

Public Service and Community Engagement Statement: David Arendale

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Engaged service to the community is an integral part of my research, personal faith, and an extension of who I am as a connected member of society. Many of my service activities are directed related to increasing access and success of students in postsecondary education, especially those that are historically underrepresented. Part of my passion for serving students who are the first student in their families to attend college is that I am a first-generation college attendee and graduate. My parents were warmly supportive of my attending college. They did not have the financial resources to pay my board and tuition. Also, they could not provide mentoring for the rigors of college as neither of them had graduated from high school. As with many young people during the Great Depression, the model was to attend high school until 16, get a job, and then get married. I could not have asked for a better pair of parents who cultivated a love of learning and reading. Just as with my classroom experiences, community engagement is a critical grounding element of my research. It also becomes a venue to disseminate my research findings.

I employ an engaged scholarship model that collaborates with community agencies and professional groups to solve issues related to student success. We work together to identify problems, test interventions, evaluate the results, and disseminate the best practices to the education community. These groups serve both as my research partners and locations for the research studies. The engaged scholarship requires a dynamic focus that changes through interactions between the testing of hypotheses and needs expressed by potential consumers of the scholarship. This requires not only my observation but also serving as an active agent within the community.

Intersection of my Personal Faith with my Professional Life

For too much of my life, my faith as a Christ-follower was a stealth identity compared to professional life as an educator. However, I found intersections of my faith with my roles as a <[researcher and knowledge disseminator](#)>, <[public service provider](#)>, and <[teacher](#)>. Being a professional can be a solitary life. Much responsibility is on the educator for their work performance. Life as an educator was more of a lifestyle than a predictable job. The following Bible verse reminded me that I was responsible for my work, “*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men*” Colossians 3:23). Following is a description of those three parts of my life.

I was clear in my college classes and with my colleagues about being a Christ-follower rather than a Christian. An unfortunate growing trend is the word “Christian” having negative baggage affixed to it in the eyes of students and young adults. Too many think “Christians” are negative, overly judgmental about others, and a killjoy about life. Many think Christians automatically reject gay, bisexual, or transgender people. Some of my best colleagues and friends are gay. For purposes of this brief statement, I will not try to unpack those ideas other than to say I am a “Christ-follower”, literally someone who seeks to emulate the life of Jesus. Rather than focusing on others, I concern myself with my relationship with God. My issues are enough for me to deal with. The church that I

attend welcomes everyone to worship and learn. I participate in the community outreach activities of our church to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and provide ministries for those in need. The first step toward long-lasting change in society is for people to have a changed heart and to become a Christ-follower. With change on the inside, they are more likely to behave differently towards others and work to achieve social justice for everyone. Inner freedom is the first step to a free society.

Intersection with <[Public Service and Engagement](#)>

Some higher education educators live a relatively solitary life of teaching their classes, conducting research, publishing through journals and books, and attending the occasional professional conference to present a paper on their research and listen to their colleagues. That lifestyle was not satisfactory for me. I pursued a community-engaged scholarship. Public service and engagement were essential. I needed to connect with other educators and the general public to engage in dialogue and collaborate on research. Working as research partners with colleagues and people in the community was essential. The Bible provided explicit admonitions to engage with the community and seek social justice for them. Two examples from the Old Testament include the Book of Isaiah 1:17, *“Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless and plead the widow’s cause”* and the Book of Jeremiah 22:3, *“Thus says the LORD: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed.”* In the New Testament from the Book of James 2:26, *“For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”* Being a Christ-follower was accompanied by the expectation to engage in social action actively.

My role has been to take the lessons discovered by my research teams and by others in the community and then translate them so that others can act and improve the condition of others. I don’t invent best practices in education. But, I have a good knack for conducting research and learning from others and then effectively sharing that information with others through various venues.

For nearly a quarter-century, I have worked with like-minded educators who have identified best practices in teaching developmental-level courses, tutoring programs, and student-led peer study groups. I am responsible for heading up a team of fifty that produced a guide to best practices for study group programs, <[website](#)>. A significant expansion of that guide is antiracism policies and practices. This area has been overlooked previously. I have been a frequent conference presenter. This has also allowed me to converse with colleagues and learn from them.

Throughout my career, I have followed the work of TRIO and other equity organizations focused on historically-underrepresented and marginalized students in secondary and postsecondary education. For over a decade, I have led a team from the Educational Opportunity Association (EOA) to identify best practices for serving these students and created a <[website](#)> to disseminate those practices. EOA represented TRIO and GEAR UP federally-funded programs in the Midwest.

While I have focused on first-gen students for decades, I neglected to more deeply consider the plight of people of color and how their lives have been negatively impacted

by racism, discrimination, and poverty. In the past couple of years, I have reexamined my life and the privileges that came quickly to me as a white male. I am on a growth curve to more deeply understand how issues of race and poverty intersect with student learning and the academic support systems that were designed to help them achieve higher grades and graduate at higher rates. To help me understand these issues, I joined a nationwide research and writing group named Colleagues of Color for Social Justice. I am a fellow learner and author. Our first two publications are *Antiracism Policies and Practices for Student Study Groups* and *Antiracism Glossary for Education and Life*. These are available through our <[CCSJ website](#)>.

Jesus spent much of his time with the oppressed and the marginalized people in society. I think that Predominately White Christian Churches have often ignored the day-to-day experiences of people of color in America. There is much to be ashamed of and much to take action with. I found new energy working with my colleagues of color to help solve the serious issues that make it difficult for students to achieve their dreams. I used to be afraid to engage in race and social justice matters. Especially with people of color. I have discovered that they have warmly embraced me in conversation to help me learn and take action with them as we jointly tackle the problems. I feel like for the first time, I am working out my Christ-follower faith within the context of this diverse and hurting world.

Services to Academic Communities

Service to Pratt Community College and Highland Community Colleges in Kansas

As a faculty member at Pratt Community College, I was co-chair of the enrollment management task force and the campus computer planning task force. At Highland Community College, I served on the North Central Accreditation Steering Committee and was chairperson of the learning resource center committee. I was co-director for the campus holistic student retention program. That program won a prestigious award from the Noel-Levitz organization for its outstanding retention program. I served the faculty as chairperson and chief negotiator on behalf of the Faculty Association during contract and salary bargaining talks.

Service to the University of Missouri-Kansas City

As a student affairs division staff member, I served as a member of the following committees and task forces: enrollment management, model campus living project, services to students with disabilities, orientation program, graduate teaching assistant training program, and staff development.

Service to Academic Departments at the University of Minnesota

I was actively involved with three academic units at UMN, the General College, the Department of Postsecondary Teaching and Learning (PsTL), and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. My roles with PsTL included: being an elected member of the Executive Committee that advises the department head on policy matters, curriculum transformation, and strategic planning. Other committees included: revenue generation and new academic programming task force, graduate advisory council, web portal development team, and the executive council of the department. A major role was

co-chair of the Graduate Certificate Development Team. With the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, my major responsibility was serving on the tenure review committee.

Service to Colleges at the University of Minnesota

Service to the General College included serving as a representative to the social concerns committee, admissions and advancement committee, and search committees for the assistant dean and the director of student affairs.

Within the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), I served in a variety of venues: search committees for the director of TRIO Student Support Services, CEHD awards committee, chairperson of the CEHD curriculum council, CEHD iPad implementation team, CEHD committee on technology, taskforce on CEHD on-line, and co-director of the Jandris Center.

Within the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), I have served as a trainer for professional staff, parents, and students in the Upward Bound TRiO program. I served as representative to the CEHD Committee on Instructional Technology which developed recommendations for policies and expenditures designed to increase effectiveness for office staff, faculty members, and an enriched learning environment for students. I have served a variety of roles for the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy including Faculty Advisor for Outreach Activities, Advisory Board Member, and columnist for the Center's newsletter. I was appointed to the College's Curriculum Council as a representative of my academic department for graduate curriculum issues and later served as the chairperson of the Council.

Service to the University of Minnesota

Due to my previous experience as National Director of the Center for Supplemental Instruction (SI) based at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, I co-led the team that developed the SMART Learning Commons. I adapted the SI program for use at UMN to serve students in biology, chemistry, and mathematics courses to increase their academic achievement and graduation rates. The campus name for this approach is Peer Assisted Learning (PAL). My roles with PAL included: (a) training all PAL student paraprofessional facilitators, (b) developing PAL training materials; (c) serving on the PAL management team, (d) create new courses for professional development of the PAL facilitators, and (e) conducting research studies of the PAL program. In addition to teaching the professional development course for several years, I continued to be a consultant to the PAL program administrator and met on a frequent basis.

Additional service roles for UMN included: chairperson of the Senate Committee on Information Technologies, mentor for the Teaching in an Active Learning Classroom Faculty Learning Community, faculty advisor for the National Society of Collegiate Scholars UMN Chapter, appointed representative to the UMN Public Engagement Network, member of the Steering Committee for Transition of Course Management System for the UMN System, and staff trainer for the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence

Service to the Profession

I have long provided service to the profession of college access at the state, national, and international levels. I was recognized for this service through selection as a Founding Fellow of the profession in 2000 by the American Council of Developmental Education Associations (ACDEA). This followed nearly two decades of elected service at the state and national level, including election as president of the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE). Service projects include the following.

Global-Level

In 2020, I was recruited to serve as a board member on the Academic Council that guides the Mentor Academy. The academy is developing curriculum for an international training program for training student mentors. I have helped with field testing of the curriculum and served as an advisor.

National-Level

In 2010, I was selected by the Educational Opportunity Association to create a system to identify, validate, and disseminate best education practices for historically-underrepresented secondary and postsecondary students that are typically served by federally-funded GEAR UP and TRIO programs. <https://besteducationpractices.org> It was named the National Best Practices Clearinghouse. I led a team to recruit educators to submit education practices that would be evaluated by an external panel of experts regarding suitability to be made available through the website which I created and through webinars for the nationwide community of educators. I continue this work.

In 2015, a writing group that I had been involved for nearly a quarter-century decided to formalize our writing projects. We had previously worked under the National Association for Developmental Education to create best practices for peer learning programs, developmental-level courses, tutoring programs, and the teaching/learning process. Our new name is the Alliance for Postsecondary Academic Support Programs. We will be publishing our work with the National College Learning Centers Association.

In the fall of 2020, I recruited a group of college educators who were people of color to create a research and writing group. I had come to the conclusion that I needed to create multi-racial writing groups for upcoming publications and research projects. Our focus is the intersection of race and social justice with learning assistance and developmental education. This national group swelled to more than 50 members. It is named Colleagues of Color for Social Justice. www.socialjustice.work We are currently working on a dozen publications and media projects. So far, we have completed an antiracism glossary for education and life and a guide to policies and practices for antiracist peer study groups.

The National Center for Developmental Education recruited me to serve as an advisory board member for programs and services. Several times I served as a faculty member for the Center's Kellogg Institute for the Certification of Adult and Developmental Educators. Each summer the institute conducts a month-long training workshop for current and emerging leaders of the profession.

My most extensive leadership was provided to the members of the National Association for Developmental Education (now named the National Organization for Student Success). I was elected president of the association and served the membership through a variety of other roles: Commission on Professional Standards and Evaluation, ad hoc strategic plan committee, chair of the Emeritus Council, co-chair of the national conference, first content editor of the association website, professional liaison committee, and co-chair of Supplemental Instruction special interest group.

The American Council for Developmental Education Associations is composed of five national associations that represent the field of college access. This group selected me as chairperson of the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) Taskforce to investigate the strategic repositioning of all the major professional associations, including the creation of a new national organization to subsume the existing ones. As a result of the BRC report, town hall meetings, and national presentations over a three-year time period, the two largest organizations have moved into discussions to create a new organization. I was selected as chair of a working group investigating this opportunity. During the summer 2007, I convened a group of former national presidents and leaders to analyze the opportunity. The product of our labor was a 60-page report that provides a model for a 21st-century approach to college access that employs an expanded and transformed mission, vision, and language. I served as editor and major contributor to this report.

I have served on the editorial board for the major publications in this professional field: *CRDEUL Annual Monograph Series*, *Education Sciences*, *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, *Journal of Developmental Education*, *Journal of Peer Learning*, *Journal of Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, *Journal of Teaching and Learning*, and *The Learning Assistance Review*. I have reviewed manuscripts for seven other professional publications.

State-Level

Kansas. I served with several technology-related organizations: Higher Education Board of the Kansas Association for Educational Communication and Technology, and the Vice-Chair of the Kansas Association of Community College's Committee on Television. I was the chair of the Northeast Kansas Human Resources Association and Secretary/Treasurer of the Kansas Learning and Support Services Association.

Missouri. I served a variety of roles for the Midwest Regional Association for Developmental Education including newsletter editor, conference chair, and president.

Minnesota. There are several community and state organizations that I have been involved since arriving at the University. My longest working relationship is with the Association of Minnesota Community and Technical College Counselors which is composed of faculty counselors at the 40 institutions within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system. I have served as a consultant for their Student Retention Taskforce. We meet six times annually to discuss research-based practices for improving student persistence on their campuses. My roles with their group have included: (a) presenting keynote talks and co-managing their state conference, (b) conducting periodic training workshops on student retention, (c) assisting development

of training materials, and (d) identifying the contribution of personal counseling services to improved student outcomes through research studies.

Another community group with which I have worked since arriving in Minnesota has been with the Twin Cities TRiO Association. This group is composed of the federally funded TRiO programs that are located in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. I conduct annual training workshops for their student paraprofessional staff. These individuals provide tutoring support for their grant-eligible students that are often first-generation college, economically disadvantaged, and historically underrepresented in postsecondary education. This venue has afforded early field testing of the PAL training materials mentioned in the earlier section of my service to the University community.

Service to the Local Community

For the past decade, I have served as a mentor to a young man who comes from a disadvantaged background through the Kinship Youth Development Program. We often met weekly to take in community events, share a meal, and more importantly engage in conversation. Regardless of my residence in Kansas, Missouri, and Minnesota, I have been heavily involved with a local church through service as a small group discussion leader, Sunday School discussion leader, a greeter for church services, community service activities, and other roles.

Summing It All Up

My involvement with the previously described service activities has been based upon my long involvement with the profession and the organizations that represent this field. As a faculty member, I embrace the three worlds that I operate within: teaching, research, and service. Each one is essential for the proper functioning of the other two. My service activities are essential for grounding of my research in real-world problems and to provoke new ideas for inclusion in my teaching.