

Dear Editor,

We are: Syracuse's Rise....

We are graduate students at Syracuse University writing to take a stand against Robin Wilson's unfair and one-sided critique of Syracuse University's mission of publicly engaged scholarship, *Scholarship in Action*, in her "Syracuse's Slide" article publicly published on October 2, 2011.

We write to share our stories of engaged research, teaching, learning, and civic life as citizens of Syracuse, New York and students enrolled at Syracuse University. Far from experiencing or perceiving a decrease in the rigor of our educational experience, we acknowledge what a privilege it is to grow in our disciplines through sharing and co-creating knowledge with diverse and valuable communities. In response to your article, one graduate student within our network posted the article on Facebook expressing outrage and dismay that work with, by and for publics could be labeled as a "lack of commitment to significant scholarly work." This may have been the spark out of which an alliance grew with the collective sense to speak back and express our belief that engaged scholarship powerfully *adds* to our academic experience, combats the out of date "Ivory Tower" metaphor, and rigorously contributes to our academic community.

We embrace engaged scholarship, the building of knowledge that is inseparable from practice. The inclusion of historically underrepresented students does not detract from our ability to recruit or to remain competitive. It contributes to a robust and dynamic learning environment where multiple perspectives and voices expand our notions of what is knowable. Public scholarship is important to us because it mobilizes community and campus resources, brilliance, and creativity.

We view community constituents as our research partners in the knowledge laboratory. This breathes life into the experience – it gives the work a richness and meaning and purpose. The idea that we should not engage the local community in a collaborative effort in creating social change while simultaneously being rigorously challenged academically creates a false dichotomy that does not allow room for the academy to grow.

Our engaged praxis informs our collective understanding of working and writing for change, building meaningful relationships between the university and the community, and perhaps most importantly, including a wider range of perspectives and voices in making knowledge. Relevant and responsible scholarship does not and should not happen in a vacuum. Like the professors Ms. Wilson interviewed, we do feel a commitment to the "broader academic community." However, we do not see this commitment as something in opposition to publicly engaged work. We are proud to be a part of a university whose commitment to engaged scholarship is unwavering.

We are engaged scholars. We are presenters at national research conferences. We are participants in research tanks. We are published scholars. We are students of color. We are partners on the Near West Side on the Gifford Street Community Press. We are participants in the school and community arts initiative at 601 Tully. We are allies of First Nation students. We are advocates who recognizing the significance and value of our geographic location on Haudenosaunee Land. We are the Haudenosaunee Promise Program, working to include native students in a predominately White institution. We are activist writers. We are creative writers who partner with veterans. We are tutors at the GED tutoring program at Auburn prison. We are Intergroup Dialogue facilitators partnering with civically active urban high school students. We are the SmartKids-Visual Stories project, and we believe students offer insight into school reform. We are international students who choose not to ignore the community surrounding our university.

We are partners working with local immigrant rights groups and religious organizations. We are working-class students, studying and working to combat oppression, exploitation, and war. We

are teachers and tutors of a diverse constituency of high school students enrolled in our highly competitive Summer College. We are researchers driven by social change who insist on conducting research *with not on* communities of color as a way of positively impacting society. We are *Scholars in Action*....

We are:

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