

Engagement in Higher Education

Building a Federation for Action



A Wingspread Report, 2006
Creating the
Higher Education Network on Community Engagement

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on behalf of the conference participants

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On February 22, 23, and 24, 2006, leaders of 28 national organizations gathered at the grounds of the Wingspread Conference facilities in Racine, Wisconsin. These leaders represent organizations and university programs whose efforts focus on enhancing and supporting partnerships between U.S. colleges and universities and communities through community engagement. The purpose of the conference was to discuss how these organizations might, through their collective efforts, advance the higher education engagement movement around the country. This document reflects the ideas that emerged from the proceedings, and offers a blueprint for action to guide this national agenda into the future.

We would like to thank the staff of The Johnson Foundation, especially Carole Johnson, who has been an enthusiastic champion of this work and made this meeting possible. To learn more about the Foundation and Wingspread, see www.johnsonfdn.org.

Finally, we are indebted to the conference planning committee members for their vision to unite a coalition around these important ideas. It is their leadership that helped Wingspread participants recognize that inter-organizational collaboration offers an important avenue for furthering a national agenda around public engagement.

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May, 2006

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An Evolving National Movement

The national movement toward authentic engagement between higher education institutions and the communities they serve is continuing to evolve. Since the early days when Ernest Boyer called for a larger purpose for higher education, there have been important signposts signaling the “coming of age” of public engagement. In 1999, the Wingspread Declaration on Civic Engagement united a group of college and university presidents to express civic engagement as a core mission within their institutions. Three years later, the American Association of State College and Universities (AASCU) published the guide, “Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place” to help higher education leaders institutionalize engagement on their campuses. Most recently, a group of Wingspread participants assembled to “call the question” about whether higher education is ready to commit to engagement. Their work helped to identify the most promising practices that could lead to authentic engagement between campuses and communities they serve.

These statements, guides, and technical reports have fueled momentum for engagement across the country. In addition, a number of national organizations have been founded or refocused to support this work. Conveners of this Wingspread Conference identified 28 national organizations where public engagement is a core organizing principle. These associations represent a diverse group of institutions including land grant institutions, community colleges, faith-based institutions, urban universities, and small liberal arts colleges.

Conveners of the conference recognized that these national associations were influential bodies that play a key role in supporting a wide range of engagement activities. These leaders envisioned how inter-organizational cooperation among these associations might advance the entire public engagement movement. Thus, the explicit goal of this Wingspread conference was to develop a national network of associations to promote and support institutional engagement across the U.S.

The primary charge of the session was to put the best ideas of the past into action for the future. Specifically, the goal was to move toward a practical and achievable set of strategies that would propel the engagement movement to a new level. Eugene Rice of AAC&U articulated this action-oriented agenda, “Civic engagement has soared to rhetorical heights. The statements are impressive. But there are also some extraordinary things happening across the country. Now is the time to bring together rhetoric, leadership, and hard work.” With this charge, participants rolled up their sleeves and began the difficult task of developing a blueprint for action.

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Eugene Rice

United Themes, Diverse Missions

The challenges of building collective action around engagement were expressed from the outset. The primary question articulating these challenges is, “How do our organizations develop unified themes and actions around engagement while respecting the diversity of organizational missions and unique approaches to this work?” It was quickly noted that engagement occurs under a large tent featuring a wide range of activities, stakeholders, and even “dialects” to describe these initiatives. Whether organizations are focused on service learning with students, community-based scholarship with faculty, or economic development with business partners, organizations focused on engagement have all developed their own unique niche. Recognizing these differences, Cathy Burack from Brandeis University explained that the words “civic engagement” would be used at this conference as a placeholder to represent the entire range of activities associated with higher education engagement. The immediate goal was to get beyond the language, and instead focus on the core engagement themes that are representative of all the associations.

“Little collaboration exists between our organizations, but each organization does good work. We are all good at what we do. But the question is: Together, how can we go from good to great?”
Lorilee Sandmann

With this caveat, it was acknowledged that many common interests exist across associations that support engagement. Campus Compact, Outreach Scholarship Conference, and the Michigan State University Benchmarking Project are just a few of the organizations and initiatives that are working to better align colleges and universities with the larger needs of their communities. However, while these organizations all make unique contributions to engagement, it was made clear that these groups largely operate in isolation from one another. The question remains how collaboration among organizations could best affect a larger national agenda. Lorilee Sandmann, co-director of the Clearinghouse/National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement and chair of the conference planning committee, explained, “Little collaboration exists between our organizations, but each organization does good work. We are all good at what we do. But the question is: Together, how can we go from good to great?” Sandmann suggested that a unified approach to engagement would further legitimize the engagement movement and raise its profile across the country. She challenged participants to consider four “P’s” to guide the two-and-a-half day working session: purpose, power, process, and product.

Purpose: The key to successful collaboration is to develop a unified purpose. What needs to be done to advance the engagement agenda? What does success look like? What are the specific actions that can be implemented through inter-organizational collaboration? What are the mechanisms for facilitating this collaboration?

Power: Collective action has great power in mobilizing the movement at this stage of its growth and maturity. Power developed through collaborative action deepens our commitment to the greater good.

Process: Participants must consider the means to building a federation for action. According to Sandmann, this means “we want to enrich, extend, and maximize promise to advance this work through collaboration.” The objective is to establish mutual interests and maintain standards of quality. The motto “bold but achievable” should guide this work.

Product: The primary objective of the conference is to create a blueprint for action. Substance and strategic goals are two key aspects of this objective. Participants were reminded that they are steering the field into the future where we are moving to a “transformative sense of change” and not just an add-on to a growing list of expectations within our organizations.

Key Issues for the National Agenda

On Thursday morning, Karen Bruns from Ohio State University launched the day’s meetings by introducing the results of a pre-conference survey taken by Wingspread participants. The primary purpose of the survey was to solicit the perspectives of respondents regarding two questions: 1) What are the primary strategies that you or your organization use to achieve engagement goals? 2) What are the greatest immediate needs and strategies to fulfill engagement goals?

Survey respondents represented 28 organizations and university programs in 18 states and the District of Columbia, indicating a broad geographical representation among associations. Individual memberships among these organizations range from a few hundred to several thousand, and institutional membership lies between a few hundred to several hundred institutions. In short, the survey represented a large cadre of organizations and engagement activities across the U.S.

According to survey results, these groups employ four primary strategies to fulfill engagement goals at both the local and national levels. These four strategies were viewed as essential to fulfilling engagement goals in the future and fall under the following broad themes:

- 1) Assessment and documentation
- 2) Policy, media, and funding
- 3) Professional development
- 4) Scholarship and tenure

These themes were introduced as a springboard to stimulate discussion and set forth an action agenda for the future.

Assessment and documentation

The survey revealed that 24 of the 28 organizations were involved with assessing and documenting engagement activities. These activities include measuring institutional impact of engagement, the impact of faculty scholarship, and student impact on engagement. Central to assessment is measuring the impact of these activities on the communities themselves.

Barbara Holland from the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse facilitated a discussion about assessment and documentation and started the conversation by expressing her vision for common data collection. Her hope is to create a database that would be useful for all associations at all levels: local, state, and national. Holland emphasized the need to look at both the internal and external impact of this work. She explained that data are especially important to promoting change within institutions since such information could be leveraged to bolster campus reputations. Furthermore, she articulated the urgent need for assessment around student retention, achievement, and transition to college through the vehicle of service learning. Finally, she expressed the need to examine the impact of institutions on community, recognizing the challenges of aligning academic assets to address dimensions of public work.

“Look at outcomes over process, where assessment efforts would focus on the question, ‘How will this region be better and different after this is over?’”
Jim Applegate

Participants responded to Holland by addressing two key issues: quality of assessment tools and the focus of assessment. Participants noted that there is tremendous passion and concern for assessment, but little expertise to conduct it. Specifically, there are many surveys to assess the impact of engagement, but few are done in a careful and expert fashion. Conference attendees discussed developing a rubric to guide the development of survey instruments measuring institutionalization, impacts of service learning, and outcomes of programs such as Learn and Serve America. This rubric would provide a conceptual framework to guide all aspects of measuring engagement outcomes. A collection of this evidence could leverage support for this work.

David Cox, representing the Association for Community Higher Education Partnerships, challenged the group to make the distinction between tracking and assessment. He also suggested moving from the language of “assessment” to “change.” Similarly, other participants pushed to clearly distinguish the differences between tracking and assessment, suggesting that the two concepts are often confused. Jim Applegate from the Kentucky Council of Postsecondary Education challenged the group to look at outcomes over process, where

assessment efforts would focus on the question, “How will this region be better and different after this is over?” Holland referenced the 120 benchmarks developed in the state of Oregon, where institutions document what they have done to address issues such as pregnancy rates and improving K-12 education. Amy Driscoll from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching summed it up, “If you design assessment with purpose in mind, you design a different assessment than just a summary of ‘what is happening.’ Accreditation wants to know what is being done with it.”

The session concluded with Holland asking participants to keep in mind how assessment might inform all the other working groups at the conference, in particular, the policy group and professional development group.

Policy, media, and funding

The pre-conference survey revealed that 14 of the 28 associations were involved with advocacy and public policy related to engagement. Elizabeth Hollander, executive director of Campus Compact, facilitated this discussion session and began her remarks by sharing the bad news and the good news about higher education. “The bad news is that higher education is in a real pickle in terms of public perception” said Hollander. “Higher education has gone from being seen as a public good to a private right.” Hollander explained that campus appropriations are continuing to get cut even as state budgets turn around.

The good news, according to Hollander, is that these startling trends have shaken the higher education community out of its complacency. For example, the American Council on Education (ACE) has thought seriously about these issues and has invested in focus groups to understand how the public thinks about higher education. The result of ACE’s research concluded that there is no belief among the public that there is a financial problem in higher education. At the same time, there is a strong belief that U.S. higher education helps address the key problems of society. ACE is using these findings to launch a national campaign about how higher education strengthens America.

Hollander lamented that there has never been a coherent federal agenda for higher education engagement. Instead, she suggests that each association has “chased its own set of dollars” at the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and others. This lack of a unified agenda is also evident at the state level. In some states, for example, K-12 advocacy on civic engagement has included higher education while in others it has not. Hollander suggested the need to identify strategies underway within these states because at present, these initiatives are unknown. “If we knew, we would

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Amy Driscoll

have power,” declared Hollander. It was suggested that such an effort might start small by identifying who is undertaking which advocacy agendas. The next step would be to convene dialogues at conferences about ways to build a cohesive state-wide and federal policy agenda around engagement.

The importance of building advocacy strategy at the state level was emphasized among participants. In particular, it was suggested that hosting congressional visits showcasing “engagement at work” on college campuses may have a lasting impact. Along these lines, it was observed by participants that a powerful, but untapped, advocacy voice is students. Amy Cohen of Learn and Serve America suggested that students could be used to help make the case for engagement using the model of the successful “Raise Your Voice” campaign. In general, Hollander challenged participants to “think boldly” about how students could be part of advocacy efforts including the forthcoming campaign at ACE.

Jim Applegate concluded this session with the idea that an advocacy agenda might piggyback messages about college access and the importance of earning a college degree. George Mehaffey, representing the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, called for a dialogue about this topic with the six major higher education lobbying groups in Washington, DC. Hiram Fitzgerald from Michigan State University (MSU) declared that taking this next step on advocacy will be hard work, requiring extra effort by this new network of engagement leaders.

Professional development

The pre-conference survey suggested that the associations’ professional development activities primarily supported faculty involvement in engagement. In sum, 23 of the 28 organizations offered training or resources for faculty, while such support was available to administrators and staff to a lesser extent (19 and 12 organizations respectively). Only 11 of the 28 associations provided training resources for community partners. At the same time, almost every organization hosted convenings, conferences, and workshops for all stakeholder groups to discuss engagement. These professional development activities were primarily aimed for faculty (21), administrators (20), community partners (15), staff (14), policy makers (12), students (11), and K-12 partners (9).

Building on the findings of this survey, Phil Nyden, from the Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University-Chicago, led a discussion about the challenges affiliated with faculty who take on engaged scholarship. First, he explained that community-based scholarship is often viewed by traditional scholars as biased, and that community involvement is believed to taint the results of research. Dwight Giles, representing the New England Resource Center for Higher Education, drew attention to the egocentric nature of higher

education institutions, noting that “outside peers are seen as biased but inside peers are not.” In other words, there is a general feeling in the academy that critique of scholarship is more likely to be reliable and value neutral if conducted by faculty colleagues rather than colleagues outside the university.

These issues led to a general discussion about quality and the role of expanding the definition of peers to include those outside the academy. Eugene Rice described this as “making the walls of higher education institutions more permeable.” Rice explained that one must think about creating a future where “inside people want to go outside, and outside people want to go inside.” In this context, the definition of peer expands to accommodate community partners. At present, institutional policies build walls to be protectors of quality and these assumptions need to be changed.

To combat these barriers, Nyden suggested Loyola University’s approach of “adding chairs at the research table.” According to Nyden, “Expanding the team makes the research more powerful and ensures that community partners are consumers before the work even starts.” Nyden suggests expanding research teams to include faculty, graduate students, staff, and community partners to ensure that learning is going on in multiple directions. In this way, research gets away from a model of isolation and socializes graduate students to take on this work. In sum, Nyden suggests that adding chairs to the research table promotes hands-on, interdisciplinary approaches, where innovation is most likely to occur. The result is what he described as “messy research, neat results.”

“Getting beyond politics requires framing public scholarship as translational research. Translational research aims to make a public impact where the goal is to ‘prevent important cures from sitting in the lab and never making it to the doctor’s office.’”
Phil Nyden

Another barrier to promoting community-based scholarship is that it is often viewed by traditional colleagues as being parochial versus global in scope. This work is also viewed as being political. Nyden explained, “There is an effort by some to label this work as leftist. But in reality, public scholarship simply aims to have research see the light of day.” David Cox agreed that people get confused about values of engagement. He noted that the act of selecting research questions is not a value-free activity. “Whether this work is labeled as politics becomes a question about values” said Cox. Nyden suggested that getting beyond politics requires framing public scholarship as translational research. He explained that translational research aims to make a public impact where the goal is to “prevent important cures from sitting in the lab and never making it to the doctor’s office.”

Finally, Nyden suggested key institutional levers for change including reforming promotion and tenure guidelines, conducting affirmative hiring for engaged scholarship, and adding positions to support engagement. In addition, institutions must create incentives such as research funding and international

collaborations to attract faculty to take on engagement. Finally, endowment funds should be sought to sustain engagement in the long term.

At the end of the discussion, Barbara Holland reminded participants that this assembly represents colleges of all types and that some of these issues are more relevant to some institutions than others. In this context, participants should think about this work through informal networks where colleagues can work collectively to move the agenda forward. Amy Driscoll agreed and challenged the group to keep student learning as a focal point of these discussions.

Scholarship and tenure

The pre-conference survey revealed that 17 of the 28 organizations were involved in research and engaged scholarship in some form. Of the 28 organizations, 27 were involved in activities to promote organizational change or institutionalization of engagement. These activities include development a range of models:

- Faculty development models (18)
- Engagement/service-learning infrastructure models (17)
- Faculty role/reward models (13)
- Partnership management models (10)

Hi Fitzgerald led a discussion about faculty rewards and engaged scholarship. He started this session by reflecting on his own pathways to promoting engagement at Michigan State University. He explained, "At Michigan State, we had to transform middle management first by changing deans and directors. Most importantly, we had to anchor it all in scholarship. At MSU, scholarship is what we do, and that is what faculty understand. This model cuts across all aspects of teaching and learning and relates to discovery in all areas—humanities, the medical school, engineering, and others."

Fitzgerald also made clear the distinction between service and citizenship. He explained, "If I am asked by a girl scout pack to do a talk about psychology, then that counts as service. But if I serve on the board of directors because my daughter is in the troop, that doesn't count." Fitzgerald also discussed MSU's efforts to change the faculty reward system and the need to document what he called "Points of Distinction." In 1996, MSU created the Points of Distinction as a tool to advise chairpersons about a broader interpretation of scholarship. In 2004, MSU developed the Outreach and Engagement Measurement Instrument, a tool that allows faculty to enter their engaged scholarship directly into university system wide databases. Subsequently, an annual report is developed to create crucial benchmarks of

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engagement. This system has been field tested with the University of Connecticut, and is currently being used by the University of Kentucky system, and the University of Tennessee system. The system aggregates information across various domains including clinical service, volunteer time, community based research, and public information and events.

The result of this work is a portfolio of products related to stakeholder needs via knowledge generation and information dissemination. Fitzgerald explained that MSU peer reviews this work before it is accepted. He also emphasized that communities participate in peer review and provide positive or negative feedback. Fitzgerald explained the importance of involving these peers, "Either they will come back or never come back again. If collaboration is done correctly there will be ongoing peer review through research design, data collection, and analysis." He argues that the MSU system is successful because the institution and its leaders value engagement.

Following up on Fitzgerald's remarks, Barbara Holland made the point that culture, not procedures and guidelines, are the barrier to promoting engagement on campus. She suggests focusing on the educational process and how engagement is merely a form of teaching and research. Holland explained that culture varies widely across institutions. For example, at non-elite institutions, community partners care about faculty at risk because it may affect the sustainability of engagement initiatives. In this context, Gail Robinson from the American Association of Community Colleges made the point that promotion and tenure issues do not impact community college faculty and are affecting a smaller percentage of faculty and instructors at 4 year institutions.

At research institutions, the issue remains to align engagement in a way that helps faculty to earn promotion and tenure. Karen Bruns suggested that early career awards are necessary to getting tenure and that getting organizations such NSF on board with engagement would provide great leverage for the movement. Amy Driscoll pointed out that even failed community partnerships can be turned into a powerful body of scholarship. She cited one example of a faculty member who failed three times in setting up his community partnership, but still got tenure because he turned what he learned into scholarship.

Finally, Fitzgerald's remarks rekindled an earlier discussion about the definition of peer. Marv Van Kekerix, representing University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Outreach Scholarship Conference, suggested that the definition of peer is a key concern. Van Kekerix declared, "As a group, we need to come to conclusion that peers are not just experts in the field. We've had great difficulty with this. It is critical to get feedback from the community." Eugene Rice agreed that peers must not simply

"Culture, not procedures and guidelines, are the barrier to promoting engagement on campus."
Barbara Holland

include PhDs in the field, but community partners who are not affiliated with what he called “the prestige economy.” Finally, Jim Applegate pointed out that this shift in definition of peers constitutes radical change for faculty. “Peer review is very private in academic circles, but it is very public for this type of work,” explained Applegate. He argued that peer review that becomes public puts faculty in a more vulnerable position.

Finally, the survey showed that a variety of publication venues are used to facilitate professional development and assist faculty scholarship and tenure. These venues include:

- White papers/reports
- Newsletters
- Toolkits, guides, handouts
- Refereed journals articles in disciplinary journals
- Unrefereed journals
- Books
- Other professional development sources: websites, listservs, online publications, project stories, examples, syllabi, course models.

The primary journals featuring engagement scholarship are *Journal of Metropolitan Universities*, *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, and *Journal of Extension*. Julie Ellison representing Imagining America announced that the University of Michigan has plans for book series on public scholarship.

Creating a Blueprint for Action: Framing Issues and Devising Action Strategies

Then the group focused on framing the issues from the opening session. Four working groups were assembled to dig deeper into each of the four key themes and identify mechanisms to support these themes. Lorilee Sandmann asked the working groups to keep two questions in mind:

- 1) What are the dimensions of this issue we can move forward?
- 2) What are some strategic mechanisms that can be employed to accomplish this?

Eugene Rice reminded the group to keep focused on what is most important. “As we move toward specificity, don’t lose dimensions of our work on improving society.” Amy Driscoll asked the group to keep in mind that students are our mission and that a barrier to elevating this movement is effectively documenting that student engagement is important to learning.

Each working group met for one hour and reconvened to report briefly on how they framed their particular issue. After lunch, working groups

representing the four themes gathered again to translate their ideas into practical strategies for action. Lorilee Sandmann asked these working groups to consider these four important questions:

- 1) Who should be involved? (Those here and not here)
- 2) What is the timeline for these activities?
- 3) What does success look like?
- 4) What structure supports this activity?

Summaries of Key Issues and Action Steps

Framing the issues: Professional development group

Stephen Percy, director of the Milwaukee Idea at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, summarized the key issues from the professional development work group. Percy explained that professional development around engagement serves a diverse group of stakeholders: faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, community partners, and administrators. He stated that the principle that should guide engaged scholarship is recognizing that knowledge exists outside the academy. The knowledge community must be expanded to include these outside partners as co-researchers. Faculty and staff must value engagement and it must become a part of our ethic of what we “owe” the community.

“The principle that should guide engaged scholarship is recognizing that knowledge exists outside the academy. The knowledge community must be expanded to include these outside partners as co-researchers. Faculty and staff must value engagement and it must become a part of our ethic of what we “owe” the community.”
Stephen Percy

Strategies to advance these values include creating a campus focal point to promote engagement and a scholarly academy to further legitimize and elevate engagement nationwide. Furthermore, Percy suggested that it is essential to create entry points and helpful resources for faculty to pursue engagement-related scholarship. “We must support community partnerships and involve them in the design, execution, and analysis of our work. To carry out these goals, ethical issues must be addressed and guides must be developed to help us complete this work.” Practical steps suggested by the group include developing a career guide for the engaged scholar and a companion piece for helping communities work with colleges and universities.

Action steps:

The group proposed introducing a practical guide series that would assist stakeholders at all levels in their engagement efforts. Five guides were suggested:

- 1) Academic guide to engagement

- 2) Community guide to engagement
- 3) Institutional guide to engagement
- 4) Student guide to engagement
- 5) Guide for international engagement

The series would have an editor and author teams for each guide. A goal is to complete the first issues in 18 months. In addition to creating the guides, a second goal is to create an Academy of Engaged Scholars. The group identified six purposes of the academy:

- 1) To share knowledge among scholars: deepen knowledge of engagement, disseminate information on engagement, share ideas regarding methodology
- 2) To support reflection as a mechanism of assessing engagement
- 3) To organize disciplinary research around common issues
- 4) To build and promote campus-level "Institutes of Engaged Scholarship"
- 5) To build regional/metro/state academies
- 6) To support a group of engaged fellows and build recognition and support for this activity

Potential members of the academy include individuals from service learning organizations, extension, partnership and membership organizations, and higher education based centers. The network would create opportunities for exchanging ideas, create dissemination vehicles, and bring disciplines together at a national conference.

Potential conference hosts include the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU). During a discussion about this action plan, Rachel Vaughn, representing Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, complimented the group for being inclusive to staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, community partners, and university administrators. However, she cautioned that the phrase "Academy of Engaged Scholars" may not be welcoming language to constituencies who are not faculty. She cited her own challenges of recruiting staff and community partners to join her organization as Community-Campus Partnerships for Health Fellows.

Framing the issues: Assessment and documentation

Andrew Furco from the Service Learning Research and Development Center at the University of California-Berkeley led a discussion about the key issues related to assessment and documentation. First, Furco suggested that the group focus on the similarities of data being collected among associations and centers. These similarities include data on student learning, outcomes, and community impact. Second, processes of data collection and protocols must be understood and made common among groups. This includes creating

common measurement tools and reviewing logic models and accreditation guidelines.

Furco's group emphasized that assessment and documentation must be useful for both internal and external audiences. Thus, the main objective would be to develop common measures that would help everyone. A venue to discuss documentation and dissemination must be injected into all the appropriate conferences. The participating organizations would share information on websites and create definitions of common measures. An annual report could be created to provide a clearinghouse of information about engagement across U.S. colleges and universities. Outlets such as *U.S. News and World Report* or *Change* could be solicited to feature this topic and its results.

Action steps:

Action steps include contacting *Change* magazine about printing a thematic issue about assessment and documentation of engagement. This issue would feature institutional stories about engagement and impact of engagement across the country. Another action step is to put this topic on conference agendas in 2007. For example, assessment and documentation could be a track at national meetings and individual conferences. Finally, the movement needs a distillation of what we currently have on assessment and documentation, from measuring progress and commitment at the institutional level to identifying benchmarks at the regional level.

"Colleges and universities must forge alliances with many knowledge-making institutions as a part of their engagement agenda."
Julie Ellison

Framing the issues: Scholarship and tenure

Dwight Giles led a discussion about the issues framed by the scholarship and tenure group. Giles summarized that the central concern of this team is not promotion and tenure, but rather, the issue of quality. Using this frame, he advised examining engagement as it contributes to student learning and community development. Giles also discussed the diminishing role of traditional institutions and the growing number of organizations that are involved with knowledge production (inside or outside of the academic enterprise). Julie Ellison declared that colleges and universities must forge alliances with many knowledge-making institutions as a part of their engagement agenda.

Action steps:

The scholarship and tenure team suggested the development of a large resource center to advance collaborative efforts around engagement. This resource center would act as a clearinghouse to provide information about promising practices of engagement (e.g., successful campus models and faculty

cases). Among its functions, the resource center would include links to the Carnegie classification system, criteria for national review boards, and information about grant-making agencies that fund engagement-related projects. The center would provide a full media resource center including digital journals, video cases, consulting, online mentoring services, conferences, online workshops and courses.

The scholarship and tenure committee specifically outlined plans for a “successful campus models initiative.” This initiative would feature vignettes that describe the context, culture, and challenges associated with developing successful higher education-community partnerships. Implementing the action plan involves the following four steps:

- 1) Solicit models from network of interested organizations
- 2) Develop protocol of themes and key words for the project
- 3) Select campuses and vignettes
- 4) Disseminate information.

Hi Fitzgerald suggested that the effort could start as soon as May 2006 and would require no new money. The network of organizations present at Wingspread could send information regarding the full range of resources that would be useful to the center. The result would be a fully integrated online resource system with regular updates and a disseminator. The structure required is a webpage and someone committed to managing the page regularly. The timeline for developing the system is six months with a goal to obtain a sponsor in nine months.

What does a policy framework look like in a state that supports engagement?

Framing the issues: Policy and advocacy

Jim Applegate led a discussion about creating a collaborative agenda for political advocacy centered on engagement. First, his group recommended mapping the current engagement activities going on across the country by state and federal districts. Applegate suggested that advocacy strategies should not merely focus on what institutions provide, but on the concerns most important to government officials. For example, a collaborative could be started with the National Governors Association to identify what governors care about, and what would help them achieve their goals. Applegate declared, “It has to be about them, not about us.”

On the policy side, the group recommended conducting a policy audit to identify existing policies that stand in the way of institutions being engaged, and new policies that could facilitate engagement. For example, a key policy inhibiting engagement is that institutional funding is based on FTE. On the other hand, a new policy could be implemented to “fence off funding” for engagement. In sum, the main purpose of the audit is to answer the question, “What does a policy framework look like in a state that supports engagement?”

The group also concluded that the most powerful advocacy tool is students and compelling stories about engagement. As Applegate said, “Data are good, good stories are better.”

Action steps:

Applegate shared his group’s dream that every department in the federal government would eventually have a community partnership center based on the Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) model, a HUD program in the Office of University Partnerships. Under this model, each department would decide what is important to fund. In the meantime, some important questions must be answered: “What federal programs do we have now? How do we share strategies for getting to these people?”

The goals for this group include supporting funding lines and putting new policies in place to support engagement. The first step is to identify champions for federal programs on engagement among Congressional leaders and higher education associations (e.g., Smith-Lever Farm bill). These champions could be identified by two tiers—those dedicated to engagement and others on the way to it (e.g., NSF, USDA). This is especially critical as two major programs were or are slated to be “zeroed out” (COPC and the Americorps National Civilian Community Corps). The second step is to meet with lobbyists at One Dupont Circle in Washington (the National Center for Higher Education) to discuss funding for engagement programs. Before such a meeting occurs, a list of federal programs supportive of engagement, and their beneficiaries and champions, must be assembled. The first priority is to focus on programs at risk.

In addition to the federal government, the group discussed how the network could promote a public agenda for higher education at the state level. The group concluded that states need a public agenda for higher education that includes a corresponding accountability system. Subsequently, institutional agendas and funding requests could be organized around this larger public agenda. The group seeks a model for this conducting this work in each state with the help of the Midwest Higher Education Commission (MHEC), New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE), and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). One strategy is to convene a conference on creating a public engagement agenda in states, including polices that preclude or promote engagement. The group also suggested “putting meat on the bones of ACE’s campaign” by creating materials on public engagement and how it affects states.

Finally, the group talked about the importance of regional approaches to engagement. It was pointed out that a lot of good work is regional in nature and that these stories should be told in journals and at conferences. Consequently, this group suggested that this network of associations identify

successful regional models and articulate how they work (e.g., San Diego with Mary Walshok, Northern Kentucky with Jim Votruba). A journal focused on engagement could publish this work in a special issue.

Putting the Agenda and Actions Into Place

The meetings ended on Thursday with perspectives from three colleagues regarding next steps to forward the national agenda on engagement: Nancy Belck, representing the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities, Amy Cohen from Learn and Serve America, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and Gail Robinson representing the American Association of Community Colleges.

Nancy Belck described the work of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities as identifying common interests among diverse constituencies, bringing people to the table for productive dialogue, applying knowledge and expertise to problems, and developing curricula to meet identified needs. She urged the group to view engagement from national and local perspectives and to “think globally and act locally.” CUMU institutions have taken this perspective in addressing workforce needs, homeland security, and urban revitalization. Belck suggested that engagement could be advanced as scholarship by building the capacity to ask the questions that matter to society, applying multidisciplinary approaches to address societal problems, and committing to entering into long-term relationships with communities.

Amy Cohen focused her remarks on building coalitions to support engagement. Cohen called on the group to build a wide net of support for this work and demonstrate the relevance of engagement activities to allies of higher education. She declared that colleges and universities must be able to demonstrate their unique contributions to their communities in order to earn support for these endeavors. Cohen referenced the successful federation of coalitions in K-12 and the National Service-Learning Partnership as strong models for higher education to follow.

“Community is not a place to be defined, but a climate to be created.”
Gail Robinson

“Engagement could be advanced as scholarship by building the capacity to ask the questions that matter to society, applying multidisciplinary approaches to address societal problems, and committing to entering into long-term relationships with communities.”
Nancy Belck

Gail Robinson discussed dissemination efforts and the urgent need to collect information about engagement activities and their outcomes. Robinson mentioned that community colleges have excellent access to the business community, including CEOs who are closely involved with their work. The service learning initiative at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has strong resources to support engagement, including *A Practical Guide for Integrating Civic Responsibility into the Curriculum*. In addition, AACC has a database that lists the congressional districts for each community college across the country.

Finally, Robinson suggested to the group that community is not a place to be defined, but a climate to be created. She urged her colleagues to consider the language used to describe higher education - that using the word "universities" excludes community colleges and tribal colleges - noting that half of all undergraduate students attend community colleges. Robinson also noted potential difficulties in recruiting part-time faculty to participate in civic engagement strategies (two-thirds of community college faculty are adjuncts). In closing, Robinson indicated that a challenge of engagement is keeping this issue high on the overall advocacy agenda for higher education associations. At present, student financial aid, Perkins funding, and the Workforce Investment Act dominate lobbying efforts for community colleges.

A discussion followed the short panel presentations. Liz Hollander made an initial observation about the scope of activity underway around the country. "The field has proliferated so fast that we don't know what each of us is doing," said Hollander. "We need to push ourselves to keep up with knowledge of engagement activity happening across the country."

Hollander's observation fueled a discussion about tracking the expanding scope of engagement programs. George Mahaffey, of American Association of State Colleges and Universities' American Democracy Project suggested that the Wikipedia website be used to keep everyone abreast of engagement activities. This website could be created by the engagement community and edited by the community. Barbara Holland referenced the history of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website explaining that it was once barely visible and now has over 2 million visitors a year. Rachel Vaughn noted that a clearinghouse would unite a diverse group of stakeholders around this topic—administrators, faculty, community, and students.

The conversation shifted to discuss political advocacy for engagement. George Mahaffey lamented that we presently don't have the tools and knowledge to get leaders of higher education systems on board. Jim Applegate discussed how State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEOs) play a role in setting the agendas and funding priorities for the states. "If we can get them on board, they will advocate for higher education," said Applegate. Applegate explained how the postsecondary education council in Kentucky is able to show how investing in higher education is the right thing for the state. The Kentucky model could be replicated in states across the country. Andrew Furco remarked that he has graduate students who want to do this work and suggested matching these students with mentors to work on this project.

Finally, Liz Hollander pointed out that boards of trustees at private institutions should also be cultivated to support engagement. She suggested that engagement could become a priority for campus fundraising efforts across the country. Steve Rozman, representing the HBCU Faculty Development

Network and Center for Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility at Tougaloo College, agreed that the private sector should get on board with supporting public engagement, especially corporate America.

Levers for Engagement

On Friday morning the group reconvened to examine strategies and levers for change. Presentations pertaining to these issues were given by Amy Driscoll and John Taylor from the Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association.

Carnegie Foundation classification of engaged institutions

Amy Driscoll introduced the Carnegie Foundation's efforts to create a new classification category focused on community engagement. The project was undertaken in three distinct steps. First, a review of literature was conducted to draw on what is known about the subject. Research on attributes of engaged institutions was critical to designing the classification system. Second, a draft of a classification system was created and piloted by 14 diverse institutions. These institutions provided feedback on the draft and helped to shape its structure. These institutions convened in California to discuss the thorny areas and offer overall improvements to the instrument. Finally, the elective classification system was released in late February 2006.

Driscoll indicated that a limited number of institutions will be classified in the first year. In addition, a national advisory board has been assembled to review proposals for classification. The project seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- Affirm and document good work being done in engagement
- Encourage inquiry and learning at the institutional level
- Provide useful information to an institution
- Document the full scope of engagement from institution to institution
- Build on current work already done (Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), Campus Compact, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health)
- Design a process that is practical and uses existing data

The foundational indicators or attributes of an engaged institution include institutional identity and culture, and institutional commitment. Driscoll explained that promotion and tenure continues to be an issue that prohibits widespread commitment to engagement. During the pilot study it became evident that only four of the 14 institutions would have been classified as engaged institutions if promotion and tenure was a primary gatekeeper to becoming classified as engaged. Thus, the group decided to include promotion

and tenure as an optional indicator to prompt institutions to take this on as a “work in progress.”

Institutions apply for one of three categories of community engagement. These categories include:

- 1) Curricular engagement—service learning, scholarship associated with engagement, faculty and administrative support.
- 2) Outreach and partnerships (one directional)—campus makes facilities shared with community, existence of professional development centers and economic development initiatives, scholarship is associated with these initiatives
- 3) Both curricular engagement and outreach/partnerships

Driscoll concluded by suggesting that the classification system promises to be an important lever to forward a national agenda on engagement. Most importantly, the category adds status, visibility, and prestige to institutions that build their identity around public engagement. In addition, the new system encourages institutional self study and brings isolated parts of campus together to collaborate around engagement. Finally, the project is an important political device that communicates the institution’s commitment to engagement to state legislators and the public at large.

Higher Learning Commission

John Taylor provided a brief overview about the North Central Association (NCA), emphasizing the diversity of missions among its membership (two-year, four-year, faith-based, for-profit.) Taylor explained that the job of the accrediting bodies is to evaluate the whole organization including mission and integrity, preparing for the future, student learning, acquisition and application of knowledge, and engagement and service. At present, two evaluation processes are available for campuses. First, the ten-year cycle involves self study and peer review of campus operations. Alternatively, the seven-year cycle focuses on self assessment and provides annual updates on the progress of these institutions. The four components of each of the evaluations are as follows:

- 1) Mission and integrity: clear articulation of mission, recognition of diversity
- 2) Prepare for the future: allocation of resources for evaluation and planning
- 3) Student learning and effective teaching
- 4) Acquisition of knowledge: lifelong learning for faculty, administrators, staff, and students; support inquiry, creativity, and practice social responsibility.

In addition to these criteria, NCA accrediting teams have evaluated engagement activities since January 2005. Taylor explained that engagement is mission driven and shaped by place and institutional commitments. In short, accrediting teams seek to understand whether institutions learn from constituencies they serve, and have the capacity to serve community needs and expectations. Taylor explained that institutions that are engaged demonstrate responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service. Based on this model, accrediting teams examine the institution's civic memberships and the quality of its community development activities, community services and partnerships, continuing education programs, cultural preservation programs, educational services, facilities, international activities, institutional partnerships, and strategic planning.

In the future, Taylor suggests that institutions will be held to the standard of "walking the talk" and showing relevancy of engagement. Institutions must show commitment to sustaining community relationships and recognize the value of experiential learning, workforce training, and partnerships with other institutions and groups.

Taylor's remarks transitioned into a group-wide discussion about the changing role of accrediting agencies. Amy Driscoll observed how helpful accreditation has become to higher education in recent years, calling it "a new day." She referenced the power of these bodies in heading off damaging legislation that would get away from assessing student learning (e.g., No Child Left Behind). Chancellor Belck agreed and indicated that the seven-year accreditation has been very helpful for strategic planning and improvement at UN-Omaha. Hi Fitzgerald offered another perspective, saying, "I believe that Michigan State by most measures is a very engaged institution. However, the accreditation process makes us realize how far we yet have to go." Applegate referred to accreditation as "an enormous lever for us." He suggests using this process to align all accountability processes inside and outside of the institution (e.g., state governing board, regional accrediting agency, etc.). Driscoll commented that this alignment is a great fit with the new Carnegie classification on engagement.

"Accrediting teams seek to understand whether institutions learn from constituencies they serve, and have the capacity to serve community needs and expectations."
John Taylor

"Years ago we sat in a room and dreamed about this. Now our challenge is to get this into disciplinary accreditation circles. If we have the vision and can articulate it, we can get there."
Elizabeth Hollander

The discussion with John Taylor ignited great enthusiasm around the room. Liz Hollander suggested that NCA's leadership on this issue represents "an amazing milestone in the movement." Hollander explained, "Years ago we sat in a room and dreamed about this. Now our challenge is to get this into disciplinary accreditation circles. If we have the vision and can articulate it, we can get there."

In the end, Taylor challenged the group to be aware of engagement activities among for-profit organizations. He explained, "Institutions that are floundering are trying to get into online learning and have good markers of engagement by supporting 24-hour learning. Traditionalists must be knowledgeable of this reality." Hi Fitzgerald made the distinction that for-profits and traditional campuses frame engagement differently. Fitzgerald explained, "The University of Phoenix can't take a group of students and faculty into a community like we can. They frame what they do in a different way. Engagement is a cost center at for-profit institutions."

Blueprint for Action

The three-day meeting concluded with each working group documenting immediate action steps and collaborators required to carry out the national agenda. In addition, a Wingspread declaration was signed by all the participants as a symbolic commitment to launch this inter-organizational partnership. Soon after the meeting, the network quickly became known as the Higher Education Network for Community Engagement (HENCE). The appendix of this document provides details about the products and immediate plans for HENCE. The appendix includes network objectives, a blueprint for action (including work group assignments), a list of founders, and a list of organization networks that HENCE comprises.

Closing Thoughts

Lorilee Sandmann concluded the conference by asking the question, "Have we fulfilled the promise?" Sandmann declared that the conference resulted in three primary achievements: 1) a beginning sense of a field for the future, 2) a collaborative blueprint, and 3) an enabling mechanism to carry this work into the future. She reiterated the committee's commitment to quickly document the outcomes of this session and produce a news release to inspire key faculty and administrators. She ended the session with a quote from an unnamed source "What does it take to be a futurist? Courage and appetite."

The meeting ended with participants pledging courage and appetite to take on the agenda. Liz Hollander admitted that she was initially skeptical about the gathering, but that it turned into an overwhelmingly positive experience. "I was negative about this meeting and how we were going to bring people together. In the end, this has been a better meeting than I could have ever anticipated." Others concurred with Hollander and walked away with renewed energy and commitment to collaboration with old and new colleagues in engagement.

APPENDICES

***Wingspread Declaration on HENCE:
Higher Education Network for Community Engagement***

Established: February 24, 2006

Wingspread, Racine WI

The Higher Education Network for Community Engagement (HENCE) is a response to the growing need to deepen, consolidate, and advance the literature, research, practice, policy, and advocacy for community engagement as a core element of higher education's role in society. Increasingly, higher education institutions are intentionally connecting academic work to public purposes through extensive partnerships that involve faculty, staff, and students in active collaboration with communities. This idea of "community engagement" is renewing the civic mission of higher education and transforming academic culture in ways that are both exciting and challenging.

HENCE represents a new, high level of commitment to cooperation across diverse engagement-related organizations to provide support for the next phase of growth and improvement. On February 24, 2006, at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin, individuals representing several national organizations agreed on the following network objectives:

- Create a national network coordinated across leadership organizations
- Develop a coordinated approach to providing resources and data
- Encourage local, state, regional, and national meetings (formal and informal)
- Implement a coordinated agenda for advocacy
- Create an agenda for professional development and recognition
- Celebrate institutional differences

HENCE organizations committed to meeting these objectives by forming workgroups on these related tasks:

- Organize resources for and meetings among higher education lobbyists for advocacy at state and national levels
- Provide publications, web resources, training, and events for promoting community engagement at regional and national levels
- Collaborate on common data measures and dissemination of promising practices
- Develop models and provide support for quality scholarship of engagement
- Provide professional development opportunities for higher education leaders

Founders, Higher Education Network for Community Engagement

Gail Robinson
American Association of Community Colleges

Lucinda L. Maine/Ruth E. Nemire
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

George Mehaffey
American Association of State Colleges and Universities- American Democracy Project

David Cox
Association for Community Higher Education Partnerships

R. Eugene Rice
Association of American Colleges and Universities

Cathy Burack
Brandeis University, Center for Youth and Communities

Amy Driscoll
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Elaine Ikeda
California Campus Compact

Lorilee R. Sandmann
Clearinghouse/National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement

Elizabeth Hollander
Campus Compact

Sarena Seifer/Rachel L. Vaughn
Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

Nancy Belck
Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

Philip Nyden
Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education
Center for Urban Research and Learning-Loyola University, Chicago

Amy Cohen
Corporation for National and Community Service

David Weerts
Florida Atlantic University

Stephen L. Rozman
HBCU Faculty Development Network
Tougaloo College Center for Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

Julie Ellison
Imagining America

Melvin Hill, Jr.
Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement

Jeffrey Howard
Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning

James L. Applegate
Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

John W. Eby
Messiah College Agapé Center for Service Learning

Hiram E. Fitzgerald
Michigan State University National Center for the Study of University
Engagement

Theodore Settle
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
Council on Extension, Continuing Education and Public Service

Lawrence S. Cote
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
Extension Committee on Organization and Policy

Barbara Holland
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

John Saltmarsh/Dwight Giles
New England Resource Center for Higher Education

Marv Van Kekerix
Outreach Scholarship Partnership

John A. Taylor
The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association

Karen Bruns
The Ohio State University & Outreach Scholarship Partnership

Wayne Smutz
University Continuing Education Association
Outreach and Engagement Community of Practice

Andrew Furco
University of California, Berkeley
Service Learning Research & Development Center

Stephen L. Percy
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, The Milwaukee Idea

Organization Networks

National and Regional Societies and Organizations

American Association of Community Colleges-Service Learning Initiative
 American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
 American Association of State Colleges and Universities-American
 Democracy Project
 Association for Community Higher Education Partnerships
 Association of American Colleges and Universities
 Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
 Campus Compact
 Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
 Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities
 Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education
 Corporation for National and Community Service
 Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
 HBCU Faculty Development Network
 Imagining America
 Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
 National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges:
 Council on Extension, Continuing Education and Public Service
 New England Resource Center for Higher Education
 The Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association

National and Regional and Centers

Clearinghouse/National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement
 National Center for the Study of University Engagement
 National Service Learning Clearinghouse

Scholarly and Professional Journals

Change
Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement
Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning
Urban and Metropolitan Universities
Journal of Extension

College and University Centers

Agape Center for Service Learning, Messiah College
 Center for Urban Research and Learning, Loyola University Chicago
 Center for Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility, Tougaloo College
 Service Learning Research and Development Center, UC-Berkeley

Scholarly Conferences and Meetings

AAC&U conferences

Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities Conference
International Service-Learning Research Conference
Outreach Scholarship Conference