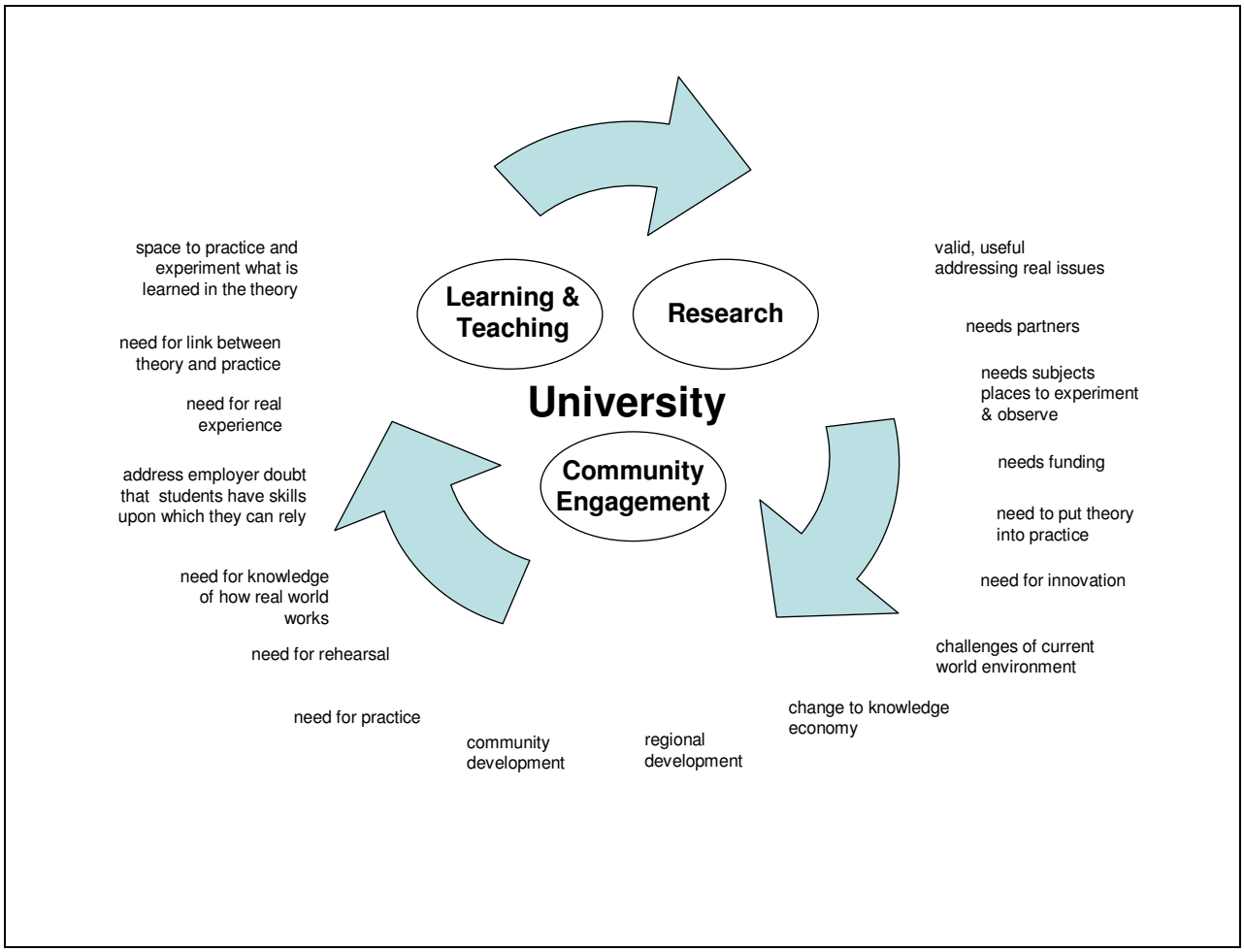
Community engagement when viewed as one element of academic practice

If we place community engagement, research, and learning and teaching together as a whole in terms of academic practice, we bring into play the possibility that they work together in a symbiotic relationship for the university and the community. This contextualisation of university academic practice places it within the post modern world, where values are no longer fixed, where learning is a lifelong activity and where the need to be creative, flexible and change oriented makes it possible to adapt to the demands of the knowledge economy. This matters both for academics in their praxis, and for the would-be professionals who are studying what academics provide in universities. And indeed, the same applies for the academic as researcher, because of the way that they, as an academic researcher, need to link with enterprises, business, industry and the community, in order for their research to link meaningfully to the real world as well as to create attendant funding opportunities. Indeed, of the central questions are: what is the university doing, how does it fit with society, what gives it meaning in the world and what is its social purpose – both in

the present and in its future 'becoming'. University community engagement can provide linkages that address many of these concerns.

The following, though probably not exhaustive, Diagram 2: Benefits of University Community Engagement highlighting the three areas of academic practice, is indicative of the potential in successful community engagement. The diagram takes the perspective from the university point of view as this paper focuses on the university fostering university community engagement practitioners and practice.

Diagram 2: Benefits of University Community Engagement



Community engagement assists the learning and teaching needs of the university to address student graduate outcomes in order that students achieve discipline specific

skills as well as a range of skills and attributes in preparing students for a changing world. For example The April 2003 Business Higher Education Round Table's News

> "acknowledged … growing demands of government, employers and the students, to make explicit the outcomes of learning that provided the added value to a university education."

Langworthy & Mawson (2006 :4) note that "the lesson from the US (Holland, 2005, Harkavy 2005) is that community engagement is not third stream or somehow independent of core business, but like Industry Based Learning and collaborative research, is essential for the development of graduate attributes and the achievement of graduate outcomes including employment." Butcher et.al. (2003:4) highlight that the Prentice and Garcia (2000) study established the crucial importance of students engaging in critical reflection about their learning and demonstrated that the combination of service with a reflective framework enhances the benefits to students, staff and community agencies beyond the expectation of either approach offered alone.

As well, the research agenda can benefit from activities in community engagement. However, if we also consider the type of advice provided by Toews &Yazedjian (2007) where for young academics, they note the following guides for implementing a research agenda: Finding projects; Finding resources; Integrating teaching with research; Involving students; Conference activity/presentation; Developing collaborative relationships, we can envisage the potential for university community engagement. Each of these steps in creating a research agenda can benefit through community engagement processes. In other words the three elements of academic practice find a meeting of needs which, synergistically, result in each gaining potential benefit from the practice of the other.

The experience of Owen Curtis demonstrates the success for learning and teaching and for research in concert with community enhancement. The recent research grant from the Department of Health and Ageing was granted to Owen, his practitioner colleagues and their respective organisations, because his years of university community engagement practice provided the boundary-spanning linkages, relationships and mutually-beneficial partnerships required, as a naturally-occurring context of practice, for an entirely new area of research. This recognition of the value of linkages and partnership for advancing knowledge and professional practice, substantiates the claim for enhanced learning and teaching and research that become possible with synergistic potential of university community engagement. Moreover, university community engagement can provide both the stimulus for the research and the avenue through which the research is conducted. Often, the research can only be conducted in or with the community, and can only be effectively conducted if the various stakeholders have a clear vision of potential challenges and outcomes and have developed the trust necessary for successful conduct of the research.

University community engagement as praxis

The work of a community engagement practitioner like Owen Curtis has its origins in learning and teaching activities with young professionals in the field of exercise science. Exercise Science attained professional recognition in 1991 with the formation of the Australian Association for Exercise and Sports Science. Prior to 1991, graduates of Human Movement Science from the 28 universities around Australia gained employment largely in the fitness industry. Other opportunities were limited to working with elite sportspeople or with individuals with pathology in the small number of cardiac rehabilitation programs and in a few cases in musculoskeletal rehabilitation programs. While it was believed that the graduates had

the knowledge, skills and competencies to support individuals with pathology in improving their quality of life and there was research evidence, largely developed overseas, that exercise could impact positively on disease, on its progression, and on quality of life. There was very little evidence that graduates from universities in Australia could assure such outcomes locally, and indeed, there were very few employment opportunities where these skills could be applied.

University community engagement provided the vehicle for students to gain competence and confidence in delivery of their knowledge and skills through a living laboratory. On campus opportunities were developed with the testing and program design for regional athletes, with the development of the Adult Fitness Class for individuals over 55 years of age. Expansion of this concept to off campus facilities and delivery by students provided the opportunity for potential employers to witness the positive outcomes of appropriate exercise interventions for employees (Wollongong City Council, Illawarra Electricity), for patients (Exercise Physiology students within Illawarra Area Health Services for individuals living with chronic pain and receiving treatment at Port Kembla Hospital). The involvement of students in provision of safe and effective exercise interventions for 'at risk' members of the community required the development of strong relationships between the stakeholders. It also required a quality assurance model through which it could be confirmed that the students possessed the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies which would allow them to deliver their knowledge safely. The learning and teaching environment on campus required modification to ensure students were indeed safe. The process of up skilling of students IN AN EMERGING PROFESSION, required the development of assessments that considered not only the technical skills of delivery, but the process of engagement with the potential client.

As the acceptance of Exercise Science/Rehabilitation graduates has increased over time within the larger community, and as the impact of tailored physical activity programs has been validated through clinical trials both internationally and in Australia, the community engagement program has expanded into areas in which exercise has not traditionally been delivered. In these circumstances, the university community engagement practitioner has to develop a strategy that supports the increase in knowledge about the practices of exercise in allied health and medical practitioners. These professionals may resist implementing change, especially change which brings practices that impact on the 'culture of the organisation' in which the university community engagement initiative is being proposed.

Initiatives which reflect the challenges facing a community engagement practitioner in this field of endeavour include:-

- The implementation of an exercise intervention for individuals on Dialysis.
- The involvement of final year exercise rehabilitation students in the exercise component of an indigenous health program targeting individuals with complex and chronic health needs
- The involvement of students in cardiac rehabilitation programs locally
- The involvement of final year students in a collaborative project targeting individuals with complex and chronic conditions AND at increased risk of falls. Participants include individuals with chronic kidney disease not yet on dialysis as well as people in living in supported care.

These initiatives have required the development of a process which has educated administrators, managers, medical and nursing staff about the benefits of exercise, as well as addressing the professional challenges these individuals may face in attempting to introduce practices that differ significantly from traditional treatment.

For Owen's practice as a university community engagement practitioner, the intrinsic rewards have been significant and have been influenced by: the professional rewards such as recognition by the National Body through nomination for Fellowship status, the appointment of recent University of Wollongong graduates to executive positions in the state and national committees of the professional body and the very high level of employment amongst the four year graduates of Exercise Rehabilitation. However, to meet the aims of university Community Engagement Plans which seek identification and augmentation of community engagement activities, universities need strategies that encourage and support young academics involvement. Leadership of community engagement initiatives is a skill developed over time which enhances the development of trust and the creation of networks.

The importance of leadership styles

Using appropriate leadership styles in university community engagement practice is essential and there needs to be recognition of the skills and knowledge and networks facilitated by university community engagement practitioners. Styles used by university community engagement practitioners will differ when engaging with different stakeholders and the skills associated with moving between these styles are significant. For example, in the case examined here the range of stakeholders includes:

- Community members accessing the services
- University administration – Legal and Commercial
- University and Area Health Human Research Ethics Committees
- Medical and Allied Health professionals and managers
- Non-government organisations

- Professional bodies – AAESS, Division of General Practice
- Staff and students within the University

Clearly, different groups will have different needs and the range of stakeholders demonstrates the complexities of communicating effectively across these groups. The following discussion of some different leadership styles used in the practice of Owen Curtis points to the challenges for successful university community engagement practice.

When supporting the emerging professional, the undergraduate student, a coaching leadership style (Goleman, 2,000) is required. The learning emphasis of this leadership style is essential for effective involvement of students with members of the community at increased risk due to their illness. The importance of feedback is the hallmark of this style of leadership, and the student/community member interface is one important aspect of this feedback process. It is only through the development of a close working relationship with the various stakeholders and their communities that an understanding of the relative roles of each is made explicit and then utilised effectively for maximal professional growth in the undergraduate student.

As well, the university community engagement practitioner is often the instigator, innovator and role model for professional behaviour for the students, particularly when there are few discipline specific exercise rehabilitation professionals employed within the various organisations with which community linkages are made. Regular team meetings, discussions and committee meetings provide the opportunity for reflective practice of all involved in the processes of university community engagement. One obvious challenge is the currency of university community engagement practitioner's skills and competencies in the profession. Universities lack

support infrastructure to encourage academics to return to the field and refresh protocols and interventions which maintain currency of skills as practitioners.

As well as acceptance as a professional in the practice of the profession, at the interface between the various members of the university community engagement process, the pacesetting leadership style (Goleman, 2000) may be required to develop outcomes. Working with self motivated professionals, as occurs in many organisations including NGOs and professional bodies, requires a different emphasis in the relationship and the risks inherent with this style of leadership may be ameliorated by balancing pacesetting style with the affiliative leadership style. This style is effective in gaining team support through friendship and trust. The role of trust in university community engagement cannot be overstated, and that trust extends both between the organisations involved, and within the students undertaking the various experiences. In effect, it is *trust* that forms the core element of social capital which provides the medium of exchange for community engagement (Cox, 1995).

With research opportunities multiplying as the discipline specific interest areas are supplemented through boundary spanning linkages with stakeholders in the community, the ability of the university community engagement practitioner in using an 'empowering leadership style' (Goleman, 2000) becomes critical. In Owen's experience the processes that engage Indigenous individuals in behaviour change related to chronic and complex conditions through appropriate physical activity requires strong ties between the University and relevant organisations. Introducing beneficial 'treatment modalities', such as exercise, within organisations that privilege the biophysical medical model, requires research in and with the community, not in a laboratory. To achieve this in the community requires the development and maintenance of trust, of shared vision and strategies for changing the culture within the organisation in order that the intervention is supported in the community not

simply in the university research or learning and teaching. Accomplishing this requires prolonged interactions and demonstrated competence by the university community engagement practitioner, and indeed, 'street cred' in the various contexts of practice that might present opportunities. This needs empowering leadership style where people can be engaged with and mobilised towards the vision and where self-confidence in newly-emerging professionals is nurtured and grown with leadership that functions as a catalyst for positive change.

To develop academics who can finesse the benefits of university community engagement needs a range of strategies which assist in leadership development. Without appropriate reward and legitimation systems within universities, the successes of universities in developing community engagement will be limited. As well there needs to be strategies like an effective mentoring system that, for example, introduces the young academic to the local powerbrokers/decision makers and provides them with strategies that support the development of clinical AND interpersonal skills within the students through whom the community engagement activities will be delivered is required.

Conclusion

Thus development of ways of linking academic endeavour and the world are critical for students, the university and for the community in these times of change where connectedness and experience are valued overtly alongside discipline specific skills. Finding ways to make this work are part of the current agenda in universities. But until the academic practice of community engagement is valued for its own strengths it will remain an afterthought, the clown in the three ringed circus according to Toews

&Yazedjian (2007). The fruits of university community engagement ripen over time and only with constant attention: attention to detail, attention to relationships and the development and maintenance of trust.

University community engagement practice needs to be openly valued in university recognition and reward structures. The next steps are to identify the university framework of university community engagement recognition and rewards and how to measure the activities of university community engagement practitioners. While it may be the case that the most significant reward of community engagement is seeing the real personal and professional satisfaction that comes from the mutually beneficial activities, we limit the number of academics who will engage in community engagement practice if we do not provide support beyond the 'feel good factor'. University community engagement activities are characterised by lasting relationships of trust and unconditional giving and receiving which provide a humanising element to the "bottom line" focus of many initiatives. What needs to be noted is that from this kind of work comes sustainable practice for the community and the university.

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