



| ARTICLE

INTERNATIONALISING THE CARNEGIE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CLASSIFICATION

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DEFINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The development of university
community engagement has

been challenged by overlapping
terminology in the US:
service learning, community
engagement, community based

learning and research, engaged scholarship, etc. Over the last decade, the concept of the “engaged university” has become more common in the US and around the world. Traditional academic approaches to studying social issues do not meet the standard of what defines engagement with communities (Bingle, Hatcher, & Clayton, 2017; Kellogg Commission, 1999; Saltmarsh, Giles, Ward, & Buglione, 2009; Sandmann, 2008; Vogelgesang, Denson, & Jayakumar, 2010).

Since 2006, a clear marker of growing consensus in the US, the Elective Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (CE Classification) of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, has focused on a definition for community engagement that guides many campuses:

“[T]he collaboration between institutions of higher education 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... 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.”

This definition reflects the purpose and process of engagement. First the purpose of engagement is to “mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources... to enrich scholarship...curriculum, teaching and learning...prepare citizens...address critical societal issues...” The emphasis here is on a process of exchange that understand both parties to have resources for the joint collaboration rather than one with knowledge and the other with need. Furthermore, as Carnegie is chiefly concerned with improving the core mission of universities, the emphasis is also on research and teaching, knowledge creation and dissemination. Thus, knowledge creation and dissemination are recast as a joint venture between academics and community partners.

Second, community engagement is characterised by norms of “partnership and reciprocity”. The community must be a collaborative partner, at the table defining joint projects, research questions and opportunities, and dissemination strategies (Bingle, Hatcher, & Clayton, 2017; Mitchell, 2013; Saltmarsh, Giles, Ward, & Buglione, 2009; Sandman, 2008; Vogelgesang, Denson, & Jayakumar, 2010). This emphasis is a clear demarcation from more typical forms of scholarship and dissemination that frame the community as laboratory and/or knowledge consumer only. There is a growing recognition of communities as critical partners for knowledge generation and dissemination rather than possessing problems for the academy to solve (Hoy & Johnson, 2013; Peterson, 2009; Saltmarsh, Giles, Ward, Buglione, 2009). Globally, similar challenges around terminology and definitions for community engagement have developed.

THE CLASSIFICATION

The Carnegie Foundation has been committed to the improvement of undergraduate education in the US across its history. Among other contributions, the Foundation developed the Carnegie Classification (Basic Classification) for all two and four-year accredited degree granting institutions to distinguish mission differentiation, degree level, and specialisation. In the early 2000s, the Foundation designed a new “elective” classification for community engagement that gathers data provided by the campus through a process of self-assessment, similar to those done for accreditation. This elective classification process results in a national review of each application, encouraging institutions to improve educational effectiveness. Following a pilot in 2005, the first cycle of classification occurred in 2006, followed by a second round in 2008, then 2010, 2015, and 2020 respectively. To date, 361 US institutions have successfully achieved classification.

The CE Classification is designed to respect the diversity of institutions and to encourage institutions to undertake a process of inquiry, reflection, and self-assessment (Driscoll, 2008). The CE Classification is not a ranking tool. It is a distinction that indicates, for institutions that succeed in being classified, an institution has achieved a high standard of practice in community engagement. To be evaluated for classification, universities undergo a structured process of institutional self-assessment and self-study resulting in an external review by experts in the field. Putting together an application, gathering evidence and reflecting on it, and understanding the areas of strength

and weakness of institutional engagement is a way of improving institutional practice and the benefit most cited by universities. Campuses also seek the CE classification as a way to demonstrate accountability, that the institution is fulfilling its mission to serve the public good.

THE APPLICATION

The application asks for evidence of community engagement practices from across the institution. To set the context for the National Review Panel, campuses

provide a narrative describing both the campus and community context for community engagement. Applicants then gather and report evidence supporting *Foundational Indicators of community engagement, Categories of Community Engagement, Community Engagement and other Institutional Initiatives, Professional Activity and Scholarship, and Outreach and Partnerships.*

Foundational Indicators, are “foundational” to institutional community engagement and include institutional identity and

culture, mission and vision, recognition, institutional level assessment and data, marketing materials, and community engagement as a leadership priority. *Categories of Community Engagement includes both Curricular Engagement and Co-Curricular Engagement. Curricular Engagement is:* “the teaching, learning and scholarship that engages faculty, students and community in mutually beneficial and respectful collaboration. Their interactions address community identified needs, deepen students’ civic and academic



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learning, enhance community well-being, and enrich the scholarship of the institution.” *Co-Curricular Engagement* is “structured learning that happens outside the formal academic curriculum through trainings, workshops and experiential learning opportunities. Co-Curricular Engagement requires structured reflection and connection to academic knowledge in the context of reciprocal, asset-based community partnerships.”

Professional Activity and Scholarship asks for evidence of faculty scholarship as it pertains to scholarship about their community engaged teaching, and collaborative, co-created - with community partners - research. *Community Engagement and other Institutional Initiatives* asks for evidence of community engagement as an integrated strategy for other institutional goals, programs, and priorities like diversity and inclusion goals and student retention and success.

Outreach and Partnerships asks for evidence of both consistent with the classification definition of community engagement. Some community engaged institutions have been intentional about reframing their outreach programs and functions into a community engagement framework. Institutions can report evidence of outreach they had shifted into the community engagement framework. Campuses are asked to provide partnership examples that are representative of the range of forms and topical foci of partnerships across a sampling of disciplines and units.

The goal of the CE Classification is to encourage change on campuses that would improve teaching and learning, and advance mission fulfillment of the public

purpose of higher education (McCormick & Zhao, 52). The CE Classification allows campuses to claim an institutional identity as community engaged through a classification that is based on “the best practices that have been identified nationally” (Driscoll, 40). Creating a community engaged institutional identity can create change in campus culture, structures, and practices across an institution.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Eckel, Hill, and Green’s (1998) study of 26 diverse colleges and universities focused on “transformational change” (3). “Transformation” assumed “that college and university administrators and faculty will alter the way they think about and perform their basic functions of teaching, research, and service, but they will do so in ways that allow them to remain true to the values and historic aims of the academy...they will change in ways that are congruent with their intellectual purposes and their missions” (3). They found evidence of transformational change in three areas: “putting learning first” (7); “making higher education more cost-effective and affordable” (8); and a third was “connecting institutions to their communities” (7). “Because higher education is a public good and fulfills a public function, institutions form intentional linkages with their communities. The activities of the academy address a range of public needs, including the needs of students, the tuition-paying public, the employers of future graduates, the beneficiaries of research, scholarship, and service, and society as a whole. Communities may be local, national or international, and most institutions

interact with multiple communities. These connections can contribute to the reshaping of institutional practices and purposes” (7). Engaged universities can therefore be transformed.

“Transformation,” Eckel, Hill and Green explained, “changes institutional culture... [it] touches the core of the institution... requires major shifts in an institution’s culture — the common set of beliefs and values that creates a shared interpretation and understanding of events and actions. Institution-wide patterns of perceiving, thinking and feeling; shared understandings; collective assumptions; and common interpretive frameworks” (3). Transformation “a) alters the culture of the institution by changing select underlying assumptions and institutional behaviors, processes, and products; b) is deep and pervasive, affecting the whole institution; c) is intentional; and d) occurs over time” (3). The CE Classification reflects all four aspects of transformational change.

Campuses that make serious, dedicated commitments to community engagement change the core culture of their institutions. This is a process that is intentional, strategic, with long-term commitments and formal obligations. It shapes and clarifies the campus identity. For campuses making these kinds of commitments, the CE Classification provides an opportunity for rigorous self-assessment and public recognition.

SECTORAL CHANGE

The CE Classification emerged at a time of high activity in the community engagement field in the US. Because the CE Classification did not depend

on a membership - like the 1000 campus members of Campus Compact - the emergent community engagement organisations in the US like the Compact, Imagining America, the Consortium on Urban and Metropolitan Universities, and others, saw in the CE Classification a framework that shaped many of their conference offerings. The CE Classification definition of community engagement became a touchstone. The CE Classification has become a framing document for a maturing field in US higher education. The non-competitive and intentionally not ranking nature of the CE Classification encourages local, regional and national collective learning communities across institutions focused on achieving the CE Classification.

As each cycle is completed, changes in the field are identified, and revisions to the application framework are made thus continuously raising the bar. Continuous development of the field informs the framework and the revised application continues to push innovation in the field. In the most recent cycle, areas of improvement in the application included requests for evidence of co-curricular engagement, differentiation of evidence by faculty employment status, and new

approaches to soliciting evidence from partner organisations.

The CE Classification thus has become an important aggregator and conduit for best practices in the field. Changes emerge from the field through conferences and consultations with national community engagement organisations, outreach

to academic and community experts, and review of new literature. In this way, the CE Classification is 'owned' by the field as much as by the Carnegie Foundation. Independent of membership or ranking constraints and open to every institution - the CE Classification had unified the field around a set of concepts, a definition, and a set of institutional best practices, contributing to the creation of a field consciousness.

university ranking systems to "take civic engagement seriously." The report suggested that a "gather[ing of] a group of universities [to] tell the rankings that [they] will collectively withdraw if they don't take civic engagement in the future." In the following year, Anthony Monaco, President of Tufts University in the US and founding member of the Network, along with Cheryl De La Rey, then Provost of the University of Pretoria in South Africa, published a blog post that received wide distribution and attention entitled *World University Rankings Blog: should global league tables consider community engagement?* In the post they argue that "...in addition to improving the rankings, we should develop an international civic engagement classification system. In the United States, the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification has been highly successful, setting a high standard for engagement and determining which institutions meet it."

A 2015 pilot project was conducted in Ireland, the first time the CE Classification was tested in a non-US context through a collaboration with the Talloires Network. Nine Irish institutions conducted the self-study and used the US CE Classification application framework. The project assisted campuses with institutional assessment of community engagement and explored the applicability of the CE Classification outside the US. All sectors of Irish higher education were represented in this project including: University College Cork, University of Limerick, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Athlone Institute of Technology, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, TU4Dublin Alliance, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, NUI



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INTERNATIONALISATION

The CE Classification has run in the US for five cycles and in each cycle surfaced international interest. Individual institutions outside the US had requested to apply for the Classification and a *2014 Talloires Network Convening in Cape Town, South Africa, Final Report* called for global

Galway, and the Institute of Technology - Tralee. The lessons learned through this project informed the US classification, and the current International Carnegie Research Project.

INTERNATIONAL CARNEGIE: EARLY LEARNINGS FROM AUSTRALIA AND CANADA

The chief insight from the Irish pilot was that for the CE Classification to be effective in non-US contexts, locally relevant versions of the application framework and a “field” must be nurtured in that context. To create the space for this to happen, and remain consistent with the internal philosophy of the CE Classification – valuing expertise of others, working against colonial knowledge regimes, and mindfully building towards increased epistemic justice – we selected a cohort of universities in Australia and Canada that represents the wide array of the sector in both geographies. Both national cohorts include a diversity of institution type, geography, and size in each national context. Sixteen institutions in Canada and 10 institutions in Australia have joined the project. More recently 10 additional Australian institutions have joined with an “observer” status. This represents about one-quarter of the university sector in Australia and one-sixth of the university sector in Canada. In partnership with Simon Fraser University and the McConnell Foundation, a Canadian cohort is exploring the CE Classification and considering how it might support community engagement in the Canadian context. In partnership with Charles Sturt University and University of Technology Sydney, an Australian cohort is doing the same.

Australian cohort members include: University of Technology Sydney (UTS); Charles Sturt University; Australian Catholic University; Central Queensland University Australia; Curtin University; Flinders University; Southern Cross University; University of the Sunshine Coast; La Trobe University; and Western Sydney University. Australian observer campuses include University of Tasmania; University of Western Australia; Deakin University; University of Sydney; James Cook University Australia; Swinburne University of Technology; and Federation University Australia.

Canadian cohort members include: Assiniboine Community College; Carleton University; Kwantlen Polytechnic University; McMaster University; Mount Allison University; The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies; Simon Fraser University; The Université du Québec; The University of Alberta; The University of British Columbia; The University of Calgary; The University of Ottawa; The University of Windsor; York University; and Yukon College.

These two national cohorts sent institutional teams to a two-day start-up retreat where the teams could learn about the CE Classification. These retreats were also designed to begin knitting the cohorts together as a national learning community. A variety of follow-up video conference meetings, a mid-project retreat, and a closing retreat, and drafting of a nationally specific version of the CE Classification based on this two-year project is now underway. Across this project, each campus will complete a self-study and submit a completed application, facilitate a site visit

with National Review Panel members and members from other university teams in their country, and receive feedback on their application. Cohorts will also draft the Australian and Canadian CE Classification framework respectively.

“Indigenisation” of the university sector, which will have significant impact on their rethinking of the framework, is a foundational issue for both national cohorts. This focus promises interesting iteration on the US CE Classification. Discussions of the values that animate institutional commitment to community engagement lead to discussions about sector development and development of a more robust national learning community as desired outcome of the project. Both cohorts have articulated social justice as a core value of community engagement in their respective national contexts, and most participants feel an impending pressure from national or provincial governments to demonstrate their public value. Unfortunately “public value” is often being articulated by government as commercial and utilitarian or focused to heavily on ranking research metrics. Most of the participating universities hope that the CE Classification might serve as a proxy or an additional measure used to demonstrate impact.

“While both Canada and Australia, like the US, are white settler - former British - colonies, their unique histories with regard to race, class and access to university education will demand attention in the revision of the framework for local relevance. There will be many opportunities for learning across national contexts as our community engagement seeks to be more racially conscious and critically oriented.” (Johnson, Forthcoming).

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