

COPE Outcomes and Assessment Committee Progress Report

December 11, 2002

THE BASIC QUESTIONS

- In what ways are we relevant to the public, in our ongoing teaching and research?
- How can we document and measure that relevance?
- How can we use those measures to track improvements in public engagement?

OUR CHARGE IS TO DEVELOP

- specific short term and long term expected outcomes of COPE activities
- ways that University of Minnesota would be different in five years as a fully engaged university
- measures of public engagement as an indicator of institutional performance

DOHERTY CLASSIFICATION

Prof. Bill Doherty has suggested a useful classification of three categories of civic engagement, as they relate to faculty work.

1. The ability of faculty to articulate the public value of their work
2. "Outreach", in which we bring our expertise to people in ways that they see as relevant (the traditional notion of outreach)
3. Collaborative working relationship with community partners to define problems and work together to solve them. This often necessitates bringing a comprehensive and integrated research, teaching, and service scholarship portfolio to the situation. The public should be fully and equally engaged in this process.

KELLOGG COMMISSION SEVEN-PART TEST

The Kellogg Commission's seven-part test for an engaged university addresses issues that seem mainly directed at part 3 of the Doherty typology, but which have some applicability to all three types of public engagement.

- Responsiveness: are we listening to the publics we serve and responding to their needs? Do we provide space and resources for community-university discussion of the public problems that need to be addressed?
- Respect for partners: Do we encourage joint definition of problems, solutions, and success? Do we respect the capabilities of our public partners?
- Academic neutrality: Do we maintain our role as neutral facilitator and source of factual information when public policy issues are discussed?
- Accessibility: Have we made access to our expertise and resources as simple and direct as possible? Is our expertise equally accessible to all constituencies?
- Integration: Do we bring multiple disciplines together to work toward solutions to interdisciplinary problems? Is there incentive for faculty and students to be involved in engagement activity?
- Coordination: Do we know what each other is doing?
- Resource partnerships: Do we commit adequate resources to engagement activity? Do we tap into various funding sources to get our work done? Do we help our partners get necessary funds?

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON OUTCOME AND ASSESSMENT MEASURES

With these general principles in mind, the Outcomes and Assessment Committee has begun to develop three sets of outcomes and assessment measures, one for each of the three Doherty categories.

Type 1: Regular faculty teaching and research

Five-year vision: In five years, it will be widely recognized both inside and outside the University that public engagement, in its various manifestations, is an integral part of our teaching and scholarship, rather than the third of a three-part mission (teaching, research, outreach). Not everyone will be engaged equally or in the same way, but all will be cognizant of the ways in which their teaching and research serve public purposes.

Some desirable outcomes:

- All departments, colleges, and campuses will include public engagement in their mission statements. Effective public engagement that enriches teaching and scholarship will be recognized, fostered, communicated, and rewarded.
- Faculty governance will be supportive of increased recognition of public engagement as properly integrated faculty work.
- Faculty efforts in public engagement, even when indirect, will be noted in annual reports and considered in merit reviews.
- Discussion of the public implications of scholarly work will be common in departmental conversations, and an integral part of the acculturation of new faculty and graduate students.
- Invidious distinctions between basic and applied research will dissolve in recognition of a continuum of challenging problems and important solutions, as appropriate to each unit.
- The U will be recognized as taking a long-term, objective position on important but contentious issues. It will play a visible role in facilitating dialog, as a convener of groups with different interests.
- Our positive interactions with under-represented communities will result in the admission of more minority students into our undergraduate and graduate programs.
- The recognition that real social problems can rarely be solved along strict academic disciplinary lines will lead to the development of new interdisciplinary courses and research projects. Many of these might bring together scientific and humanistic perspectives.
- University policies and budgetary mechanisms will be seen as supportive of enhanced interdisciplinary activities.
- University Relations, in its role of communicating between the public and the academic units, will be more effective in telling the story of how fundamental research and scholarship serve important public purposes.

Some possible practical/quantifiable measures:

- teaching (classroom hours and credits, new interdisciplinary courses, service learning, ...)
- students (classes, dissertations, ...)
- research and scholarship (papers, books, reports, interdisciplinary projects, ...)
- funding (grants, gifts, contracts, ...)
- publicity (newspaper and magazine stories, TV and radio items, ...)
- contacts with publics (projects, lectures and performances, ...)

- cooperative interactions with other universities and colleges, ...
- increased recruitment of students from under-represented populations

Type 2: Traditional outreach and consulting

Five-year vision: In five years faculty and staff in all parts of the University will have—to the extent they desire—interactions with appropriate publics, through extension and consulting activities, that enrich their teaching and scholarship while providing benefits to constituents.

Some desirable outcomes:

- An updated vision for Extension will have been achieved, with a sustainable division of labor and financial support between university and MES assignments.
- The role of the College of Continuing Education in forwarding the public engagement agenda will be clarified.
- Consultation with the private sector and with state and local governmental entities will be recognized as an important part of civic engagement.

Some possible practical/quantifiable measures:

- Constituents served
- Economic and social impact of services provided

Type 3: Community partnerships

Five-year vision: In five years, there will be numerous long-term community-university research partnerships in which the two are equal contributors, utilizing the strengths and insights of both partners.

Some desirable outcomes:

- There will be numerous formal and informal conversations between university and community members, including external advisory groups, leading to better understanding of the needs and priorities of both sides.
- Through web sites, newsletters, meetings, call-ins, and community-based staff, the resources of the University will be made better known and more accessible to the public.
- Faculty and students will learn the difficult but essential lessons of how to work patiently, respectfully and successfully with community partners.
- The strengths that communities bring to these partnerships will be broadly recognized.
- When possible, community members will be made part of research teams, and will be appropriately trained and compensated.
- Community outreach projects will be viewed as opportunities to recruit students from under-represented groups to the university.
- Service learning opportunities will be expanded—in ways that are not burdensome to community agencies—by careful planning, training, and consultation; and will be as thoughtfully evaluated as other educational activities.
- Faculty peers will take into account, during merit review, the special challenges posed by properly collaborative community-based research.
- The complexities of real-world research will break down disciplinary barriers, producing new,

rich interdisciplinary research and teaching opportunities. New sources of funding will be found to underwrite these ventures.

- There will be improved coordination among our various departments, centers, institutes, and other offices to facilitate interdisciplinary work with community partners.
- We will have better coordination with regional partners.

Some possible practical/quantifiable measures:

- Number of community-based projects, and number of people involved and served
- Number of community people who gain or enhance useful skills as a result of such projects
- Amount of new funding generated for these projects
- Number of under-represented minority students recruited to the University
- Number of students involved in service learning projects, and number of clients served thereby
- Number of new courses that are based on interdisciplinary, community-related themes, and the number of students taking these courses
- Number of papers and books published by faculty engaged in community-based research, and external funding generated thereby
- Successful promotion and tenure cases of faculty engaged in community-based research

NEXT STEPS

- Focus more sharply on the most important and feasible measures of institutional performance, with the goal of recommending to the Council and to the EVPP a set of assessment criteria that can be used for the University Plan, Performance, and Assessment Report.
- Develop and recommend sets of short-term, mid-term, and longer-term outcomes for at least some of the items in each of the three Doherty categories.
- Work with the Minnesota Extension Service and the College of Continuing Education to expand and deepen the issues sketched in the Type 2: Traditional outreach and consulting category.
- Identify others who might help us with these tasks, either as committee members or as advisors