



# Community-Higher Education Partnerships: National Trends & Realities

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# The Bottom Line

1. The #, range, scope & benefits of “partnerships” and funding for “partnerships” is diverse and growing
2. There is a plethora of national policy statements and organizations; dominated by higher ed perspectives
3. The predominant model is not a partnership, is initiated by the campus and is framed by campus priorities
4. There are ongoing challenges, but recognized success factors
5. Communities are realizing their power to change the situation, as are funders



## The #, range & scope of “partnerships” is diverse and growing

- Eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities
- Increasing health workforce diversity
- Closing the achievement gap in K-12 education
- Increasing access to higher ed, health care, info technology
- Increasing youth civic engagement
- Increasing relevance of research, translation into practice & policy
- Creating healthier campuses
- Establishing quality affordable housing
- Revitalizing cities
- Developing rural economies
- Preparing graduates for practice in wide range of fields...

Methods & models: Community service, service-learning, CBPR, economic anchors, engaged institutions...



## The #, range & scope of “partnerships” is diverse and growing

- 98% of campuses offer service-learning courses, which combine academic with community work
- 98% of campuses have one or more community partnerships, most commonly involving nonprofit organizations (95%), K-12 schools (90%), and faith-based organizations (62%)
- \$4 billion in student volunteer service
- Growth in campus structures to support faculty/student engagement

*Campus Compact Member 2004 Survey, 44% of 950 members reporting*

- Growth in # and range of CBPR projects



## Funding for “partnerships” is diverse and growing

- WK Kellogg Foundation
- Atlantic Philanthropies
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Knight Foundation
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institutes of Health
- Corporation for National and Community Service
- US Housing and Urban Development
- Etc!



## Benefits to Communities

- Community capacity building
- Advancement of mission
- New perspectives and insights
- Rewarding personal and professional relationships
- Access to information and research
- Funding
- Credibility for their own efforts
- Exposure and access to higher education
- Being recognized as peers, teachers and experts



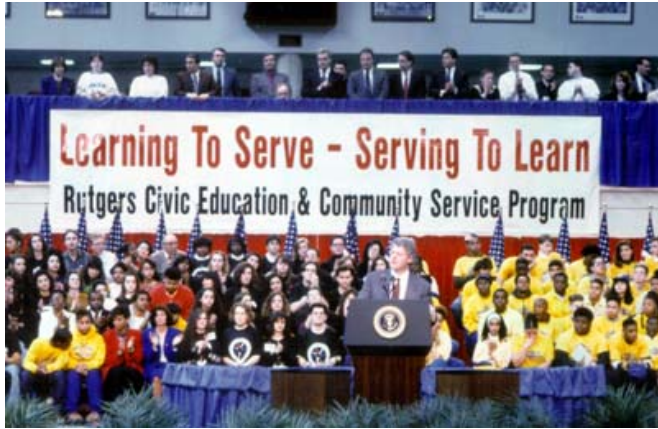
## Benefits to Students

- Transformational learning experiences
- Clarification of values, sense of self
- Awareness and understanding of broader health and social justice issues
- Awareness and understanding of policy issues
- Comfort working in and with diverse communities
- Leadership development



## Benefits to Faculty

- Fulfillment of personal values and beliefs
- Linkage of personal & professional lives
- Enhanced relationships with students and community
- Increased understanding of community issues & concerns
- New career and scholarship directions
- New directions and confidence in teaching
- External funding
- External validation



## Benefits to Institutions

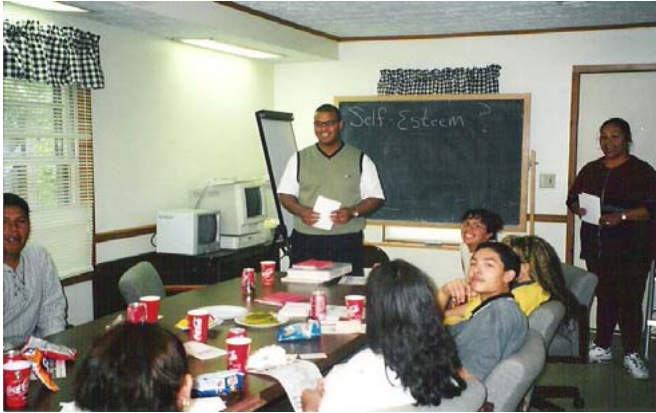
- Student recruitment and retention
- Enhancement of curriculum
- Alumni giving
- External funding
- Graduates excel
- Positive response to public expectations of accountability and value, positive PR
- Diverse research participants
- Accreditation



There is a plethora of national policy statements and organizations; dominated by higher ed perspectives

*Declarations, policy positions & statements of principles*

- Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University, 1998
- CCPH Principles of Partnership, 1998
- Campus Compact Benchmarks for Campus/Community Partnerships, 1998
- Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education, 1999
- Kellogg Commission on the Future of State & Land-Grant Institutions - Returning to Our Roots: Engaged Institutions, 1999
- Kellogg - Characteristics of Vibrant Partnerships Between Communities and Institutions of Higher Education, 2001



The predominant model is not a partnership

- Initiated by campus, framed by academic mission and priorities
- Driven by grant and program requirements
- Disconnects and contradictions
- Bulk of investment in campus infrastructure
- Community as “placement site” or advisor
- Community capacity building & social justice not an explicit goal
- Risks and costs to community can outweigh benefits



# Ongoing Challenges

- Community distrust of academic institutions
- Unethical behaviors
- Unequal power and distribution of funds
- Resistance to change, loss of control
- Academic culture of needs-based and expert approaches
- Scientific rigor vs. community acceptability & feasibility
- Faculty review, promotion and tenure policies
- Staff job descriptions & performance expectations
- Not viewed by leadership as “mission-critical”
- Institutional review board policies
- Funder requirement and not genuine participatory process



# Recognized Success Factors

- Formed to address genuine community concern and strategic partner issues, not to get a grant
- Builds on prior positive relationships, trust
- Has structures, processes that codify sharing influence and control
- Funding is distributed equitably
- Boundary-spanning leadership
- Supportive partner policies and reward structures
- Tangible benefits to all partners
- Balance between partnership process, activities and outcomes
- Culturally competent and appropriately skilled staff, researchers
- Collaborative dissemination
- Ongoing assessment, improvement and celebration



# Communities are realizing their power to change the situation, as are funders

- Partnership agreements and community board with “teeth”
- Community Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)
- Community-based organization-initiated partnerships
- Partnership intermediary organizations
- Community-conducted research
- Higher ed as economic asset
  - 300,000 jobs in the 1990s; \$136 billion in 1996 on salaries, goods and services – 9x more than federal direct spending
- National networks of community-based organizations
- Funding agency requirements



# Community-Higher Education Partnerships? National Trends & Realities

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