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Community Partner Indicators of Engagement: An Action Research Study on Campus-Community Partnership

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COMMUNITY PARTNER INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT:
AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY ON CAMPUS-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

SEAN J. CREIGHTON

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program
of Antioch University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

August, 2006

SIGNATURE PAGE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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Numerous family members, friends, and colleagues played a pivotal role for me during the last four years. While I cannot list them all, I would like to acknowledge the most important ones at this time.

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Lastly, I express my sincere gratitude to the leaders of the community organizations that participated in this research study. Each participant made the process rewarding, valuable, and enjoyable. I share this study on their behalf.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife

Leslee Creighton

for her unwavering support, generosity of love, and most beautiful spirit.

ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY PARTNER INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY ON CAMPUS-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Sean J. Creighton

The central purpose of this research study was to develop common indicators of engagement for civic initiatives between institutions of higher education and their community organization partners. The unique aspect of this study was that the indicators were generated by the community organizations participating as stakeholders in campus-community partnerships.

Using an action research methodology that involved eleven community organization participants from the health and wellness sector, the study advocated for research that provided a deeper understanding of the perspectives of community organizations. Findings suggested that significant divides existed in core civic areas dealing with service-learning, relevance of academic research, and equitable treatment of community partners. The study produced a formal set of community partner indicators of engagement that were developed by the participants in the study and disseminated to higher education leaders. The indicators illustrated the expectations of community partners that engaged in civic partnerships with higher education. Additionally, the study provided an analysis of the literature on civic engagement, identifying a lack of empirical research concerned with the perspectives of community organization partners.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Determining what constitutes effective civic engagement from a community partner's perspective is a critical step toward building strong relationships between institutions of higher education and their community partners. Recent research on civic engagement has led to the development of widely recognized indicators of engagement for colleges and universities and best practices that serve to guide higher education (Campus Compact, 2002; 2004; 2005). Perceptions of community partners about what is important to successful and effective partnerships are critical to effective relationship building, even though they have not been deeply researched, or broadly disseminated (Cruz and Giles, 2000). At this point, higher education leaders and proponents of civic engagement do not possess substantive community-partner research that advocates what community constituencies consider to be the key quality indicators of engagement. There is plenty of civic engagement research from a campus perspective, whereas there is far less from a community-partner perspective.

This study addressed the need for a better understanding of community partners by developing a set of common quality indicators of engagement from the perspective of community-organization partners. These indicators were developed by working directly with community organizations that partner with institutions of higher education. Civic partnerships are dependent on a common understanding and agreement among not only community-organization leaders, but also among higher-education administrators and faculty (Bingle and Hatcher,

2002). By developing a set of common indicators that advocated community-partner perspectives, colleges and universities that participated in civic engagement could improve their practice by having a clearer basis for dialogue and by sharing an understanding of quality partnerships.

Background on civic engagement

In 1862, the United States' Morrill Act established land-grant colleges equipped to contribute agricultural and technical resources to their communities (U.S. Info, 2005). This federal act positioned colleges and universities as a civil force, designed to educate and improve the lives of individuals as well as make relevant contributions to their communities. The connection between higher education and social improvements continued into the early and mid 1900s with the work of John Dewey, Jane Addams, Myles Horton, and Paulo Freire. However, at the same time, major research universities remained heavily influenced by a German model of education in which the university was seen as a place for the production of basic, scientific research. While a research university may have produced valuable research, it was limited in its response to changing social conditions; and, furthermore, faculty were rewarded for producing research first and then extending it to the external world instead of the reverse (Alpert, 1985).

In recent decades, scholars have argued in favor of returning institutions of higher education to a civic mission and purpose. Research institutions, in particular, have been criticized for their disengagement from society and for their

ivory tower mentality (Bok, 1982 and 1990; Checkoway, 2000; Ehrlich, 2000; Harkavy, 1997; Hearn and Holdsworth, 2002; Neave, 2000; Wagner, 1993). In pursuit of civic renewal, scholars created a national movement in higher education that pushed toward increased *civic engagement* of colleges and universities in service to their communities (Kezar, et. al., 2005).

The objectives of civic engagement activities within higher education included developing civic skills, inspiring engaged citizenship, promoting a civil society, and building community. Beginning with Ernest Boyer, civic leaders in higher education acknowledged these objectives and called for a scholarship of engagement (Boyer, 1996; Bringle, et. al., 2000; Rice, 1996). Teaching civic values and student citizenship were considered central goals (Hollander and Saltmarsh, 2000; Zlotkowski, 1996), as was a commitment to active partnerships with society (Votruba, 1996). As a result, common strategies and programs across campuses developed, focusing on initiatives that linked scholarship and service, including: service-learning, service leadership, community-based research, neighborhood and community building, economic development, campus-community partnerships, higher education-K12 partnerships, and diversity education (O'Meara and Kilmer, 1999).

Higher education institutions obtained major funding from foundations such as Lumina, Kellogg, and Carnegie, and the Pew Charitable Trusts, to support a civic renewal agenda. Further, university and college presidents formed Campus Compact in 1985 as a centralized effort to research and promote civic values in higher education. Campus Compact became a leading source for

information and research on civic engagement and partnerships with the mission “to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility” (Campus Compact, 2005). Higher education leaders concerned with civic engagement valued the alignment of research and scholarship with the priorities of local communities and recognized that such an alignment would yield the most positive actions for society (Keith, 1999). Moreover, engaged colleges and universities established key offices and centers, or “enabling mechanisms,” to coordinate centralized civic engagement initiatives on their campuses (Campus Compact, 2002). The institutions committed financial and human resources to focus on efforts dedicated to community building, political awareness, health-awareness promotion and prevention, crime-related issues, affordable housing, drug abuse, homelessness, job loss, and other critical social concerns (O’Meara and Kilmer, 1999).

Because of the close ties that were being established between institutions of higher education and their communities, the importance of effective community relations and campus-community partnerships became an essential concept in civic engagement theory, practice, and scholarship (Boyte and Hollander, 1999; Harkavy, 1997; Harkavy and Benson, 2000; Holland and Gelmon, 1998; Risley, 1992; Tierney, 1998). Scholars challenged institutions of higher education to focus their missions and goals on becoming social change agents, which resulted in the development of campus-community partnerships. Partnerships have been described as a form of grassroots organizing and community development (O’Meara and Kilmer, 1999).

In 1994, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development established the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) in an effort to encourage and expand the growing number of partnerships formed between colleges and universities and their communities. OUP recognized the crucial role these collaborations and partnerships play in addressing local problems and revitalizing our nation's communities. OUP's goal was "to support and increase these collaborative efforts through grants, interactive conferences, and research" (OUP, 2005), and it issued a challenge to universities to actively pursue campus-community partnerships (Cisneros, 1995). Further, numerous case studies helped advance the understanding of campus-community partnerships and the mechanics of relationship building between community organizations and institutions of higher education (Johnson, 2004; Kreutziger, et. al., 1999; Pew Partnership for Civic Change, 2004). Contemporary proponents of campus-community partnerships still credit Derek Bok's (1982) argument for an engaged university and also Ernest Boyer's (1990) original challenge calling for a scholarship of engagement that addresses societal needs (Kezar, et. al., 2005; Soska and Butterfield, 2005) as major influencers in the scholarship on civic engagement.

Another key development in the civic engagement movement has been the establishment of evaluation and assessment of civic initiatives, with an emphasis placed on assessing service-learning. Campus Compact researched and created multiple tools and resources for assessing civic engagement and

service-learning, including a set of benchmarks for campus to assess their progress.

The most recent addition to the evaluation of civic engagement has been its integration into the accreditation process for colleges and universities. In 2005, the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accrediting body, added a new criterion: “Criterion Five: Engagement and Service” (Higher Learning Commission, 2005). This criterion required that colleges and universities demonstrate that they have identified internal and external constituencies and serve them in ways that both value.

The integration of civic engagement into the accreditation process complements the Morrill Act in the sense that all institutions today, rather than just land-grant institutions, are required to effectively serve their communities and provide services for public good. The acceptance of civic engagement by the Higher Learning Commission promotes civic principles at accredited institutions of higher education through a mandate; however, the ability of the new criterion to instill demonstrated change or commitment at accredited colleges and universities remains to be measured.

Overview of the study

There has been a tremendous interest in civic engagement and campus-community partnerships, evidenced by scholarship, conferences, and white papers. Along with this, there has been an interest in developing effectiveness indicators. In 2002, Campus Compact received funding from the Carnegie

Corporation “to combine documentation and dissemination of best practices of the engaged campus with an organizing effort to help campuses achieve broader institutionalization of civic engagement” (Campus Compact, 2005). Its research project led to a the publications of their *Indicators of Engagement: Themes and Indicators*. These indicators served as an instrument to help colleges and universities measure their commitment to civic engagement and examine areas for institutional enhancement. The indicators evaluated civic engagement in the areas of mission, administrative support and leadership, faculty roles and rewards, resource allocation, student involvement, community-based teaching and research, and the promotion of forums for eliciting a community voice (Campus Compact, 2002). Campus Compact’s indicators project advanced the concepts and strategies for civic engagement.

Most of the work on evaluation has been conducted from the point of view of colleges and universities. Only a handful of studies have been undertaken that consider community-partner perspectives, but even these have not taken the necessary step of actually identifying what the effective criteria are. In order to address this imbalance in the partnerships, scholars need to identify effective criteria from the community partners’ perspective. This will help in the evaluation of future civic engagement partnerships. Inspired by Campus Compact’s *Indicators of Engagement* (2002), this dissertation study identifies indicators of engagement for community partners. In contrast to Campus Compact’s indicators, developed with the college and university as the stakeholders and the

sources for data collection, this research developed indicators of engagement in which the stakeholders were community organizations.

The study deepened the research on civic engagement from the perspective of community organizations that engage in collaborative efforts with campuses. This new research filled a gap in studies of community-partner perspectives and of a community's understanding of, and the value it places on, civic partnerships. The majority of literature and research on civic engagement and campus-community partnerships has been from a point of view of colleges and universities as stakeholders (Giles and Eyler, 1998). In this sense, the majority of the research is campus-centric. This lack of knowledge about community-organization partners was a recognizable gap in the research, and scholars have been calling for more research on community-partner perspectives (Darlington-Hope, 1999; Fullbright-Anderson, et. al., 2001; Giles and Eyler, 1998; Giles, Honnet, and Migliore, 1991; Pew Partnership for Civic Change, 2004; Braskamp and Wergin, 1998). Because of this need, I chose to focus this study on community organizations in an effort to expand the knowledge and research on civic engagement.

This doctoral research also served to influence the leadership at universities and community organizations by improving their understanding of the processes involved in civic engagement practices. The influence on the university leadership has been premised on the concept of educating university leadership and decision makers about community-partner perspectives on civic engagement. The influence on the community leaders resulted from the

research process that engaged them in reflection about the purpose of and need for working collaboratively with local colleges and universities.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study was to develop common indicators of engagement for civic initiatives between institutions of higher education and their community-organization partners. The unique aspect of this study was that the indicators were generated by the community organizations participating as stakeholders in campus-community partnerships. Assessing the needs of community organizations provided an illustration of the core ingredients, or indicators, for forming an effective relationship and partnership with a college or university and the considerations for effective civic engagement. The development of the indicators required self-reflection on behalf of the community organizations, a process that deepened their own understanding of effectiveness, partnerships, purpose, and mission. The process deepened their understanding of effectiveness by requiring them to undergo an examination of what they look for in a civic engagement partnership. Additionally, the process allowed participants to identify tangible and intangible manifestations of effectiveness. Consequently, their understanding of partnerships was deepened during the study as they reflected on the factors that contribute to successful civic engagement.

The results of the study can help colleges and universities that engage in campus-community partnerships and civic engagement activities understand the

positions of their respective community partners. This deepened understanding will inform the higher education institutions, allowing them to make thoughtful decisions that increase the chances of successful partnerships and civic engagement activities.

Research question

The fundamental dissertation question was: What do community organizations look for (and expect) in a successful civic engagement partnership with higher education institutions? The action research method of inquiry permitted a deeper understanding of the participating community organizations in relation to the research question, allowing for follow-up questions and a dynamic research process.

Methodology

While both qualitative and quantitative methods could be used to conduct research on campus-community partnerships, I proposed that the method of inquiry be one that directly engaged community organizations in the process. Action research was the appropriate method of inquiry in this case, allowing me, as the researcher, to work directly with community-organization participants in the development of the indicators of engagement. Action research engages researchers, students and community leaders “in a collaborative process of critical inquiry into problems of social practice in a learning context” (Argyris, et. al., 1985, p. 236). It has also been defined as a “form of self-reflective problem

solving, which enables practitioners to better understand and solve pressing problems in social settings” (McKernan, 1988, p. 6). Other scholars have contributed to a definition of action research: McCutcheon and Jung (1990) added the importance of collaboration during the inquiry process with participants, and Kemmis and McTaggart (1987) embedded a goal of social justice. Unlike other methods of inquiry in which research is conducted “to” or “on” a community, action research permits an inclusive approach in which the inquiry is done “by” or “with” the community (Anderson and Herr, 2005, p. 3).

In addition, the researcher can record his or her reflections on decisions as well as other issues relevant to the study, including: 1) the primary interview questions and the basis for their selection; 2) criteria for selection of the individuals or groups for participation in the research; 3) relationships between the researcher and the participants; 4) the contextual landscape of the environment in which the community organizations work; 5) the single or numerous partnerships in which the community organizations have participated; and 6) other pertinent information that provides a context for understanding the participants. The researcher’s journal and reflection on decision-making serves as a mapping of the process. In action research, the reflections are as valuable to the method of inquiry as the outcomes themselves.

Study design. Eleven community organizations situated in the Dayton, Ohio community participated in the study. Each organization partnered with one of four primary Dayton-area colleges and universities. The scope of the study included community organizations from the public purpose sector that worked on

issues of health and wellness. The selected community organizations participated in a three-part process that led to the development of a common set of indicators of engagement. The three parts included interviews and two conference-style group sessions. The findings resulted in a final set of community partner indicators of engagement that represented their views about expectations in campus-community partnership.

Limitations. Limitations to this study included: 1) As in most qualitative research, the issue of transferability needed to be addressed, especially since I was establishing indicators of engagement that I proposed would help community organizations external to the research study. I provided sufficient detail so that this research was transparent and readers could understand the delimited design of the study, as well as be able to generalize the findings to their own organizations; 2) As the primary researcher responsible for data collection and analysis, this position of influence was powerful, and I assured that adequate checks were in place to confirm the accuracy and interpretation of the data; and 3) In qualitative research based on a series of questions, there is always the possibility that a researcher could lead the participants to provide answers that support prescribed outcomes. It was therefore important to report the findings honestly and accurately.

Assumptions. A few assumptions were associated with the research: 1) As the researcher, I relied on the perceptions of study participants and assumed they were honest and authentic in their responses to the questions; 2) I assumed that the community organization participants wanted to participate in the process

and viewed it as a legitimate research study; 3) I assumed that I was prepared as a researcher to conduct a study that gathered sufficient and valuable data to support the identification of effectiveness indicators; and 4) I assumed that common agreement among different community organizations resulted in a set of indicators of engagement.

Professional interest

The combination of scholarly preparation, experiential knowledge gained through working in higher education, and community involvement, prepared me, in part, for this dissertation research study. My scholarly understanding of higher education's involvement in community had come primarily from the scholarship on civic engagement and the research I have conducted as a doctoral student, as well as from working in the field of higher education. For the last ten years, my professional work has included responsibilities for building relationships with key individuals in the Dayton community. During five of those ten years, I worked in fund-raising and public relations, networking with businesses, foundations, and individuals to support projects that allowed arts education to flourish in the Miami Valley, a twelve-county area of southwestern Ohio. Most important, my interest in relationship building developed significantly from: 1) board service at a community daycare center; 2) participation in multiple school-levy campaigns; 3) working at Antioch University McGregor as the executive director of external relations; and 4) leading a higher education consortium.

As the current executive director of the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE), a consortium of more than 20 colleges, universities, and businesses, I direct an organization founded principally for the purpose of collaboration. I have a vested interest in the mechanics and understanding of successful partnerships. In addition to ongoing, informal relationship building among the SOCHE member colleges and universities, I have formed trustee-approved memoranda of cooperation with Ohio Campus Compact and the Midwest Higher Education Compact. These partnerships were developed to advance higher education, increase professional development, and create social networks that further organizational mission. From the onset, I have hoped to gain an understanding from this research study that enabled me as a professional in higher education to contribute to increasing the effectiveness of campus-community partnerships.

I recognize that I am privileged to be in a doctoral program when most individuals may never have the opportunity to go to college or university. In recognition of this privilege, I feel morally obligated to leverage my professional position. I intend to work with colleagues in higher education and at community organizations to form long-lasting partnerships aligned with the needs of society. This dissertation study has prepared me to achieve this goal.

Structure of the dissertation (Chapters 2-5)

Like traditional dissertations, this dissertation has been written in five chapters. In addition to this introductory chapter, there are four other chapters, including: 1) literature review; 2) methodology; 3) results; and 4) recommendations.

Chapter two: literature review. Chapter Two is a reflection on the literature and empirical research on civic engagement, including: historical development of the civic engagement movement in higher education; review of the major initiatives within higher education to advance the practice of civic engagement; and research on campus-community partnerships. Chapter Two also presents a rhetorical argument in support of this dissertation research, identifying the gaps in the research, and the importance of new research and its contribution to the field.

Chapter three: methodology. In Chapter Three, I convey my positioning statement, ensuring that readers are aware of my professional background in higher education as well as the views and biases I may bring to the research study. In addition, I reflect on the selected method of inquiry, action research, presenting a definition of the methods and the rationale for the decision to use an action-research approach.

Chapter Three also includes the design of the study. I discuss the boundaries of the study and the selection of the community organizations. In addition, Chapter Three details the timeline for the study, definitions for civic engagement and campus-community partnership, data collection and procedures, interview questions, data analysis, ethical issues, and the limitations and delimitations of the research. Particular emphasis is placed on the

development and evaluation of the community indicators of engagement; how the indicators are selected from the data; and the process for involving additional participants in the evaluation process.

Chapter four: results. Chapter Four is a reflection on the research process and analysis of the findings. Key findings and the process for creating core indicators are discussed. The chapter presents the final chart of the community partner indicators of engagement as well as reflects on the formal and informal dissemination of the indicators.

Chapter five: discussion and recommendations. Chapter Five is a reflection on the importance of previous research in relationship to the key findings and analysis. In addition, Chapter Five discusses the limitations and transferability of the study. Lastly, I present recommendations for future research and conclude the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research study was to develop common indicators of engagement for civic initiatives between institutions of higher education and their community-organization partners. The unique aspect of this study was that the indicators were generated by community organizations participating as stakeholders in campus-community partnerships. The research question was: What do community organizations look for (and expect) in a successful civic engagement partnership with higher education institutions? In the research, I identified both implicit and explicit criteria for success, effectiveness, and quality of partnership.

Research has been conducted on numerous facets of civic engagement with respect to higher education, but little has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of civic engagement from a community organization's perspective (Darlington-Hope, 1999; Fullbright-Anderson, et. al, 2001; Pew Partnership for Civic Change, 2004). Additionally, little research focuses specifically on indicators of engagement from the perspective of community organizations involved in campus-community partnerships. As a result, a need exists for a deepened understanding of what community partners believe constitutes effective civic engagement community partners; therefore, higher education leaders can be more responsive in their civic engagement programs to the evolving concerns of their community partners.

Some new research has been done on specific aspects of campus-community partnerships. For instance, the research in *University-Community*

Partnerships: Universities in Civic Engagement (Soska and Butterfield, 2005) explores civic engagement specifically connected with the field of social work. Additionally, Campus Compact published *The Promise of Partnership: Tapping into the College as a Community Asset* (Scheibel, et. al., 2005), which offers practical guidance for community organizations on how to approach colleges and universities, utilize their resources and expertise, and establish long-term relationships. Even these new publications do not fully embrace viewpoints held by organizations involved in direct partnership with higher education. The publication *The Promise of Partnership* markets itself to a community organization target audience, but the information is re-packaged from research developed with primarily higher education participants at a Wingspread Conference in 2003, as noted in the beginning of the publication.

While Chapter One introduced the background, purpose, and research question, the goal of Chapter Two is to provide a review of the literature that includes: 1) a broad overview of civic engagement; 2) a review of the major initiatives within higher education to advance the practice of civic engagement; and 3) research on campus-community partnerships. The chapter concludes with an argument for the necessity of this research.

Civic engagement landscape

Colleges and universities are critical to society, providing a home for knowledge, research, and resources that enhance our potential to solve social

problems. This is particularly true of American higher education, where the dignity of education resides in the fact that all matters of learning are available to the public. American higher education provides accessibility to learning, allowing people to acquire training as well as build knowledge. Community colleges are the centerpiece of the commitment to serve the general public, keeping costs low and learning opportunities expansive. Four-year public and private colleges and universities provide homes for valuable research and knowledge acquisition and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills that empower learners with the capacity to make positive contributions to society. However, land-grant schools, in particular, exemplify strong university and community relationships. These land-grant research institutions are funded with an expectation that they will provide services that extend far beyond training. They are expected to conduct research and develop new techniques that serve their communities.

The Morrill Act (1862), which established the land-grant colleges, however, was the vision of the U.S. Congress and not the formal vision of higher-education leaders. It funded a concept that grew out of practical concerns about educating the public, as well as improving research and gaining knowledge in the area of agriculture (U.S. Info, 2005). The act revolutionized the landscape of higher education by significantly expanding the number of colleges in the national and, consequently, increasing accessibility to education for American citizens. When Congress approved the Morrill Act, the general public was the primary beneficiary of this civic action. The land-grant colleges served as the conduit or

delivery system, providing practical education to their publics and maintaining a mission dedicated to improving the broader society.

Other actions followed the Morrill Act by the U.S. Congress, including the Hatch Act of 1887 and Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (Higher Education Resource Hub, 2006). Each act subsequently addressed broader community needs and provided opportunities to increase accessibility to higher education for the general public. The development of extension services, specifically, resulted from the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 (Peters, et. al., 2005), which furthered the opportunity for faculty to extend their work into communities. The act gave rise to programs that reflected the service mission of land-grant institutions. The extension services mobilized efforts to connect university research and personnel to working closely with local communities on issues of community development. The majority of the services provided rural communities with opportunities for learning and problem solving. Moreover, extension service sights became an organizing structure around civic activity and leadership development (Peters, et. al., 2005).

These formal engagement efforts ran counter to the traditional image of higher education as the *ivory tower*, an institution removed from society and teaching in isolation. In addition to the extension service practices at land-grant institutions, reflections by scholars and activist leaders working for social change helped bridge higher education and society as they explored progressive education, value of experience, public purpose of learning, and service to society. John Newman's *The Idea of a University* (1873) conceived of the

university as an institution that taught social and civic interaction (Newman, 1996). John Dewey, America's foremost philosopher on education, advocated for progressive education that engaged students in solving civic problems. The integration of learning and experience emerged as an inseparable component for quality education (Dewey, 1916; 1938).

Similarly, civic engagement flourished in the scholarship of Jane Addams and in her work at Hull House. Founded in 1889, Hull House became a center that provided a "higher civic and social life; to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprises, and to investigate and improve the conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago" (Elshtain, 2001, p. xxxiv). Addams' scholarship aligned with Dewey's pragmatism, in which there was an inseparable connection between the development of individuals and society. Education as a means of engaging individuals with solving social problems bred a form of activism that dealt with oppression, civil rights, and labor rights and challenged entrenched social, economic, and political barriers that restricted change (Horton and Freire, 1991; Freire, 2000).

For these visionary thinkers, service to society and making contributions that improved the lives of individuals and groups became a new purpose for higher education and confronted the traditional disengagement of higher education. Colleges and universities held the power to be a major catalyzing force for the greater populace as more people attended school, increasing the "capacity to serve and the very performance as servant of existing major

institutions by new regenerative forces operating within them” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 49).

However, the civic mission and purpose of higher education established by the Morrill Act encountered the German model of education that had been adopted by many American research universities in which the university was considered the primary home for scientific research. Consequently, in this model, the purpose of graduate education was to produce scientific research. Reactions to the Flexner Report (1910) further fueled the concentration on scientific research, making research the heart of the university and the primary role and purpose of university faculty (Alpert, 1985). Thorstein Veblen’s *The Higher Learning In America: A Memorandum On the Conduct of Universities by Business Men* (1918) discussed scientific and scholarly inquiry as foremost and indispensable to higher learning (Questia, 2005). The result was strong support for building research universities and schools of business and engineering, in addition to Flexner’s call for a reform of hospitals and medical schools.

The emergence of the modern research university continued with a boom in university-funded scientific research that resulted from government initiatives to involve scientists in the application of science to warfare (Bush, 1945). Higher education became the nation’s source for scientific research, which removed the university from, firstly, producing research based on the needs of their communities. Civic engagement efforts have had to deal with this focus on scientific research ever since, challenging faculty to work collaboratively with their communities.

In the later 1900s, Derek Bok, in *Beyond the Ivory Tower: Social Responsibilities of the Modern University* (1982), provided a reasonable examination of higher education's position and ability to respond to social problems. Bok reminded us that colleges and universities hold the potential to transform the lives of students and their social communities (Bok, 1982). He understood the significant influence education had on individuals and society. Higher education was in a privileged position, providing technical training, as well as contributing more to learning by providing an experience that "transform(ed) the lives of students and society" (Bok, 1982, p. 64).

In 1985, higher education presidents came together to discuss civic engagement and, as a result, formed a collaborative and centralized movement with the creation of the Campus Compact organization. Their action gave rise to a national advocate that represented higher education's perspective in the civic engagement movement and helped develop a coalition of like-minded college and university presidents committed to the civic purposes of higher education.

Scholars had reclaimed the civic purpose of higher education. Instead of the concept arising from government forces, as with the Morrill Act, this time leaders from higher education called for a more engaged modern university (Bok, 1982 and 1990; Boyer, 1996; Boyte and Hollander, 1999; Checkoway, 2000; Ehrlich, 2000; Hearn and Holdsworth, 2002; Jacoby, 1996; NASULGC, 1999 and 2000; Neave, 2000; Wagner, 1993). Colleges and universities thus became the stakeholders in a movement that called for a re-examination of higher education as a civic enterprise with an essentially public mission. As a result, research on

colleges and universities became more prominent in the development of the civic engagement movement in higher education.

In 1996, Ernest Boyer reinforced a return to the civic purpose of higher education, denouncing, as did Bok, the movement of colleges and universities away from a mission of improving society. Arguably, Bok and Boyer started the dialogue in higher education about civic engagement that exploded in the following years, becoming the focus of scholars and continued research and development. By beginning this discussion on civic engagement, Bok and Boyer enabled higher education to take ownership of the dialogue and research on the subject.

A firestorm of scholarly critiques from within the academy fueled the discussion, which confronted the German model and challenged higher education institutions to become increasingly more engaged with their communities in an effort to improve societal conditions through service and leadership (Astin, 1996 and 2000; Ehrlich, 1995; Harkavy, 1997; Lynton, 1995; Rice, 1996). Scholars pressured institutions of higher education to provide evidence of and clarity about their broader connection to society (Levin, 1991; Russell, 1992; Prewitt, 1993; Johnstone, 1993; Breneman, 1995; Fairweather, 1996; Tierney, 1998). In particular, scholars singled out the research universities, criticizing the administrative and faculty research for not showing a strong commitment to public service (Checkoway, 1997). Scholars reinforced the criticisms of disengagement, saying that institutions that were once more active in addressing social issues had de-emphasized their civic mission. They

accused universities of dropping their civic purposes to become powerful research institutions and focus on their own interests and financial gains (Checkoway, 2001). The language became provocative, describing the traditional research culture as a “vampire that saps the blood of younger and older faculty alike” and saying it had “broken up whatever community existed within the academy and whatever connections the academy had with the public realm in the past” (Gamson, 1999, p. 19).

The critics became a vital and proactive voice, helping mobilize a national discussion of the issue. However, the discussion was confined to the higher education arena, keeping the public from contributing to the dialogue, even though the civic engagement movement premised itself on public concerns. The research and discussion of civic engagement of higher education focused primarily on higher education as the stakeholder in the matter and did not give equal weight to the public’s role. The dialogue became one of insider experts in the academy primarily fueling the research and discussion.

Campus Compact centralized the civic engagement movement over the years, and the organization became a voice for scholarship and research that contributed to embedding the concept of civic engagement in academic discourse. The organization’s dedication to civic engagement produced new research. Campus Compact’s *Assessment of Civic Responsibility* (1999) and Barbara Holland’s (1997) framework for evaluating institutional commitment to service suggested that in order to effectively engage higher education in the civic realm, national initiatives should address the following areas: institutional

mission, undergraduate and graduate curriculum, co-curricular activities, campus culture, student, faculty and staff diversity, faculty culture, faculty orientation and rewards, administrative leadership, campus-community partnerships, public relations and fundraising, and institutional planning. These main components concentrated on the internal structures and systems of colleges and universities, providing guidance and measures of accountability with respect to the mission of civic engagement. The colleges and universities were the stakeholders; hence, the assessment and evaluation measurements reflected indicators that were developed entirely from a campus-centric perspective.

It is no surprise that the research was campus-centric, as the civic engagement renewal movement emerged from the leadership in higher education circles. The discussion by insiders about higher education's commitment to civic engagement strengthened colleges' and universities' sense of ownership concerning this issue. In effect, the ownership increased the importance and value for them of civic engagement, helping elevate the purpose of higher education by viewing it as a moral obligation to society. The civic engagement literature exhibited the strengths of self-reflection and analysis, enabling institutions of higher education to learn from one another and establish best practices in the field.

Higher education leadership further advanced civic engagement in 1998 and 1999 at the Wingspread conference. Coordinated by the University of Michigan for Community Service and Learning, the conference provided a place and context to explore civic engagement in depth. Its sponsors included the

Association of American Universities, American Association for Higher Education, American Council on Education, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Campus Compact, New England Resource Center for Higher Education, University of Pennsylvania Center for University Partnerships, the Johnson Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. As an outcome, the conference participants produced a written declaration (Boyte and Hollander, 1999) on renewing the civic mission of the American research university. Harry Boyte, Senior Fellow at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, and Elizabeth Hollander, Executive Director of Campus Compact, wrote the declaration on behalf of the conference participants. In the declaration, they clearly articulated, from the academy's perspective, a call for increased civic engagement:

Civic engagement is essential to a democratic society, but far too many Americans have withdrawn from participation in public affairs. Higher education can contribute to civic engagement, but most universities do not perceive themselves as part of the problem or of its solution (Boyte and Hollander, 1999, p. 7).

The document reiterated a common tenet of civic engagement scholars: that research universities had become disconnected from their original civic purposes. This disconnect had led to the questioning once again of their purpose by state legislatures and other critics, as major funding from taxpayers

continued to flow to these institutions. The Wingspread conference resulted in a declaration built on consensus that challenged higher education as well as provided strategies for integrating civic engagement into the operations of colleges and universities. The authors of the declaration challenged their colleagues within the academy to take part in a national movement:

We issue the Wingspread Declaration based on the conviction that now is the time to boldly claim the authority and ability to focus our energy on the civic purposes of higher education. Those of us in higher education can change its directions and commitments.... We can shape our cultures, renew our civic mission, and guide our destinies (Boyte and Hollander, 1999, p. 8).

The Wingspread Declaration reclaimed the civic role of higher education and the academy's traditional commitment to community and service. Firmly believing in the civic mission of colleges and universities, the college and university presidents and leaders participating in the conferences signed on to further a national movement. By making the declaration, they institutionalized a dominant and governing voice in the movement.

A critical publication, *The Engaged University* (Hollander and Saltmarsh, 2000), also contributed depth and breadth to the national dialogue on civic engagement. Hollander and Saltmarsh addressed the basic question of how universities can become more relevant to the rest of society. They approached

the question from a political and social-activist position with the intention of leading a movement that “reinvigorates the public purpose and civic mission of higher education” (Hollander and Saltmarsh, 2000, p. 1). Their goal was to help students develop the values and skills associated with citizenship through participation in public and community service. Noting that 70 percent of high school graduates attend college in some form, they wrote, “Higher education therefore has a particular opportunity to educate students on their democratic rights and responsibilities” (Hollander and Saltmarsh, 2000, p. 2).

The governing voices in the civic engagement movement turned civic engagement into a teaching method that embraced service-learning, for one, as part of a pedagogy that reclaimed the civic purposes of higher education (Zlotkowski, 1998; 2000; 2001; 2003). In addition, major changes were called for in curricular content and practices as institutions of higher education developed their civic mission. A strong call came for academically based programs that enhanced the civic-learning experience for students by rooting it in the heart of the academy. This would be accomplished through a curriculum fundamentally designed to institutionalize civic engagement by embedding it in the learning process. The challenge to college pedagogy was to avoid treating the external community as merely a learning laboratory for students and forgetting that community members had voice and perspective.

Campus Compact’s Indicators of Engagement (2002) further detailed best practices in civic engagement for higher education, providing a map for colleges and universities for the integration of civic engagement practices into campus

operations. The indicators project illustrated themes and components of an institution that could be used to measure a college or university's level of commitment to civic engagement. The majority of the key indicators focus on internal functions at colleges or universities. For instance, the indicators assess mission and leadership, campus culture, curriculum, faculty roles and rewards, and mechanisms in place that centralize civic engagement practice for the university. Though Campus Compact's indicators incorporate an element that encourages public forums and dialogue to engage community members in a process, the primary stakeholder served by the indicators of engagement has been institutions of higher education. The indicators primarily focus on the internal functions of higher education.

Since the formation of Campus Compact, numerous faculty and administrators at colleges and universities across the nation have taken on the struggle to involve students and their institutions in behavioral and intellectual practices of civic engagement. Their commitment is passionate, logical, thoughtful, and expressive. Their dedication is purposeful and serves to satisfy their own desires to help others, as well as leverage the power of their member institutions to create civic change that addresses societal needs. This service to society is unquestionably admirable and necessary if a society is to progress in solving its problems. The numerous proponents of civic engagement in the academy have heeded the call of Bok and Boyer. Moreover, they have advanced the scholarship of engagement.

Robert Putnam, in his book *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (2000), popularized the terms "civic engagement" and "social capital," thus helping broaden the discussion of civic engagement beyond the ivory tower. In his book, Putnam rightly argued that civic engagement is on the decline and that social capital has eroded in the United States. Putnam's research indicated that reductions were apparent in the number of volunteers for mainline civic organizations, and he noted that dedicated volunteerism had declined by roughly one-sixth over a period of fifteen years (Putnam, 2000). In the face of a boom in higher education during these decades, it is disturbing that civic participation was actually declining and not expanding. Putnam found that the declines were highest among the better educated (Putnam, 2000). Higher education in America appeared to have had little influence on civic values, and people had steadily become less and less likely to participate in civic affairs. To make matters worse, the trends indicated that each succeeding generation had shown less interest and involvement in civic affairs than the previous one.

Putnam's research supported an effort to increase civic engagement. His work raised questions about the role of colleges and universities since those privileged to obtain an education were becoming less and less engaged (Putnam, 2000). Equally important, Putnam's work expanded the discussion of civic engagement to leaders across sectors of the American public, bringing the discussion back to civic leaders external to higher education. Putnam provided an important expansion of the discussion on civic engagement, making it more a part of the public dialogue. The wide distribution of *Bowling Alone* increased

accessibility to the dialogue on civic engagement outside of higher education, making it a leading contribution to the civic engagement landscape.

Today, civic engagement has become a serious question for thousands of universities, faculty, and administrators across America. In 2005, the Higher Learning Commission, an accrediting body for higher education, created and approved civic engagement criteria as part of the accreditation process for colleges and universities. Known as “Criterion Five: Engagement and Service” (Higher Learning Commission, 2005), the criterion requires that: a) the organization (college or university) learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations; b) the organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities; c) the organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service; d) internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides (Higher Learning Commission, 2005).

The creation of Criterion Five is a hallmark accomplishment: it requires systemic and strategic thinking on the part of colleges and universities about meeting their civic engagement and service requirements for accreditation. Criterion Five also implies that a college or university should understand itself from an “external” viewpoint in addition to the understanding gained from self-reflection. Further, the institution of higher education is asked to “learn from” from its community(ies), which can only be accomplished by patiently conducting research on community perspective. The support by the Higher Learning

Commission exhibits how civic engagement has become an essential component in the mission of colleges and universities at a systemic level. The dialogue has moved beyond the committed academic and administrative leaders across the country to include the governing oversight committees that enable institutions of higher education to actively conduct business as reputable organizations.

Clearly, the next step is implementation and assessment on behalf of higher education and third-party organizations to determine the effectiveness of a systemic, accreditation-driven approach to civic engagement.

Because of already established common practices of civic engagement at colleges and universities, there are several areas of concentration to be explored in view of the accrediting criteria. Community perspective will be critical to the process, as higher education moves forward to implement Criterion Five. There is far more research on successful community collaborations than there is on the factors that contribute to understanding community partners (Darlington-Hope, 1999). It is possible that Criterion Five will help generate further understanding of community partners, enabling colleges and universities to better serve their community constituencies.

Civic engagement practices

Numerous initiatives within higher education have advanced the practice of civic engagement. Examples of initiatives include service-learning, diversity education, public policy, co-curricular activities, faculty reward systems, community-based research, and university-community partnerships. In an

extensive review of major initiatives, O'Meara and Kilmer (1999) indicated that Campus Compact, American Association of College and Universities, and Learn and Serve America made significant contributions in these areas by directing funding to civic engagement programs that engaged students. These organizations also helped further the understanding of civic engagement by providing technical assistance and training to higher education personnel responsible for coordinating civic programs for students. Emphasis has been placed on increasing the number of civic-minded students. The America Democracy Project, an initiative orchestrated by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, is another example of an organized effort in which the project's goal is to produce graduates who understand and are committed to "engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democracy" (American Association of State College and Universities, 2005). Additionally, the American Association of State College and Universities has developed multicultural education programs and delivered them to students at institutions across the country in a coordinated effort to provide diversity education.

The majority of research on civic engagement practices has focused on outcomes particular to higher education, and mostly outcomes on student learning. Extensive research on service-learning has indicated its effectiveness in student learning. Eyler and Giles (1999) demonstrated that service-learning benefits students in several areas, including personal and interpersonal development, the ability to understand and apply knowledge, critical thinking, and development of citizenship skills. Astin (2000) found that participants in

volunteer service continued to feel the effects for at least five years following college. An entire body of research has developed around service-learning that assesses the pedagogy and the influence on student learning. Scholars acknowledged early on in the service-learning movement that too many colleges and universities participating in service partnerships viewed their communities as “laboratories for experimentation or passive recipients of expertise” (Bringle, Games, Malloy, 1999, p. 9.). This observation reinforced the dominant and self-serving positions of colleges and universities engaged in service-learning. Regardless, there have been several benefits to organizations that engage in service-learning partnerships with colleges and universities, especially when the service-learning directly fulfills the mission of the recipient organization (Holland, 1997; Kendall, 1990; Torres, 2000b).

Until recently, little research had been done to assess the impact of service-learning on the partnering organizations (Shaffett, 2002). As more research is conducted in the future on the effects on community-organization partners, a constructivist approach to service-learning and civic engagement practices may emerge. Additionally, as new research deepens the understanding of community-organization partners, institutions of higher education will achieve a more engaged, collaborative campus, building trust based on a demonstrated commitment to and shared values with their communities (Ciulla, 1998).

Another common practice adopted by faculty and students in the civic engagement movement is community-based research. Community-based

research makes a significant leap in the efforts to legitimately involve community members in the research process. Couto (2001) explained how “community-based research takes us another step towards the scholarship of engagement by more surely integrating the pressing problems of urban and rural areas into the curriculum through a community-based, problem-centered pedagogy” (Couto, 2001, p. 8).

Typically, community-based research is research that takes place in community settings and directly involves community members in the design and implementation of research projects. Community-based research has “a diverse history that spans the globe, and most of it does not involve higher education or academics at all” (Strand, et. al., 2003, p. xx). However, it has been the next critical step of civic engagement practices, along with service-learning and the scholarship of engagement.

The concept is to demonstrate respect for the contributions to research made by community partners as well as show how the researchers approach research from the perspective of not inflicting any harm on the participating community. Community-based research is a critical step in the civic engagement movement because, like service-learning, it moved from abstract concepts of civic engagement to concrete action. The pedagogy, which is the operational center or perspective of the campus, drives the actions of the researchers. The researcher, or the campus that engages in community-based research, is viewed as *at the service* of the community. This is a return to a European form of community service, in which service is one of the primary obligations of the

university (Neave, 2000). In contrast, the community connection in American universities has been a function of service on the part of individuals rather than the system-wide community connection more common to European forms of community service (Neave, 2000).

Community-based research represents a shift in research that allows participants to have a voice in the research process. Essentially a manifestation of Boyer's scholarship of engagement, community-based research is designed to address social concerns. As well, it is a research paradigm grounded in principles of collaboration and partnership as researchers engage community members to develop outcomes that benefit the specific issues in their community. In addition, the research model strives to empower communities to identify their own needs and develop strategies and mechanisms for solving them. Because of the community emphasis, this approach is the closest higher education comes to creating a community-centric research paradigm. The content of the research is centered on community. By default, researchers develop a heightened sense of community perspectives during the research process. The community perspective becomes tacit knowledge through the participatory process and can also translate into organizing principles used to solve problems. However, because the research approach is results-based in terms of specificity of community issues and contexts, sometimes a broader, general understanding of community perspective is lost in the translation.

Principles guide researchers in developing relationships as well as effectiveness measurements such as: 1) satisfying each other's interests and

needs; 2) having organizational capacities enhanced; and 3) adopting long-range social change perspectives (Strand, et. al., 2003, p. 29). Some of these factors are similar to those identified in studies on campus-community partnership research that will be explored in the following section. Community-based research is a significant step in higher education's pursuit of strengthening relationships with its neighboring communities and developing long-term partnerships as well as addressing identified community issues.

Campus-community partnerships

Increasingly over the years, institutions of higher education and external entities, including government, corporations, and not-for-profit community organizations have begun collaborating on specific projects or wide-ranging initiatives to address societal issues and crises (Harkavy and Benson, 2000; Office of University Partnerships, 2002). The leaders of community organizations are recognizing the effectiveness of collaboration when aligned with a college or university. Higher education scholars realized as well that linking scholarship and service adds value to the learning experience in addition to addressing vital community concerns (Cruz and Giles, 2000).

Although the practice of campus-community partnership has become commonly practiced, most research has focused on service-learning, student personnel development, and outcomes that affect higher education (Howard, et. al., 2000). There has been less attention given to the overall effects of campus-community partnerships, including the positive or negative impact on community

partners. Campus Compact's publication *Benchmarks for Campus Community Partnerships* (Torres, 2000) furthered discussion on general and practical data for improving relationships, even though the focus of the work provided benchmarks that target colleges and universities. Even Campus Compact's publication *The Promise of Partnership* (2005), which is directly marketed to community organizations, was not written from a community organization perspective. However, David Murrasse's publication *Beyond the Campus: How Colleges and Universities Form Partnerships with Their Communities* (2001) leads the charge that much is to be gained and learned when higher education works, specifically, with low-income communities. The residents of such communities bring forward wisdom and experience that are not otherwise learned in traditional classroom settings. Murrasse emphasizes that community members are to be viewed as equal partners in any campus-community partnership. His publication questions the sincerity of higher education and its ability to make a genuine commitment to its communities.

In researching empirical studies on campus-community partnerships, I found several that attempt to better understand the mechanics of campus-community partnerships and the value of relationships developed in a partnership. Studies that are expanding the knowledge of campus-community partnerships, in particular, have examined different contexts and settings in which the emphasis has been on: 1) building relationships between higher education and community partners; 2) identifying core processes in forming civic partnerships; and 3) discovering factors for sustaining civic partnerships.

Additionally, I have located a few core studies that heeded the call to advance the research on community-partner perspectives.

Research on the elements that contribute to the establishment of successful relationships and sustainable partnerships between higher education and community entities is helping create an important body of scholarship. The studies reinforce the contextualized nature of the research. Further, such studies identify elements in campus-community partnerships that serve to inform readers of core ingredients in forming and sustaining civic partnerships (Blythe, 2004; Bringle and Hatcher, 2002; Bullough, 2004; Cox, 2000; Darlington-Hope, 1999; Fullbright-Anderson, et. al., 2001; Leiderman, et. al., 2003; Risley, 1992; Shaffett, 2002; Vernon and Foster., 2002). While the contexts of the partnerships and methodological approaches to the research differ in these studies, a commonality exists in the reporting process. It appears to be common practice to identify a list of core elements that underline the relationship between the campus and its community partner. These partnership qualities are identified in the language of “themes” and “factors,” which reflects the approach I take in this study with regard to establishing a list of core “indicators” of engagement.

This research augments the study of campus-community partnerships with its investigation of a unique context and report on a set of quality markers and criteria that indicate an effective civic partnership. However, it is necessary to explore themes and factors specific to campus-community partnerships that have been previously researched. The majority of the themes focus on mechanics of relationships, processes, and sustainability. The themes and factors do not

neatly align with one another because they are particular to the contexts in which they were developed. Additionally, they do not serve to measure effectiveness or apply criteria markers, but rather focus on the core elements that contribute to an understanding of specific campus-community partnerships. Hence, an increase in the understanding of effectiveness as a result of these previous studies is unintended.

Numerous colleges and universities have begun to create electronic structures that help foster sustainable partnerships with their neighboring communities. One study on the use of technology in campus-community partnerships found that “trust” was a necessary factor in the established and valued relationships (Blythe, 2004). By analyzing data obtained on the users of technology that were invested in a partnership, the study illuminated their perceptions of the process. The participants commented on the value of a trustworthy relationship in a successful partnership. The value of “trust” is a common element in human relationships. Hence, the research reported that the campus-community partnership mirrored human relationships in this respect.

Further research on the nature of romantic relationships reinforced similar findings, illustrating how “psychological theories and constructs from both friendships and romantic relationships are useful in understanding and elucidating some aspects of campus-community partnerships” (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002, p. 504). Other studies suggested that assumptions about the respective roles by the participants in a partnership influence the strength of the relationship (Bullough, 2004). These studies elucidated core factors or themes

that contributed to the success or presumed failure of civic partnerships. In addition to “trust,” a common theme emerged indicating that a difference in status between participating faculty undermined the goal of collaboration and that “partnerships need(ed) to be understood less as an administrative and motivational problem than a question of identity formation and of relationship building” (Bullough, 2004, p. 520).

These studies provide a premise for treating campus-community partnerships like human relationships. However, the research is limited and does not go far enough to fully understand the implications of its own findings. The studies rely on analogy instead of substantiating the data through longitudinal or multiple studies that corroborated the findings. While their explication adds to the scholarship on partnerships, it also recognizes the need for additional research (Bringle and Hatcher, 2002) to evaluate the necessary qualities that improve campus-community partnerships. Moreover, while community partners are included in the data collection, the analysis by the researchers takes precedence and the community organization’s involvement in the development of the key factors is limited. This trend appears to be prevalent in the core research studies on campus-community partnerships.

Another set of key factors were identified in a study (Calleson, 1998) that explored an increase in involvement between academic health centers and community organizations. The study focused on academic health centers that led the nation in community service and involvement. The reported core factors for increased involvement with community organizations by the centers included:

1) public perception of an increased focus on a population health perspective; 2) accountability to local and state-wide constituents; 3) fiscal concerns and competition for community-based training sites; 4) institutional leadership; 5) familiarity with community-based organizations; 6) institutional climate; 7) faculty and student interest; and 8) structures for community involvement (Calleson, 1998). These factors varied significantly from the relationship factors because of the unique focus of the study on measuring an increase in involvement instead of the success or failure of a civic partnership. In this respect, the study added new knowledge to the general scholarship on campus-community partnerships.

However, more so than even the studies that reported on the relationship factors, this study failed to include the direct effects of the increased involvement on the community partners. Community-based coordinators were included in the participant pool, which accounts for possibly the information reported for the first factor: public perception of an increased focus on a population health perspective. Yet, there remained a deeper need for the study to pursue its research to the degree that it recognized the total effect of the increased involvement by the academic health centers. Further, the study concluded that the most significant institutional barriers to community involvement were a lack of collaboration across health-profession schools and inadequate faculty roles, rewards, and release time (Calleson, 1998).

Although the study credited a push from the community as significant in raising the level of engagement by academic health centers, it was the internal factors that made the shift toward the practice of engagement challenging to the

centers. This is an important finding in terms of recognizing that internal institutional challenges commonly impede progress toward civic engagement. At the same time, it is a reminder that this study is campus-centric in its perspective. While the study recognizes that the academic health centers changed through their community involvement, it does not recognize explicitly that the community partners were directly changed as a consequence.

Another relevant case study (Risley, 1992) highlighted elements and conditions critical to the successful establishment of partnerships between universities and organizations. The characteristics of the reported factors differ considerably from the relationship or increased involvement factors. They included: 1) leadership, especially the ability to involve a variety of individuals and instill in them, and the organizations they represent, a sense of ownership; 2) identification and selection of partners; 3) sharply focused goals; 4) identification of common needs and mutual self-interests; 5) acquisition of resources; 6) recognition and publicity; 7) accountability and systematic assessment of the partnership's impact; and 8) flexibility to sustain itself during changing economic circumstances (Risley, 1992). These factors are focused less on the emotional aspects of the relationship factors and are less concerned with personal bonds. Instead, the factors reported capture a sense of organizational traits or strategies for forming a successful partnership. In examining the data from this organizational perspective, the inclusion of community-organization partners' interests is recognized as part of the equation for success.

Though the Risley study is older than some of the others that present key factors and themes, current research continues to recognize that engaging all participants in a partnership is a “crucial aspect of developing effective collaboration” (Kearney and Candy, 2005, p. 198). This recognition implies the value of increasing the involvement of community-organization partners, which is more prevalent in research studies that begin a shift away from campus-centric designs toward study designs that analyze data collected primarily, though not entirely, from community-organization partners (Darlington-Hope, 1999; Fullbright-Anderson, et. al., 2001; Shaffett, 2002).

Research based on data from the community-organization perspective tends to report a combination of factors that include organizational traits as well as individualistic behaviors. Darlington-Hope (1999) reported on the primary lessons learned about partnerships, including: 1) civic engagement requires a commitment to building long-term relationships; 2) building effective collaborations means intentionally developing norms of participation and sticking to them; 3) authentic relationships with community members must involve more than a simple response to individual, group, or issue; 4) involving faculty in collaborations brings an expectation that their skills and training are of value to the collaborative effort; and 5) institutional collaboration requires cultural change and structural reform (Darlington-Hope, 1999). The conclusions from the data did not exclude institutional elements that contribute to partnership successes. Instead, the findings included expectations on the part of the community-organization partners, such as that of developing long-term and authentic

relationships. The treatment of the community-partner perspective changed the reported factors. This is a critical shift in the research on campus-community partnerships. Yet it does not go as far as this study proposed, which was to enlist the participation of the community-organization partners directly in the development of the indicators of engagement.

In a quantitative study that advanced the value of involving community-organization partners, Shaffett (2002) explored perceptions among community-organization staff about the importance of selected practices in building effective community-university service-learning partnerships. The study indicated that seven primary factors were important with respect to partnership practice: 1) university institutional context; 2) community organization context; 3) preparation/training; 4) community partner roles; 5) faculty partner roles; 6) relationship/communication; and 7) evaluation/outcomes (Shaffett, 2002).

These factors, in comparison to factors reported on relationships, process, and sustainability, are overly broad, even though they are specifically connected to service-learning partnerships. The study does not indicate measurements for effective engagement to an applicable degree. It lacks the detail found in the richness of the traditional qualitative studies that present the relationship factors. Nor does it capture the practical factors for success of the sort suggested by Fullbright-Anderson (2001): “shared decision making and goal setting, a mandate to address problems that the committee (community and partner representatives) identified, and a formal structure for ongoing problem solving and action” (Fullbright-Anderson, et. al., 2001, p. 6). This latter example provides a clear

directive that could be used as a measure of success in assessing civic partnerships.

In the case of Shaffett (2002), the factors require the additional investigation more typically done in qualitative research in order to reveal the subtext of the reported factors. Instead of deepening the understanding of campus-community partnerships, the factors are a broad contribution to the scholarship. However, Shaffett's study is significant as an example of investing in the value of community-partner perspectives and presenting knowledge based on data collected from community-organization staff.

The majority of the studies that reported factors are traditional in their designs and methodologies and typically qualitative in design: grounded in theory, case study, or descriptive analysis. The few quantitative studies are surveys, which gather the perspectives of community-organization partners and then, through factor analysis, determine the core factors in the relationship. The community-partner perspectives are represented in the data collection and, consequently, shape the findings. However, the studies do not go far enough in involving the community-organization partners in order to present knowledge exclusive to understanding community-organization perspectives. Even though one such study (Vernon and Foster, 2002) goes further and seeks to answer research questions pertinent to community organizations, the questions are couched in the context of service-learning relationships. Although significant to the scholarship on service-learning and understanding community-partner perspectives in the service relationship, the community-organization participants

are engaged only to the degree that they are the focus of the data collection. The researchers, however, remain in control as the authors of the factors and themes, providing substantive and confirmable results that lack the participatory qualities that would enhance community-partner involvement.

This study augmented these previous studies by presenting factors, themes, or indicators that reflect the position of the community partner. I suggested that community-organization partners be involved directly in the creation and analysis of the data, enlarging the scholarship on campus-community partnerships. In essence, I proposed that this level of involvement with community-organization partners can only be achieved by taking a participatory approach to the research and the development of the indicators of engagement.

Additionally, the factors presented in these previous studies do not explicitly serve as quality measures of effectiveness. A more deliberate set of indicators that establish effectiveness markers would be more useful in evaluating civic engagement. Rogge and Rocha (2005) stated that as “community-based participatory research continues to evolve and inform, so must we advance in designing, implementing, and systematically evaluating university-community interactions and outcomes” (Rogge and Rocha, 2005, p. 118). Though readers could use some of the findings from the current studies to create measurements, this research was grounded in original efforts to supply effectiveness markers. By focusing a study on investigating indicators of engagement that represented what community organizations generally looked for

in successful civic partnerships with higher education institutions, I researched new territory that makes a contribution to both practice and scholarship. The applied aspect of the research served to further bridge the relationship between campuses and their community-organization partners.

Importance of continued research

As already indicated, researchers are improving their understanding of campus-community partnerships (Rogge and Rocha, 2005; Rooney and Gittleman, 2005; Scheibel, et. al., 2005). This research has the potential to provide insight and analysis through examination of past and current campus-community partnerships, which is helpful in forming, strengthening, and sustaining future partnerships. Although a few researchers have been inclusive of community-partner perspectives, there is still a wide differential in the available research. The majority of the research and literature on civic engagement is written from the point of view of higher education, an internal perspective, and not from the perspective of external organizational partners. As a result, the research on civic engagement professes a delimited scholarly perspective, and there is a need for a continued comprehension of community organizations' views on the civic engagement of higher education. This deficiency in the representation of community perspective is a recognizable gap in the research that values understanding of campus-community partnerships, and scholars have been calling for more research on that perspective (Giles and Eyler, 1998; Giles, Honnet and Migliore, 1991; Howard, Gelmon, and Giles, 2000).

To advance civic engagement further, researchers need to be more intentional about understanding civic engagement from the civic partners' perspective. This requires shifting from an academic centered paradigm, as challenging as that may seem, to research from community-centered paradigm. As researchers, we can do this by employing the knowledge and skills we have developed in service to the academy and structure research in service to the community, as has been accomplished, for example, by community-based research or action research methods of inquiry. In more provocative terms, some of us need to abandon self-referential, campus-centric research, and immerse our scholarly services in community organizations. Going further than community-based research, which derives its research questions from the community in an effort to help the community (Strand, 2003), the research on civic engagement has reached a crossroads from which new territory can be explored by researchers if they conduct what I would call *community-advocate research*. This approach to research allows for the researcher to advocate the positions and perspectives of community organizations, making them apparent to higher education institutions. As well, the community-advocate research integrates community voices into scholarship that upholds the tenets of academic rigor.

Summary

To summarize, there has been a tremendous interest in campus community partnerships, evidenced by scholars, conferences, white papers, and

the formation of Campus Compact. Along with this has been a concomitant interest in factors that measure effectiveness. Most of the work has been done from the institution's point of view. Only a handful of studies have been undertaken that take the community perspective into account, but even these have not taken the necessary steps of identifying what these effectiveness criteria are for community organizations. In order to address this we need to be able to more clearly identify effectiveness indicators of engagement from the perspective of the community partner. This will contribute to a balance in civic partnerships and help evaluate their effectiveness.

A clear gap in the literature is a discussion about the markers for effective engagement from a community perspective. These indicators have real consequences. Not only will they capture the expectations and experiences of community participants, they also will help shape the outcomes for success. The purpose of this study is to develop indicators of engagement for civic engagement initiatives in which the stakeholder is the community partner and, hence, the indicators represent the viewpoints of community organizations. Within the scope of the civic engagement literature and research, studies have not specifically developed indicators of engagement in which community organizations are the stakeholders.

Furthermore, an intentional shift to a community-advocate body of research literature can help strengthen the relationship between campuses and their community partners. In this sense, the research study served to advocate

for the community, enlightening campuses about a community partner's view of the effective markers in a civic engagement partnership.

Chapter Two served as an overview of the civic engagement literature and argument for this research. The chapter began with a broad overview of the landscape and then narrowed to focus on specific areas of civic engagement, including: civic engagement practices and campus-community partnerships. Chapter Three presents the details of the methodology and procedures for pursuing the research question.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research study was to develop common indicators of engagement for civic initiatives between institutions of higher education and their community-organization partners. The unique aspect of this study was that the indicators were generated by the community organizations participating as stakeholders in campus-community partnerships. The research question was: What do community organizations look for (and expect) in a successful civic engagement partnership with higher education institutions? In the research, I identified both implicit and explicit criteria for success, effectiveness, and quality of partnership.

Chapter One introduced the study, and Chapter Two provided a broad overview of the literature and selected research on civic engagement to support the rationale for this study. The goal of Chapter Three is to outline, in detail, the design of the study and associated procedures such as data collection and analysis and quality assurance of the study and its findings. Also, in this chapter, I fully acknowledge my potential biases in order to indicate their possible influences on the study. Further, I clarify key definitions and discuss the limitations, delimitations, and ethical considerations of the doctoral study.

Positioning statement

It is critical to make explicit the researcher's position in a research study, particularly in action research with its unique relationship between the

participants and the researcher. Action research permits personal views stemming from biases “as long as they are critically examined and not ignored” (Anderson and Herr, 2005, p. 60). A number of factors may affect the investigation of this topic. These influential factors include my political, social, and cultural positioning or biases. They are the multiple positions from which I approach the study and the positions that may influence the decisions that I make throughout the research.

My professional experience may also affect the research. I have held an executive leadership position in higher education for the last five years. I regularly follow current events and news through industry journals and newspapers, read books about higher education’s purpose, and participate in up to ten professional development conferences in higher education annually. I am the executive director of the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE), a consortium of colleges and universities dedicated to advancing higher education in the region through active collaboration, resource and knowledge building, and effective professional development programs. In this capacity, I am an insider in the higher education arena, working daily with faculty and administrators from public and private colleges and universities. Hence, my perceptions are influenced by my professional knowledge.

Even though I work for the 25 member institutions at SOCHE, I am not a direct employee at any one particular member college or university. In this sense, I was an outsider in this study; I was not conducting research inside my own organization with the purpose of making insider organizational change.

Ultimately, I am an outsider in a unique position of having strong insider relationships. I relied on the cooperation of higher-education insiders and then community-organization outsiders for the study to become a reality. Negotiating these relationships could typically take a long time. However, my insider relationships provided me with access to educational leaders that led me to their community-organization partners. Though these established relationships have created opportunities for learning about civic engagement in the region, I recognized that they held the potential to shape my decisions. I made an effort to reflect on the strength of these relationships and their influence on the decisions made in the research process. Further, tensions that arose between the participants and me were made explicit in the study with the hope that I could “avoid the blind spots that come with unexamined beliefs” (Anderson and Herr, 2005, p. 44).

Though I have studied civic engagement over the last three years, I have recently become aware of the importance of better understanding community-partner perspectives. Hence, in this study, I see myself as a researcher in service to the community organizations. By working “with” the community-organization participants, I was committed to eliminating hierarchical structures, relinquishing my role as the ultimate authority on the research. This was an intentional choice, made knowing that I could not entirely shed my professional, political, social, and cultural influences and aimed at increasing the legitimacy of my service to the community-organization participants in the study.

Reflection on the selected method of inquiry

The purpose of this study was to directly engage community-organization participants in a process that shaped the development of the indicators of engagement. While both qualitative and quantitative research methods engage participants in a study, flexibility was necessary in this study to probe more deeply based on the participants' reflections and conclusions. Qualitative methods have an advantage over quantitative research designs because they afford the flexibility of asking questions that probe further. Additionally, the study required active participation by the community-organization partners so that the researcher's interpretations did not overly influence the outcomes and the development of the indicators. The qualitative method of inquiry that best allows for flexibility and collaborative participant participation was action research.

Action research allowed me to directly involve the community organizations in the development of the quality indicators. Unlike other methods of inquiry in which research is conducted "to" or "on" a population, action research permits an inclusive approach in which the inquiry is done "by" or "with" the community (Anderson and Herr, 2005, p. 3). By working with the community participants, the research study was able to record variety and depth of perspective that permits a common understanding of effective civic engagement. The process creates a forum for valuable dialogue and a shared development of the indicators.

In addition, the researcher can record his or her reflections on the decisions made during the research process, including: 1) primary interview

questions and the basis for their selection; 2) criteria for selection of the individuals or groups for participation in the research; 3) relationships between the researcher and the participants; 4) the contextual landscape of the environment in which the community organizations reside; 5) the single or numerous partnerships in which the community organizations have participated; and 6) other pertinent information that provides a context for understanding the participants (Anderson and Herr, 2005). In action research, reflective practice is as valuable to the inquiry as the outcomes of the process. Hence, the researcher's journal and reflection on decision-making serves as a map of the process.

Action research is a method of inquiry that constructs an action that causes potential changes as a result of the process and study (Troppe, 1994). In this study, I pursued the creation of indicators of engagement in an effort to produce organizational change at colleges and universities that practice civic engagement. Additionally, I sought to strengthen the voice of the community-organization participants in the scholarship on higher education as well as in their own community contexts.

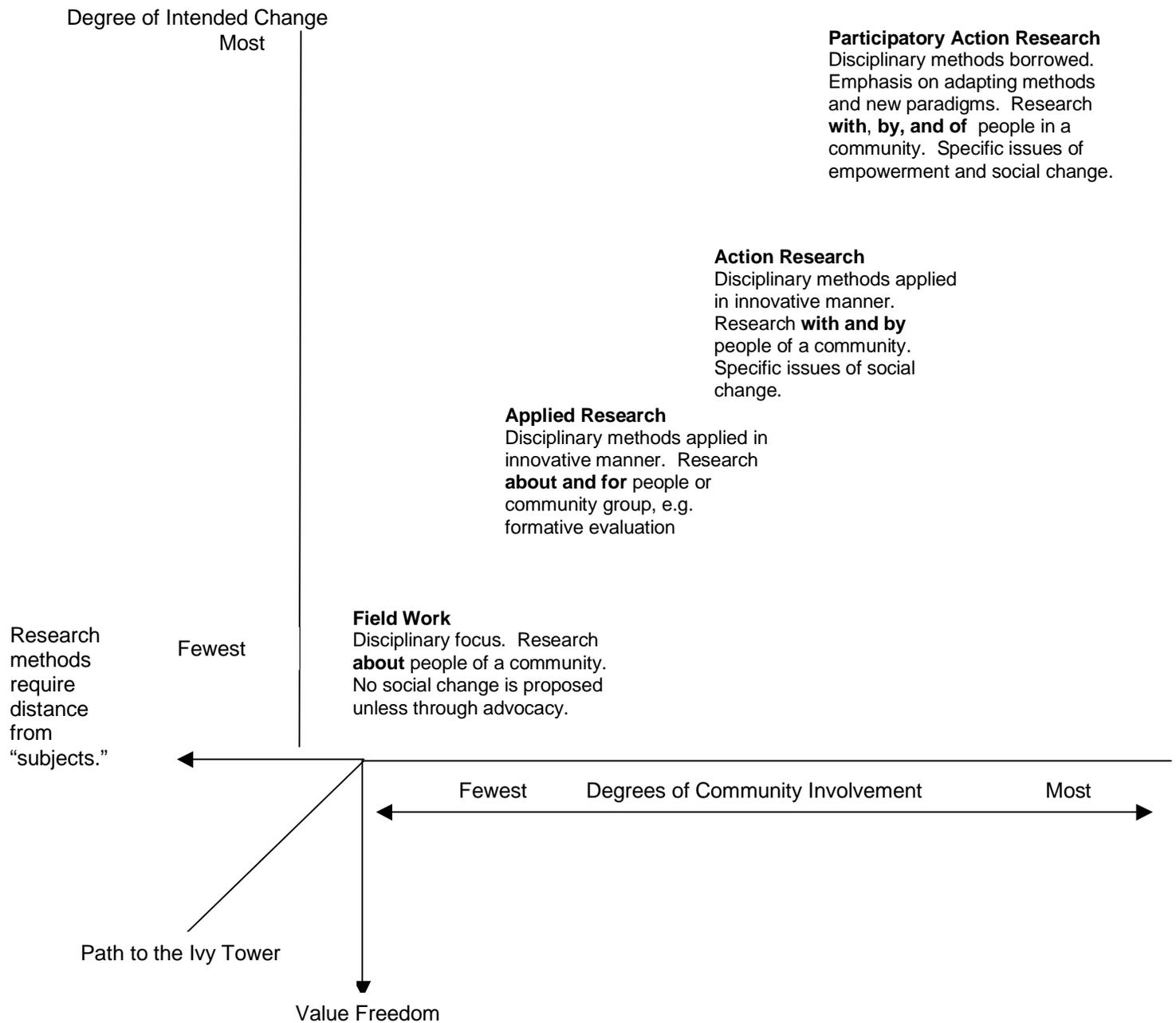
Action Research

Action research has not achieved high status as a research methodology, although it has become more widely practiced (Anderson and Herr, 2005). In most cases, action research has been viewed as an approach more effective for informing process and practice than for making a significant contribution to the

scholarship on subject matter (Anderson and Herr, 1999). As a secondary outcome, I hope that by using action research for this dissertation and maintaining the tenets of rigorous qualitative research, I may help elevate the status of this research method.

A clear distinction exists in the philosophical traditions of the different scholarly camps regarding action research (Anderson and Herr, 2005). For this reason, it is critical that I identify the approach I am employing. I am most aligned with participatory action research, in which the research permits a form of social action. The social action results from several activities undertaken in the research process that involve the participants' and the researcher's reflective practice. Differing degrees of involvement and participation lead to a variance in results or actions. Participatory action research yields the greatest amount of intended change. The corresponding relationship between the level of community involvement and the amount of intended change is outlined in the following figure (Couto, 2004):

Taxonomy of Community-Based Research Forms By Methods, Community Involvement, and Change



This study maintained several key tenets of participatory action research as indicated by De Schutter and Yopo (1981): 1) theory and practice are integrated; 2) the subject-object relationship is transformed into a subject-object relationship through dialogue; 3) research action becomes a single process; 4) the community and research together produce critical knowledge aimed at social transformation; 5) the results of research are immediately applied to a concrete situation (Anderson and Herr, 2005). As already indicated, this study helped give voice to the local community-organization participants as they took action to create the indicators. An additional action was the influence of the indicators on local higher education leaders. The potential existed to instill change outside of southwestern Ohio, through the dissemination of the community indicators of engagement. In addition to presenting and/or publishing the results for the members of SOCHE, I looked for avenues that led to sharing the findings with a broader audience.

Definitions for the study

For the purpose of the study, definitions of community, community organization, civic engagement, and campus-community partnerships are outlined.

Community. The word “community” can be used in a number of ways to apply to almost any group of individuals. It can be defined by location, group composition, and/or used loosely to represent an assortment of contexts. It is

used in this study specifically to describe a geographic location, which is the Dayton, Ohio region.

Community organization. When mentioning a “community organization,” I refer to a community-partner organization that participated in a civic and/or service partnership in a community setting, otherwise known as an “agency” or “community organization” (Kendall, 1990). Examples of community organizations may include, but are not limited to, government agencies, public schools, and not-for-profit organizations (Kretzman and McKnight, 1993; Zlotkowski, 1998). In this study I delimited the definition and focused on community organizations that serve a public purpose. Those community organizations that participated in this study engaged in face-to-face interaction with higher education institutions. Detail with regard to the selection of the community-organization participants is outlined in the section on the study’s design.

Civic engagement. O’Meara and Kilmer (1999) acknowledged that attempts have been made by numerous individuals and groups to define civic engagement. However, there is no consensus on one definition of civic engagement. At its most basic, civic engagement has been described as the interaction of citizens with their society and their government (Patrick, 1998). Civic engagement has also been described as “those activities which reinvigorate the public purposes and civic mission of higher education” (Hollander and Saltmarsh, 2000, p. 1). The definition of the term *civic engagement* has not been agreed upon, in part, because it is contextualized and particular to situations in which civic engagement is manifested. Institutions of higher education can

illustrate civic engagement practices, and it is in these demonstrated actions and practices that civic engagement takes on a definitive meaning for institutions.

As the researcher, I approached this doctoral study without having a set definition of civic engagement, knowing that the numerous participants may each have had a view of its meaning particular to them as individuals and as representatives of their partnering organizations. In some cases, it was possible that the term civic engagement had no specific meaning for a participant and had never been formally used or understood in connection with their partnership with a college or university. I conducted the study knowing that it was possible that time would be spent discussing the research process and similarities as well as differences in the perceived understandings of civic engagement. Fortunately, qualitative research, in general, and action research, specifically, allows for the freedom to discuss issues that may arise in doing the research process and data collection.

While it was critical that I reflected on the meaning of civic engagement, at the same time, I did not think it was necessary to espouse a specific definition of civic engagement for the purpose of the study. I acknowledged that I was versed in the research and literature of civic engagement, yet I did not want to create a hierarchy of knowledge prior to the research process. I was open to the perceptions and shifts in meaning construed by the participants.

Campus-community partnership. Similar to *civic engagement*, the term “campus-community partnership” can be defined both broadly and contextually. Though it has largely been defined by actions and initiatives, the broad definition

for the purposes of this study is a “formalized relationship between a college or university and one or more community-based entities or groups to meet academic and community goals” (Leiderman, et. al., 2003, p.18). More specifically, the programmatic manifestations of civic engagement, such as service-learning, community-based research, and volunteerism, are included in this definition. I proposed this definition for the study to give general shape to an understanding of campus-community partnerships. In these instances, there was a reciprocal relationship that resulted in a sharing of resources for mutually beneficial purposes.

Design of the study

The design of the study followed an action research method in which the participants were actively engaged in the process. I used the Dayton community as a setting from which I developed the community indicators of engagement, working directly with eleven community organizations from the public purpose sector. Each community-organization participant had to have engaged in one or more partnerships with one of the four following Dayton institutions of higher education: Central State University (Central State), Sinclair Community College (Sinclair), University of Dayton (UD), and Wright State University (Wright State).

These four institutions of higher education were not selected based on similarity of type. In fact, they are four different types of colleges and universities. Established in 1856 and one of the nation’s premier historically black universities, Central State is a four-year public university, serving

approximately 2,000 students annually. Centrally located in downtown Dayton, Sinclair is among the largest community colleges in America, serving over 24,000 students, as well as a member of the board of the League for Innovation in the Community College. UD is the largest private university in Ohio, is ranked among the top ten national Catholic universities, and is rated a top-tier national university according to the 2005 issue of *America's Best Colleges* from *U.S. News and World Report*. Named after the world-famous Wright brothers, Wright State is a public university that serves more than 17,000 students, offering more than 100 undergraduate and 50 graduate and professional degrees.

I chose these four institutions of higher education based on: 1) proximity to Dayton and 2) partnerships with one another. For instance, these four institutions created the Miami Valley Higher Education Consortium, in which they collaborate regularly through their provosts and presidents, sharing information and strategizing together on higher education efforts for the Dayton region. Additionally, Central State, Sinclair, UD, and Wright State were the founding and permanent board members of the Miami Valley Research Park Foundation, an economic development initiative in the Dayton region. As well, UD and Sinclair were partners in the Dayton Early College Academy, a partnership with the Dayton Public Schools. Sinclair and Wright State were partners in the national-award-winning Center for Healthy Communities, “a community-academic partnership committed to improving the health and well-being of the community, educating its health professionals and serving as a force for change” (Center for Health Communities, 2005). Lastly, each campus was a founding member of

SOCHE, and participated actively in the leadership and collaborative efforts of SOCHE since its inception in 1967. Hence, the partnerships among these four major institutions of higher education in Dayton demonstrated an active relationship that exemplifies service to the Dayton-area community.

In addition, I narrowed the scope of the study by examining community organizations from a particular sector. The sector for this study was public purpose organizations dedicated to improving health and wellness, specifically community organizations that advocate, research, and/or provide health and wellness social services that educate and assist the Dayton regional community. Services that are directly related to health and wellness address primarily health care, mental health care and health education programming.

To identify these organizations, I worked with contacts at the four colleges and universities. At a minimum, I worked with the following key individuals: 1) Dr. Carlos Vargas, Provost, Central State University; 2) Dr. Ned Sifferlen, past president, Sinclair Community College; 3) Dick Ferguson, Executive Director, The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, University of Dayton; and 4) Dr. Katherine Cauley, Director, Center for Healthy Communities, Wright State University. Each key contact provided examples of relationships and partnerships between their institutions and community-organization partners. It was my responsibility to contact the community organizations and set up the meetings to explain the purpose of the study and ask for their participation. In total, the four contacts provided 40 possible community organizations to contact for participation in the study. I narrowed the selection to eleven participants by a

process that included making sure they represented the delimited criteria. Also, I assigned priorities to the organizations that appeared on all four lists. This narrowed the list considerably. Lastly, I elected to work with community organizations that provided health and wellness programs for youth and families. I decided to approach these types of organizations since their constituents were more likely to attend college one day than if I worked with organizations that focused on programs that served senior citizens.

Selection of participants. The selection of participants for the dissertation study was purposeful. They represented community organizations that are specific to the Dayton area and from the health and wellness sector. Particular to the organizations were a mission and purpose that included advocacy, research, and/or other health and wellness services to the Dayton community. Further, they were organizations that have engaged with the four identified colleges and universities. As previously outlined, I worked with representatives from the four higher education institutions to identify community organizations that fit the criteria of the study. My job as the researcher was to provide a voice for these community organizations from this particular sector in the Dayton-area community. Prior to the study, I had no direct relationships with the selected community organizations, though I may have known of their existence.

As part of the data collection, the study included interviews and conference-style focus groups with participants. The interviews provided a basis for acquainting myself with the participants, discussing the study and process, and obtaining preliminary data on their perspectives regarding what they look for

in a successful civic partnership. In addition to the one-on-one interviews, I held conferences that brought participants together for dialogue and creation of the indicators of engagement; this conferencing exemplified the collaborative work, providing participants a venue for creating a shared vision of common indicators. The first conference included a reflection on the data I had gathered from the one-on-one interviews. This required an examination of the indicators proposed by each member. As a whole, the group had the opportunity to ask questions and reflect on the initial data and discuss issues and concerns they had related to the information I had collected. My role was to facilitate the discussion and to probe for further explanation of their comments by asking questions to stimulate dialogue about the effectiveness indicators of civic engagement and civic partnerships. The second conference focused on further development and refinement of the community indicators. In this meeting, a set of shared indicators was proposed at the beginning of the meeting.

The final part of the study's design was the dissemination of the indicators of engagement. I distributed the indicators to the colleges and universities that comprised the membership of SOCHE. At this stage, I requested that they provide feedback regarding the community-partner indicators and share their perspective on the likelihood that these measurements could be achieved in a civic partnership. Their feedback was not used to make changes to the indicators, but rather to add realistic comments from the higher-education sector. Engaging higher education in this stage of the process served as an opportunity to educate local college and university leaders about the community-partner

perspectives with regard to successful civic partnerships. Additionally, the dissemination of the indicators continued the action from the study to generate change at institutions of higher education.

Data collection and procedures

I conducted one-on-one interviews and also group conferencing to maximize data collection and the time commitment of the participants. The interviews and the conferences were audio-recorded and reviewed to capture the accuracy of the information. Each interview was approximately one hour in length and conducted at a place most convenient to each participant. I held the two conferences at the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education offices located in Dayton, Ohio, and I audio-recorded them to capture observations and make field notes about the process.

Interviews. Interviews were part of the inquiry process for this dissertation study. Prior to meeting in person, I sent participants a description of the study interview, along with a cover letter and the consent form. The letter read as follows:

Dear Jane Doe,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this doctoral study. I really appreciate your taking the time, and look forward to meeting with you on **Friday, March 3, 11:00am**. Together, we will be able to develop a common understanding of what community organizations value in partnership with higher education.

When we meet, I will provide you with an overview of the dissertation study, including the purpose and procedures. However, I wanted to send

you a summary of the study, along with the consent form in advance for you to review in case you have any questions.

Also, at the meeting, I would like to begin to discuss what your organization looks for in a successful partnership with a college or university. This initial discussion will help guide the larger discussion with the other participating organizations when we meet on **March 29 and 30** as a group. I will be most interested in talking about these questions:

1. What would you see as criteria for an effective civic partnership with higher education?
2. How would you know a partnership is working?
3. What are some expectations you have going into a partnership?

Please contact me if you have any questions prior to our meeting, (937) 258-8890 or screighton@phd.antioch.edu. Thanks, again, for your help!

Sincerely,

Sean Creighton

The letter was accompanied with the following summary of the study:

Dissertation Research Study Summary
Community Partner Indicators of Engagement
Sean J. Creighton
Antioch University's PhD in Leadership and Change Program

Determining what constitutes effective civic engagement from a community partners' perspective is a critical step toward building strong relationships between institutions of higher education and their community partners. Recent research on civic engagement has led to the development of widely recognized indicators of engagement for colleges and universities and best practices that serve to guide higher education (Campus Compact, 2002; 2004; 2005). Perceptions of community partners about what is important to successful and effective partnerships are essential, even though they are not deeply researched, nor broadly disseminated (Cruz and Giles, 2000). At this point, higher education leaders and proponents of civic engagement practices do not possess substantive community partner research that advocates what community organization constituencies consider to be the key quality indicators of campus engagement.

The purpose of this research study is to develop common indicators of engagement for civic initiatives between institutions of higher education and their community organization partners. The unique aspect of this study is that the indicators will be generated by the participating community organizations that are the stakeholders in campus-community partnerships. By assessing the needs of community organizations, the indicators will provide an illustration of core ingredients for forming an effective relationship and partnership with a college or university and the considerations for effective civic engagement.

The method of inquiry for this study will be action research. Action research allows me as the researcher to directly work with community organization participants in the development of the indicators of effectiveness, engaging them in the process of creation and analysis of the common set of indicators. Unlike other methods of inquiry in which research is conducted “to” or “on” a community, action research permits an inclusive approach in which the inquiry is done “by” or “with” the community (Anderson and Herr, 2005).

This study calls for an intentional shift to a community-advocate body of research that will help strengthen the relationship between campuses and their community partners. The study serves to advocate for the community organizations, enlightening campuses to a community partner’s critique of the effective markers in a civic engagement partnership. Hence, a distinctive aspect to this study is the dissemination of the findings to, firstly, the leadership at the colleges and universities that comprise the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education. Further, I will explore additional avenues for disseminating the final set of community indicators of engagement to a broader higher education audience.

I conducted the individual interviews at the location of the participating community organizations, which provided an important experience for me as the researcher to witness firsthand the different neighborhoods as well as the constituencies being served. Every participating organization created a welcoming environment. Equally, the participants exhibited enthusiasm for the study.

During the interviews, I met with each participant for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, and recorded the meeting in addition to taking extensive notes. My role as the researcher remained relatively constant in which I had a format for conducting the interviews. In each, I asked a series of questions that addressed the main research question of discovering the expectations from a community partner, and then followed-up on the answers in an effort to probe further. The qualitative design provided the opportunity to probe participants further on their perspectives. The inquiry process allowed for the participants to define the experience in their own terms, thus giving me the opportunity to discover and respond to the emerging worldview of the participants (Merriam, 1998). The combined results of the eleven interviews provided sufficient information for forming the initial draft of the community partner indicators of engagement.

After meeting with participants in person, I followed-up with a correspondence that read as follows:

Dear Jane Doe,

I cannot thank you enough for participating in the development of the community partner indicators of engagement, and am very much looking forward to our next stage together. In advance of our meetings on March 29 and 30, 8:00am, Research Park, please find enclosed the following:

1. Copy of your consent form
2. Directions to Research Park
3. Draft indicators of engagement
4. Agenda for the meetings

Please take a moment to review the draft indicators in advance of our meeting. As well, I will go over them at the first meeting.

Let me know if you have any questions, (937) 258-8890, or need further directions. Really looking forward to our group meetings!

Sincerely,

Sean Creighton

Conferences. By conferences, I mean the act of bringing together the participants as a group to engage in discussion on the subject. This was a collaborative process and directly involved all of the participants in the data creation and, consequently, data analysis. The technique allowed for developing a shared understanding as well as exploring differences that existed among the participants. The openness of the forum provided an opportunity for dialogue and group reflection.

The initial version of the community partner indicators of engagement became a cohesive representation of the interview process and the primary document for the two conferences with the group. The conferences provided the opportunity for the group to refine and advance the development of the indicators. In the conferences, all eleven participants attended, and engaged in dialogue that made contributions to the indicators. The process made for a vibrant and lively discussion in which the indicators provided an anchor for the conversation. The group process in the conferences permitted reflection on the draft document and clarification of the indicators identified from the interviews. At each successive stage in the process, the content and presentation of the community partner indicators of engagement evolved. The conferences generated honest and forthright conversation. Participants were candid about

their experiences in working with higher education. By the end of the second conference, the participants confirmed that the community partner indicators of engagement represented a fair, accurate, and substantial account of their perceptions. This final version of the indicators addressed the dissertation research question, illustrating an essential set of expectations for campus-community partnerships from community partner perspectives.

Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative inquiry is a *process of doing* (Creswell, 1998): collecting, organizing, managing, reflecting, categorizing, and classifying in order to accurately represent and present the data. I recorded the interviews using a digital voice recorder and then transcribed the interviews in Microsoft Word. I also recorded and transcribed the conferences.

In action research, the researcher is not analyzing the data separately from the input of the participants. This makes the analysis part of the data collection process. In this study, only during the interview process were the participants not working as a group. I made sure to share the information as an accurate representation of the interviews. Since I shared the information with the group of individuals who created the data, there was more room for clarification than if I had shared the data with an entirely new group that did not participate in the interview process.

The result of the data collection and analysis was a set of descriptive community partner indicators of engagement. They represent the agreed upon

common indicators identified by the working participants. After I completed transcribing these indicators into a final, written form, they were shared with the entire group of participants. This gave the group another opportunity to confirm the results. Additionally, the indicators were shared with SOCHE member and other constituencies presented in this dissertation. I looked for avenues for disseminating the findings that included scholarly publications and conferences as well informal venues.

Issues of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability

This study followed the quality criteria for rigorous qualitative research identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. I addressed credibility in this study through a few basic strategies. First, I have been clear regarding my biases and the professional, cultural, social, and political factors that may have an influence on the study (see the *positioning statement* section early on in this chapter).

A second strategy was through the selection of action research as a method. Since action research is an open process, some of the traditional credibility issues do not apply. For instance, it was not necessary for me to perform member checking to validate the research in a traditional manner since the participants were actively involved in the construction of the meaning derived from the data. However, I sent each community-organization participant a copy of the final version of the community partner indicators of engagement. In this

study, I have tried to ensure the credibility of the openness of the process and that the voices of the participants were active in the process. I addressed this by assuring that participation, through the interviews and conferences, was structured in a manner that engaged all participants. Since the participants were actively engaged in the development of the final indicators, there should not be questions about my interpretation or misinterpretation of the data. The outcomes from the process were open and transparent. I have taken special care and consideration to assure this openness.

To address dependability, I made the research auditable, which entails providing a detailed description of the procedures throughout the process. As I have already indicated, I maintained a reflective journal. Specifically, the journal reflects on decisions made and unpredictable occurrences that arose during the process as well as provides a personal account of the research pertaining to the study.

To address confirmability of the research, in Chapter Five I examine the indicators of engagement with respect to prior knowledge and research on campus-community partnerships. This measure of comparison includes studies that have specifically looked at community-partner perspectives, including studies by Calleson (2002), Campus Compact (2002), Darlington-Hope (1999), Leiderman (2003), Risley (1992), and Shaffett (2002). These other studies have enabled me to draw broader conclusions about the findings discussed in Chapters Four and Five of this dissertation.

Transferability is concerned with the level to which naturalistic studies can be applied to other contexts. As Lincoln and Guba indicated, ultimately, the “burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 29). This study is designed to produce local knowledge. Action research recognizes the significance of conducting research that is contextualized locally. This is one of the strengths of action research since it is a research method that “produces knowledge grounded in local realities that is also useful to local participants” (Anderson and Herr, 2005, p. 98). I have made sure that the process and results are transparent and clearly articulated so that others may elect to repeat the process at their own locality. As well, they may find value and interest in the potential transferability of the findings.

Delimitations of the research

As is common to most research studies, boundaries were established and the research was delimited. This research was delimited, first, by the purposeful sampling in a specific community setting. I produced knowledge that was contextualized in local realities such as the geographic, economic, racial, cultural, and political conditions specific to the Dayton, Ohio region. More specifically, the views represented in the research did not claim to represent the views of the entire community and were delimited by the perspectives of the participants as representatives of their community organizations and as individuals from the local community.

Secondly, I worked strictly with community organizations that had partnered with Central State, Sinclair, UD, and Wright State. Data collection was limited to identified community-partner participants that: 1) agreed to make a commitment of time for the interview and the conferences and 2) have led or worked directly on civic partnerships with higher education.

Lastly, I delimited the scope by selecting community organizations that were from the area of health and wellness. This provided further depth in the research that enhanced the voice of the participants from that sector.

Assumptions

I need to make a few assumptions explicit: 1) As the researcher, I relied on the perceptions of study participants and assumed they were honest and authentic in their responses to the questions; 2) I assumed that the community organization participants wanted to participate in the process and viewed it as a legitimate research study; 3) I assumed that I was prepared as a researcher to conduct a study that gathered sufficient and valuable data to support the identification of effectiveness indicators; and 4) I assumed that there was common agreement among different community organizations that resulted in a set of community partner indicators of engagement.

Timeline for dissertation study

- January 19, 2006 – Held dissertation proposal hearing in Seattle, WA.
- February 2006 – Arranged to have first three chapters copy-edited.

- February 2006 – Completed one-on-one interviews with participants
- March 2006 – Hosted conference of community organization participants.
- March 2006 – Reviewed final indicators with participants in conference.
- May 2006 – Sent final indicators to SOCHE members for feedback.
- May/June 2006 – Completed chapters four and five of the dissertation.
- June 2006 – Gained approval from chair, Dr. Jon Wergin, to proceed with formal defense.
- July 2006 – Arranged to have chapters four and five copy-edited.
- August 2006 – Held dissertation defense hearing in Yellow Springs, OH.

Ethical issues

In the planning process, I did my best to anticipate challenges, conflicts, or risks that could arise regarding ethical issues in the research process. However, because action research is a “dynamic and evolving process” (Anderson and Herr, 2005, p. 112), I know that there was an increased possibility for ethical issues to develop as a result of the process. From the onset, I engaged in ethical research practice. For a qualitative researcher, this means that I was clear with the participants about all aspects of the study, including the purpose and procedures (Creswell, 1998). In no manner had I deceived participating organizations about the nature of the study. At every point in the research, participants were given the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and make comments on the process.

Collection of data and dissemination of findings. All qualitative studies carry with them the potential for ethical issues regarding data collection and dissemination of findings (Merriam, 1998). Hence, ensuring confidentiality and the accuracy of the data collected were essential aspects of this study. When I presented interview findings to the participants and outcomes to the broader SOCHE audience and other readers, the findings were reported in aggregate form. Also, when the findings were disseminated, they were not manipulated, and clearly and accurately articulated the work of the participants.

IRB Process. IRB approval was secured.

Summary

I know that I cannot hide my own campus-centric views. Since I cannot shed this higher-education perspective, I used it as an asset in the process, meaning that I brought to the process experiential knowledge of higher education and access to local college and university leaders.

I have worked for a community organization as well on multiple committees that serve community organizations. My heart belonged to the community organizations in this process. At a meeting of Wright State University's task force for community and civic engagement, in which I reported on the literature of civic engagement and civic partnerships, a task force member commented that my "righteous" position with respect to capturing community perspectives would help the university better understand its partners. In this particular situation, the term "righteous" conveyed a relentless commitment to

assuring community-partner representation. This story illustrated my conviction to the community partners in the process and beyond, even though I hold a professional position in higher education.

Lastly, I recognize that by choosing action research, I adhered to the concept of creating a change effort as a result of this study. Although understanding the perspective of community organizations and providing a voice for community-partner participants was the basis for the research, another identified change in this case concerns higher education institutions: the set of indicators developed by community partners on civic engagement were intended to help inform those in the higher education community become more effective in the areas of civic engagement and community partnerships.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this research study was to develop common indicators of engagement for civic initiatives between institutions of higher education and their community-organization partners. The unique aspect of this study was that the indicators were generated by a group of participating community organizations that were stakeholders in campus-community partnerships. The research question was: What do community organizations look for (and expect) in a successful civic engagement partnership with higher education institutions? In the research, I identified both implicit and explicit criteria for success, effectiveness, and quality of partnership.

Chapter One introduced the purpose of the study and provided background on the civic-engagement movement. Chapter Two presented a rhetorical argument for the need for this study, reflecting on the literature and empirical research on civic engagement, including: historical development of the civic-engagement movement in higher education; review of the major initiatives within higher education to advance the practice of civic engagement; and research on campus-community partnerships. Chapter Three conveyed my positioning statement, sharing my professional background in higher education and potential biases. Chapter Three also presented the rationale for the selected method of inquiry— action research — and included the design of the study, including the delimitations and the selection of the community organizations.

Chapter Four focuses on the results of the study. I provide a detailed account of what happened during the data-collection process and identify the

indicators of engagement. I also present the resolutions developed by the participants and discuss dissemination of the indicators and limitations of the study.

Identification and development of indicators

The indicators of engagement identified by the community partners evolved and matured over three progressive stages. To best illustrate the progression, I have inserted the indicators verbatim at each of the three critical points of development: 1) post-interview (Chart One: Community Partner Indicators of Engagement); 2) post-conference one (Chart Two: Community Partner Indicators of Engagement); and 3) post-conference two (Chart Three: Community Partner Indicators of Engagement). In addition to sharing the charts, I highlight incidents during the interviews and the two conferences that contributed to the advancement of the indicators.

Results of interviews. In the interviews, I asked a series of predetermined questions that elicited discussions about expectations, effectiveness criteria, and what constitutes a working partnership. I listened carefully for repetition and commonality among the participants with regard to their expectations of a partnership with higher education, noting the outcomes they anticipated from a partnership. As well, I documented their perceptions about the benefits deriving from an effective relationship.

Based on the data collected and a review for emergent themes, I drafted the first version of the community-partner indicators of engagement. The

process included scanning notes and transcripts for themes, clustering the data by commonality. As for the choice of language for each indicator, I selected words from the notes or I chose language that summarized the data. As best as I could, I portrayed the data in the language of the participants. Further, I selected language that I considered an accurate representation of the participants' views, knowing that I would have the opportunity to discuss and clarify the language in the conferences with the participants.

Participants discussed in detail attributes that contributed to both effective and ineffective partnerships. I recognized this trend after the second interview with a community partner and made sure subsequent interviews captured the same detailed perspective of positive and negative experiences with higher education. Consequently, the perceptions associated with each community-partner indicator ranged from effective to ineffective practices. In an effort to maintain supportive details, the indicators conveyed descriptors that exemplify “effective” and “ineffective” engagement practices. I presented the indicators in a format that enabled the research process to move forward productively. Hence, the indicators were presented in a chart format, which increased readability for participants. For results of the interviews and the first version of the community partner indicators of engagement see Appendix B – Chart One: Community Partner Indicators of Engagement.

The first version of community partner indicators of engagement captured the commonalities as well as unique contributions from the interview data. In total, ten key indicators emerged based on the data. The order in which the

indicators appeared did not reflect a hierarchy imposed by the participants. Each indicator also was accompanied by “effective” and “ineffective” descriptors that detailed the expectations of the community-partner participants. For example, the indicator *mutual commitment* had an “effective” descriptor noting that participants valued having representatives from higher education on their boards of trustees. Board service indicated a sign of commitment, especially when the individual serving had an authentic concern for the mission of the community partner and expertise to share that would advance the programs of the organization. A good example of effective service would be a faculty member from social work serving on the board of a social service agency or a dean of a medical school serving on the board of a health commission.

The indicator *relevance of research* captured issues pertaining to performance of research and its applicability or lack thereof in addressing community needs. Participants felt strongly that academic theory and direct-service practice were disconnected and, consequently, theory was not informed by practice. This disconnection between theory and practice resulted in the production of research by higher education that had little applicability to real social concerns. The participants placed fault for the disconnection on faculty, stating that faculty were merely enamored with theory and uninterested in practice. Also, participants said they felt disrespected, undervalued, and ignored by faculty. While the indicator *relevance of research* represented the applicability and relevance of academic research, the indicator *synergy* described more accurately the behavioral attitudes of faculty and the positive or negative

influence attitude had on collaboration. Participants weighted equally the manner in which they were treated by higher education and the practical application of the research produced.

During the interviews, the majority of participants talked extensively about the role of their organization as a place for college students to gain service experience. This resulted in the development of the indicator *usefulness of student service*. The effective descriptors for this indicator stressed examples of beneficial service to the community partner that included graduate-student expertise, low-cost labor, and students as role models. Participants understood the value of the service experience for students and believed in an experiential approach to education. However, strong consensus existed among participants that service-learning was in a state of disarray and that it had shifted away from being community-centered to solely student-centered. Further, they indicated that a lack of coordination in service-learning resulted in student confusion and awkwardness, which created a burden on the community organizations. While service-learning had the potential to be an effective and mutually beneficial for the student, community partner, and higher education institutions, changes needed to be undertaken to improve the implementation of service-learning.

Participants voiced discontent about being undervalued and shared candidly that they felt there should be some reciprocity for their willingness to provide opportunities for students to acquire experience-based education. Some participants clearly stated a need for a formalized exchange between a community partner and higher education. From these conversations emerged

the indicator *mutually beneficial exchanges*. This indicator captured data that stressed the enhancement of campus-community partnerships through the critical exchange of knowledge, best practices, and financial gains. While the indicator *synergy* focused more on emotional and transformative qualities of a synergistic relationship, that of *mutually beneficial exchanges* illustrated transactional benefits to the community partner that included free tuition, in-service opportunities, and other negotiated benefits. Participants felt they deserved some form of remuneration for the experiences they provided college students.

The importance of communication surfaced as a common theme and translated into the indicator *effectiveness of communication*. When participants noted communication as an issue, I probed for descriptors that provided explicit meaning and context, which resulted in comments about honesty, openness, transparency, and sustained communication. These were seen as attributes of effective communication. Also, the participants consistently identified bureaucracy in higher education as a major contributing factor to ineffective communication, which impeded relationship building.

Noting the qualities of ineffective communication, participants stressed their discontent with higher education faculty. They believed that faculty had little regard for direct service providers and, hence, did not pay attention to concerns raised by community partners. For instance, accrediting and licensing agencies for social work programs have developed specific procedures that must be taught to students as part of their education. They must be familiar, for example, with

particular forms required for documenting assessment in social services agencies. One community partner informed the social work department at a local university that students were not familiar with the appropriate state forms. Instead, an older, outdated form was used in the classroom. Even though the community partner shared the observation to be helpful, the university did not take the suggestion seriously, nor did it make the necessary changes. As a result, the community partner felt disrespected and ignored. In an effort to improve poor communication, the participants in the study focused on making suggestions that would help bring faculty and community-organization leaders together to establish a deeper understanding of practices.

The participants agreed on the importance of identifying clear goals and outcomes for a partnership. The indicator *clarity of expectation and roles* addressed this expectation and pertained to procedures and operations that made explicit the intentions and available resources of a partnership. A few participants stated that their organizations would not engage in a partnership without the expectations written out and agreed upon. The strength of their conviction resulted in a descriptor stating that expectations and outcomes be clearly identified in writing.

In the interview data, I found observations by participants to support the need for indicators dealing with *mission alignment*, *compatibility of values*, and *sustainability*. These three indicators covered different stages of a partnership. *Mission alignment* reinforced the importance of a natural affiliation between organizations that would result in the formation of a partnership. Participants

emphasized that each partner's mission would be served by the relationship directly or indirectly, regardless of the similarity of mission. The indicator *compatibility of values* highlighted concrete traits expected as part of a successful partnership, including respect, fairness, integrity, and trust. These traits corresponded to an effective partnership that added value to the community partner. Several of the descriptors for *compatibility of values* had to do with the positive and negative treatment by the higher education institution toward their community partner. The indicator *sustainability* focused on the long-term effects of a partnership that resulted in capacity building for the community partner and the possibility of developing new collaborations. It was important to capture expectations from the participants that described what they looked for at different stages of a partnership.

Overall, the first version of the community partner indicators of engagement illustrated the major themes in the interviews with the participants. As discussed with each partner, the goal was to develop a common set that would be developed further during the conferences. The first version provided a good working version for leading the conferences.

Results from conference one. The first conference required participants to reflect on the data I gathered from the one-on-one interviews. All the participants were present for the conference. At the outset, I presented the draft community indicators of engagement and the rationale for how I arrived at them, emphasizing that I looked for commonalities as well as distinctions in perceptions and expectations. The participants examined the draft indicators of engagement,

engaging in dialogue with one another on effective partnerships with higher education in light of the indicators. I facilitated the discussion and probed for clarification and deeper explanation, keeping participants anchored to the indicators. I also steered the participants toward focusing on concrete explanations instead of abstractions.

Conversation during the first conference clarified that the interview process had effectively illuminated substantive data related to the indicators. However, the conference dialogue evoked deeper reflection on the meaning of the indicators and the relevance of the descriptors for “effective” and “ineffective.” The first conference also included extensive discussion around proactive initiatives, namely solutions for strengthening the relationship between higher education and community partners. Participants gravitated toward dialogue that involved action and change, which resulted in the suggestion that the community-partner indicators of engagement chart include a column called “Resolutions.” The resolutions captured the changes suggested during the discussion at the first Conference One. For results from the first conference and, consequently, the second version of the community partner indicators of engagement see Appendix C – Chart Two: Community Partner Indicators of Engagement.

Conference One provided an occasion for participants to expand on the commonalities in the interview data and to further clarify perceptions. The group did not challenge the language I had used to portray the data collected from the interviews. Instead, they concentrated on discussing in detail the descriptors associated with the identified indicators. The conference provided a setting in

which the participants bonded, viewing one another as comrades and sharing their peer experiences. They had adequate time to share frustrations as well as positive experiences.

Everyone respected and acknowledged each other's views, identifying with the majority of the descriptors. They conversed about points raised in the individual interviews that were captured in the indicators list. They discussed at length descriptors related to the indicators *compatibility of values, mutual commitment, effectiveness of communication, usefulness of student service, and relevance of research*. Further, they persistently moved toward creating solutions to address the problems identified between their organizations and the local higher education community.

Some of the ideas led to tangible suggestions for strengthening partnerships. Many of the suggestions were connected to service-learning and academic research. They reinforced the need for a coordinating body that handled service placement, and for research that was guided by the community partner's needs. As a result, the descriptors more clearly represented a commonality of perceptions about the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of service-learning.

The conference also allowed for extensive clarification by participants. One major change was prompted by a quiet, yet thoughtful participant who had difficulty identifying with the same service-learning concerns as other community organizations. This person had a different issue altogether, construing the issue as one of race and geography. In this case, the local colleges and universities

did not send students to this particular organization for service-learning because of a concern for the safety of the students. The organization was located in an economically depressed neighborhood in Dayton, and the participant voiced concern that the colleges and universities were not providing a real education to students, and instead sheltered them from the realities of an inner city neighborhood.

The participants discussed higher education's negligence and failure to serve community organizations from Dayton's inner city. They concurred that the failure to send students to inner city organizations had to do with more than race alone; it encompassed issues of class, safety, and fear as well. This conversation advanced the development of the indicators by recognizing that the culture of service should not be selective. To be effective, participants indicated, service-learning had to be directed equally to all neighborhoods that were part of the Dayton community. They called for including fair distribution of service-learning placements as a descriptor for *usefulness of student service*. Further, they emphasized the expectation by adding under the same indicator a descriptor that defined ineffective service-learning practices as discriminatory against poorer neighborhoods. The community partners did not want to be viewed as complicit in discriminatory practices because they did not confront the issue of selective service-learning placements. Hence, the participants agreed that they had to think beyond their own organizations and be intentional about assuring that the numerous needs of the different community partners were met.

Participants also shared frustrations about the burden service-learning created on the infrastructures of their organizations and about the coordination of service-learning placements. They repeatedly voiced concerns about faculty attitudes that they perceived as arrogant and insensitive. But, even though participants were upset with aspects of service-learning, they were not willing to abandon higher education and refuse to participate in service-learning partnerships. There remained a commitment to the students, regardless of the frustrations with higher education in general. Hence, to improve the practice of service learning, the participants proposed a resolution for *usefulness of student service* calling for development of a clearinghouse for service-learning opportunities that coordinated efforts between community partners and students. Similarly, they proposed a resolution for *relevance of research* calling for development of a clearinghouse that promoted the research needs of community partners, giving faculty the opportunity to develop and conduct applied research based on realistic issues.

Because of the action-oriented nature of the participants and the process, participants looked for broader solutions. Several suggestions became the basis for a resolution linked to *clarity of expectations and roles*. In effect, the participants discussed creating a memorandum of understanding to which higher education had to adhere in order to partner with a community organization. For the memorandum to be effective, participants would need the participation of many, if not all, of Dayton's community organizations. If there were a unified effort to improve relations, then the resolutions would be effective. However,

some of the participants struggled with the concept because they did not want to damage relations if higher education responded adversely. They did not feel comfortable hindering students' ability to learn through practical experience.

As much as the participants supported the idea of creating a unified effort to improve campus-community partnerships, they did not want this effort to offend higher education. Essentially, they exhibited concern for their own reputations in the community. This concern became represented in the indicator *sustainability* as an "ineffective" descriptor: "Community partner feels it cannot walk away from partnership because of possible negative effect on its reputation." They felt that too strong an effort to achieve their expectations could strain the relationship between their organizations and higher education. This created a dilemma.

Overall, the review of the indicators that took place in Conference One confirmed their accuracy and pertinence. Further, substantial conversation resulted in several prominent ideas that formed the content of a new Resolutions category. At the end of the meeting, participants discussed fleshing out the resolutions further in Conference Two since gaps remained.

Results from conference two. The second conference further developed and refined the community partner indicators of engagement. A continuation of the first conference, the second conference included the community partners selected for the study, all of whom represented organizations from the Dayton region that had partnered with one of the major four major universities. Additionally, they represented organizations that provided social services related

to health and wellness issues in the Dayton community. At the outset of the conference, I proposed the revised indicators from Conference One. I directed the participants to spend time reflecting on whether the indicators adequately represented their perspective on effective civic partnerships. I also asked that Conference Two be utilized for making contributions that would result in the final version of the community partner indicators of engagement. The participants agreed that more time would be spent directly commenting on each respective indicator — and the associated descriptors — and resolutions. By the end of the meeting, the indicators were to be a fair, accurate, and substantial representation of their perspectives on effective campus-community partnerships.

Below are the results from Conference Two and, consequently, the final version of the community partner indicators of engagement:

CHART THREE: COMMUNITY PARTNER INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Mission Compatibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flourishes because of compatibility of missions, creating a meaningful and complementary intersect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks relevance to either party's mission • Instills competition instead of collaboration
Equitable Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates respect, fairness, quality, cooperation, integrity, and trust between partners • Adds value to the credibility of the community partner • Provides opportunity for development of relationships with affiliate organizations • Recognizes both partners make decisions based on ethical considerations and financial implications • Emphasizes the importance of civic responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrespects and under-values community partner • Ignores importance of community partner's role as a provider of practical knowledge, field experience, and training • Perpetuates the "ivory tower" syndrome, which keeps higher education from utilizing existing services, programs, and expertise of community partners
Mutual Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes service of faculty or administrator on board of trustees who advocates for community partner at their campus • Commits to educating current leaders and creating future leaders • Raises awareness of the vitality of non-profits and their effects on the community • Commits to the intentionality of learning from partnership • Exhibits motives driven by a shared goal of relevant communal improvement • Provides faculty incentives to increase the value of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits insensitivity to the needs and challenges of community partner

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Clarity of Expectations and Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines expectations and outcomes in writing, including specific check-in points to assess progress • Identifies and commits to equal sharing of resources • Provides explicit documentation necessary to sustain the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to recognize that community partner has expectations
Effectiveness of Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values honesty, transparency, openness, and sustained communication • Identifies decision makers for achieving goals that are central to partnership • Develops personal relationships between participating individuals • Creates a forum for conversations between both parties to engage in a dialogue that helps establish mutualism • Communicates and adheres to best practices, resulting in improved collaboration and a better understanding of each other's needs, perspectives, and effect on the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignores community partner's opinions, creating a fundamental communication gap • Makes it difficult for community partner to determine with whom or what department to discuss and plan for partnerships • Operates in bureaucratic systems that prevent collaboration and/or makes working together difficult, creating unwarranted interference, challenges, and barriers

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Usefulness of Service-Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandates fair distribution of service-learning placements to all neighborhoods that are part of the community • Organizes a system for instructing students about service and for coordinating effective placement in cooperation with community partner • Provides helpful and typically low-cost labor by undergraduate students • Provides graduate-student expertise to address community-partner needs and share new academic knowledge with community-partner staff • Views students as role models for the constituencies being served by community partner • Hires students to become employees of the community partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminates against providing student service in areas based on race, class, and safety concerns • Permits sense of student entitlement • Fails to recognize that under-prepared undergraduate students tax community partner personnel, placing an increased strain on the infrastructure • Shifts service-learning purpose from community-centered to student-centered • Treats community partners as merely a laboratory • Depends on community partner excessively, resulting in too many students calling for interviews, information, and placement

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Relevance of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects the priorities of the community partner's research needs • Produces applicable research outcomes and trend data, increasing a community partner's knowledge of its direct service to constituents • Provides research as a partnership, waiving overhead rates and associated fees • Partners on funding for research on community health and wellness that improves direct service programs regionally • Integrates existing models of practice and academic knowledge, enriching relevancy of both theoretical scholarship and direct service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces research that places stress on community partner infrastructure • Strains the already limited resources of the community partner through an exhaustive research process • Redirects substantial funds toward evaluation research that could otherwise support direct service programs • Impacts negatively a community partner's constituency by charging for research when it could otherwise be provided in-kind • Perpetuates ignorance about a community partner's constituency through shallow research

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits quality commitment to strengthen the intellectual capacity of community partner personnel, building agency and empowering constituency • Recognizes the community partner as a legitimate teaching center and provides remuneration for training • Values placed on protocols that create and sustain a long-term relationship • Strengthens personal relationship between faculty member and community partner • Develops new projects and collaborations overtime and assistance in finding funding sources • Recognizes and adheres to each described community partner indicator of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places community partner in a position in which it feels it is unable to walk away from partnership because of the fear that it will negatively affect its reputation • Permits short-term placement of students for the purpose of checking off their service requirement for a major or course • Fails to recognize the long-term value of the community partner and its constituency

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Synergy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges that both partners are better off working together than separately, creating a mutuality that results in higher productivity and progress toward desired outcomes • Recognizes the community partner adds value to student education by providing practical experience and that students receive real-world lessons in servant leadership • Demonstrates that faculty gain more experience in the areas of practice and direct service • Creates feeling of pleasure from collaboration • Produces happiness with results of the partnership • Believes parties' constituencies mutually benefit from the relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permits patronizing attitude toward community partner on the part of faculty and administrators • Exhibits academic arrogance on the part of tenured faculty who are disconnected from direct-service providers • Views practice as inferior to theory • Places students in the awkward situation of brokering the relationship between faculty and community partner, making them the glue that holds the partnership together

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Mutually Beneficial Exchanges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides community partner with tuition vouchers, in-service, fitness center and library access, bookstore discounts, and/or other negotiated financial or in-kind resources • Integrates faculty expertise in theory with community partner's expertise in practice • Produces knowledge of best practices that benefit community partner in ways that educate staff, save resources, create efficiencies, and enhance programs and services • Enhances the practical experience of faculty and students, complementing their understanding of theory and making it more applicable to the realities of practice • Increases attractiveness of students to employers by equipping them with practical experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes the ongoing perception and treatment of community partner as a provider of practical services that are <i>free for the taking</i>

RESOLUTIONS	
Community Partner Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form community partner collaborative that develops policy, procedures, actions, and outcomes for higher education to adhere to when doing business with community partners; begin by exploring the concept of the collaborative by working with the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education and Alliance of Executives
Memorandum of Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish unified community partner memorandum of understanding addressing community partner's expectations and benefits, outlining meaningful expectations of student service, including <i>quid pro quo</i> for educational services rendered by community partner
Service-Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create clearinghouse database that shares service-learning opportunities available to students and promotes fair distribution of student service throughout the entire community
Academic Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create clearinghouse database that promotes community partner's specific research needs, consequently increasing relevancy of research
Partner Constituency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve faculty relations and student placement to help situate the dignity and humanity of the people being served by the community partners so future professionals will understand their value and worth and researchers will exhibit their humanness
Building Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute Community Partner Indicators of Engagement to faculty and non-profit leaders, bringing them together to discuss gaps in perception and how the differences can be addressed; and/or program a conference on "What Makes Community Partnership Work?" in an effort to engage higher education in listening and understanding the community-partner perspective as well as establish a dialogue that bridges campus and community
Co-Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach a non-traditional college/university to partner in the co-creation of a curriculum for a graduate degree program specifically designed for non-profit leaders and co-instructed by community partners and higher education faculty

Conference Two had a similar level of engagement among the participants in terms of lively dialogue and conveying experience based on firsthand knowledge. At the same time, the participants had a sense of the priorities: completion of the discussion and development of the indicators of engagement. A heightened sense of focus occurred and they checked in with me for guidance and assurance that the study was achieving its purpose. For this reason, they reviewed the revised indicators of engagement sequentially, approving and revising each indicator and associated descriptors. Also, though we discussed particular word changes, they permitted me to make adjustments in grammar and style following the conference, providing them the latitude to concentrate on content development. Immediately following Conference Two, I made style changes and then distributed the final version of the community partner indicators of engagement to the participants for proofing and final agreement.

Regarding negotiation in Conference Two around the indicators, as in Conference One, there seemed to be general agreement with respect to the language and ton of the indicators. Minor suggestions were made about the clarity of language, which strengthened the bullets under “effective” or “ineffective.” For example, when talking about the indicator *mission alignment*, they disputed the accuracy of the word *alignment* and favored changing it to *compatibility*. As well, *usefulness of student service* became *usefulness of service-learning*, and *compatibility of values* was re-worded as *equitable treatment*.

For the participants, *mission compatibility* indicated that the missions of both organizations worked together effectively while maintaining independence. They believed that the word “alignment” over-emphasized a co-existence of missions. This change in the indicator also resulted in clarification of the “effective” descriptor: they condensed the two descriptors into one that clarified the relevance of a meaningful and “complementary” intersect.

For the indicator *equitable treatment*, the participants added that their decision-making process took into account “ethical considerations” as well as financial implications. They did not want to remove financial implications because they felt strongly that higher education ignored the fact that non-profit organizations made decisions based on the effect on the bottom-line.

At the same time, participants removed an “effective” descriptor regarding the altruistic behavior of higher education, stating that the word “altruistic” was a misnomer for the type of relationships higher education had with community partners. Other clarifications included tightening the language around disrespect and inferior treatment and refining the first descriptor in *mutually beneficial exchange* as well as the resolution regarding *memorandum of understanding*. Although they had mentioned the idea of a transactional exchange in the interviews and Conference One, they solidified the language with further examples as well as the insertion of the term *quid pro quo*. Also, they added to the *effectiveness of communication* indicator a new “ineffective” descriptor stressing that a fundamental communication gap existed when higher education ignored its community partner.

Additionally, the resolutions included *community partner collaboration*. The participants agreed that community partners had to take responsibility and work collaboratively to develop rules for engagement. In the discussion, they suggested that the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education work closely with the Alliance of Executives to form a pact that bridges the relationship between higher education and community partners.

The participants made several new contributions in Conference Two that advanced the development of the indicators. For instance, they recognized the importance of personal relationships with faculty and administrators, adding the development of personal relationships as an effective descriptor in *effectiveness of communication*. They did not want to lose sight of already strong relationships and discussed in-depth how personal relationships alleviated the stress and frustration created by ineffective partnerships. At the same time, the participants removed the “effective” descriptor that called for a primary contact at the higher education institution that links mutual needs. They concurred that a centralized office may be a good starting point, though, in their experience, a centralized office often produced the same “dead-end” results. By this, the participants meant that even a centralized office would not necessarily be able to handle communication for all parts of the university or college. As well, they have found that changes in personnel for the primary contact tend to diminish its effectiveness. This latter observation has been identified in previous research on service-learning coordination (Vernon and Foster, 2002). The idea does contrast with higher education’s perspective on the need for a coordinating office or

centralized enabling mechanism for civic activity (Campus Compact, 2002).

Colleges and universities have developed centralized units for effective community building and outreach activities (Creighton, 2006). This approach has enabled them to streamline and manage campus civic engagement practices.

Another new contribution included adding to the indicator *synergy* an “effective” descriptor that addressed the constituencies of the community partner as well as higher education. A vibrant discussion ensued around the purpose of partnership. Ultimately, participants acknowledged that partnerships existed to benefit directly or indirectly the individuals served by the organizations. The indicator *relevance of research* described the applicability of research for the community partner. Moreover, the addition of the descriptor “believes parties’ constituencies mutually benefit from the relationship” emphasized the direct relevance of the partnership to helping the community partner’s constituency. Further development of the idea in Conference Two resulted in the creation of the resolution *partner constituency*. The crux of the idea captured in the resolution states that students should learn to value the dignity and worth of the constituents through the service-learning experience. As well, it reinforces the *relevance of research* indicator by suggesting that faculty engage in research that shows the humanness of the constituents. The resolution confronts attempts to ignore or devalue the underserved peoples of the Dayton community who are living in hardship. These community members, more than other more affluent groups, need the support and expertise of higher education.

A participant made a comment that maybe higher education leaders would perceive the community partners as “complainers.” Another participant, however, noted that the indicators of engagement had a non-offensive tone overall and were on target, as well as necessary, for existing partnerships. The indicators placed more emphasis on the “effective” descriptors, providing guidance for improving relations. Participants agreed that “ineffective” descriptors in *synergy* had an antagonistic tone regarding faculty. However, they did not agree to make changes to soften the tone, noting that the indicator *synergy* was balanced overall.

From the discussion in Conference Two, participants generated another contribution for the indicator *sustainability*. They added a final descriptor that reinforced the relevance of all the indicators, stating that effective *sustainability* resulted from recognizing and adhering to each community partner indicator of engagement.

Another important contribution was the distinction made between the types of learning students acquired from community partners. This led to the evolution of the indicator *synergy*. The point was originally made in Conference One and discussed further in Conference Two. A participant noted that students gained more than practical knowledge from a community partner. In addition to providing an opportunity for students to engage in reality-based practice, community partners provided the added value of teaching students about servant leadership. The service-learning experience allowed them to witness servant leadership in action. The participant discussed the value of this experiential

learning and linked it directly to the community-partner environment, stating that students acquired a servant-leadership experience from direct interaction at a non-profit organization. As a result, the group agreed to include new language about servant leadership among the “effective” descriptors for *synergy*.

Discussion ensued around how to proceed with bridging the fundamental communication gap. The participants assumed that colleges and universities were not willing to authentically discuss the improvement of relationships. Historically, for the participants, the local campuses had not been willing to truly understand the views and expectations of community partners or establish an ongoing dialogue. Such assumptions were manifested in the indicator descriptors, and the resolutions addressed them head on.

In Conference Two, the participants wrestled with the resolutions. In the process, they realized that the resolutions did not clearly align with the indicators. There was not a one-to-one correspondence between indicator and resolution. Hence, they agreed to remove the resolutions column added from Conference One and reconfigure the resolutions as a separate entity in the document. This change resulted in the development of seven core resolutions. In addition to the resolutions discussed in Conference One — *memorandum of understanding*, *service-learning*, and *academic research* — the participants decided in Conference Two to add *community partner collaboration*, *partner constituency*, *building dialogue*, and *co-education*. The resolution *co-education* contained elements from the first version of the indicator *mutual commitment*, in which participants sought a degree program designed specifically for non-profit leaders.

The idea evolved over the course of the conferences, maturing into a resolution that called for the co-creation of a program that melded the expertise of both higher education and community partners.

Because the resolutions captured several change initiatives to address the core problems that made a partnership ineffective, they were significant to the process. Developed through the active dialogue, the participants viewed the resolutions as a series of next-step action items and agreed to examine them further upon completion of the study.

Consensus and agreement

I anticipated that there would be a fair amount of negotiation among participants to ensure that a common set of community partner indicators of engagement developed. Although the participants exhibited passion and expressed well-formed views, opinions, and perceptions of campus-community partnerships, the interviews and the conferences exuded an atmosphere of congeniality. Participants exemplified the quality descriptors in the indicator *treatment*, showing respect for one another and a willingness to listen and cooperate. Everyone was candid during the process, and lots of laughter occurred as a result. I sensed that the participants trusted and respected each other. They were peers who brought passion and integrity to their organizations, and they held each other in high regard.

The research process fostered teamwork that included collaborative and constructive brainstorming. Participants shared their stories and experiences

with higher education. While some participants spoke more frequently than others, each person made contributions to development of the indicators that are represented in the final document fairly and accurately. Some participants focused on details and language in the document, while other participants contributed less to word choice, focusing instead on the bigger-picture issues of human dignity and concerns about research that perpetuates ignorance. As a whole, consensus and agreement resulted from active discussion and a commitment to the process. The participants agreed from the outset that the study was credible and worthy of their participation, which was an observation that held consistent throughout the process and completion.

Dissemination process

Dissemination of the results was a critical component of this research study's design. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, this study advocated research that included community-partner representation in the scholarship. Further, the community partner indicators of engagement were viewed as a deliverable intended to be used to improve civic practices by colleges and universities. Hence, I am responsible for disseminating the findings to representatives at colleges and universities, going beyond the participants involved in the dissertation research. Disseminating the research will make apparent to higher education institutions and leaders the necessary qualities in an effective campus-community partnership from the community partner's perspective. I have chosen to disseminate through three different avenues: 1)

electronic distribution to higher education; 2) presentation at conferences; and 3) discussion with community partners outside the scope of the study.

Distribution to higher education. The final version of the community partner indicators of engagement was sent to the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education's board of trustees, which is composed of the presidents from the member institutions. Additionally, I distributed the indicators electronically to Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education's council of chief academic officers, council of student affairs officers, and faculty development committee.

As well, the four individuals from Central State, Sinclair, UD, and Wright State who provided the initial pool of community-partner participants each received a copy of the indicators. Additionally, I distributed the results to selected colleagues at Antioch University, Ohio Board of Regents, and Wright State University's community and civic engagement task force, on which I served. The task force included the indicators in a report they prepared for the provost. From the field of civic engagement, I included Robert Bringle, Director of the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; Julie Hatcher, Associate Director of the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; and Barbara Holland, Director of the National Service Learning Clearinghouse. The higher education organizations and affiliates included executive leaders at the Adult Higher Education Alliance, Alliance of Consortium Leadership, Midwestern Higher Education Compact, New England Resource Center for Higher Education, Ohio Campus Compact, and the national office of Campus Compact.

Presentation at conferences. To date, I have three conferences set: 1) Wright State University, *Quest for Community*, April 28, 2006; 2) Adult Higher Education Alliance, *Adult Higher Education in the 21st Century: Conversations, Collaborations, and Deliberations*, October 12-14, 2006; and 3) International Leadership Association, *Leadership at the Crossroads*, November 1-5, 2006. For each conference, the proposal addressed supporting and strengthening community partners through furthering understanding of their perspectives. The community partner indicators of engagement served as the anchor for the proposals.

Discussion with other community partners. The participants in the study requested that the indicators be distributed to a broader audience of non-profits in an effort to extend the conversation about community-partner perceptions of effective partnerships. This was achieved initially through a meeting I attended on April 19, 2006, of the Alliance of Executives. Each attendee received a copy of the community partner indicators of engagement. The meeting addressed the goal outlined in the resolutions of strengthening the relationships between higher education and community organizations. As a result of the meeting, the Alliance of Executives decided to work closely with SOCHE on convening a meeting between higher education leaders and community organization leaders in the fall of 2006. In addition, I spoke to the Kiwanis Club in Kettering, Ohio, on May 11, 2006, and talked about the Southwestern Ohio Council for Higher Education's efforts to work with community organizations in strengthening campus-community partnerships.

Although I asked the various groups and individuals that received the results to provide feedback or ask questions, I purposefully did not incorporate the feedback into the study results. The primary goal of dissemination was to advocate for the community organizations and to educate a broader community of scholars. By disseminating the community partner indicators of engagement, the intent was to help inform scholars about the community-partner perspective.

Limitations of the research

Limitations in this study are common to qualitative research and the study of natural phenomena based on perceptions. Further, the potential existed for confusion, conflict, and misinterpretation because each person was an active participant and his or her input weighed equally. These limitations were a necessary part of the process of distilling perceptions into a representative set of indicators. In every instance during the study, honesty was critical to developing the best understanding of the subject. I began each meeting with a brief overview of the previous meetings and invited the participants to make comments or ask clarifying questions. This helped address misinterpretations.

In most qualitative research, the possibility exists that the researcher may lead the participants to provide answers that support a set of predetermined outcomes. Typically, it is important for researchers to bracket their knowledge and position so as to limit their influence on participants. This means being cautious in not expressing how they feel about participants' responses since participants might answer to "please the researcher" instead of being completely

candid. This common approach was not fully adopted in this qualitative study. As much as I was the facilitator of the process, I was also an active participant, sharing comments on the input or sharing data collected in the interviews to reinforce the need for the development of an indicator. Essentially, I reacted and responded to the comments of participants as a researcher, facilitator, and participant. To respond otherwise and negate or bracket my views would have been disingenuous. I recognized the dilemma that maintaining transparency with the participants presented; I could be seen as being in too powerful a position of influence, which in turn could alter the results of the study. I recognized the delicate balance between transparency and influence. To achieve this balance, I acknowledged openly and frequently to the participants that the most important purpose of the study was to provide a benefit to community organizations. During the conferences, the participants checked in with me on occasion to see if I was getting what I needed from the meetings. I assured them that I was getting more than I had anticipated and appreciated their candor and willingness to participate. For me, it was more a question of whether the participants were getting the opportunity to create a set of indicators that clearly expressed their perceptions of effective partnership. If we could achieve that outcome, I could proceed to advocate on their behalf, ultimately looking to improve the campus-community relationship by sharing the indicators.

The study also was limited by its own intentionally defined scope: the development of a “common” set of indicators based on the perceptions of selected participants. While pursuing commonalities among participants,

significant differences did not arise as was originally anticipated. However, this may have been the result of the limited number of participants and their heightened collegiality. There remained the potential for clear differences of perception if the study had been conducted with a larger group, representing different sectors. While the participants labored over the indicators and discussed them in depth, the data were still representative of a pool of only eleven selected leaders.

The study was limited by the amount of time spent on the service-learning indicator, which made it challenging for one organization that did not practice service learning to fully participate in the conversation. One participant expressed a concern he/she had little to add to the conversation and felt left out of the discussion.

Summary

Chapter Four contained the results of the study and a detailed account of the process of identifying the community partner indicators of engagement. Three different charts were presented to illustrate the different stages of development of the indicators. In addition to examining the indicators, descriptors, and resolutions, I presented several limitations of the study. I included a synopsis of the dissemination process. Dissemination of the findings will be an ongoing effort as I advocate on behalf of the community-organization participants in the study. Chapter Five discusses key findings of the study in relation to the scholarship on civic engagement, as well as reflects on action

research. Lastly, Chapter Five presents recommendations for future research and practice.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this research study was to develop common indicators of engagement for civic initiatives between institutions of higher education and their community-organization partners. The unique aspect of this study was that the indicators were generated by a group of community organizations participating as stakeholders in campus-community partnerships. The research question was: What do community organizations look for (and expect) in a successful civic engagement partnership with higher education institutions?

Chapter One introduced the purpose of the study and provided background on the civic-engagement movement. Chapter Two reviewed the literature and empirical research of civic engagement and the major initiatives that have emerged from the civic-engagement movement. Chapter Three conveyed my positioning statement, which made readers aware of my professional background in higher education and potential biases. Chapter Three also included the rationale for the selected method of inquiry — action research — and described the design of the study, delimitations, and the selection of the community organizations. Chapter Four focused on the results of the study. I provided a detailed account of the data collection process and the identification of the community partner indicators of engagement. In addition, Chapter Four discussed the resolutions developed by the participants, and detailed the process for the dissemination of the indicators to colleges and universities and respected individuals in the higher education community.

This chapter discusses key findings and the contribution the study makes to the scholarship on civic engagement and campus-community partnerships. I benchmark the study against previous studies illustrating similarities and differences and then focus on the salient findings of this study, focusing attention and detail on those indicators that hold criticality and importance for institutions of higher education. Additionally, I reflect on the action research process, and make recommendations for further research. The research recommendations include those that emerged from the community partners during the research process.

Resituating myself in the research

I came to the study firmly valuing colleges and universities that practice civic engagement over institutions that did not consider civic engagement as part of their mission, purpose, teaching, and research. I viewed service-learning as a model for teaching students how to become proactive citizens. The research process challenged these ideals as I uncovered data that suggested several problems with local civic-engagement efforts. Participants revealed issues regarding service-learning and relevance of research that I have elected to underscore in the discussion on significant findings because of the surprising nature of the findings. As well, I underscore these findings as an advocate on behalf of the participants, conveying their legitimate, firsthand experiences with institutions of higher education. As much as I might wish that the results

reinforced only positive perceptions of higher education's civic-engagement efforts, I remain faithful to the perspectives of the community partners.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that I am utilizing my executive role at the Southwestern Ohio Council of Higher Education to bring together community-organization leaders with higher education representatives. In light of the findings, I am hoping that the community partner indicators of engagement, at a minimum, become a resource that improves campus-community partnerships in southwestern Ohio.

Benchmark with previous studies

Chapter Two presented an historical body of scholarship focused on core factors and themes related to establishing a successful and sustainable partnership between higher education and community partners (Blythe, 2004; Bringle and Hatcher, 2002; Bullough, et. al., 2004; Cox, 2000; Darlington-Hope, 1999; Fullbright-Anderson, et. al., 2001; Leiderman, et. al., 2003; Risley, 1992; Shaffett, 2002; Vernon, et. al, 2002). A comparison between previous studies and this study is illustrated in: "Chart Four: Comparison of Indicators and Factors from Previous Studies." In Chart Four, I present indicators from several previous studies in comparison to the community partner indicators of engagement. The previous studies are paraphrased for brevity and comparability. The entire version of indicators from previous studies can be found in Appendix D.

For each study in Chart Four, there are two columns: one for "similarities" and another for "differences." The similarities column represents indicators that

are common between the previous studies and this study, while the differences column lists indicators that differ from this study. I also inserted asterisks by each community partner indicator of engagement that is not found in previous studies. This helps to clarify that, while several indicators do overlap between this study and previous ones, overall certain key quality indicators that were produced in this study do not appear in the previous research. The chart is followed by a narrative synopsis comparing other detail on similarities and differences among studies in the chart and other previous studies on campus-community partnerships.

*CHART FOUR: COMPARISON OF INDICATORS AND FACTORS FROM PREVIOUS STUDIES

This Study (2006)	Calleson (2002)		Campus Compact (2002)		Darlington-Hope (1999)	
	Similarities	Differences	Similarities	Differences	Similarities	Differences
**Mission compatibility	Accountability to constituents	Public perception increased	Leadership supports civic engagement	Mission of campus articulates civic commitment	Norms of participation	Institutionalized collaboration
**Equitable treatment	Familiarity with community-based organizations	Fiscal concerns and competition for training sites	Faculty roles and rewards for civic scholarship	Pedagogy includes civic engagement	Authentic relationships with community	
Mutual commitment	Faculty and student interest	Institutional climate	Integrated community service	Departments, incorporate community work	Faculty involvement	
Clarity of expectations and roles	Structures for community involvement		Community voice	Internal resource allocation	Long-term commitment	
Effectiveness of communication			Forums for fostering public dialogue	Faculty development		
**Usefulness of service-learning				Enabling mechanisms		
**Relevance of research				Student voice		
Sustainability				External resource allocation		
**Synergy						
**Mutually beneficial exchanges						

This Study (2006)	Leiderman (2003)		Risley (1992)		Shaffett (2002)	
	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>	<i>Similarities</i>	<i>Differences</i>
<p>**Mission compatibility</p> <p>***Equitable treatment</p> <p>Mutual commitment</p> <p>Clarity of expectations and roles</p> <p>Effectiveness of communication</p> <p>**Usefulness of service-learning</p> <p>**Relevance of research</p> <p>Sustainability</p> <p>**Synergy</p> <p>***Mutually beneficial exchanges</p>	<p>Roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Deep understanding of community needs</p> <p>Peer relationships among participants</p> <p>Benefits to each partner</p> <p>Systems of accountability</p>	<p>Shared visions</p> <p>Mutually determined goals and processes</p>	<p>Leadership commitment</p> <p>Sharply focused goals</p> <p>Acquisition of resources</p> <p>Recognition and publicity</p> <p>Assessment of the impact</p>	<p>Identification and selection of partners</p> <p>Identification of common needs</p> <p>Sustain during economic changes</p>	<p>Relationship and communication</p> <p>Roles of participants</p> <p>Evaluation and outcomes</p>	<p>University institutional context</p> <p>Community organization context</p> <p>Preparation and training</p>

*Indicators from previous studies abbreviated. See Appendix D for complete list.

**Indicator from this study not found in previous studies.

This study was grounded in the local realities of the Dayton community and treated the previous studies as benchmarks. I was able to draw parallels among studies and enhance the credibility and transferability of the community partner indicators of engagement. To varying degrees, research results aligned with previous qualitative studies that engaged higher education and community partners in a discussion about effective partnerships. This alignment was important, suggesting that participants in the study were on target in several core areas with participants in previous studies.

The results of this study were consistent with Risley's (1992) findings on the importance of a commitment from the leadership at the partnering institutions, development of sharply focused goals, and assessment of the impact of the partnership. The community partner indicators of engagement included the importance of authentic relationships and faculty involvement, which were also discussed in Darlington-Hope's study (1999). As well, findings corroborated Calleson's (2002) factors about understanding community-based organizations and exhibiting a sense of accountability to partner constituencies. Calleson also exhibited similarities in faculty and student interest and structures for community involvement; also identified by Campus Compact as community voice and forums for fostering public dialogue.

Several studies cited *sustainability* as a core factor (Blythe, 2004; Bullough, et. al., 2004; Darlington-Hope, 1999; Risley, 1992). *Sustainability* emerged in this study as well, which was not a surprise since long-term commitment and achievement is a common trait linked to successful

partnerships. To provide deeper understanding regarding the meaning for participants of *sustainability*, I probed for further explanation. Specifically, I asked questions that contextualized the meaning of *sustainability*.

For instance, the importance of *trust* emerged as an essential element (Blythe, 2004; Bringle and Hatcher, 2002) in both previous work and this research on Dayton community partnerships. However, instead of trust being just an isolated factor, as in previous research, participants in this research project expanded on trust and grouped it with numerous descriptive qualities under the indicator *treatment*. Along with trust, they included respect, fairness, quality, cooperation, and integrity, which helped further understand the expectations of participating community partners.

The monograph *Building Partnerships with College Campuses: Community Perspectives* (Leiderman, et. al., 2003) included community-organization leaders in its research about the challenges of partnerships and developed recommendations for implementing successful community/campus partnerships. The monograph presented several major core elements or common themes present in successful campus-community partnerships and detailed the perspectives of the participants accordingly. Several of the core elements found aligned with this study's research. For instance, the monograph consistently discussed the development of peer relationships between faculty and community partners and emphasized mutuality of commitment between the two. The latter aligns with the indicator *mutual commitment*. Both studies have helped develop a deeper understanding of the community partner's interests,

needs, and opportunities. They address relationship compatibility, effect on the infrastructure of the stakeholders involved, and accountability that holds each partner responsible for carrying out the negotiated terms of the partnership. These qualities were dispersed across different indicators in this study and included specifically in *clarity of expectations and roles* and *usefulness of service-learning*. The Leiderman study reinforced the importance of documenting the community-partner perspective.

Campus Compact Indicators of Engagement (2002) are limited by their focus on best practices in civic engagement for institutions of higher education. As outlined in Chart Four, Campus Compact's indicators eloquently describe the necessary indicators for integrating an effective civic engagement program into the operations of a college or university from the perspective of higher education stakeholders. Essentially, the community partner indicators of engagement were developed to supplement Campus Compact's previous work by extending an opportunity for community stakeholders to address their views on effective civic engagement. Equally, Campus Compact's research on campus-community benchmarks (2000) relied on data gathered from both higher education and community-organization leaders. However, I question the degree of disclosure by the community organization leaders since I found that the community partners expressed more openly their views about concerns without the presence of higher education leaders. Campus Compact's studies on campus-community partnerships presented benchmarks for colleges and universities developed primarily by internal stakeholders. The indicators in this study differ from

Campus Compact's benchmarks because they represent views from a perspective external to higher education.

Though this study on community-partner perspectives corroborates the findings of previous studies with respect to particular traits, it contributes uniquely to the scholarship by identifying indicators that had gone undocumented previously. The most significant difference is that previous studies did not reveal strongly felt community-partner perspectives pertaining to service-learning and academic research. This study also differed in that it provided action steps in the form of "Resolutions," which represented the community-partner participants' interest in collaborating with higher education to resolve differences. Several of the previous studies identify the need for assessment of partnership and increased understanding of community partners. However, in this study, the seven resolutions combined actions to address key findings that emerged from the process and are captured in the indicators. These resolutions further represent the community voice that the previous studies indicated as valuable.

In summary, the benchmark is affirming in that there is some significant overlap with previous studies, yet also this study found new indicators of engagement. Of the 10 indicators that emerged from this study, four were similar, at least in part, to other studies. However, six of the indicators offered new qualities of engagement for campus-community partnerships. Each of these six indicators is a unique representation of community partner perspective on the value and expectation they hold in a civic partnership with institutions of higher education.

Discussion of significant findings

Research findings emerged from intense conversations among community-partner participants during the interviews and the conferences. Participants shared their personal experiences with higher education institutions, expressed their views about the way they were treated, and also provided rational observations about logistical challenges and successes in their past partnerships. The data collected revealed thoughtful and exhaustive examples that addressed what the participating community organizations looked for and expected in civic partnerships with higher education.

Except for the indicators *usefulness of service-learning* and *relevance of research*, the study yielded indicators that represented qualities common to a variety of partnerships and were not limited to campus-community partnerships. During the process, the participants noted that the indicators represented qualities to be expected in all types of formal partnerships. Most partners expected from a relationship, regardless of industry, effectiveness in the areas of commitment, communication, and sustainability.

The “effective” and “ineffective” descriptors for each indicator provided an important level of detail. The descriptors helped provide a context for the indicators and linked the expectations to organizations that partner with higher education. In the delineation of the indicators, participants clearly described particulars that were unique to their relationship with a college or university. For instance, in the indicator *mutually beneficial exchanges*, the participants made

sure to document examples in the “effective” column such as tuition vouchers, in-service, library access, and the integration of academic theory and field practice. Conversely, the “ineffective” descriptors for the indicator *synergy* cited academic arrogance on the part of tenured faculty and disconnection from direct service providers as among the characteristics of an ineffective community partner-higher education relationship.

The indicators *usefulness of service-learning* and *relevance of research* were inseparable from the context of higher education. Specifically, Campus Compact’s Indicators of Engagement (2002) suggested that civic engagement be directly linked to the curriculum and pedagogy at a college or university and that working with the community be related to teaching and learning. Additionally, Campus Compact reinforced the importance for an institution of developing a reward system as an incentive for faculty to practice scholarship that incorporates community-based activities. This study covered new territory in terms of capturing perceptions and expectations on the execution of service-learning and the relevance of research from a community-partner perspective.

Hence, in this discussion on the significant findings, I examine specifically the indicators *usefulness of service learning* and *relevance of research*. Further, I discuss *treatment* since it emerged as a theme in which the participants expressed true concern. While *servant leadership* was not identified as an indicator, I discuss it because participants included it as a descriptor in the indicator *synergy*, and servant leadership stood out as an important finding from the study to support the importance of a service-learning experience for students.

Lastly, the *resolutions* are highlighted since they capture both the action-oriented spirit of the study and the participants.

Usefulness of service-learning. The pedagogy of service-learning has been researched and written about extensively. The popularity of service-learning as a teaching method has increased significantly as it makes for an effective strategy for engaging students in their communities. Much of the scholarship on service-learning illustrates its effect on student learning and is written from a campus-centric position. The scholarship validates service-learning as an effective teaching method with long-term implications for the creation of engaged students (Astin, et. al., 2000). However, little has been written that researches service-learning from the community-partner perspective.

The indicator *usefulness of service-learning* included descriptors of both effective and ineffective implementation of service-learning. This indicator made a relevant contribution to the scholarship on service-learning by expressing the voice and perspectives of community partners. Higher education is dependent on community partners for service-learning opportunities. The concerns raised by this research are serious enough that service-learning programs could be threatened if community partner dissatisfaction continues.

For colleges and universities to learn from the study, they need to look at the main concerns expressed in the indicator *usefulness of service-learning*. Apparently, the participants perceived a serious lack of organization in service-learning programs. Although some faculty and service-learning coordinators had begun to establish relationships with the participants, the prevailing experiences

was that too often students initiated contact with the community partner and were not well prepared by their faculty for the work they were expected to do. Further, the students had little understanding of the purpose of the experience aside from securing the required number of service hours to graduate or pass a class.

Community-partner participants also acknowledged that students were ambivalent about the service requirement, having put little or no thought into the type of service experience they were interested in and the value of the experience. The participants expected students to have been adequately informed and the process to be orchestrated in a professional and collegial fashion. Instead, they experienced situations in which students arrived with a sense of entitlement, unwilling to perform certain work they deemed as menial.

In addition, the burden of service-learning on the community partner remained a significant finding in that participants felt added strain on their organizations. Participants noted that it cost them time and money to train students and, in several cases, mentioned the significant cost of police background checks in order for students to be placed at their organization. The participants agreed that they expected higher education institutions to demonstrate that they valued community partners by providing a *quid pro quo* exchange for the service-learning placement. The community partners wanted to be paid for the training and service opportunities they made available for the colleges and universities and wanted equity for sharing time, expertise, and organizational resources. The burden of service-learning instilled a discontent that fueled this desire for reciprocity. I sensed that this expectation of reciprocity

was driven by the ongoing poor treatment expressed in the indicator *equitable treatment*.

The participants had a lengthy discussion about the need for equitable distribution of service-learning placements across Dayton neighborhoods so as not to exclude an underserved population of a community. Such a practice sheltered students, hiding the realities of inner-city life and keeping students from engaging fully in their communities. If service-learning is to provide an educational experience in which students engage in initiatives that meet identified community needs (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995), then higher education must fully embrace sectors of the community that have serious needs. It is through direct engagement with neighborhoods in need that students are able to reflect more deeply on the core issues of society that create depressed areas. Although the experience may cause discomfort for faculty and students, they gain firsthand knowledge that broadens their initial perceptions. Those firsthand experiences and the opportunity they provide for self-reflection about service-learning enhance the possibility that students will adopt civic responsibility as a guiding principle in their lives.

The numerous perceptions and expectations that emerged from the research revealed new insights about the revered pedagogy of service-learning. The participants perceived that service-learning programs were more concerned with student learning than with their effect on the community. In some respects, the research process was therapeutic for the participants in that the interviews

and conferences provided an avenue for discussion that had not readily been available before.

Relevance of research. As mentioned in Chapter One and Chapter Two, scholars have complained for a couple of decades about the disengaged nature of the research conducted by American universities (Bok, 1982 and 1990; Boyer, 1996; Checkoway, 2000; Ehrlich, 2000; Harkavy, 1997; Hearn and Holdsworth, 2002; Neave, 2000; Wagner, 1993). Boyer's work addressed this disengagement by calling for a scholarship of engagement. The findings of this study suggested that the disengagement of scholarly practices from everyday reality remains an issue for community partners.

Participants described in the indicator *relevance of research* the effective and ineffective ways to go about producing research that has a meaningful effect on their community constituencies. In this category, they focused on the disconnection between theory and practice as well as the irrelevance of academic research, particularly evaluation research. Participants noticed little or no progress in strengthening the applicability of higher education research to community-partner needs. Repeatedly, the participants voiced frustration about their time being wasted in working with academic researchers. While the research served to advance the academic profession, they thought it did not improve direct service programs. Further, participants felt that funding for evaluation redirected substantial support away from community organizations to higher education. For example, the participants noted examples of universities charging exorbitant overhead rates to conduct research, while the community

partner received little or no support for providing the requested data to the research evaluators. Additionally, participants agreed that much of the research did little to help their constituents. Instead, they felt research perpetuated a misperception of the community and its members, which increased public ignorance of the community.

Further examples of community-partner frustration with academic research emerged during the individual interviews. One example had to do with Community Outreach Partnerships Centers (COPC), the funding system housed within the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of University Partnerships program. COPC provides funds to colleges and universities to apply their intellectual resources to efforts to revitalize distressed communities. Although COPC directs millions of dollars in funding each year to universities, community partners are burdened with the responsibility of writing letters of support and agreements to participate based on their geographic location in a distressed area. Frustration on the part of community partners arose as a result of the perception that the COPC funding stays within the budgets of the universities that received grants and little funding is allocated directly to the communities in distress. The participants indicated that they valued applicable research and research that served their constituencies, but they also expected fair working exchanges and equal treatment when participating in a grant-funded partnership with higher education.

As a result of these findings, this study has challenged progress made in the scholarship of engagement, regardless of the honorable intentions on the

part of higher education to reconnect research efforts with community needs.

The *relevance of research* indicators was a significant finding and one that needs to be examined carefully by leaders of colleges and universities.

Treatment. During the study, the participants discussed in detail both positive and negative feelings about their relationships with local colleges and universities. The results produced indicators of engagement that captured their perceptions. Participants felt disrespected by higher education partners, expressing the opinion that higher education had an elitist attitude. The feeling of inferiority was a core finding. It can be remedied through a process that engages institutions of higher education and their community partners in discussions that alleviate feelings of mistrust, disrespect, and inferiority.

From what I know through my position at SOCHE, local higher education faculty and leaders have not intentionally sought to create ill will, nor instill negative feelings in their community partners. In fact, these feelings may stem from a misunderstanding between differing professional cultures. The participants viewed institutions of higher education as well funded, powerful, and uniquely situated community assets that had significant leverage in Dayton. In comparison, the participants viewed their own organizations as similarly critical assets to the community, yet struggling, in some cases, to survive. The participants expected higher education to help address community-wide issues and harbored resentment because of poor experiences with certain faculty and students. Essentially, the participants wanted a degree of respect and treatment

that put direct-service providers and higher education on an equal level.

Unfortunately, they felt unheard by higher education.

Servant leadership. The indicator *synergy* included a descriptor for “effective” that stated: “recognizes the community partner adds value to student education through practical experience and students receive real-world lessons in servant leadership.” The notion that the leaders at these community organizations exemplify servant leadership was a powerful, reflective observation. The participants were humble and caring people with a passion to make sure that the highest priority needs of their constituents were being met at all times. They were under-paid and worked long hours to keep their programs effective and their organizations visible in the community. For the students who had the opportunity to work side by side with these leaders, they experienced a commitment to mission-driven servant leadership that they could only acquire in like settings. While students could read Robert Greenleaf’s book *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (1977), the community organizations provided a place for them to witness servant leadership firsthand.

Resolutions. A section of the study entitled “Resolutions” emerged due to the practitioner mindset of the participants, who thought that a discussion of future goals was a logical and worthwhile subject to initiate while together. The seven resolutions documented specific objectives developed by the participants in the following areas: 1) community partner collaboration; 2) memorandum of understanding; 3) service-learning; 4) academic research; 5) partner

constituency; 6) building dialogue; and 7) co-education. The resolutions provided steps for progressive and future changes aimed at improving civic partnerships between community partners and higher education. Specifically, the resolutions highlighted good-faith commitments by the participants of service, time, energy, and intellectual capacity and their willingness to work collaboratively with one another and with higher education leaders. The resolutions that emerged were change initiatives that went beyond the scope of the study but reiterated the participants' belief in the value of civic engagement and future campus-community partnerships.

The resolutions provided a point from which the original group of community-partner participants could work to improve relations for the future. They provided a way for participants to stay engaged after the study was completed. As well, the next stage included broadening the network and involving more community partners in a discussion about ways to improve civic engagement efforts. Finally, the resolutions reflected the participants' desire for active collaboration with their colleagues and higher education. As much as the participants felt undervalued or misunderstood, they also believed progress would only be achieved if they could work together with colleges and universities to address their expectations regarding partnerships.

Significance to the field of civic engagement

The main reason for conducting this study was to elicit feelings about how community partners perceived their partnerships with higher education. Several

qualities that emerged in the community partner indicators of engagement go beyond campus-community partnerships and could be applied to numerous types of partnerships, including those that involve private sector corporations, government agencies, public or private K-12 education, and other types of private or public organizations that engage in partnership practices. However, the immediate contribution to the field of civic engagement is a strong feeling among community partners that the civic engagement efforts of higher education are ineffective in the most critical areas: service-learning and academic research. As a result, substantive dialogue is required that specifically addresses equitable treatment, reciprocity, effective coordination, student preparedness, and relevance and applicability of research.

Community as a monolithic entity. The research process and outcomes illustrated the challenges of treating a community as a monolithic entity. The community partners in the study provided a diverse range of perspectives — diverse in class, race, gender, challenges, issues, and needs. Even when a community was defined by location and group composition, numerous layers of distinction remained. I had the opportunity to visit each community organization during the interview process in an effort to strengthen my relationship with the participants. The range of organizational settings varied significantly from professional, high-rise, corporate settings to windowless buildings surrounded by barbed-wire fences. In one case, I passed one abandoned home after another on my drive to the center of the neighborhood where the community organization resided. In contrast, I visited a downtown Dayton corporate building, a safe and

accessible location. Upon entering the building, I pushed a buzzer and a voice rudely asked what I was doing there. I explained and it was silent for a minute. Then, the same voice welcomed me and opened the door.

The contrasting organizational contexts provided a broad representation of perspectives in the study. As a result, the community partner indicators of engagement represent both commonality and diversity with regard to expectations. As for commonality, by the end of Conference Two all of the participants had agreed on the indicators and their associated descriptors as representative of what they looked for and expected in a civic partnership with higher education. The indicators also retained, however, the diversity in perceptions and interpretations voiced by the participants. In essence, the participants developed a common set of distinct expectations specific to their constituency and organization. For instance, the indicators carried different weight and priority depending on their relevance to the community partner. Though the indicator *mission compatibility* was listed first, the priority given to mission compatibility varied among participants. There was not a specific order of priority inherent in the development of the indicators, nor did an integral relationship exist among all ten indicators. For some of the community partners, mission compatibility was a critical issue that determined whether their organization would consider partnering with a college or university. However, other participants did not weight this expectation as heavily.

Strengthening community partners through civic engagement. The study also contributed information about ways to strengthen community partners

through higher education's civic-engagement practices. The community partner indicators of engagement served as an educational tool. In brief, the participants shared content that asked higher education to: 1) understand and value community-partner perspectives; 2) form a partnership based on equality and clearly defined expectations and roles; 3) coordinate a service-learning program in direct cooperation with community partners; 4) produce research that is applicable and relevant; 5) provide a fair and equitable exchange for services rendered by the community partner; 6) reflect on the indicators as a model for establishing an effective partnership; 7) use the indicators as a discussion tool; 8) consider the influence of civic engagement on the community partners; 9) involve community partners in development of civic-engagement programs; and 10) intentionally recognize that a community is a diverse composition of constituencies.

Reflection on the action research process

The action research process allowed for direct engagement of the participants in a manner that captured real perceptions, opinions, experiences, and ideas for change. It provided an avenue for the translation of intense dialogue and thought into a structured format that captured insights and experiences from leaders with strong positions in the community. This research method allowed the leaders to share their candid positions on the state of affairs with regard to campus-community partnerships in Dayton, Ohio. Both the

interviews and group conferences enabled a process that went beyond the scope of the dissertation study.

At the beginning of the study, I noted that I hoped to change higher education leaders by educating them about community-partner perspectives. The strategy for accomplishing this goal included dissemination of the indicators as part of the research process. As outlined in Chapter Four, this occurred through direct dissemination of the indicators to institutions of higher education throughout southwestern Ohio and to various national contacts and leaders in higher education. Further, the participants determined that the findings be shared with a broader network of peers at community-based organizations. The distribution of the community partner indicators of engagement at a meeting with local executives from non-profit organizations and at an academic conference resulted in a grassroots effort to share the information. Several faculty members approached me after the meeting with the executives and the academic conference asking if they could share the indicators with their deans, who had been pressuring them to adopt service-learning. I had not envisioned this method of dissemination happening and encouraged them to distribute the findings from the study.

In comparison to case study research, which I had conducted previously, action research required that a large amount of time be dedicated to managing the input from the community participants. For instance, several prominent voices emerged that had to be tempered at times to allow for full participation of the group. This meant I had to keep a close watch on group participation, and

check in with the quieter participants to make sure their views were expressed. On a few occasions, the process of checking with quieter participants resulted in thoughtful ideas that advanced the discussion as a whole, leading to a deeper level of discussion. The process enabled deeper reflection by participants because of the emphasis placed on dialogue and collaboration.

The fact that I co-created the results with the participants made this methodology perfect for providing results that accurately represented the views of the participants. Additionally, the collaborative nature of the research process resulted in a study that was engaging and exhilarating for me as the researcher. I felt as if I had discovered something new in the process and could advocate verbally, in meetings and presentations, the importance and relevance of community-partner perspectives to civic-engagement efforts.

Recommendations for further research

Based on the process and the findings from this study, I propose several recommendations for future research that will add to the scholarship on campus-community partnerships. The recommendations reflect a continuation of the research presented in this study. As well, research recommendations from the community-partner participants are presented.

Student retention, satisfaction, and engagement are vital issues in higher education and service-learning programs are now being touted as contributing to improved retention (Campus Compact, 2005). This study found that community partners have clear expectations for service-learning that are not necessarily

identified in the research on service-learning. Several opportunities for further research that would enhance the scholarship on service-learning with regard to student retention, satisfaction, learning, and engagement include: 1) establishing broad-based community-partner perspectives on the administration and management of service-learning; 2) gaining a deeper understanding of issues related to reciprocity for the education provided by community partners; and 3) developing best practices for service-learning from a community-partner perspective to educate higher education on strategies for managing a successful service-learning partnership that is community-centered.

As a result of the findings in this study, I suggest additional research on service-learning will benefit community organizations, which include: 1) a deeper examination of fair distribution practices of service-learning placement by higher education; 2) an investigation that measures the differences between graduate students and undergraduate students in terms of making positive contributions to community partners; 3) and a study that assesses the effects of students as role models for the constituencies being served by a community partner.

Further research is needed to determine whether higher education institutions enter research arrangements with community partners primarily to court funding for their institutions from public and private agencies. In this research, the participants agreed that partnerships formed for the main purpose of attracting funding are flawed in design and do not provide legitimate and valuable research to community partners. Further research is needed to substantiate the authenticity of the scholarship of engagement practices by

faculty to assess the applicability of research from the community-partner perspective. As pointed out in this study, there is a major difference between conducting research “on” a community in comparison to conducting research “by” or “with” a community. A study that researches the COPC grants program specifically would contribute a deeper understanding of the value of grants for the community organization partners. Additionally, because this study named evaluation research as irrelevant to the needs of the community partner, additional research is needed regarding how evaluation needs to be framed in terms of broader stakeholder interests.

The Higher Learning Commission’s recent inclusion of Criterion Five into the accreditation process (Higher Learning Commission, 2005) provides an opportunity for evaluation research to determine the effects on local community organizations. Because the traditional accrediting process occurs every ten years, unless a college or university elects to use the continuous improvement model known as the Academic Quality Improvement Program, a longitudinal research study would provide insight into the long-term effectiveness of higher education accreditation policies on civic engagement. Such research could serve to inform other policy initiatives.

The participants in the study recommended that the community partner indicators of engagement be turned into an assessment tool. The idea grew out of a request by community partners that I assign a Likert scale to each indicator. The intention of the scale was to make the indicator measurable in terms of its effective or ineffective qualities. Though this was not the purpose of the study,

an opportunity exists for future research that conducts extensive validity testing on the indicators and converts them into a measurement tool.

The participants in the study made an additional recommendation for further research regarding their desire for a deeper understanding of the way in which private and public funding agencies and foundations perceive community organizations. The participating community partners assumed that funding agencies and foundations value theoretical research over direct-service practices, and therefore made choices to award grants to higher education instead of community organizations. Their recommendation included taking the action research approach with foundations that provide support to community organizations to develop a set of attitudes and expectations from their perspective.

The participants emphasized that board service was an important feature in strengthening relationships. Further research that measures volunteerism and, specifically, board service by college and university personnel would be helpful in accurately reviewing external commitments to community organizations. In addition to quantifying volunteerism and board service, an action research study that engages higher education personnel could yield changes that increase board service participation as a result of the process.

A final recommendation for research is to model Campus Compact's Indicators of Engagement. In its project, Campus Compact expanded the research by investigating indicators at different types of colleges and universities, which included comprehensive universities, community colleges, and minority-

serving colleges and universities. To expand the scope of this study further, the same action research process could be conducted on different sectors or delimited groups. For example, studies could be designed to develop indicators of engagement for: 1) neighborhood associations (urban, suburban, and rural); 2) churches (different denominations); 3) hospitals; 4) government agencies (local, regional, state, federal); and 5) private sector business (large, mid-sized, and small).

Conclusion

Community organizations in Dayton are local assets, providing programs and services to the public that increase the health and wellness of individuals in the community. They have existed, in some cases, for as long as many of Ohio's colleges and universities. In this chapter, I discussed the significant findings from the study and showed that several key areas, including service-learning and academic research, needed to be researched more deeply. Because of the importance of service-learning in the civic engagement movement, and its increasing popularity among college and university faculty and administrators, I focused on the study findings that illustrated concerns about service-learning from the perspective of the community partners. For service-learning programs to improve their chances for success, higher education leadership must address these challenges to community partners.

Further, the study focuses on the finding that higher education needs to improve the relevance of its research, which includes increasing its applicability

to addressing widespread community issues. It is important to note that the participants expressed repeatedly that this study provides research of relevance to the organizations. They expressed their sincere gratitude for including them in the process. For them, the process resulted in a productive dialogue with peers, reflections on the meaning of effective campus-community partnerships for them, and action steps for continuing the dialogue on how to improve their relationships with colleges and universities in the Dayton, Ohio region.

I am indebted to the community organizations that participated in this study, and commend each one for their dedication to helping improve the health and wellness of the numerous individuals in need of their programs and services. They truly exemplify servant leadership.

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APPENDIX A – Consent Form

Consent Form for Community Indicators of Engagement Dissertation

This study involves an examination of what organizations that partner with institutions of higher education view as quality indicators for effective civic partnerships. It has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the PhD Program in Leadership and Change at Antioch University. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life).

Partnering community organization staff will be interviewed individually and will also participate in two group conferences for the purpose of gathering data on their perspectives regarding civic engagement and effective partnerships. In no form will this study be used to impact employee evaluations, or be used in a manner that has any influence on employee performance. Further, in no form will this study be used to impact the reputation of participating organizations, nor their relationship with other organizations.

The interviews and conferences will be audio-recorded and transcribed, and the researcher will keep process notes. The audiotapes will be destroyed upon transcription. All responses are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Data will be stored in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher has access.

Participation is voluntary. Refusal to take part in this study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may remove themselves from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. If participants withdraw from the study, the researcher will not document anything pertaining to those individuals that did not wish to participate.

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to lodge a complaint or concern, they may contact Jon Wergin, principal faculty advisor at (804) 269-3826, or Elizabeth Holloway, professor of psychology and chair of the Program IRB Committee, Antioch University PhD in Leadership in Change, at (805) 898-0114.

Signature of the participant

Date

APPENDIX B – Chart One: Community Partner Indicators of Engagement

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE
Mission Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership exists because of similarity of missions • Serves regardless of direct alignment with or similarity of mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership not relevant to either mission
Compatibility of Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of respect, fairness, quality, cooperation, integrity, and trust • Adds value to the credibility of the community partner • Strengthened relationships with other organizations in the community as a result of the affiliation, which can lead to additional collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner undervalued and disrespected by institution of higher education • Higher education does not acknowledge its dependence on community partner as providers of practical knowledge, field experience, and practical training • “Ivory tower” syndrome keeps higher education from utilizing the existing services, programs, and expertise in the community

<p>Mutual Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board service by faculty or administrator • Faculty or administrators advocate for community partner • Raises awareness of the vitality of nonprofits and their effects on the community • Intentionality about co-learning from the partnership • Motives driven by the shared goal of relevant community improvement • Faculty provided incentives to increase the value of service • Graduate degree program offered designed specifically for non-profit leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding as the primary reason for collaboration is a flawed rationale for participation and does not represent an authentic commitment to forming a sustainable partnership • Insensitivity to the real needs and challenges of community partner
<p>Clarity of Expectations and Roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations and outcomes in writing at the outset, including specific check-in points for assessing progress • Resources equally identified, committed, and shared • Proper documentation necessary to sustain the process made explicit 	

<p>Effectiveness of Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty, transparency, openness, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy prevents
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	<p>sustained communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision makers clearly identified• Primary office/contact at higher education institution links the needs of the community partner and the needs of the higher education institution• Forum for conversations between direct service providers and faculty and administrators to engage in a dialogue that helps establish a deeper understanding as well as a strategic mutuality• Dialogue locates points of integration and models of best practice between higher education and community partner, resulting in improved collaboration and a better understanding of each other's needs, perspectives, and effect on the community	<p>collaboration, makes working together difficult, and creates unwarranted interference</p>
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<p>Usefulness of Student Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students provide labor that is helpful and typically low cost • Graduate students provide expertise to address community partner's needs and share new academic knowledge with community-partner staff • Students are viewed as role models for the constituencies being served by community partner • Students eventually hired as employees by community partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-prepared undergraduate students tax the personnel at community partner, placing an increased strain on the partner's infrastructure. • Service-learning shifted from being community-centered to being student-centered • Community partner feels treated as a laboratory
<p>Relevance of Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces applicable research, increasing a community partner's knowledge of its direct service to constituents and contributing to the enhancement of programs • Provides research as part of a partnership and not as a contract, waiving overhead rates and associated fees • Seeks major funding for research on community health and wellness that improves direct service programs regionally • Integrates existing models of practice and academic knowledge, enriching relevancy of both theoretical scholarship and direct service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research often produces challenges on community partner • Campus receives substantial funds to perform research, and consequently, the research strains the already limited resources of the community partner • Research diverts important monies that could fund direct service. • Perception that higher education is hurting a community

		<p>partner's constituency by charging when the institution could be providing in-kind research as part of its civic responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research can be shallow and, as a consequence, perpetuate ignorance about a community
<p>Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality commitment by higher education to strengthen the intellectual capacity of personnel, building agency and empowering the community partner • Longevity of student service in terms of length of service and weekly hours • Development of new projects and collaborations • Authentic investments in the community partner 	

<p style="text-align: center;">Synergy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both partners better off working together than separately, which results in higher productivity and progress toward desired outcomes. • Feeling of pleasure from collaboration • Happiness with results • Faculty gain more experience in the area of practice and direct service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paternalistic attitude on the part of faculty toward community partner • Academic arrogance on the part of tenured faculty who are disconnected from direct service providers and view practice as inferior to theory
<p style="text-align: center;">Mutually Beneficial Exchanges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides community partner with tuition vouchers, in-service resources, or other negotiated financial or in-kind resources • Integrates academic expertise in theory with community partner's expertise in practice • Produces knowledge of best practices that benefit community partner in ways that educate staff, save resources, create efficiencies, and enhance programs and services • Enhances the practical experience of faculty and students, complementing their understanding of theory, making it more applicable to the realities of practice 	

APPENDIX C – Chart Two: Community Partner Indicators of Engagement

INDICATOR	EFFECTIVE	INEFFECTIVE	RESOLUTION
Mission Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership exists because of mutuality of missions, creating a meaningful intersect • Partnership serves each respective mission, regardless of similarity, as a contractual relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership not relevant to either mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “True partnership” achieved by establishing equality between higher education and community partner
Compatibility of Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of respect, fairness, quality, cooperation, integrity, and trust between partners • Partnership adds value to the credibility of the community partner • Strengthened relationships with other organizations in the community as a result of the affiliation, which can lead to additional collaborations • Recognizes that community partner makes decisions based on financial implications • Higher education to be altruistic to community partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner under-valued and disrespected by higher education • Higher education does not acknowledge its dependence on community partner as providers of practical knowledge, field experience, and practical training • “Ivory tower” syndrome keeps higher education from utilizing the existing services, programs, and expertise in the community to help with social service issues on campus that concern the health and wellness of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION?

<p>Mutual Commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty or administrator serves on partner board of trustees and advocates for community partner at home institution • Current leaders advanced and future leaders created • Raises awareness of the vitality of non-profits and their effects on the community • Intentionality about co-learning from the partnership • Motives driven by the shared goal of relevant communal improvement • Faculty provided incentives to increase the value of service • Graduate degree program offered designed specifically for non-profit leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insensitivity to the real needs and challenges of community partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION?
<p>Clarity of Expectations and Roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations and outcomes in writing at the outset, including specific check-in points to assess progress • Resources equally identified, committed, and shared • Proper documentation necessary to sustain the process made explicit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education's failure fails to recognize that community partner has expectations and inability to take them into account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner memorandum of understanding that makes explicit the community partner's expectations in the relationship and the role of the community partner

<p>Effectiveness of Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty, transparency, openness, and sustained communication • Decision makers clearly identified • Primary office/contact at higher education institution links the needs of the community partner and the needs of the higher education institution • Forum for conversations between direct service providers and higher education to engage in a dialogue that helps establish a clear understanding of the purpose of the partnership as well as a mutuality • Dialogue locates points of integration and models of best practice between higher education and community partner, resulting in improved collaboration and a better understanding of each other's needs, perspectives, and effect on the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy prevents collaboration, makes working together difficult, and creates unwarranted interference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION?
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<p>Usefulness of Student Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement reflects the entire community and there is fair distribution of service-learning personnel to all neighborhoods that make up the community • Students provide labor that is helpful and typically low cost • Graduate students provide expertise to address community-partner needs and share new academic knowledge with community-partner staff • Students are viewed as role models for the constituencies being served by community partner • Students hired as employees by community partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination against providing student service in areas based on race, class, safety • Sense of entitlement in students • Under-prepared undergraduate students tax the personnel at community partner, placing an increased strain on the partner's infrastructure • Service-learning shifted away from being community-centered to being student-centered • Community partner feels treated as a laboratory • Overdependence on community partner, resulting in too many students calling for interviews, information, and placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearinghouse database that shares service-learning opportunities made available to students and promotes fair distribution of student-service placements • Refer to the community-partner memorandum of understanding, which explicitly outlines the expectations of student service
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<p>Relevance of Research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces applicable research, increasing a community partner's knowledge of its direct service to constituents and contributing to the enhancement of programs • Provides research as a part of a partnership and not a contract, waiving overhead rates and associated fees • Partners on securing funding for research on community health and wellness that improves direct-service programs regionally • Integrates existing models of practice and academic knowledge, enriching relevancy of both theoretical scholarship and direct service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research often generates challenges to community partner infrastructure • Campus paid substantial funds to perform research, and, consequently, research strains the already limited resources of the community partner • Funding research diverts important monies that could be used to fund direct service • Perception that higher education is hurting a community partner's constituency by charging when it could be providing in-kind research as part of its civic responsibility • Research can be shallow and, as a consequence, perpetuate ignorance about a community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research cannot be divorced from practice • Clearinghouse or data bank that promotes community partner's specific needs for research
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<p>Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality commitment by higher education to strengthen the intellectual capacity of personnel, building agency and empowering the community partner • Longevity of student service in terms of length of service and weekly hours • Development of new projects and collaborations • Authentic investments in the community partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partner feels it cannot walk away from partnership because of possible negative effect on its reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION?
<p>Synergy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both partners better off working together than separately, which results in higher productivity and progress toward desired outcomes • Community partner adds value to education through practical experience • Faculty gain more experience in the areas of practice and direct service • Feeling of pleasure from collaboration • Happiness with results of the partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paternalistic attitude toward community partner on the part of faculty • Academic arrogance on the part of tenured faculty who are disconnected from direct-service providers and view practice as inferior to theory • Students put in the awkward position of brokering the relationship between faculty and community partner, becoming the glue that makes the partnership survive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION?

<p>Mutually Beneficial Exchanges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides community partner with tuition vouchers, in-service, library access, bookstore discounts, and/or other negotiated financial or in-kind resources • Integrates academic expertise in theory with community partner's expertise in practice • Produces knowledge of best practices that benefit community partner in ways that educate staff, save resources, create efficiencies, and enhance programs and services • Enhances the practical experience of faculty and students, complementing their understanding of theory and making it more applicable to the realities of practice • Increases attractiveness of students by equipping them with practical experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment of community partner as a provider of services that are <i>free for the taking</i> 	<p>RESOLUTION?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the community partner memorandum of understanding, which explicitly outlines the expectations of student service
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APPENDIX D – Indicators from Previous Studies

Calleson (2002)

- 1) Public perception of an increased focus on a population health perspective
- 2) Accountability to local and state-wide constituents
- 3) Fiscal concerns and competition for community-based training sites
- 4) Institutional leadership
- 5) Familiarity with community-based organizations
- 6) Institutional climate
- 7) Faculty and student interest
- 8) Structures for community involvement

Campus Compact (2002)

- 1) Mission and purpose that explicitly articulates a commitment to the public purposes of higher education
- 2) Administrative and academic leadership (president, trustees, provost) that is in the forefront of institutional transformation that supports civic engagement
- 3) Disciplines, departments, and interdisciplinary work have incorporated community-based education allowing it to penetrate all disciplines and reach the institutions academic core
- 4) Pedagogy and epistemology incorporate a community-based, public problem solving approach to teaching and learning
- 5) Faculty development opportunities are available for faculty to retool their teaching and redesign their curricula to incorporate community-based activities and reflection on those activities within the context of the course
- 6) Faculty roles and rewards reflect a consideration of scholarship that embraces a scholarship of engagement that is incorporated into the promotion and tenure guideline and review
- 7) Internal resource allocation is adequate for establishing, enhancing, and deepening community-based work on campus – for faculty, students, and programs that involve community partners
- 8) Enabling mechanisms in the form of visible and easily accessible structures (i.e., centers, offices) on campus to assist faculty with community-based teaching and to broker community partnerships
- 9) Integrated and complimentary community service activities that wave together student service, service-learning, and other community engagement activities on campus
- 10) Student voice that recognizes students as key partners in their own education and civic development and supports their efforts to act on issues important to themselves and their peers
- 11) External resource allocation made available for community partners to create

richer learning environments for students and for community-building efforts in local neighborhoods

- 12) Community voice that deepens the role of community partners in contributing to community-based education and shaping outcomes that benefit the community
- 13) Forums for fostering public dialogue are created that include multiple stakeholders in public problem-solving

Darlington-Hope (1999)

- 1) Civic engagement requires a commitment to building long-term relationships
- 2) Building effective collaborations means intentionally developing norms of participation and sticking to them
- 3) Authentic relationships with community members must involve more than a simple response to individual, group, or issue
- 4) Involving faculty in collaborations brings an expectation that their skills and training are of value to the collaborative effort
- 5) Institutionalization collaboration requires cultural change and structural reform

Leiderman (2003)

- 1) A set of mutually determined goals and processes, including processes to select and train people who will come into contact with a community organization or community residents
- 2) Shared vision, resources, rewards, and risks
- 3) The members of the partnerships have a shared vision that is built on genuine excitement and passion for the issues at hand
- 4) Strategies focused on issues as they play out in a particular location, based on deep understanding of a community's interests, assets, needs, and opportunities
- 5) A variety of roles and responsibilities based on each partner's particular capacities and resources
- 6) Peer relationships among faculty (and other campus partners) and management and staff of partner organizations in the community
- 7) Benefits (short- or long-term) to each partner sufficient to justify the costs, level of effort, and potential risks of participation
- 8) A system of accountability that covers responsibility for carrying out jointly determined plans, ensuring that quality work is produced, and benefits accrue to communities and campuses

Risley (1993)

- 1) Leadership, especially the ability to involve a variety of individuals and instill in them, and the organizations they represent, a sense of ownership
- 2) Identification and selection of partners
- 3) Sharply focused goals
- 4) Identification of common needs and mutual self-interests
- 5) Acquisition of resources
- 6) Recognition and publicity
- 7) Accountability and systematic assessment of the partnership's impact
- 8) Flexibility to sustain itself during changing economic circumstances

Shaffett (2002)

- 1) University institutional context
- 2) Community organization context
- 3) Preparation/training
- 4) Community partner roles
- 5) Faculty partner roles
- 6) Relationship/communication
- 7) Evaluation/outcomes