**Full Participation: Engagement, Diversity, and the Postsecondary Success of Underserved Students**

*The project of achieving inclusive institutions is not only about eliminating discrimination or even increasing the representation of previously excluded groups. It is about creating the conditions enabling people of all races and genders to realize their capabilities as they understand them. All institutional citizens should be able to realize their potential and participate fully in the life of the institution* (Sturm, p. 4).

Achieving the full participation of diverse students and diverse faculty in higher education and beyond--in democratic communities and civic institutions--requires systemic inquiry and action focused on a set of connections that has yet to be rigorously addressed: the connections among (1) active teaching and learning, (2) collaborative knowledge creation, and (3) the academic success of underserved students. Understanding this matrix is a necessary pre-condition for fundamental changes in institutional cultures, structures, policies, and practices at colleges and universities. Only a comprehensive, integrative approach to the full continuum of teaching, learning, and research can ensure that all student--but especially those with the fewest resource--have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in postsecondary education and to fully participate in the economic, social, political, and civic life of the nation. Full participation is about education that provides for participation in a wider public culture of democracy. It calls for a fundamental reorientation of higher education toward addressing equity and opportunity in deeper, systemic, more complex, and more transformative ways. Above all, it requires examining faculty, students, and institutional policies in relation to one another. To achieve full participation of students and faculty in transformed, inclusive institutions of higher education suggests the need to address at least four critical questions:

* “How do racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination shape institutions of education?
* How do educational structures, practices, and discourses maintain race-, gender-, and class-based discrimination?
* How do students and faculty of color respond to and resist racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination in education?
* How can education become a tool to help end racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination?” (Yosso, et. al, 2004, p. 6)

**Context – Diverse Students and Faculty**

Diversity has many dimensions in the context of higher education. In relation to students, a shifting national demographic has reshaped the student population to be increasingly representative of underserved students – students of color, first-generation students, and/or low-income students. Students increasingly represent racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and socio-economic class diversity. For faculty, higher education institutions have struggled for more than a decade to create a more diverse academic workforce, with remarkably meager success. As an “industry,” higher education recognizes that fulfillment of its mission, and for some campuses their very survival, is dependent upon both attracting and supporting diverse faculty and attracting and retaining a more diverse student body.

According to a recent report from the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), [*A Portrait of Low-Income Young Adults in Education*](http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/m-r/%28Brief%29_A_Portrait_of_Low-Income_Young_Adults_in_Education.pdf) (June 2010), there are 35.2 million low-income young adults in the United States who are between the ages of 18 and 26, and whose parents’ income or their own (if financially independent) is up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Young adults living in “total poverty” are more likely to be Native American, Black, and Hispanic (59 percent, 57 percent, and 47 percent, respectively). This stands in contrast to 47 percent of their White and 40 percent of their Asian contemporaries.

College enrollments for Blacks and Hispanics have increased nationwide and there is a widespread perception that major strides have been made to meet the goals of equal educational opportunity. Even though the number of underrepresented students (including low income or first-generation students and students of color) who go to college and earn a degree is an impressive accomplishment when compared to forty years ago, the gap between Blacks and Hispanics, on the one hand, and their white, non-Hispanic counterparts persists and continues to grow (Ruppert, 2003). Students of color lag well behind whites in completing college. In 2001, of high school completers ages 25 to 29, about 37% of Whites, 21% of Blacks, and 16% of Hispanics had received a bachelor’s degree. The assumption that progress has been made *beyond access* into higher education for African Americans and Latinos is not supported by the evidence (Swail et al., 2003). The achievement gap among these groups is substantial nationwide and has not diminished in the last fifteen years (Bok, 2003). A pervasive rhetoric of America as a near “post-racial society” further confuses the issues even when there exists no indicator of social health that demonstrates that “minorities” are on par with their white counterparts.

Research indicates that the academic success of systematically and traditionally underserved students is enhanced by increased opportunities to participate in high-impact teaching and learning practices - practices that involve greater engagement in learning. One of these practices is community-based teaching and learning (often referred to as service-learning or community engagement tied to the curriculum) (Kuh, 2008).

Further, research indicates that the academic success of underserved students is enhanced by increased opportunities to identify with faculty and staff who represent ethnic, racial, gender, and cultural diversity (Hurtado, 2001, 2007; Milem et. al, 2005).

It is also apparent that along with demographic shifts among students, there are demographic shifts among faculty. We are seeing greater diversity among graduate students and early career faculty – and a rotating door for careers in higher education. The academy is attracting more under-represented faculty than ever before, but those faculty are leaving in greater numbers than coming in (Moreno, 2006)

Research has documented that women and faculty of color are more likely to engage in both interdisciplinary and community-service-related behaviors, including community engaged and inclusive pedagogical practice in teaching and learning and building research agendas related to public problem-solving in local communities and are more likely to cite such experiences as critical to their purpose in the academy. (Baez, 2000; Antonio, Astin and Cress, 2000; Antonio, 2002; Vogelgesang, Denson, Jayakumar, 2010; Rhoads, et al., 2008; Hale, ed., 2008; Ibarra, 2001)

Additionally, there is research indicating that faculty roles and rewards –criteria for research, scholarship, and creative activity – either 1) reward community engagement as service (counting little in promotion and tenure) or 2) do not specifically reward community engagement as either teaching, research and creative activity, or service. Institutional policies create disincentives for faculty to undertake community engagement through their faculty roles (Saltmarsh, et al, 2009; Ellison and Eatman, 2008)

Efforts to connect diversity, community engagement, and student success in higher education have gained increased attention (Cress, C.M., Burack, C., Giles, D. E., Jr., Elkins, J, Stevens, M.C. (2010) *A Promising Connection: Increasing College Access and Success through Civic Engagement*. Boston, MA: Campus Compact). Yet, the dominant response continues to focus primarily on expanding access to higher education through programs in which undergraduate student volunteers support programs aimed at preparing underserved high school students for access to higher education. While such programs are laudable, they are not sufficient, in part because they do not examine organizational cultures in higher education that would shift the focus from *access to* to *success through* postsecondary education.

**Problem Statement**

While there are efforts in higher education to explore the connections between diversity, community engagement, and student success, they typically address access but not persistence and success in higher education. Consequently, these efforts do not lead institutions of higher education to undertake significant organizational change aimed at creating environments in which underserved students and underrepresented faculty can thrive and succeed. Furthermore, the dominant approaches do not examine systemic organizational issues in a way that links institutional reward policies to two critical domains: student diversity, including diverse learning styles, and faculty diversity, including diverse pedagogical practices and diverse forms of scholarship.

The challenge of achieving the full participation of diverse students and diverse faculty in higher education and beyond--in democratic communities and institutions--focuses our attention on a set of connections that has yet to be rigorously addressed: the connections among (1) active teaching and learning, (2) collaborative knowledge creation, and (3) the academic success of underserved students. Understanding this matrix is a necessary pre-condition for fundamental changes in institutional cultures, structures, policies, and practices at colleges and universities. Only a comprehensive, integrative approach to multi-generational communities of faculty and students and to the full continuum of teaching, learning, and research that defines such communities can ensure that all students—but especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and to fully participate in the economic, social, political, and civic life of the nation. Full participation is about educating people for participation in a wider public culture of democracy. It calls for a fundamental reorientation of higher education toward addressing equity and opportunity in deeper, more complex, and more transformative ways. Above all, it requires that we look at faculty, students, and institutional policies affecting both in relation to one another.

**Research Questions**

Our research into these complex relationships begins by asking questions about faculty because we believe that the foregoing research calls for much deeper understandings about the evolution of faculty lives and work as it relates to the range of learning experiences that postsecondary students encounter within the collegiate milieu. What can the experiences of college and university faculty members who--for reasons of race, ethnicity, and/or gender--are members of historically underrepresented groups reveal about organizational factors that facilitate or inhibit the full participation of young adults and adult professionals in higher education?

Secondary questions:

1. In what ways are faculty research interests and approaches shaped by social issues in communities?
2. In what ways are the teaching and learning practices of faculty shaped by the diversity of learners in the classroom?
3. In what ways are the faculty roles of teaching, research, and service defined in ways that facilitate the professional success of underrepresented faculty *and* the academic success of underserved students?

The purpose of the proposed project is more fully to reveal the professional and organizational dimensions of faculty diversity and to explore the implications of these initial findings for student success. Based on this analysis, our goal is to develop a research agenda that will lead to a greater understanding of how changes in institutional practice and policy can contribute to fuller participation in higher education.

**Theory of Change**

The proposed project is grounded in the work of Susan Sturm (2006) that frames inclusiveness as a core institutional value and democratic imperative for institutions of higher education. The current project is grounded in the understanding that institutions of higher education will not embrace diversity for diversity’s sake, nor will they embrace civic engagement for the sake of civic engagement. Both diversity and civic engagement need to be pursued as means to a larger and more central aim of building inclusive organizations in which all of its members realize their full potential through full participation in the life of the organization. The concept of full participation through “institutional citizenship” is based on the premise that the fundamental goals of a democratic culture include social justice and equity. Full participation, Sturm argues, can be achieved through institutional transformation built upon an “architecture of inclusion” that incorporates new normative frameworks of knowledge generation and discovery, more active pedagogical practices, expanded research priorities and methods, reward policies that recognize a broad spectrum of scholarship, and more robust environmental supports. As Sturm writes, “there is a framework and methodology for pursuing inclusive institutions and for building the architecture to sustain the practice of inclusiveness (p. 4).” The principle of full participation, applied to organizations, establishes “institutional citizenship” as a core value.

**Project Goals**

The primary goals of this project are to

1) advance the national dialogue on the future of higher education in contributing to an equitable, just, and diverse democratic society,

2) shape both research on policy related to full participation in higher education, and

3) inform the development of a research agenda to better understand full participation in higher education.

This project will address these goals through studies that address faculty member’s

1) professional experiences related to full participation,

2) understanding of implications for change in higher education to advance full participation, and

3) analysis of what a research agenda should include and the methodologies appropriate for understanding the organizational cultures that impede full participation as well as the strategies for bringing about change in higher education.

**Project Coordination**

The Project will be coordinated an overseen by co-PIs Timothy Eatman (Syracuse University) and John Saltmarsh (University of Massachusetts, Boston), and Elaine Ward (Dublin Institute of Technology) with a project advisory team consisting of NERCHE visiting scholars for the Next Generation Engagement Project (see appendices). The advisory team will shape the project and will participate in it in a variety of ways, including serving as editors of a planned book project.

The New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, will serve as the grant administrator for the project.

**Organizational Partners**

This project will establish sharply focused collaborations with at least three national organizations: Imagining America, The American Association of State Colleges and Universities, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Each of these organizations will specify an existing project or program as the responsible entity for contributing to research, discussion, and dissemination. The responsible entity for Imagining America will be the office of IA's Director of Research, Dr. Timothy Eatman. Eatman directed a recent survey on early career public scholars and serves as the Co-PI for Imagining America's new research collaboratory examining the impact of the 2008 report, *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University.* Julie Ellison, Co-PI of the collaboratory, will also be a contributing investigator on this project. The responsible entity for AASCU will be the American Democracy Project, led by George Mehaffy and Cecilia Orphan. And the responsible entity for AACU will be Caryn McTighe Musil. Specific constituencies from each will be invited into participation in the project, Each of these responsible entities represents strong organizational investments in years of imaginative programming. In the case of IA and ADP, the core mission extends to strong relationships with non-university organizations, such as schools, nonprofits, public cultural institutions (e.g., museums, libraries, heritage sites, parks); and governmental, judicial, and political institutions. This extends the scope of knowledge institutions that are vital to the educational nexus of engagement and diversity.

**Project components**:

The project includes planning activities, writing activities, and convenings related to both. It includes a number of convenings that will allow for the deeper development of the project design and contribute to addressing the research questions. Each organization has an annual national convening that will allow for the sharing and dissemination of project findings. A culminating product from this project will be an edited book. The purpose of the book will be to 1) advance the national dialogue on the future of higher education, 2) shape both research on and the public understanding of full participation in higher education, and 3) inform decisions on further research.

Virtual Convening:

The project will have an interactive web presence that will allow for continual building of the project in collaboration with a wide range of scholars nationally and internationally. The web portal will include sharing documents related to the project, capturing input from readers, and co-authoring a blog that will engage project participants in ongoing dialogue. (A model for this web-based interface can be found at http://futureofengagement.wordpress.com/).

Face-to-Face Convening #1:

This convening will bring together between 20 and 25 individuals who in equal numbers are 1) senior faculty and administrators representative of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity and, 2) early career faculty representative of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. Participants will also be selected to represent a wide range of disciplines and institutional types.

The focus of the meeting will be on refining the problem statement and research questions with two goals in mind: first, creating a study that reveals the professional and organizational dimensions of faculty diversity and second, assessing the implications for student success of these initial findings. Based on this analysis, we aim to develop a multi-year research agenda that will lead to a greater understanding of how changes in institutional practice and policy can contribute to fuller participation in higher education.

Participants may be asked to contribute chapters for a book on full participation in higher education in which their individual chapters address 1) their professional experience, 2) their understanding of implications for change in higher education, and 3) their analysis of what a research agenda should include.

Convening #2:

Contributing Authors Meeting: This will be an opportunity for the authors to share their draft chapters and receive feedback for revisions.

Convening #3:

The authors come together to offer a pre-conference session at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement to discuss the project findings with a focus on the emergent research agenda. Linking public engagement and diversity will be central to future research. The relationship between engagement and diversity is both a conceptual and a practical necessity in the movement toward full participation in higher education.

Timeline

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| Date | Activity | Product |
| May-Aug. 2011 | Project Leadership Team established – meets by teleconferencing | Begin planning of project activities and establish work plan |
| September 2011 | Web-Based interface created | Invite wide collaboration in exploring and examining the dimensions of and implications of full participation |
| November 2011 | Face-to-Face Convening | Deepen conceptualization of the project and shape the written product(s) of the project |
| March 1, 2012 | Chapter Drafts due to editors |  |
| May 1, 2012 | Editor’s feedback to authors |  |
| June 2012 | Author’s Meeting | Critiquing and revising chapter drafts |
| October 2012 | Session at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement | Disseminating findings and developing a research agenda |
| Nov.-Dec. 2012 | Work with publisher to complete book | Edited volume |

Proposed Budget: Grant Period from May 2011 through January 2012 (18 months)

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| --- | --- |
| Activity | Costs |
| Teleconferencing | $750 |
| Web-Based interface  Staff | $2000 |
| Face-to-Face Convening  2 days  @ $1,750 X 25= 43,750  Facilities  Food  Accommodations  Travel | $43750 |
| Author’s Meeting  One day/one overnight  @ 15 X $1,000 | $15,000 |
| Stipends to authors  @ 15 X $800 | $12,000 |
| Session at the Annual Conference of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement  Travel, accommodations, registration for 6 @ $1,200 per person | $7,200 |
| Grant administration  NERCHE staff | $8000 |
| Total | $88,700 |

Project PIs:

**Dr. Timothy Eatman** is Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Syracuse University and Director for Research of Imagining America (IA). Tim provides research leadership for the Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship and is co-author of Scholarship in Public, Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University. This work on faculty rewards for publicly engaged scholarship extends to a recently established study of IA's Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) program, which examines the aspirations, and decisions of engaged artists and scholars in the cultural disciplines. He earned degrees in Education (B.S.-Pace University, NY and M.Ed.-Howard University, D.C.) and the Ph.D. in Educational Policy from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Professor Eatman also pursues research on the pipeline to graduate school and the professoriate for students from traditionally underrepresented groups in higher education. This strand of his research examines the relationships among institutional policies, programs, and college student development. He has recently begun research with funding from the National Science Foundation that explored the transition from the military to higher education for veterans in engineering fields within the context of the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Eatman has published in venues including the Journal of Educational Finance, Readings on Equal Education, Diversity and Democracy, other book chapters and reports.

**Dr. John Saltmarsh** is the Director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) at the University of Massachusetts, Boston as well as a faculty member in the Higher Education Administration Doctorial Program in the Department of Leadership in Education in the College of Education and Human Development. He is the author, with Edward Zlotkowski, of *Higher Education and Democracy: Essays on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement* (Temple 2011). He is also the author of numerous book chapters and articles on civic engagement, service-learning, and experiential education, and the co-author of the *Democratic Engagement White Paper* (NERCHE, 2009) as well as co-editor of the forthcoming book *“To Serve a Larger Purpose:” Engagement for Democracy and the Transformation of Higher Education (2011).* He serves as past chair and current member of the board of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE), as a member of the Board of The Democracy Imperative, as well as on the editorial board of the *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning*, the editorial board of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, and on the board of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) Core Commitments Project. He is a member of the National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement, has served as a National Scholar with Imagining America’s Tenure Team Initiative, and as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification. From 1998 through 2005, he directed the national Project on Integrating Service with Academic Study at Campus Compact. He holds a Ph.D. in American History from Boston University and taught for over a decade at Northeastern University and as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Feinstein Institute for Public Service at Providence College.

**Dr. Elaine Ward**

Dr. Ward currently holds the Arnold F. Graves Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Dublin Institute of Technology’s Center for Social and Educational Research in the Higher Education Policy Research Unit. Elaine is researching the value of Arts and Humanities Research for HEPRU as part of a collaborative project with the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente in the Netherlands and with the Norwegian Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFUSTEP) in Norway. Her dissertation, entitled *Women’s Ways of Engagement: An Exploration of Gender, the Scholarship of Engagement, and Institutional Reward Policy and Practice* has been nominated for numerous awards and is the winner of the New England Educational Research Organization’s Schmidt Award for Outstanding Dissertation Research 2009 and the International Association of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement’s dissertation of the year award 2010. Dr. Ward is a Visiting Fellow at the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE), in Massachusetts and is active in a number of international research teams. She is a core member of a US-based research team that studies institutions that received the Carnegie Foundation for Teaching’s Community Engagement Elective Classification since the classification was first established in 2006.

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**Appendices:**

New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) Next Generation Project Team: see <http://www.nerche.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=355&Itemid=96>