

ACADEMY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP CONCEPT PAPER

Mission and Scope. The mission of the Academy of Engaged Scholarship (ACES) is to assist in improving the physical, social, civic and economic wellbeing of communities by advancing scholarship based on collaborative discovery by communities and their higher education partners. To do so, ACES selects as members persons in communities and higher education institutions who have been recognized by their peers as exceptional in their accomplishments in engagement. Members then draw on that expertise to further the application of engagement for addressing the challenges and opportunities of community and higher education partners.

- Preparation of authoritative reports benchmarking the impact of community-higher education institution partnerships and identifying models of outstanding community engagement;
- Issuance of policy guidance statements on important issues related to society and the role of community engagement in addressing those issues;
- Partnership with other organizations around funding opportunities and issues that lead to informed public policy related to community engagement;
- Publishing best practices of scholarly engagement, community engagement, and service learning/civic engagement; and
- Sponsoring and conducting transdisciplinary workshops and think tanks that address important societal issues and their relationships with community engagement.

Through the involvement of leading community engagement scholars, community engagement partners, and knowledgeable, collaborative, and effective community counterparts, ACES explores critical and complex societal and community issues and provides recommendations, upon request, to inform local, regional, national, and international research and policy agendas. ACES seeks to ensure that all scholarly activities and policy initiatives take into account the needs, voices, and perspectives of the individuals, groups, communities, and constituents involved. ACES notes that rigor is not based solely in procedures used, but also in the openness and transparency of the scholarly enterprise in ways that value and welcome active participation on an equal and mutually respectful basis by community counterparts, encouraging shared authority and responsibility for the process. In the practice and study of community engagement, ACES shall be a broad voice representing allied groups in the field of engagement, and a common thread for the support of community engagement.

Rationale. Honorary academies recognize individuals for outstanding accomplishment in their disciplinary areas. Organizations devoted to promoting university, civic, and community engagement also exist. While these groups advance the work of engagement in meaningful ways, no single organization brings together the best minds in the field of engagement to examine all facets of engagement, thus bringing attention to the important role that community engagement plays in strengthening best practices for the betterment of society. No organization convenes the most respected practitioners of, and scholars of, community-engaged scholarship to address regional, national, and global issues from both scholarly and societal perspectives. ACES shall fulfill these purposes.

ACES recognizes that multiple forms of knowledge are created within and outside higher education institutions and that boundaries between knowledge creators and users are always permeable. ACES believes that the practice of shared intellectual, institutional and community resources has the potential to produce better outcomes for communities, society, and higher education institutions. Reasons for establishing ACES include:

- Nationally and internationally community partners and academic institutions and their faculty, staff and students are involved in partnerships working synergistically to solve local, regional and national problems.;
- Faculty engagement has reached disciplinary and accreditation associations, and a knowledge base has developed, along with well-established networks and discourse communities;

- Universities are giving significant attention to structures and processes for supporting and encouraging faculty engagement with their community counterparts in their work;
- Communities are seeking meaningful collaboration with higher education representatives to local and regional address complex issues;
- Think tanks, associations, and major projects are focused on integrating community engagement scholarship within core educational missions; and
- Major funding agencies in the U.S. and elsewhere are increasingly requiring grant applications to include practices that will create positive societal impact.

Membership. Candidates for ACES membership shall be community-engaged scholars, scholars of engagement, and community leaders who demonstrate notable contributions to the theory and/or practice of working collaboratively to address societal needs. Election to ACES will be based on nomination and rigorous review of a prospective member's body of work. Members of ACES shall:

- Be individual, lifetime members (not groups or institutions);
- Represent a broad range of community and university competencies that reflect the diverse perspectives necessary for high quality community engagement; and
- Be committed to using engagement scholarship practices, approaches, and values to respectfully and collaboratively address society's most pressing needs and issues.

Benefits. ACES will provide numerous benefits for varied entities and purposes. Members selected will have the opportunity to serve the greater good by advancing community engagement scholarship and advancing community-engaged disciplinary and transdisciplinary scholarly activities and knowledge to address regional, national, and global issues. ACES will provide briefs and policy/practice documents that will inform the broader community of the value of higher education for advancing the public good through partnerships with community constituents. Members will be able to have a voice in this work.

Public policy will gain a catalyst in ACES for leveraging the learning, discovery, and engagement capacity of higher education and communities to influence private and public leaders to solve societal problems and recommend innovations needed by society. Communities, institutions and their representatives will benefit from ACES' promotion of community engagement and the scholarship that benefits scholars and practitioners of community engagement. Those inducted into ACES will: 1) deepen their knowledge; 2) create international community and higher education networks; 3) increase their visibility within the community engagement scholarship field; 4) broaden their association with others who study and practice community engagement scholarship, while contributing to public policy, community priority issues, and community-based innovation.

ACES will provide a non-partisan, transdisciplinary, research and practice-based voice for advancing the study and development of partnerships linking communities with higher education institutions and private, public, and governmental entities. Such partnerships will address society's most complex and challenging issues—including, but not limited to, education, economic development and well-being, the environment, health and wellness, and active citizenship.

Academy of Community Engagement Scholarship [ACES] Founders

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