

## **PRESS RELEASE: National Commission Urges Action to Link Scholarship and Communities**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions released today a national strategy for closing the gap between the promise of health professional schools as community-engaged institutions and the reality of how faculty members are typically judged and rewarded. The Commission's report, "Linking Scholarship and Communities," contains detailed recommendations for action by health professional schools and their national associations that can support community-engaged scholarship and cites promising practices that illustrate their implementation.

Convened by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health with funding from the WK Kellogg Foundation, the Commission has taken a leadership role in creating a more supportive culture and reward system for health professional faculty involved in community-based participatory research, service-learning and other forms of community-engaged scholarship in which faculty members connect their scholarship with community needs and concerns. A list of Commission members appears below.

Over the past decade, a steady stream of national organizations have been recommending the community engagement of health professional schools as an essential strategy for improving health professional education, achieving a diverse health workforce, increasing access to health care, and eliminating health disparities. Recruiting and retaining diverse community-engaged faculty members is essential to developing and sustaining the community partnerships that form the foundation for community-based teaching, research, and service. Despite the expansion of community engagement in the health professions, a troubling issue has arisen in many schools: Roles and expectations of faculty are changing, but the faculty review, promotion, and tenure system has not kept pace. Addressing this problem is the central focus of the Commission on Community-Engaged Scholarship in the Health Professions and its report released today.

"The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports efforts to acknowledge and provide incentives for health professional schools to become and remain engaged with their communities," said Marguerite M. Johnson, Vice President for Programs at the WK Kellogg Foundation. "We believe authentic partnerships between health professional schools and communities will move this country closer to changes in the health care system that will result in significant improvements in access to health care, a more diversified health workforce, and the elimination of ethnic and racial disparities in health. Changes must be made in our systems and institutions to support all forms of community-engaged scholarship."

The report examines a number of critical challenges that community-engaged scholarship poses to the predominant paradigm of faculty incentives in health professional schools. These include the tendency of faculty peers to classify community-engaged work as service rather than to consider the factors that might qualify the work as genuine scholarship, the under valuing of the role of products of scholarship that are not in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles, and the limited role of community partners in faculty review, promotion and tenure processes.

The Commission recommends that:

1. Health professional schools should adopt and promote a definition of scholarship that includes and values community-engaged scholarship.
2. Health professional schools should adopt review, promotion, and tenure policies and procedures that value community-engaged scholarship.
3. Health professional schools should ensure that community partners are meaningfully involved in review, promotion, and tenure processes for community-engaged faculty members.
4. Health professional schools should educate the members of review, promotion, and tenure committees about community-engaged scholarship and prepare them to understand and apply the review, promotion, and tenure guidelines in the review of community-engaged faculty.
5. Health professional schools should invest in the recruitment and retention of community-engaged faculty.
6. Health professional schools should advocate for increased extramural support for community-engaged scholarship.
7. Health professional schools should take a leadership role on their university campuses to initiate or further campuswide support for community-engaged scholarship.
8. National associations of health professional schools should:
  - Adopt and promote a definition of scholarship within the profession that explicitly includes community-engaged scholarship
  - Support member schools that recognize and reward community-engaged scholarship
  - Advocate for increased extramural support for community-engaged scholarship
9. Recognizing that many products of community-engaged scholarship are not currently peer reviewed, a national board should be established to facilitate a peer review process.

The Commission stresses that recognizing and rewarding community-engaged scholarship in the health professions will require changes not only in the wording of policies and procedures but, even more importantly, in the culture of institutions and professions. Leadership is needed from both academic institutions and the many external stakeholders that influence their values and priorities, including but not limited to government, philanthropy, peer-reviewed journals, accrediting bodies, and the communities in which they reside and work. As a starting point, the Commission suggests that health professional school administrators, faculty, and members of review, promotion, and tenure committees review this report in relation to the mission, vision, values, and policies of their institutions and professions.

In announcing its report, the Commission also applauds the recent formation of the Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative. Organized by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health with funding from the US Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the Collaborative is a group of health professional schools that aims to significantly change faculty review, promotion and tenure policies and practices to recognize and reward community-engaged scholarship - in the participating schools and their peers across the country. The Collaborative is already working to implement many of the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission is eager to work with health professional schools, their national associations, and other interested stakeholders to support the implementation of its recommendations, and welcomes inquiries and suggestions on how best to facilitate such support.

The Commission report can be found on the Commission's website at: <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/kellogg3.html>

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health welcomes comments on the Commission's work. Questions and comments may be directed to program director, Jen Kauper-Brown, by e-mail: [jenbr@u.washington.edu](mailto:jenbr@u.washington.edu), by phone: 206/543-7954, or by mail: UW Box 354809, Seattle, WA 98195-4809.

Stay connected with the Commission and related work through the Community-Engaged Scholarship electronic discussion group at <https://mailman1.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/comm-engagedscholarship>

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Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) is a nonprofit organization that promotes health through partnerships between communities and higher educational institutions. Founded in 1996, CCPH is a growing network of over 1000 communities and campuses that are collaborating to promote health through service-learning, community-based participatory research, broad-based coalitions and other partnership strategies. These partnerships are powerful tools for improving health professional education, civic responsibility and the overall health of communities. CCPH advances its mission through information dissemination, training and technical assistance, research and evaluation, policy development and advocacy, and coalition-building. Learn more about CCPH at [www.ccpH.info](http://www.ccpH.info)

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation was established in 1930 "to help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations." To achieve the greatest impact, the Foundation targets its grants toward specific areas. These include: health; food systems and rural development; youth and education; and philanthropy and volunteerism. Within these areas, attention is given to exploring learning opportunities in leadership; information and communication technology; capitalizing on diversity; and social and economic community development. Grants are concentrated in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the southern African countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe. Learn more about the Foundation at [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).

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