Growing New Roots: Institutionalizing Community Engagement

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Problem

• Many higher education institutions use community engagement as a way to partner with communities to collaboratively address pressing societal needs.

• Institutionalizing community engagement in a higher education institution is complex.
Study Purpose

To describe and understand how leaders at a selected university enacted the institutionalization of community engagement
The Study Aimed to...

Examined how one university progressed toward incorporating community engagement into their
• norms
• values
• day-to-day work
Drawing from the field: Theoretical Base

- Individual Level = Weerts and Sandmann’s (2010) boundary-spanning framework

- Organizational Level = Holland’s (2006) assessment matrix for institutionalizing community

- Interplay between levels: Adaptive Challenge (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001)
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<th>Concept</th>
<th>Literature Review Topics</th>
<th>Design</th>
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<td>The purpose of this study was to explored leaders’ perceptions</td>
<td>• University leaders</td>
<td>• Participants</td>
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<td>of the nature of boundary-spanning activities</td>
<td>• Boundary spanning</td>
<td>• Lens to analyze data for research question two</td>
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<td>and the complexity</td>
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<td>of how the university operationalized the institutionalization theory</td>
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<td>of community engagement</td>
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Gap in the literature:

A new conceptual model was needed to represent the interplay of individual and organizational factors in the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education institutions.
Adaptive Challenges

• Do not have straightforward solutions
• Systematic
• Involve multiple stakeholders

(Heifetz & Laurie, 2001)
Change Agents

Consider the change agents needed to influence this change.

Individuals who can negotiate:

- Power
- Information
- Relationships

(Torres et al., 2013)
Institutionalization

Transforming the change from a peripheral activity to a fully integrated method of strategy and practice. 

(Holland, 2009)
Research Questions

1. What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement?

2. According to university leaders, what qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess?

3. In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge?
Methodology

• Qualitative, single-case study

• Selection criteria:
  • Held the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Community Engagement Classification
  • Participants continually attend the Engagement Academy for University Leaders
Data Sources

• University artifacts

• open-ended survey questions

• transcripts from focus groups and semi-structured interviews
Findings

• Organizational Level
  • Incubator for innovation in community engagement
  • Building a coalition of the willing

• Individual Level
  • Action over rhetoric
  • Building a coalition of the willing

• Address adaptive challenges
  • Empowering others to stretch beyond routines and question norms
  • Shaping institutional norms
  • Role complexity and leadership
Adaptive Braid of Institutionalization

Organizational Boundaries

Individuals, Groups, Factors = Strands (Component(s) of Institutionalization Boundary Spanner(s), Incubator(s) for Innovation, Coalition(s) of the Willing)

Energy/Momentum
(empowerment, lessons learned, critical mass, goal attainment, pressure, resources)
Institutional Factors

- Mission
- Leadership
- Promotion, Tenure, Hiring
- Organizational Structure & Funding
- Student Involvement
- Faculty Involvement
- Community Involvement
- External Communications & Fundraising

(Holland, 2006)
References


Questions?

Want more information?


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