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If the research university were to redefine "service as scholarship" what would it be? The substantial intellectual and institutional resources of America's research universities are not readily accessible to the community. This article analyzes several elements in redefining service as scholarship, identifies obstacles to the process, and suggests ways of overcoming them.

Strengthening Service as Scholarship in the Research University

If the research university were to redefine "service as scholarship," what would it be? America's research universities have some of the greatest intellectual resources in the world, but they are not readily accessible to the community. Most of them have a mandate to develop knowledge for the welfare of society, but their top administrators and faculty members are uneven in their commitment, and the few faculty who take up its torch are not taken very seriously. And although their communities may need knowledge, only some community groups approach the university for assistance, and those that do often find it difficult to get what they need.

The university's public service—defined

here as work that develops knowledge for the welfare of society—is a resource with potential for problem-solving, but there is need to discuss even the most basic questions about the subject. What is meant by service? Who should be served? Which methods should be used to serve them? How can knowledge be made more accessible? Should the university have a comprehensive strategy for service and, if so, what should it be?

Community Needs and University Resources

Research universities are civic institutions established with a mandate to develop substantive knowledge and practical skills responsive to society. They have faculty members with expertise that can and do contribute to problem solving and preparing students for active citizenship in a democratic society. And they exercise disproportionate influence over other educational institutions in that initiatives in the research universities can lead to changes, both appropriate and inappropriate, in the others.

However, research universities do not show consistent commitment to public service. Although once these universities were active in "building the nation," today it is hard to find top administrators with dedication to service, and few faculty members view this function as central to their roles, with the result that they often appear marginal to society and become the target of critics who claim that they are not doing what they should do.

Service as Scholarship

The following are not the only elements in the process of strengthening service as scholarship, but are among the important ones:

Redefining Service as Scholarship

Public service is defined here as work that develops knowledge for the welfare of society. This meaning is consistent with *Professional Service and Faculty Rewards*, the report of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges that defines service as "work that draws upon one's professional expertise or academic knowledge for the welfare of society, and with *Making the Case for Professional Service*, the American Association for Higher Education report by Ernest Lynton that uses the definition "work by

faculty members based on scholarly expertise and contributing to the mission of the institution." Both reports use the term "professional service" for what I prefer to call "public service." We all agree on a meaning of "public service" or "professional service" that contrasts with what might be called "professional citizenship" through participation in professional associations, "university citizenship" through membership on campus committees, and other forms of "service" with which faculty are familiar. Some might think it efficient to combine these various activities into a single evaluative category, but only work that develops knowledge can constitute scholarly work as defined by Boyer in the Carnegie Foundation report, *Scholarship Reconsidered*. It is distinct from other "service" and should have its own documentation, evaluation, and reward.

Formulating a Strategy

A comprehensive strategy for service as scholarship would include a statement of goals toward which action is directed, identification of issues that appeal to constituencies, analysis of factors that facilitate or limit progress, and recognition of resources available and needed for implementation. It would require procedures for the documentation and evaluation of activities, and commitment to university-community collaboration by key actors in the institution.

Most research universities do not have a comprehensive strategy for public service. They may strategize for recruiting faculty members, building a library, or filling the football stadium, but do not usually think or act strategically for service. Some give an appearance of strategy, but even they are uneven in levels of commitment and investment of resources.

Reconceptualizing Research

Reconceptualizing research would broaden the prevailing paradigm to include other ways of knowing and "the welfare of society" as elements in knowledge development, as expressed in *Scholarship Reconsidered*. In the new paradigm, researchers would involve the community from problem definition to data collection to discussion of action steps. They would regard community members as research partners and active participants in knowledge development rather than as human subjects and passive recipients of information. They would share results with professional peers and also with popular audiences

with potential for utilization. They would receive rewards based on an as-
sessment of its scholarly significance and also on its impact on society.

Reconceptualizing research as service is an epistemological and method-
ological matter. To the extent that research is a major function of the research
university that can be reconceptualized in this way, the challenges are more
complex than are usually associated with the service category in performance
review. Needless to say, broadening the criteria for the evaluation of excel-
lence in scholarship is a formidable task in institutions whose members are
deeply invested in the status quo.

Making Knowledge More Accessible

For communities to benefit from the university's knowledge, it must be
accessible to them. For many, however, the university has too often become,
like Kafka's castle, "vast remote, inaccessible."

Making knowledge more accessible requires recognition that both the in-
dividual and the institution have responsibility for knowledge utilization and
that structures are necessary for the purpose. These include "contact and en-
try" points for potential users and "information and referral" procedures to
route them to the resources they need; "interdisciplinary arrangements" that
increase interaction among knowledge producers from diverse disciplines and
focus them on issues transcending the expertise of each one of them; "brokering
mechanisms" that handle administrative arrangements and contractual details
between partners; "bridging mechanisms" that mediate between collaborators
on campus and the community; and "public understanding" programs for dis-
semination by "communicators" who reach diverse audiences "translators"
who translate jargon into language that people can understand, and "anima-
tors" who transform knowledge into action.

Mobilizing Internally for External Outreach

For most universities, service as scholarship would require restructuring
in one of four ways. First is to centralize this function into an administrative
structure at the presidential, vice presidential, or other institutional level. Sec-
ond is to decentralize this function into academic units across the university.
Third is to incorporate service into the existing infrastructure through units that
increase interaction across the university. Fourth is to build upon the existing

institutional structure and present activities of the faculty without creating new bureaucratic structures or decentralizing the function to subunits with uneven levels of commitment.

No single structure fits all universities; the key is to fit structure to situation. However, the present structure is based on decentralization to local units, and most efforts to mobilize internally run contrary to the normal way of doing things in academia; even when a fitting internal institutional structure is found, its impact will depend on its relationships with the community.

Involving the Faculty

Involving the faculty takes a systematic strategy to sensitize them to the intellectual integrity and educational benefit of the service orientation, and to reward them for their work. Part of this necessarily involves a serious cultural campaign, increasing their support in the department or discipline, and providing promotion and other rewards in the institution. More than they admit, faculty care about these rewards, a phenomenon that can contribute to change, but that itself are not usually sufficient.

Faculty members are not nincompoops. Like other people, they want to do a good job, get paid for the work they do, and receive recognition for their efforts. They tend to respond to the rewards they receive, and when these become significant enough to favor research and teaching for the welfare of society, then they too will likely respond. However, broadening the social role of knowledge producers will be difficult in institutions whose members have been conditioned to narrow specialization and dissuaded from service from their first days of graduate training into their subsequent professional careers.

Modifying the Reward Structure

The new reward structure would recognize that the creation of new knowledge and publication in scholarly journals are only one way of knowing; others include the integration and utilization of knowledge through training, consultation, and technical assistance. It would broaden the criteria for the evaluation of excellence in knowledge development, an effort that would encounter resistance from those who are invested in the status quo.

"What was the quantity and quality of your research in terms of its ser-

vice?" "To whom did you provide service and in what form?" "How did service inform your academic work?" "How did you draw upon your academic discipline or professional expertise for the welfare of society, and with what effects for knowledge development and community change?" If the dean or department chair asked faculty members to answer these questions in this year's performance review, it might raise consciousness for needed change.

Integrating Service-Learning into the Curriculum

Community service learning—a pedagogy in which students serve the community and learn from the experience—is one way to reintegrate social values into the curriculum. Studies show that when students serve the community and reflect critically upon the experience through structured learning activities— such as individual consultations, journal writing, or in-service seminars—they learn a great deal as a result.

Studies show that service learning develops substantive knowledge with concurrent gains in academic achievement; provides practical skills in problem solving through experiential education; and strengthens social responsibility and civic values in a diverse society. It is a powerful pedagogy and way of knowing consistent with the "learning by doing" philosophy of John Dewey through which some students learn more than they would from conventional classroom instruction.

Consultation and Technical Assistance

Consultation and technical assistance by faculty members are common ways in which universities provide expertise to communities, as when they are asked to analyze some data, solve a problem, or evaluate a program. This type of work provides faculty members with new life experiences outside their professional circles that can stimulate research and improve teaching. It enables them to interact with people often very different from themselves, relate theory and practice in a real-world situation, and get new ideas for research and materials for teaching.

However, universities are slow to facilitate this function. They usually do not have the institutional infrastructure or logistical support to help faculty members make arrangements with clients or maintain written records of activities. They do not have procedures for its documentation and evaluation or

its recognition and reward, even though there are highly developed procedures for research and teaching. They also do not share in the financial remuneration from consultation and technical assistance, even when interest in the work draws partly from an individual's academic or institutional affiliation. And yet if this affiliation is a part of what makes an individual valuable to a client, then shouldn't the institution have some degree of responsibility, recognition, and remuneration for the relationship?

Involving the Community

Who is the community? Most universities are silent on the issue, or take the general population as their community, or remain aloof from the idea of serving particular groups. However, universities that try to serve everyone may serve no one, replicate existing inequities in the social structure, and open themselves to domination by those already advantaged by economic or political resources. The issue is not that universities are captured by special interests, but rather that they respond to the most powerful inputs they receive, and these come from these interests.

Universities that ignore their local community run the risk of occasional opposition—as when landlords neglect the housing near the campus landmark, or when residents protest the use of hazardous materials in the laboratory, or when legislators cut the university's budget when the institution rejects students from their districts. University presidents make a serious mistake if they ignore that their destiny is also intertwined with residents who are lacking in resources and local in their orientation.

Changing the Culture

Although some university administrators discuss service as central to their institutional mission, deans and department heads worry that service will detract from research and teaching, and faculty believe that there are few rewards for this function. They may even become conditioned to regard service as a waste of time, distraction from work, or threat to their careers, despite the evidence to the contrary. Studies show that those who engage in significant service score higher in the number of funded research projects, in the number of professional peer-reviewed publications and in student evaluations of their teaching, than those who do not, despite widely held beliefs to the contrary.

When individuals hold beliefs that run contrary to the facts, there is a cultural problem.

Changing the culture of the university is an enormous undertaking fraught with obstacles at every turn. It is possible to imagine a cultural campaign with consciousness-raising and support-building among university presidents and executive officers, deans and department heads, and intellectual leaders and change agents among the faculty. Such a strategy would evoke resistance, but this is normal in any change process.

Providing the Leadership

Leadership for the university's public service is a shared responsibility. For example, the university president has a formal position that provides both a platform on which to campaign and an appearance of greater power than is actually available in a decentralized institution. Vice presidents and other administrative officers formulate policies and provide funding support, but depend upon deans and department heads for implementation. These local officials have relative autonomy in making decisions about personnel appointments, performance standards, and curricular requirements, but are more absorbed in boosting their academic units in a time of retrenchment than in taking initiatives in areas that fall between institutional lines. Most of these operational officers praise the benefits of interdisciplinarity in theory, but rarely provide leadership in practice.

Obstacles and Opportunities

Some obstacles are individual in nature. It is difficult to strengthen service when the president does not convey commitment or have authority to coordinate a successful initiative; or when deans and department heads do not define service as scholarship or devise adequate procedures for its evaluation; or when faculty members do not perceive that service is compatible with research and teaching or that it will result in rewards.

Other obstacles are institutional in nature. It is difficult to expect much from the president when he or she is limited by the organizational context, or from the deans and department heads when they are absorbed in boosting their own academic units rather than increasing interaction, or from faculty members who are socialized into a culture that dissuades them from this function.

Yet other obstacles originate in the political-economic arena of which the university is part. Simply stated, universities hear from private corporations, professional associations, business groups, and computer companies—all of which have concentrated economic interests and organizational resources to influence the institution. They almost never hear from low-income community groups who could benefit a great deal from the resources. However, if community groups organized around the university more effectively, or if the institution reached out in ways that increased external expectations, then it could create change, although this is largely untested nationwide.

Conclusion

New initiatives are needed to strengthen service as scholarship and make knowledge more accessible to the community. They will involve mobilizing internally for external outreach, changing the institutional culture, and involving the community in the process. They will encounter resistance, but this is a normal part of the change process.

Historically, the most important contributions of the university have come from the creation of new knowledge and the education of students. But new models are emerging in which research universities develop knowledge and provide education in ways that also serve the community. The new vision is one in which excellence in research and teaching is inseparable from service in accordance with the highest standards of the university.

NOTE: This article is a substantially abridged version of "Reinventing the Research University for Public Service" published in *Journal of Planning Literature*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (February 1997), pp. 307 - 319.

Suggested Readings

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