

PART THREE

*New Perspectives on
Civic Engagement and
Higher Education*

THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

James Waits and Robert Franklin

As institutions of higher education, theological schools are rather unique. And, we think that that uniqueness makes them interesting and exciting. More importantly, theological schools may have something valuable to contribute to the revitalization of civic engagement in America and beyond.

The Nature of Theological Schools

First, a word about the unique nature of theological schools. On the one hand, they are centers of critical inquiry, and on the other, they are communities of faith and public service. Most of them reside comfortably within the larger academic community where the arts of teaching, research, and vigorous scholarly interchange are valued. But most also understand themselves to be “intellectual servants of the churches,” a term coined by theologian H. Richard Niebuhr. As such, seminaries are institutional citizens of “two realms,” committed to nurturing faith and to cultivating curiosity, skepticism, and wonder. At once, they are custodians of tradition and iconoclasts that critique traditions and practices that fail to liberate humanity. Far more interesting than watching 1,001 angels dance on the head of a pin is the fascinating way in which theological schools achieve coherence amidst the competing and often contentious dimensions of their complex identities, loyalties, and missions. Insofar as theological schools promote the dispassionate exercise of cold, critical reason in the pursuit of the truth along with the joyful expression of warm, passionate faith, they manifest a somewhat unique role in higher education. And, in a world where religious

devotion often devalues science and reason and even commits horrors in the name of God, it is important to know that there are places where faith and reason work together robustly in the service of the good.

Of course, we know that most people have no idea about what goes on inside seminaries. Those of us who work at theological schools may be a bit like the folks Robert Louis Stevenson described as “practitioners of obscure arts.” When researchers from New York’s Auburn Center for Theological Education interviewed leaders from the business, civic, media, and other sectors regarding their awareness of the local seminary’s mission, presence, and purpose, sobering responses ensued. Most business leaders regarded the seminaries as “invisible institutions” without a noticeable public profile. We realized that we had a serious PR problem and needed to tell our stories and better document the extent of our public presence.

In 2000, the Association of Theological Schools (the accrediting agency for theological education in North America) released its report of a major study to examine the public character of theological education. This project assessed the stance of evangelical, mainline, Roman Catholic, and university-related schools and their distinctive public roles and involvement. The writers of the study concluded, “Perhaps the most striking learning from the working groups was the diversity of ways in which theological schools relate to the public.” Informed by the theological and religious traditions that shaped them, these institutions came to divergent conclusions regarding their public presence and mandates for involvement in the public sphere.

Differing Conceptions About How Seminaries Should Engage the Public Realm

There is no consensus about how seminaries should engage the public realm. Some of our colleagues in theological education believe that the role of seminaries is to prepare spiritual leaders and to focus on personal and private dimensions of religion, eschewing the public realm and its compromises, controversies, and moral relativism. This is a species of “world rejecting” faith that invests little of its resources in the process of preparing believers to be effective citizens. Many forms of religious “fundamentalism” stand under this umbrella, and as long as they do no harm to others, we must acknowledge and respect their tradition. But, fortunately, it is not the only one.

There is also a “world transforming” tradition that invests its best energies in building good communities and promoting a just society. Here, we think of all the seminaries, churches and synagogues, clergy and laity who contributed positively to the movement for civil rights, protests against numerous wars, initiatives to control nuclear and arms development, efforts to reduce poverty, and countless other causes. Many of these expressions of “public faith” had a dramatic effect upon national, state, and local policies and practices. This is the tradition with which the authors identify and into which we have sought to socialize our students. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. may have had something like this in mind when he declared, “This hour in history

needs a dedicated circle of transformed nonconformists. The saving of our world from pending doom will come not from the actions of a conforming majority, but from the creative maladjustment of a transformed minority.”⁴⁵

Thinking, Speaking, and Acting Morally: Building Inclusive Communities and Seeking Social Justice

One of the great needs of our democracy at this time is an expanding body of citizens capable of engaging in the moral analysis of our national life. Moral analysis, deliberation, judgment, and commitment are essential for determining what is good, right, true, and worthy of our affirmation and loyalty. Attention to the moral dimension of politics insists that we inquire about how a policy or decision is likely to impact the lives of our community’s most vulnerable members. Moral analysis creates new habits of the heart that prompt us to worry about the health of our national community when nearly two million citizens are incarcerated, eleven million children live in poverty, and thirty million lack health insurance. Seminaries that aspire to prepare students who in turn provide leadership for moral analysis serve the public good in a compelling but often overlooked manner. In many communities, our graduates are likely to be the only locally accessible examples of, and resources for, thinking and speaking morally. And, our hope is that local religious leaders use moral language and ideas in ways that promote inclusive understandings of community and cooperation between peoples who embrace differing moral and religious traditions.

Higher education in general, and theological education in particular, have a special role to play in educating the public to employ moral language and categories as they evaluate national and foreign policy and the well-being of the global community. By framing local, national, and international affairs in moral terms – using categories such as justice, reconciliation, stewardship, and social responsibility – seminaries provide the public with an alternative to the flat vocabulary of secular politics and the social sciences. Their advocacy of the common good, in distinction from a more narrow self-interest, represents a courageous expression of moral maturity. Moral immaturity is the habit of evaluating one’s actions and opportunities solely in light of how they advance individual and group self-interest. Unfortunately, much of talk radio today reflects precisely the sort of moral immaturity that threatens our democracy.

In our post-9/11 era, it is incumbent upon all Americans to become aware of our nation’s policies in relation to other countries. We should do this in order to hold government officials accountable for the policies and actions taken in our name, and also because people throughout the world believe that Americans are powerful people and are responsible for our government’s behavior. Although the example is extreme, Osama bin Laden’s “Letter to America” asserts the point in an effort to justify the murder of civilians: “The American people are the ones who choose their government by way of their own free will; a choice which stems from agreement to its poli-

cies...The American people have the ability and choice to refuse the policies of their Government and even to change it if they want."⁴⁶ Professors of ethics, theology, and religious studies provide alternative lenses for interpreting foreign policy and aspiring to create a just, international order where the dignity of all people is acknowledged and protected.

Morally mature citizens are capable of perceiving the interdependence of all humans. Many of the connections between peoples and cultures are obvious, but many others are not. Here again, most seminaries are committed to teaching students to build communities that are inclusive and that seek social justice. In a wonderful essay titled "The World House," Dr. King asserted this point in a way that makes it impossible to miss.

All people are interdependent...whether we realize it or not, each of us lives eternally "in the red". We are everlasting debtors to known and unknown men and women. When we arise in the morning, we go into the bathroom where we reach for a sponge, which is provided for us by a Pacific Islander. We reach for soap that is created for us by a European. Then at the table we drink coffee, which is provided for us by a South American or tea by a Chinese or cocoa by a West African. Before we leave for our jobs we are already beholden to more than half of the world... All life is interrelated. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.

In a world in which religion is increasingly a source of division rather than reconciliation, the seminary may be called upon to play a larger public role: promoting interfaith knowledge and understanding. As nations and communities become more religiously pluralistic, the potential for conflict increases. Religious differences easily spawn misunderstanding, and the absence of accurate information about other faith traditions may intensify that conflict. Too often, such ignorance underwrites prejudice and violence. The role of the seminary in extending its special expertise in creating conditions of understanding and community regarding other faiths is clearly an opportunity for public engagement of theological education. Here we cite the important work being undertaken by Harvard Divinity School professor Diana Eck and the "Pluralism Project" that is documenting the extent of religious diversity within American communities and offering hopeful examples of how inter-group conflict has been resolved and managed.

Theological Schools as Advocates of the Common Good

Through the public work of board members, deans and presidents, and faculties and students, seminaries embody an approach to leadership formation that is informed by particular religious commitments but fundamentally aimed at serving the common good.

By their nature, theological schools are committed to the well-being of the entire

community and promote values such as inclusiveness, participation, acceptance, equality, justice, and access. Theological students are schooled in these values and are sent forth to serve the public with these values and tools.

One way seminaries give testimony to these priorities is by their own institutional example. Theological schools typically embrace and excel in the difficult work of manifesting and managing diversity. Although our shortcomings have been numerous, our best energies have been devoted to creating environments in which students and faculty could demonstrate their tolerance and respect for people who are different. In the past generation, America has needed and theological schools have made great strides in providing concrete examples of thoughtful, religious people patiently and gracefully overcoming past prejudices in order to live with deep differences and to expand assumptions about who is welcome in our community. Most seminaries have done a good job of embracing racial, ethnic, gender, and class differences. Today, seminaries, churches, and the larger society are facing the challenges of how to respectfully include gay and lesbian community members.

We have suggested that theological schools can provide some of the competencies needed for a healthy democracy, such as the capacity to think morally, to hold government accountable to moral standards, and to promote the common good. We challenge these institutions to step up to the plate at a time of enormous public need to supply those moral goods. And, we call upon our partners in higher education to be open to exploring collaborative relationships with these custodians of moral capital.



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HEAVY LIFTING: BRIDGING MAIN STREET AND COLLEGE AVENUE

Carlyle Ramsey

Are America's colleges and universities "common ground institutions respected by the public, private, and non-profit sectors"?⁴⁷ If the answer to this question is a resounding yes, higher education can indeed play a vital role in helping to address national and community problems, including community building and preparing students for engaged, responsible citizenship.

The issues cited above are part of the Pew Partnership's challenge to the higher education community, which is directed not only at the presumptive leaders, including chancellors, presidents, deans, and governing boards, but also at faculty and, of course, students. This is not to suggest that American colleges and universities have been derelict in pursuing a civic mission. However, given our current and future challenges, such as the continued fragmentation of families, the persistence of drug and alcohol abuse, racial divisions, economic problems, the so-called culture wars, and the loss of a sense of community (exacerbated by elements of the national media which thrive on the coarsening of manners and civility in American society), does higher education possess the resolve and resources with which to forge effective college and community partnerships which foster civic engagement and responsible citizenship?

Higher education tends to respond slowly to real-world problems due to the nature of the academy. We are expected to be reflective, deliberative, collegial, and oftentimes detached. Our critics argue that our detached and deliberative modus operandi prevents us from being proactive, entrepreneurial and even, paradoxically, visionary. For example, a recently published report by the American Council on

Education found that most American colleges and universities focus on the “traditional-age” student,⁴⁸ the 18- to 24-year-old, despite the huge numbers of adults flocking to the academy. The ACE report noted that “adult students (25 years of age and older) are becoming the new majority on campuses across the nation.”⁴⁹ With the exception of community colleges, where the average age is about 28, and some comprehensive universities, our campus cultures continue to focus on the younger population. Yet, the ACE authors observed:

*...due to dramatic shifts in the U.S. labor market, incessant advancements in technology, and the globalization of the U.S. economy, the education of adult students has become vital to the future of the 21st century America.*⁵⁰

The healthy dialogue and debate over whether higher education should provide utilitarian, career- or vocation-centered skills and education or whether it should embrace the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself has been useful to the nation. Indeed, these conversations have been occurring almost since the inception of the republic. The passage of the Morrill Act in 1862, along with additional federal and state initiatives in the late 19th and early 20th century such as the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 and the National Defense Education Act in 1958 (specifically designed to promote the sciences, mathematics, and foreign languages in response to Soviet space exploration) are all examples of how the nation has sought to harness the intellectual and creative talent at our colleges and universities to solve major national problems. Now the Pew Partnership for Civic Change is challenging our colleges and universities to become an integral part of community problem solving efforts and to contribute in a greater way to the civic health of local, state, and national communities.

A Model for Success: The Rural Community College Initiative

There are already successful models to adopt, the most impressive of which I have witnessed and experienced is the Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI). While it is called the “rural” community college initiative, the goals and the strategic planning process, Vision to Action, are perfectly compatible to non-rural communities. Conceived and sponsored by the Ford Foundation more than a decade ago, RCCI was (and remains in a slightly different format) a visionary and practical effort to deal with two overarching goals central to vibrant communities: expanding educational access and assisting with economic development. The RCCI was formally launched in the early 1990s with nine pilot community and tribal colleges located in some of the poorest regions in the United States. In 1997, an additional fifteen community and tribal colleges, including Danville Community College (DCC), joined the effort. The project was managed by MDC, a Chapel Hill, North Carolina-based nonprofit dedicated to advancing the South through strategies that enhance economic opportunity and building inclusive communities, from its inception to 2001. Currently,

RCCI is operated by two regional rural development centers, at Mississippi State University (www.srdc.msstate.edu) and Iowa State University (www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu). Ford remains a part of the partnership; an additional sixteen tribal and community colleges have been added to the project.

RCCI COLLEGES⁵¹

Alabama

Alabama Southern Community College
Wallace Community College Selma

Arkansas

Phillips Community College

Kentucky

Hazard Community College
Prestonsburg Community College
Somerset Community College
Southeast Community College

Mississippi

Coahoma Community College
Meridian Community College

Montana

Blackfeet Community College
Fort Belknap College
Fort Peck Community College
Salish Kootenai College

New Mexico

New Mexico State University-Carlsbad
Northern New Mexico Community
College

University of New Mexico, Gallup

North Carolina

Southeastern Community College

North Dakota

Sitting Bull College

South Carolina

Technical College of the Lowcountry

South Dakota

Sinte Gleska University

Texas

Laredo Community College
Southwest Texas Junior College

Virginia

Danville Community College
Mountain Empire Community College

Why could RCCI be a model for citizen engagement, community development, and civic renewal? Why community and tribal colleges? According to a 2001 MDC publication, rural community colleges are “uniquely positioned to be catalysts for increasing economic and educational opportunity in their communities.” They are “common ground institutions, respected by public, private, and non-profit sectors.”⁵² MDC continued:

*Compared to most institutions, [rural community colleges] are trusted by people across social classes. They can convene diverse groups of people to work on community problems; they can help create a collaborative civic culture, part of the foundation for community prosperity. They have the stature, the stability, and the flexibility to provide leadership for regional development.*⁵³

RCCI has a history of success in creating a “link between economic development and access to education.” This is particularly true in poor areas where “...low levels of educational attainment and high poverty are barriers to development that must be addressed directly if the economy is to thrive.”⁵⁴ Recently, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) published a national assessment report of the Rural Community College Initiative, which documented the successes of the colleges and the communities served. In the executive summary, the authors concluded that the colleges “enhanced their own institutional capacities by institutional changing cultures, leveraging resources, and developing new leaders.” The report further stated:

*Over time, the college definitions of access and economic development broadened as they were pressed to think “out of the box,” widen their leadership base, and develop deeper collaborations across their communities. With an expanded view of access and economic development, these colleges redefined their goals as educational institutions – and looked holistically at the relationship between the education and training of individuals and the development of wealth and well-being in their community.*⁵⁵

Most of the RCCI colleges have transformed their internal college cultures and made dramatic differences in their service regions, as the AACC assessment report documents.⁵⁶ Moreover, the colleges, having become much more entrepreneurial, focus on four broad goals: expanding access, strengthening the workforce, assisting with economic development, and partnering in the vitally important area of community development. If a college is not effectively addressing the first two, it will never be a serious player in economic and community development. This is precisely why the RCCI model complements the Pew Partnership’s challenge. Community renewal and engagement must encompass all of the goals cited above.

Danville Community College

The RCCI experience has had a profound impact on Danville Community College. Several success stories stand out above many, one of which is the creation of neighborhood educational opportunity centers. The College has established seven access centers in the poorest neighborhoods or communities in the College’s southern Virginia service region. Over the past five years, DCC has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of citizens from the most distressed areas of the region matriculating at the College. Frequently, these individuals need intensive counseling; others need GED preparation; and still others enroll in a certificate or degree program. The College employs local residents in the neighborhoods to staff the outreach centers. The whole idea is to empower community residents to take charge of their future. College personnel assist local citizens in plotting a “vision to action plan” for community direction. While the College is a partner, it becomes part of a larger commu-

nity collaborative. The synergy generated in the neighborhood centers has caught the attention of individuals in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. On a visit to Danville approximately five years ago, a HUD official encouraged the College to pursue a Community Outreach Partnership Center grant (COPC) after visiting several of the centers in Danville. Heretofore, these grants had been awarded to four-year colleges and universities. Rarely had a community college ever submitted a proposal, and none at that point had been approved. Danville Community College was one of the first community colleges in the nation to receive a COPC grant, and it was directly related to the success of the neighborhood educational opportunity centers and, therefore, to RCCI.

Although the main focus of the neighborhood centers is access, expanded educational opportunities quickly become a part of the community's workforce preparation strategy, which is directly related to educating and training citizens so that they become human resource assets to current and future employers. In other words, this process logically fits into the larger community's economic development equation. In addition, the neighborhood centers have experienced success because, as mentioned earlier, the College is viewed as a "common ground institution."⁵⁷ It is almost impossible for the College to gain respect and credibility if it has a hidden agenda. The local citizens quickly see through transparent, purely self-interested motives and will not accept the initiative unless the College is a true partner and a neutral convener.

One might ask how university and college presidents and administrators can facilitate this community-building process. As noted above, a requisite first step is to assure the local citizens that the college or university leadership is interested in transforming the community by making a difference in the two broad areas: expanding access and assisting with economic development. According to MDC's Conceptual Framework, the president's leadership style should reflect the following:

1. Assume more than a ceremonial and symbolic role in the process;
2. Articulate a vision "for a brighter future for the people's region and economy";
3. Be committed to a process of college engagement with the community and mobilize college faculty and staff to participate in that process;
4. Marshal or leverage adequate college or other resources for community investments;
5. Be personally engaged in regional and community activities;
6. Welcome change and encourage initiative;
7. Foster inclusive, collaborative leadership; and
8. Ensure that faculty and staff see and clearly understand why the college is involved in the community-building process.⁵⁸

If the college faculty and students come into the community with any other kind of agenda – whether it is ideological, personal, or excessively research-oriented – the

process will not work. Both the college representatives and the community partners will quickly discern if the leadership of the college, including the president, is really interested in engaging citizens in a community-building process. Moreover, citizens must see results. The citizens will be watching and, while they will not be expecting miracles, they will expect concrete results in terms of helping people gain marketable educational and training skills, the direct link to job placement. Community building, civic renewal, and preparing students for engaged, responsible citizenship are not merely intellectual exercises, but rather part of a long-term process that requires “heavy lifting”! But the results to the citizens, the community, and the college are dramatic, powerful, and, one might argue, essential to the nation’s future.



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MUTUAL BENEFITS THAT CAN ACCRUE TO UNIVERSITIES AND COMMUNITIES FROM THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH EACH OTHER

John Bryant and Miriam West

Over the past ten to fifteen years, while employed with the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, we have worked with the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, Wilmington College, Miami University, and Cincinnati State College on many community initiatives.

During this time period, the universities have evidenced an increasing willingness to become actively engaged with communities to address issues related to improving the economic and social life of those communities and to use those communities to enhance the learning experiences of students enrolled at their respective institutions.

A number of other organizations partnered with universities and communities in these initiatives and undertakings. Depending upon the particular effort, other participating groups included: the United Way, the Urban Appalachian Council, Links Inc., Cincinnati Chapter, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Cincinnati Public Schools, the Archdiocese Schools of Greater Cincinnati, and schools in the Hamilton County Public School District.

Leaders in higher education institutions have acknowledged the mutual benefits that accrue from university-community partnerships. One university president expressed his desire to create a sense of interdependence and a sense of responsibility within the university and between the university and the surrounding community. Administrators at two of the universities state that the fate of the city and the fate of the university are interconnected. There is a reciprocal relationship in which the university impacts the contiguous community and the contiguous community impacts the university.

This fact was underscored most dramatically when an unarmed black man was shot to death by a Cincinnati policeman. The killing sparked angry confrontations at City Hall and in the streets. University faculty and administrative staff were aware of their neighbors as they journeyed back and forth from their homes to their places of employment. Cincinnati's two largest universities are located adjacent to communities that are predominantly African-American and low-income. Nightly as they watched the news, members of the university communities saw residents from their nearby communities castigating city officials for failure to attend to the needs of their community.

The universities realize that the problems afflicting their surrounding communities impact their institutions. The universities are national institutions. Problems between their neighbors and the police have serious consequences for the universities. They realize that these highly publicized confrontations have a detrimental effect on the universities' student recruitment efforts.

The universities also realize that the neighborhoods are not just places to be studied. If the university is to be credible with the surrounding communities, it must become engaged with the community and in efforts to solve community problems.

The President of Xavier University states that, "In a city trying to heal itself, a Jesuit University, such as Xavier, has a moral basis from which to act. It can and should provide a neutral base where the search for common ground can begin." He added that "at Xavier, there is an emerging sensibility that engagement with the external community is fundamental to the mission of the university."

Universities continue to base promotion and tenure decisions on teaching and scholarship as evidenced through publications in journals related to one's field of expertise as well as grants successfully sought. However, there is an expanding notion of acceptable areas of research. In working with the community, there are matters that must be resolved including the community problem to be addressed, the resources brought to the table by the participating parties, and the external resources being sought. At times the university has been the convening party and at other times the lead comes from a nonprofit community organization.

Many university faculty members serve on the boards of community organizations such as the Urban Appalachian Council, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, the Children's Defense Fund, and the United Way. In other instances, university faculty members have been elected to serve on local boards of education. These affiliations provide a mechanism whereby faculty can take advantage of opportunities to become involved in local communities.

For the purposes of this essay, we divided programs and activities on which universities and communities collaborate into categories. Under each category there is a thumbnail sketch of the specific programs and activities. In each instance one of us was an active participant.

Collaborative Submissions of Grants

The University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State University, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, and Cincinnati Public Schools collaborated on several grants to work with students in the Cincinnati Public School System. In these collaborative endeavors, the principal investigator and the fiscal agent vary depending upon what is required by the Request for Proposal.

Oftentimes the university serves as an outside evaluator. In one instance, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative commissioned the Economic Development Center at the University of Cincinnati to research the economic impact of a school-to-work program funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Education. In its research the Center was able to impute the economic and social benefits that came about by increasing the number of students graduating from high school due to the school to work initiative.

Programs and Activities Initiated by University Students

Many students enrolling in college have performed community service during their high school years as part of a structured high school program or with their church. Such activities might include tutoring, working on weekends at a soup kitchen, and work with the elderly. A number of these students have been recognized in a program called the Golden Galaxy Award Program.

The Golden Galaxy Award Program, co-sponsored by the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, and local television station WKRC-TV, recognizes over 300 high school seniors each year for doing community service work while maintaining high academic grade point averages. These students arrive on college campuses with a deep commitment to doing service in the broader community.

On one of the college campuses, students preparing to be history teachers were interested in helping students at a nearby public school become more proficient in social studies. They approached the University Community Relations Director seeking guidance and assistance in developing the program. After brainstorming, they hit upon the idea of working with the public school students to do an oral history project in which the public school students would conduct oral interviews with the elders in their family and neighborhood. The project enabled the public school students to learn about their family histories, and the college students learned more about the community surrounding the university.

Community Initiated Programs and Activities

The Urban Appalachian Council is a nonprofit organization that works in neighborhoods that have a significant number of Appalachian residents. One of its ongoing committees is the research committee. The research committee consists of two University of Cincinnati professors, one professor from Miami University, one professor from Northern Kentucky University, the Director of Research for Children's

Hospital, the former Executive Director of the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, and staff from the Urban Appalachian Council. The participants share their research projects that have applications for the Appalachian community.

One of the researchers analyzes census data to determine changes in the demographics of the community. The Urban Appalachian Council requests that members of the research committee study particular problem areas and present the findings to the Urban Appalachian Council Board. The Board takes these findings into consideration as it establishes goals and priorities for the Council. Some of the researchers even availed themselves of the opportunity to present their papers at the Appalachian Regional Conference.

In another community-initiated program, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, the University of Cincinnati, Links Inc., Cincinnati Chapter, the National Council of Jewish Women, SUMA, the Women's Alliance, Time-Warner Television Station, and Fifth Third Bank sponsor a youth conference that has been held for the past 12 years. Student participants are drawn from Cincinnati Archdiocese Schools, County Public Schools, and Cincinnati Public Schools, in such a manner as to cut across racial, religious, and economic lines. The university provides the meeting rooms, food, and staff and students to handle most of the on-campus logistical work. A community volunteer is responsible for securing the keynote speaker and persons to handle the breakout sessions. The major corporate funds for this initiative come from Time-Warner and Fifth Third. However, four women's organizations representing the diversity within the community are also financial contributors. The youth leadership conference draws approximately 600 students from about 40 high schools in the Greater Cincinnati area.

By virtue of hosting the conference, the university has on its campus potential recruits and also gets excellent word-of-mouth recognition as students return to their high schools and discuss the event. At times there has been excellent coverage by the local newspaper. Breakout sessions generally serve between 30 and 50 students. Each group has a college guide provided by the college Admissions Office to move the group from one breakout session to another. The opportunity to interact with college students obviously has an impact on the high school students, many of whom would be the first from their generation to attend college.

The Cincinnati Youth Collaborative operates an extensive school-based mentoring program where adults are matched in a one-to-one relationship with students attending Cincinnati Public Schools. Area colleges are one of the vital sources of mentors and tutors. Undergraduate students looking to do community service often volunteer to mentor or tutor. The University of Cincinnati student newspaper has often publicized the need for community involvement and provides a listing of volunteer opportunities throughout the city.

In one instance, a professor in the College of Medicine recruited medical school students to serve as mentors. Through this mechanism, the professor was helping to

prepare her medical students to learn about the surrounding community. Many of the persons coming into the emergency room at the University Hospital come from the communities from which the mentees are drawn. The University of Cincinnati Law School has also worked closely with the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative in facilitating access to the mentoring program for its students.

The Cincinnati Youth Collaborative has launched a College Coach Program, which is an adaptation of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government C. O. A. C. H. program. In this program, college students work in high schools to provide information and instruction on how to explore educational opportunities and navigate the college application and financial aid process to primarily first generation college students. To begin the pilot program, students from the College of Mount Saint Joseph will "coach" high school students attending a neighboring public high school. The college students will travel to the high school once a week and spend 45 to 60 minutes with selected students. The college coaches will receive a stipend of \$400 to \$600 each academic year from the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative and they will receive recognition from their university. The high school students and their parents will also have the opportunity to visit the college campus.

Episodic/Opportunistic Programs and Activities

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice The Honorable Thomas Moyer established an Ohio Courts Future Commission to make recommendations for ways in which to improve the court system in the State of Ohio. The commission consisted of 50 members in addition to two co-chairs. The commission was equally divided between lay persons and those having some direct relationship with the courts including judges, court administrators, court clerks, law professors, and so on.

To do its preliminary work, the commission broke into five task forces (Access and Quality, Structure, Public Awareness, Technology, and Rules and Procedures) consisting of ten members each. Professors from three local law schools were asked to have their students research topics under consideration by the Access and Quality Task Force and present a synopsis of their findings to that body. One of the thorniest issues taken up by the Task Force dealt with the method by which judges should come to the bench, through an election or by appointment. The faculty members and their students received recognition at their universities for valuable service rendered to the improvement of the system of justice in the State of Ohio.

Courses Carrying Academic Credit

Classroom teachers need to be able to interact effectively with the students enrolled in their classes. In order to do so, it is desirable that the teacher be able to interact effectively with the parents of those students in the context of the neighborhoods and communities from whence the students come.

One teacher preparation program requires that all students seeking a teaching

license complete a two credit-hour course. The course is structured so that the prospective teachers meet with parents and community members that serve low-income Urban Appalachian and African-American communities. Through this experience, the college students learn firsthand the hopes, aspirations, and frustrations that the residents express as they interact with the school system. Later in the week the college students meet with teachers and administrators from the neighborhood school to discuss how the school system responds to the concerns expressed by the parents and community members.

University-Initiated Outreach Programs

The City of Cincinnati is contiguous to many smaller municipalities, including Elmwood Place, Norwood, Saint Bernard, Lockland, Deer Park, Silverton, and Reading. Most of these municipalities are aging and experiencing economic hardships.

Xavier University, in addition to reaching out to adjacent communities within the City of Cincinnati, is preparing to tailor its expertise to address the needs of the smaller municipalities that ring the City. Some of the programs that have been discussed were begun prior to 1990 and are still in place today. Others have been projects of an intentionally limited duration. Still others have ended with the expiration of external funding.

Conclusion

While projects and initiatives will inevitably come and go, the engagement between universities and their surrounding communities can and should continue because of the mutual benefits accruing to the parties. The universities gain the goodwill of their neighboring communities. They have access to the communities where their students can have positive interactions with persons they will come into contact with and affect in their professional lives in a myriad of ways. The universities have access to real-life teaching, learning, and research possibilities that will enrich their academic programs.

There are many ways in which communities can benefit from partnerships with universities as well. For example, communities have access to the expertise within the university. Students from the community enrolled in elementary and high schools will more likely aspire to attend college because the university will be perceived as an attainable option. The sustainability of the engagement process is enhanced when the university recognizes the coincidence of the involvement with the mission of university to prepare its students for participation in all levels and segments of a rapidly changing social order and when the university recognizes that it a part of the economic and social life of the communities in which it is located. The sustainability of the process is enhanced when each of the parties receives recognition and visibility for its participation in the initiatives.

Through effective engagement, universities and communities are able to leverage assets and maximize resources. Both are better able to fulfill their missions when they are able to work collaboratively.



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