

Tracking and Measuring Community Engagement

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Today's Goals

- The state of engagement – why measuring matters
- M&M in your context!
- Be clear about your data purposes
- Monitor & Measure – what's the difference?
- Capture stakeholder perspectives
- Design measures and tools to educate/stimulate
- Strategies to inspire people to share data
- Learn about data collection strategies, incentives, allies

Global Challenges to Higher Education

- Increase level of educational attainment
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of education pathways
- Adopt new approaches to knowledge discovery
- Integrate teaching, learning, research
- Deepen international learning and partnerships
- Develop entrepreneurial perspectives
 - New streams of revenue -New financial model
- Manage/leverage the largest transformation of the academic workforce in 40 years!

Higher Ed Rewards in the 20th Century

- Comprehensive mix of disciplines
- Research & teaching (learning) competing topics
- Research funding from selected sources
- Measures of dissemination and technology transfer – pubs and patents
- Educating a specific student body based on entrance – select to open door
- Excellence as the sum of the choices and outputs of individual faculty

Higher Ed Rewards in the 21st Century

- Focused areas of expertise
- Integrated view of scholarly work
- Extensive and collaborative partnerships
- Emphasis on the student experience and outcomes
- Community engagement as a strategic action
- Access and success for a socially inclusive student population – measured by completion
- Innovative and multi-mode learning models
- Excellence is the sum of the above actions on quality of local and global life, culture, health, stability

Successful 21st Century Universities must operate in a way that is:

- Intentional
- Coherent
- Focused
- Collaborative
- Responsive
- Agile
- Engaged

Community Engagement Defined

- Community Engagement describes the collaboration between higher education institutions and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the **mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.** (Carnegie Classification Scheme, 2005)

Engagement's Defining Features

- Partnership
- Mutually beneficial goals
 - Addresses a community-identified need
 - Through an intellectual activity of importance
- Reciprocity
 - Enhances community capacity
 - Enhances student learning and/or research studies
- Knowledge exchange relationship – two-way

Engagement as

Connected Learning and Discovery

- Interdependent knowledge relationships –
The nexus of intellectual (discovery and learning) goals with external expertise, assets, questions, and opportunities
- Students, faculty, community members work together to learn, explore, discover and apply knowledge

ECU Mission

- Preparing students to compete and succeed in the global economy and multicultural society,
- Distinguishing ourselves by the ability to train and prepare leaders,
- Creating a strong, sustainable future for eastern North Carolina,
- Saving lives, curing diseases, and positively transforming health and health care, and
- Providing cultural enrichment and powerful inspiration as we work to sustain and improve quality of life.

ECU New Century Opportunities

- Supporting student success
- Creating opportunities for the East
 - Intellectual capital/workforce
 - Hands-on engagement
 - New technologies
- Forging effective partnerships- “wide range”
- Responding to the greatest needs
 - Individual & communities
 - Communities in transition
 - Educational resources
 - Creativity and entrepreneurship

Engagement is a Scholarly Method

Community Engagement is a METHOD – a way of doing teaching, learning, and research that involves “others” outside academia who have expertise, wisdom, insights and lived experience that equips them to contribute to the quality of our academic activities.

As a method, it is used in situations where it is the best fit for the question, problem, or learning goal.

Engagement is Academic Work

- CE is not a separate activity. It is a way of doing our teaching, learning, research differently.
- CE is, therefore, a form of academic or scholarly work, and is recognized, evaluated and rewarded within the categories of teaching and research.
- CE has been productively used in every discipline but in any particular institution, CE activity reflects the alignment of disciplines with community contexts.

Why is M&M or TAME Important Now?

- Organic history of Community Engagement
- Mostly unfocused, but mostly positive
- Evidence of benefits
 - Student learning, development, retention, recruitment
 - Research opportunities
 - Community image and partnerships
 - Streams of revenue
- Internal campus spirit and performance
- Questions about cost, benefit, reward, goals

State of TAME/M&M Practice

- No one has the perfect scheme
 - Good experiments are underway
- Budget stress increases pressure on evidence and on strategic importance
- Some commercial systems are marketed
- Carnegie, accreditation, President's Honor Roll and similar are all incentives to keep data

Fundamental Issue!

Engagement success depends on links to:

- Strategic goals for the institution
- Core emphasis, mission, and capacity of the institution – research/teaching/learning
- Policies, structures, systems and values
- An understanding of its [external] intellectual and physical context. (AASCU, “Stewards of Place”, 2008)

Monitoring and Measuring Engagement will help!

Discussion Activity

Your Context!

Think about your institution's mission and condition:

What are some of the **current strategic priorities, opportunities or concerns** for your institution?

Monitoring & Measuring must be:

- Focused – Trim and Fit to Purpose
- Reinforcing
 - Institutional goals and strategies
 - External goals and strategies
 - Any plans or principles associated with engagement
- Educational and Developmental
 - Reinforce best practice
 - Encourage reflective practice
- Useful – Internal and external Reporting
- Linked to rewards, recognition, visibility, planning, funding

Focus on your purposes!

The biggest disasters in Monitoring and Measuring Engagement are hasty surveys sent out across campus asking people to:

“Tell us about everything you do in community settings!”

Better approach:

Use Carnegie or other established definitions of Community Engagement

Define and include public service and outreach activities

Common External Purposes

- Describe scope and scale of activity to internals and/or externals
 - By focus on topic or location or population
- Attract external support or funding
- Demonstrate economic or other impact or benefit
- Improve external image/relationships
- Celebrate partnerships
- Prepare for external review or recognition

Common Internal Purposes

- Promote quality practices and improvement
- Promote growth of engagement (to what end)
- Discover areas of similar work or partnerships
- Encourage focused/strategic activities
Promote collaboration across projects
- Engage and recognize partners
- Identify resource needs or benefits of investment

Discussion Activity

Why do you want to track and measure engagement?

Who do you want to influence and why?

From Purpose to Plan

1. What is the purpose?
2. Who is the target audience? What is the intended impact on that audience?
3. What types of data will be most convincing?
 1. Who will need to be involved?
4. What data is already available? How can we use existing tools? Do we need new tools?
5. Who will manage/lead?
6. Who can help design, support, analyze, report?
7. In what form and timeframe is data presented?
8. What's the ongoing plan?

TAME Purposes Worksheet

A way to focus and organize your plan for tracking and measuring engagement so that what you collect will be useful, impactful, sustainable.

Effective and Efficient!

You can get what you want by asking the right questions!

The process itself will build capacity and quality.

Discussion Activity

Write in a main purpose (Row 1).

Then fill in Row 2:

Who is/are key audience(s) you want to influence by providing data about engagement?

What impact or action or attitude are you looking for from that audience?

How are Tracking and Measuring
different and complementary?

Tracking/Monitoring = What's going on??

- Scanning the landscape of activity
 - Learning what is happening: who/what/where/
when/how
- Capturing data that inform measurement
- Best set up as an ongoing enterprise
- Best managed as self-developed and maintained records
- Requires incentives and links to other schemes
- Meets most reporting and planning needs

Measuring = What happened?

There are several different aspects to “measuring” engagement

- The activity – description – design, participants, practices, supports
- Outputs – numbers, time/duration, activity, products, deliverables, tasks
- Impacts and outcomes – short and long term
- Cost/benefit analysis

Data and perceptions on these points require attention to and input from **each constituency**

An effective monitoring system:

Is the **basis** for effective measurement

AND

Will answer the majority of questions about

Engagement that seem to require
measurement.

Data Generated by Well-Designed Monitoring Systems

- Scope, scale, distribution
- Descriptive information
 - Activity types
 - Identity of leaders, participants, partners
 - Links to teaching, research, public service/outreach
 - Topics and issues
 - Geographic areas
- Analytic information
- Evaluation data and findings, if available (or estimate of)
- Evidence of specific products/deliverables
- Presence of good practice
- Areas for improvement

A Multi-Constituency Approach to Collecting Data

- Different constituents and audiences have different goals, expectations, roles, and perspectives.
 - Partners
 - Faculty and staff
 - Students

Community Partner Perspectives

The Centrality of Partnerships

If partnerships are so important to quality engagement, are we doing all we should to:

- Recruit and orient partners that fit our goals for exchange of knowledge
- Involve partners in goal setting, activity design, expected benefits, assessment
- Use participatory research methods as appropriate
- Recognize partner role and contribution
- Monitor cost-benefit to partner
- Gather feedback regarding satisfaction/improvement

Your examples

Have you tried to collect feedback from partners?

What was your strategy?

What did you learn?

Campus Compact Benchmarks for Partnerships

- Shared vision and values
- Benefits and incentives for all partners
- Investment in trust/mutual respect
- Multi-dimensional (reflects nature of issues)
- Clear organization/dynamic leadership
- Linked to mission of partner organizations
- Clear process for communication, decision-making, change
- Evaluation of both methods and outcomes

Partnership Types

- Service relationship – fixed time, fixed task
- Exchange relationship – exchange info, get access for mutual benefit, specific project
- Cooperative relationship – joint planning and shared responsibilities, long-term, multiple projects
- System and Transformative relationship – shared decision-making/operations/evaluation intended to transform each organization

Hugh Sockett, 1998

Issues in Gathering Partner Data

- Partners are reluctant to be critical
- Difficult to make it anonymous if goal is improvement/feedback
- Involve partners in designing what will be asked – what can they collect, report/share? What are their Q's?
- Time spent responding should be rewarded – could be money, but vouchers, gifts, invitations are also valued
- Interpretation and presentation of data can best be done in consultation and joint review
- Organizing feedback during a recognition event gets a good response!

Measuring Impact on Community

- Measure impacts of specific project outcomes and partnership relationships
- Pay attention to causality
- Keep it simple
- Measurement must consider institutional and community perspectives and expectations
 - Perspectives may differ
- Partners must be involved in tool design
- Use mixed methods; involve partners in data collection process
- Share and discuss results; agree on presentation

Linking Internal & External Monitoring

- Internal monitoring schemes typically collect descriptive data on partners
- These can be used to solicit feedback from partners on outcomes of specific projects or other university-community interactions
- Asking about activity outcomes (impacts on partner organization/goals) is different from asking about the partnership (satisfaction working with university).

Measuring Faculty Perspectives

Benefits of M&M for Faculty

- Promotes innovation and creativity in teaching and research approaches
- Renews love of teaching
- Suggests new lines of research, local/global
- Links personal values with professional activities
- Leads to interdisciplinary activities
- Builds stronger sense of shared work

Your examples

Have you tried to collect feedback from faculty?

What was your strategy?

What did you learn?

What you want from faculty

- Title of activity
- Internal/external partners – their contact info
- Goals – intended outcomes/benefits/impacts
- Links to teaching, learning, research
- General description – timing, duration, location, target population, action strategy
- Academic or non-academic outcomes
- Evaluation/evidence if available
- Sources of support; cost- benefit
- Areas for improvement, replication, adaptation

Common Strategies

- Faculty Activity or Annual Reports
- Faculty portfolios/dossiers/resumes
- Interview department chairs
- Random/occasional survey
- Embedded in any other existing faculty reporting scheme
- Unique data base focused on community engaged practices and partnerships

Strategies to get Faculty/staff data

- Engage them in the design
- Use staff/students to attend faculty meetings to train or help complete records
- Link to internal seed grants, required reports, P&T apps, award nominations, other recognition
- Offer opportunity to be featured on web or in publications
- Hold an event – celebration/recognition
- Link to professional development activities
- Other ideas??

Measuring Student Perspectives

Your examples

Have you tried to collect feedback from students?

What was your strategy?

What did you learn?

M&M regarding Student Engagement

- Curricular or co-curricular or both?
- Focus on learning or developmental objectives
- Scale and scope – who is involved, when and how much?
- Validate/document/reward/recognize experiences
- Link to institutional goals for student experience and pathways – first year on...
- Compare models, timing, approaches, sequencing, population effects

What do you want to know about students?

- Improved higher order thinking skills; analysis, understanding complex problems
- Civic responsibility, local/global citizenship
- Commitment to service and to lifelong learning
- Career awareness/skills – awareness of options, clarity of choice, technical skills, teamwork
- Personal outcomes – self-esteem, empowerment, respect for others
- Social outcomes – pro-social behaviors, collaborative, reduced risky behaviors

Strategies to get Student Data

- Engage students in the discussion
- Add questions to existing course evaluations
- Integrate into reflections
- Create short feedback tools to use after SL activities
- Use Blackboard to link reflections and short evaluations to courses or activities
- Offer prizes
- Link to awards/recognition; transcripts
- Link to peer assessment/mentoring or undergrad research activities
- Other ideas??

Activity

Enter your ideas for key data elements in Row 3 of the TAME “Purposes Worksheet”

- What data do you already have available? Enter in Row 4.

Building Measures/Metrics And Designing your Data Tools

Target your communications

- A convincing argument for one constituency may fall flat with another
- Academics like data and “evidence”
- Politicians and board members often prefer stories and personal experiences
- Students want to know about benefits for their future; personal and career strengths/values
- Partners want to know how we will work with them; what is the process and commitment?
- As you seek to design your M&M strategy, focus on your target audience’s interests

Create SMART Metrics

- Specific
 - Target area to be measured
- Measurable
 - Data can be collected that is accurate
- Actionable
 - Metric is easy to understand
- Relevant
 - Can't measure everything! Measure what is important
- Timely
 - Data is available when needed

Measure What Matters

- WHAT do we need to know? (Goal)
- What would we look for? (Core concepts)
- What will we observe/measure? (Indicators)
- How will we gather evidence on that measure? (methods)
- Who or what source will provide the data? (source of data)

Increase Efficiency

- Make friends with your local IR staff!
- Integrate monitoring and measuring of engagement into existing data collection
- Connect to other institutional activities
 - External Reporting
 - Accreditation reviews and self studies
 - Internal reporting
 - Activity reports
 - Annual reports
 - Evaluations, feedback surveys
 - Standard national surveys

Useful Measures of Activity

- Carnegie Community Engagement
- President's Honor Roll
- Compact Survey
- Items from existing surveys
 - CIRP
 - NSSE

Most standard tools allow additional questions!

Creating New Tools

- Partner with IR, faculty, or other experts to help develop new tools
- Design of new tools occurs **AFTER** you have identified any existing collection tools/strategies

Activity

In Rows 5 and 6, note individuals who can help lead, build, support and analyze the TAME Process.

What methods are appropriate?

Surveys? Interviews? Focus Groups?

Surveys

Advantages

- Can be generalized to larger population
- Easy to report to different audiences
- Data collection (especially web-based) can be quick and cost effective

Disadvantages

- Closed questions limit possible responses
- Limited responses lead to less detail
- Respondent misunderstanding
- Non-Response Bias if questions skipped

Focus Groups

Advantages

- Relatively easy to design protocol
- Dynamic, can probe for more detail
- Participants can build on comments from others

Disadvantages

- Time intensive
- Requires expertise to manage discussion
- Qualitative skills needed
- Potential for participants to dominate
- Non-generalizable

Interviews

Advantages

- Useful when participants cannot be directly observed
- Participants can provide more information in answering questions
- Dynamic, can probe for more detail

Disadvantages

- Interviewer training
- Potential bias of interviewer
- Time and labor intensive
- Non-generalizable

Document Analysis

Advantages

- Saves time/expense of transcribing
- Unobtrusive source of information
- Documents in language/words of participants

Disadvantages

- Time consuming to locate/retrieve
- Completeness and accuracy of records
- Generates lots of data but of uncertain value

Mixed Methods

- Incorporates the advantages of different methods
- Quantitative Method → Qualitative Method
 - Survey analysis, followed by interviews, focus groups, etc
- Qualitative Method → Quantitative Method
 - Thorough understanding of issues through interviews, focus groups, etc followed by a survey to larger sample where results can be generalized

Basic Indicators for Engagement

- % of students participating in engaged learning
- % of faculty teaching or researching in an engaged mode
- # of engagement partnerships analyzed by topic or geographic area of community activity
- # of research grants with external partners other than other universities
- Distribution of engaged teaching and research activities across schools/faculties
- Student rating of engaged learning experiences (course evaluations)
- Partner rating of partnership experiences and reported benefits and impacts
- Publications and other outputs arising from engaged partnerships (academic and non-academic)

Basic External Measures

- Inventory of partnerships
 - Subject/issue focus
 - Populations served
 - Key strategy, activity or interaction
- Goals articulated by partners
- Degree and outcomes of partner satisfaction
 - Estimate of burden/benefit
 - Willingness to continue
 - Evidence of leveraged resources/enhanced capacity to fulfill mission
 - Partner's estimation of benefit/impact of specific activity on community

Ethical and Courtesy Issues

- Reporting Bad News
- Timing of data collection
- Controlling access to changing records
- Spinning Data with Incorrect Interpretations
- Anonymity and Confidentiality
 - Sharing partner data with faculty
 - Vice versa
 - What fields will be public?
- IRB Review/Approval of data Collection Procedures
- Plans for archiving inactive records

Your Next Steps

- **Focus on your audience and their data questions**
- Identify allies and leaders to develop M&M Strategy
- For rows 5-8, invite people who can help with design and implementation of TAME Process
- Ensure each stakeholder group has a voice
- Get expert help and connect to existing tools – Work with institutional research!
- Consider how to build interest and create incentives for responders
- Focusing on selected key measures will create an effective, sustainable and useful approach
- **Resist temptation to measure everything you can imagine!**

Contact for More Information and Assistance

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