The United States: Opportunities for Growth in a Dynamic Landscape

Elizabeth Tryon, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Philip Nyden, Loyola University-Chicago
Dadit Hidayat, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The United States—a large, diverse country with a huge economy—has a wide range of experience, history and structures for community-university research partnerships (CURPs), and the variety of philosophies and practices is rich and complex. In areas scattered widely throughout the country, there is authentic community-based research (CBR) being conducted with varying levels of community participation (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker & Donohue, 2003) and a few communities of practice concerned with equitable research partnerships. But in a recent global survey, only 15% of the U.S. institutions that responded to the survey reported that the research challenges originated in the community, despite the institutional structures or centers labeling themselves “community-based” (Tremblay, Hall & Tandon, 2014).

Challenges to CURPs cited by respondents to the UNESCO survey included lack of available Institutional Review Board (IRB) training for community members in Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR); funding for PhD research assistants; more paid staff from the community as co-investigators; and a need to “mandate more equitable partnerships including evaluations from community members”. Another respondent cited funding instability overall, and “insecurity - within the academy...inconsistent support for engaged faculty, fewer tenured positions, tenure decisions often made on the basis of grant and paper production, both of which are present in CURP, but working at the community level is time consuming;” and PIs report “being urged to do less community work and/or have had to make personal career decisions based on their commitment to working with communities” (UNESCO, 2014). Other challenges around short-term availability of students and academic calendars not synchronizing with community time frames have been detailed by previous research in the U.S. on academic-community partnerships such as service learning (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). A survey on global service learning was administered in 2012 to members of The Research Universities Civic Engagement Network (TRUCEN) in the U.S., and mirrored these findings, as well as a need for institutional frameworks, and a strong faculty connection to programs and partners (Tryon, Hood & Taalbi, 2013).
In October 2014, Cornell University announced a $50 million challenge gift to spur a further investment of up to a total of $150 million, with the stated goal to “educate students with the technical and academic knowledge to be engaged citizens of the world. The effort aims to achieve participation in high-quality, experience-based learning opportunities by all students at the undergraduate level by 2025” (Hayes, 2014). Research is mentioned as one of the activities that will be considered from a student learning outcomes perspective: “...[through] volunteer activities to intellectual engagement to the pursuit of careers that benefit others, students’ ...outcomes will be transformed [and] extend programs beyond the classroom that nurture empathy, initiative, cooperation, self-reflection and compassion” (Cornell Chronicle, 2014).

**History**

The Land Grant university philosophy dating from the Morrill Act in the 1850s (Cooper, 1999) created vast numbers of community-university partnerships in agriculture, health-related and many other disciplines, mostly following the one-way or translational methodology of the university ‘extending its knowledge’, but there has also been CBR in a co-constructed framework by engaged scholars with some institutional support. Action research and participatory action research were taken up in the 20th century by scholar practitioners such as John Gaventa and Myles Horton at Highlander and Randy Stoecker at the University of Toledo (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2008; Strand, et al., 2003). Several notable centers have provided structures for this work, which will be detailed in this paper. However, this equitable form of engagement where the community half of the partnership has an equal voice in decisions about design and research agenda has been slow to expand in the U.S. in comparison to the proliferation of service learning and co-curricular volunteer activities or alternative breaks.

**Institutional infrastructures for CURPs**

There is no centralized national structure that deals specifically with CBR, although the National Campus Compact, a nonprofit intended to promote campus-community engagement in general, has 1100 institutional members in the United States, and CBR is a piece of their national dialogue. The TRUCEN network is a subset or outgrowth of the Campus Compact that has thirty-nine members ranging from private schools like Stanford, Brown, Tufts and Harvard to state and land-grant universities Michigan State, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Texas-Austin, Michigan-Ann Arbor, Wisconsin-Madison, Berkeley and UCLA. The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute for Health (NIH) are two ‘major players’ in the federal academic granting mechanism. The NIH website’s homepage does not specifically mention community impact. However, calls in 2007 and 2012 mention CBPR. Since 1997, the NSF has lifted up importance
of community outcomes by a review process that incorporates “broader impacts”, defined here as “the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes” (National Science Foundation, n.d., Merit review criteria section, para. 3).

The NSF held summits in 2013 and 2014 on creating institutional infrastructure for broader impacts. Academic leaders such as Nancy Cantor, Chancellor at Rutgers University, advocated for “…[the] need to shift our approach from public communication to public engagement” and for institutions to “be ‘of the community,’ meaning …[they] come together to commit to innovation and social mobility” (NSF, 2014, p. 1). However, beyond those calls for greater collaboration with community, the language in the most recent NSF grant proposal guidelines does not go beyond a translational approach with this guidance (e.g., “researchers are increasingly reaching out to the general public as a means of raising awareness and increasing appreciation of the role that science plays in the quality of everyday life” [NSF, 2014, p. 1]) toward a recognition of community knowledge or desire for participatory research proposals.

Within institutions, an analysis by Hall, Tremblay & Downing (2009) defines four major types of HEI structures for organizing community-university partnerships (cited in Fitzgerald, 2014). Beyond a common individual-level or “Type one” faculty-community project partnership, a “co-optive” or “Type two” approach has been used in targeted fields such as public health and economic development, and these research partnerships are becoming more interested in the CBPR end of the spectrum in methodology (Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 250). While the U.S. is a decentralized and polarized environment, there are pockets of multi-institutional partnerships that subscribe specifically to an equity approach in their research relationships. Many universities have a commitment to CBR in the field of public health in addressing health disparities. Meredith Minkler at University of California-Berkeley, as well as Nina Wallerstein at the Center for Participatory Research at University of New Mexico and Barbara A. Israel with the Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center, are among this group. The University of Illinois-Chicago’s Associate Professor Joy Hammel of the Department of Occupational Therapy responded to the 2014 UNESCO survey with the following information: “We have multiple CBPR/CURP projects that actively involve people with disabilities across diverse communities and result in policy/systems change that are also now being extended to other countries” (UNESCO Global survey data, 2014).

Michigan State University has a centrally-funded office of Outreach and Engagement with about a dozen staff headed by an Associate Provost; thus, in Hall et al.’s (2009) analysis, would also be considered a “Type 3” structure… with “an inclusive investment at the institutional level to define engagement scholarship as central to the mission of the university” (Fitzgerald, 2014, p. 250). The university’s mission statement includes a bullet point:
“Advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that are innovative, research-driven, and lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities, at home and around the world” (Michigan State University, n.d.)

The Office is comprised of thirteen departments. One of note is the Community Evaluation & Research Center, which states that it builds capacity for CBPR among other goals.

Several programs fit Hall et al.’s (2009) fourth type of multi-institutional structure. One is Arizona State University’s University-Community Partnership for Social Action Research (UCP-SARnet), a “growing network of...students, faculty, community activists, and governmental officials engaged in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals” (Hoyt & Hollister, 2014, p. 141) in collaboration with the Kitchener, Ontario Centre for Community-Based Research (CCBR), the Warsaw (Poland) School of Social Sciences and Humanities and other international partners” (Hoyt & Hollister, 2014). Also at this level, not limited to CBR, the University of Minnesota system has an Office for Public Engagement, led by Associate Vice President Andy Furco, a well-recognized scholar on community engagement. The flagship campus in Minneapolis also supports the University Research and Outreach-Engagement Center, a satellite facility in an economically challenged neighborhood of the city. Faculty researchers travel to the site to collaborate with community members on a robust and diverse group of CBR and CBPR projects.

Another is the College/Underserved Community Partnership Program (CUPP), which has participants from thirteen HEI’s and twenty underserved communities in four states, with support from the U.S. Federal government’s Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Interior, Agriculture and Health, and Human Services (Burns, 2014). The community diagnoses what support they need and then CUPP funds the project through a local university, while allowing the community to remain the drivers of the projects. Other “Type four” networks that have U.S. membership include the Talloires Network hosted by Tufts University in Massachusetts, Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (profiled below) and TRUCEN.

One structure that resonates strongly with the global movement toward equitable campus-community collaborations is the “Science Shop” model (Leydesdorff & Ward, 2005; Mulder & DeBok, 2006) in use in the E.U. since the 1970s—a structure that affords communities an invitation to bring research questions in all disciplines to their universities or freestanding research entities, and exemplifies the co-creation and democratization of knowledge. There are many science shops in Europe, and some in Asia, Africa, Australia, and Canada listed in an international network called Living Knowledge (www.livingknowledge.org), which is a major convener of conferences, grants and other resource sharing activities (Tryon & Ross, 2013). Until recently only a few existed in the
U.S. However, in addition to Science Shops at the two HEI’s we profile below, others are beginning to catch on in the U.S. The University of Denver’s Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning has initiated a Science Shop unit (www.du.edu/ccesl/scholarship/scienceshop.html) designed to connect and collaborate with community-based organizations in diverse areas of study. Another new science shop at the University of California-Berkeley (ucbscienceshop.com) is a graduate student-sponsored initiative.

In the context of the dizzying number and type of interactions and overlaps between HEIs and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the U.S., the space limitations of this report make it impossible to present an exhaustive look at these partnerships. Thus, the objective here is to take a deeper dive into two HEI’s that have well-developed CURPs aligning with GUNi’s ‘Big Tent’ doctrine with contrasting demographics: a large public, land-grant institution in a small city – the University of Wisconsin-Madison; and a smaller, private Jesuit university in a large metropolis–Loyola University-Chicago, specifically its Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL). The two CSOs we will profile are also contrasting: one nationwide organization: Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, and one long-term local partnership with a Chicago neighborhood community developed by CURL at Loyola: ONE Northside, which has worked with CURL since the 1990s.

Case Study 1: Higher Education Institution–University of Wisconsin-Madison

UW-Madison is a public, land grant institution with a ‘Very High Research’ (R1) designation comprising over 43,000 students and ranked 19th academically among world universities. Over a hundred centers and institutes conduct a prolific amount of research (ranking third in the U.S. in funding procured at US $1.2 billion per year) on aspects of health, agriculture, bioenergy, poverty, and other fields from education to engines, including a unique public-private partnership, the Morgridge Institute for Research, headed by stem-cell pioneer, Professor James Thompson. For more than a century, the “Wisconsin Idea”, a tradition first stated by UW President Charles Van Hise in 1904, who declared “he would never be content until the beneficent influence of the university reaches every family in the state” has guided the university (McCarthy, 1912).

Institutional Structures

The R1 designation would seem to position the UW-Madison well to assume a national leadership role in the field of community-based research, especially since the state of Wisconsin is host to over 31,000 nonprofit organizations and climbing. However, the UW-Madison has no formal office for community engagement, or other centralized support structure. In addition, the high-intensity R1 climate poses challenges to methodologies that take longer lab set-up times for commu-
nity relationship-building to develop and bring research partnerships to a quantifiable data stage. Individual standouts include Professor Randy Stoecker’s work since 2005, especially in the area of perceptions of community organizations about service learning (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009), and community organizing and development (Stoecker & Beckman, 2009); and Professor Sam Dennis Jr.’s work on culture/nature landscapes and outdoor play environments with tribal communities (vimeo.com/111664109). Other faculty are conducting research around themes of the environment, neighborhood capacity-building, health equity, and youth development. There are some campus awards, but only a few specifically designed for community engagement efforts including CBR. Despite these barriers, the UW has developed multiple unique centers across campus with a focus on community-based learning (CBL) or CBR that support faculty and graduate students. The following are the largest:

**The Community & Nonprofit Studies Center (CommNS)**

CommNS is housed within the Department of Civil Society and Community Research in the School of Human Ecology (SoHE). Its stated mission is to facilitate a variety of community engagement efforts between faculty members, students and community to meet critical community needs including health, social services, housing, education, and emergency assistance. An ‘Action Research Core’ is the center’s key structure in facilitating its community engagement. The group gives support to action research academics on campus who often feel isolated due to their small number within such a large institution. Many of the CommNS’s community engagement projects have been integrated into the department’s for-credit curriculum, with the following elements:

- CBR and action research graduate courses
- An undergraduate research evaluation course with community groups
- Independent study—an ad hoc incentive; sustenance not assured

There are no direct incentives for participation in community engagement projects. Rather, it is under an umbrella of an outreach program that is applicable to CBR or community engagement in general. Since many of the center’s projects are funded by external grants, the department has recently hired a staff person to provide grant writing assistance to fund more student researchers.

**The Morgridge Center for Public Service**

The Morgridge Center is a privately endowed center that will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2016. Programs include both credit-based and co-curricular volunteer coordination. Credit-based initiatives entail two full-time academic staff and a faculty director who support all forms of engaged scholarship across campus. About forty-two CBL or CBR courses each semester are supported by course development grants, curriculum development guidance, ongoing support from a
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A trained undergraduate CBL Fellow, or consultation. A US $5 million matching grant program just concluded with fifty-four CBL/CBR projects funded. In 2011, the UW’s Academic Planning Council approved guidelines that include evidence of community support and input for CBL/CBR courses to be listed in the course guide and to be eligible for the Morgridge Center grants and some services.

A pilot CBR/CBL collaboration of the School of Human Ecology and the MCPS in 2010 led to a new program in the Morgridge Center: The Community-University Exchange (CUE), a CBL/CBR facilitation clearinghouse. It follows a hybrid version of the European Science Shop model. CUE facilitates community development work by introducing community partners to faculty and graduate students, and linking academic resources to community-identified priorities gathered in meetings with CSOs. Some projects are executed by CUE PhD Fellows or other faculty or staff. CUE-facilitated projects can either be stand-alone research or pieces of a service-learning course or courses linked together in a larger partnership. CUE has also helped build the professional capacity of graduate students and faculty through workshops and courses that focus on CBL/CBR methodology and pedagogy, or topics like grant writing, conflict resolution, facilitation, evaluation, and strategic planning skills.

Funds have been mostly utilized to support graduate student staff in developing partnerships with CSOs and on a database of faculty members whose research focus is on community engagement and community projects wishing to connect with the university. Faculty members are sometimes supported by course development grants for CBL or CBR courses and projects offered through their department. One example of a funded project was for a CUE PhD student to assist Professor Randy Stoecker in coordinating a variety of grassroots community improvement and violence prevention projects in Madison. The student helped to track projects to determine resource needs, intake and match requests for higher education resources and offers of assistance, facilitate communication between the UW and residents; and support two classes that developed a model of neighborhood/higher education partnership.

CUE is a co-founder, with CURL and De Paul University, of a new regional community of practice called the Midwest Knowledge Mobilization Network, following the principles of the Canadian KMb networks. Other members are centers for CBR at Notre Dame, UW-Milwaukee, Medical College of Wisconsin and Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis.

Collaborative Center for Health Equity

As part of the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research in the School of Medicine and Public Health, the Collaborative Center for Health Equity builds lasting partnerships and engages university and community partners in collaborative teaching, research, and service to improve health equity in underserved communities of Wisconsin. It is one of six cores within the UW Institute
for Clinical and Translational Research. The center maintains collaborative partnerships with tribal, urban, and rural partners throughout Wisconsin. For seven years, the center has been working with three Wisconsin Tribes and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC) in a family-based intervention to reduce obesity and cardiac risk factors in Native American children—“Healthy Children, Strong Families” (Adams, Miller-Korth & Brown, 2004).

Faculty Director, Alex Adams, M.D., came to understand the practical reasons for reaching out to communities before research planning or grant writing. In an early community-engaged experience with tribal communities, she was excited to take grant-purchased motivational tools like pedometers to a tribal reservation to start a walking/exercise group. However, when she arrived, the tribal women informed her that walking around the reservation would be unsafe due to the packs of loose dogs roaming the area (personal conversation, October 7, 2010). Subsequent interventions were undertaken by meeting with tribal elders, government officials and other stakeholders to develop strategies that would allow residents more opportunities for exercise and healthy diet (Adams, Scott, Prince, & Williamson, 2014).

Case Study 2: Higher Education Institution–The Center for Urban Research and Learning, Loyola University-Chicago; and Long-term partner CSO–One Northside

Established in 1996, the Loyola University Chicago Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) is an innovative, non-traditional, collaborative university-community research center housed within the largest Jesuit university in the U.S. with over 15,000 graduate and undergraduate students. Generally, CURL only completes research where CSOs or community leaders are involved in the research, from conceptualization and research design to data collection, data analysis, report writing, and dissemination. This places CURL and Loyola-Chicago in the forefront of American HEIs that involve communities in an equitable fashion in virtually all of its work.

CURL recognizes that there is both “university knowledge” (developed by discipline-based researchers using knowledge bases and methodological approaches developed over decades and primarily shared among members of particular disciplines) and “community knowledge”, among community leaders and residents, informed by lived experience. It is an awareness of the complex social interactions and histories within a particular community—a geographic community or community of interest.

By combining these and adding chairs at the research table—the place and time where research ideas are developed and research methods are designed—the collaborative approach reflects a community-anchored, community-informed research process that can produce rigorous research valuable in enhancing the quality of life. In addition to crossing university-community boundaries, CURL
research crosses the typical university disciplinary siloes. Since community partners typically have a holistic view of their surroundings, their participation creates everyday issues that typically calls for interdisciplinary research. The negotiation between researchers and practitioner/activists during the research conceptualization process makes this initial stage of research particularly important in shaping the research project. The back-and-forth between community and university produces a space where creative tensions are valued and lead to new approaches. Just as discussion, review, and debates among academics produce more rigorous research through critiques from colleagues, involvement of community partners in the research process adds to the quality of research. It forces academic researchers to better understand pressing needs of local communities. It helps community activists understand the value of systematic research approaches that yield research outcomes with credibility among elected officials and others involved in the policy process.

Research teams composed of faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, community partners, and CURL staff complete most CURL projects. This guarantees that there are multiple perspectives in the research process. All team members are potential teachers and learners. The knowledge of faculty researchers as well as community members and students is recognized in this process. More information on CURL and its projects is available on its website: www.luc.edu(curl).

**CURL's Partnership with One Northside**

In many cases, CURL’s connections with community partners span many years and many projects. For example, CURL has been working with a grassroots advocacy organization, Organization of the NorthEast (ONE) since CURL’s inception. In the mid-1990s, ONE was battling to preserve affordable housing in ten high-rises in Uptown, a Chicago community area of 60,000 known for its long-term stable racial, ethnic, and economic diversity. Developers of these buildings had received U.S. Department of Housing mortgages in return for providing affordable housing. However, they were attempting to pay off the mortgages early and flip these lakefront community apartment buildings to market rate units during the condo conversion craze that was already displacing low-income families throughout the city. CURL worked with ONE in documenting both the technical issues and tenants’ organizing stories.

A 35 page booklet, *Saving Our Homes: The Lessons of Community Struggles to Preserve Affordable Housing in Chicago’s Uptown*, contributed to ONE’s successful organizing effort that used local confrontational tactics and savvy political organizing to get unanimous Chicago City Council support, favorable editorials in Chicago’s major papers, and support of scores of community leaders. This organizing campaign was particularly distinctive because its ultimate target was a member of the U.S. President’s cabinet. ONE and its supporters succeeded in forcing the
U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to end his opposition to the community’s demands, and agree to sell to community development corporations that would preserve this relatively high quality affordable housing. The 3,000 copies of Saving Our Homes were used to underscore the need for the housing, but also to document the importance of tenant leaders in the success; it continues to be used in leadership training.

After this study, CURL went on to work with ONE on another project looking at the impact of welfare reform on local residents. CURL completed interviews and wrote a series of research briefs highlighting key issues, such as the potential displacement of elderly legal immigrants from stable housing because of welfare reforms that cut off food and housing supports. This report led to newspaper and television coverage that bolstered ongoing organizing pressure by ONE on elected officials to stop the cutoff. ONE and its organizational partners in Chicago, as well as nationally, succeeded in getting these welfare reform provisions dropped.

After almost 20 years of collaboration, CURL is now working with ONE to evaluate its merger with another advocacy organization to create the new ONE Northside—an organization that has doubled in size in the city of Chicago. Recognizing that decisions are made by large forces sometimes appearing beyond the reach of small neighborhoods, ONE Northside is taking on the challenge of these powerful forces at the same time as it maintains its strong grassroots ties, to preserve its democratic underpinnings. As an “organization of organizations”, ONE Northside is combining the power of congregations, businesses, schools, neighborhood associations, youth organizations, and social service agencies to protect the interests of all residents in these diverse communities. The research is guided by a team and advisory committee including both ONE Northside members and CURL staff (one of whom is a former youth organizer before getting her Master’s degree). To CURL, this is a critical research issue in its series of collaborative studies on how to preserve stable diversity in urban and suburban communities. Most importantly it represents a long-term university-community partnership that recognizes that effective social change does not happen as the result of just research, rather it comes as a result of the leadership and organizing efforts of community members able to use research for support and guidance in their policy advocacy.

Case Study 3: A Large Civil Society Organization—Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) is a “nonprofit membership organization whose mission is to promote health equity and social justice through partnerships between communities and academic institutions” (ccph.memberclicks.net). While having a focus on health, broadly defined, the CCPH has been an invaluable resource in North America and in many other parts of the world since 1997. It plays a crucial role in providing practical tools and inspiring sto-
ries, connecting people, and promoting opportunities for advancement of authentic partnership. Its online resources and toolkits are highly regarded as works of praxis. One of its unique characteristics is a set of ‘Principles for Partnership’ (see box) that focus on the intentional rebalancing of academic-community engagement toward shared power, so that community perspectives have a more equitable voice in decision-making about the research and project work of the partnership (Holland, 2005).

History

CCPH grew out of the Health Professions Schools in Service to the Nation (HPSISN), a program funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, The Pew Charitable Trusts and 17 institutions that participated in the program that ran from 1995-1998 (Gelmon, Holland & Shinnamon, 1999; Cruz & Giles, 2000). The Pew Health Professions Commission galvanized support for the CCPH’s early advocacy for competencies needed by the health professions to practice, which included: embracing an ethic of civic responsibility and service; incorporating population-based care; partnering with communities; and advocating for public policy that promotes and protects the health of the public. (ccph.memberclicks.net)

Institutional Structure

The CCPH organizational model is a membership-based collaborative and interdisciplinary model that focuses on the partnership as a leverage point for societal change in health and beyond. There are over 1500 CCPH members,

**Principles of Partnership:** recognized and applied nationally and globally (CCPH website)

- Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.
- Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership.
- The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
- The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.
- Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other’s needs and self-interests, and developing a common language.
- Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
- There is feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
- Partners share the benefits of the partnership’s accomplishments.
- Partnerships can dissolve and need to plan a process for closure.
including individuals and groups that are affiliated with colleges and universities, community colleges, community-based organizations, health care delivery systems, and/or foundations with a commitment to social justice. They work to improve the health of communities through CBL, CBPR, and other community-academic partnership strategies in the U.S., Canada and abroad.

Institutional Incentives and Capacity

CCPH is funded through member dues and contributions from organizations as diverse as the National Campus Compact and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to private donors such as the Annie E. Casey and W.K. Kellogg Foundations, which creates a resource pool for scholarships and awards. The CCPH Annual Awards typify and exalt models of truly authentic collaboration. In 2008, the annual award was given to a partnership between the University of Pennsylvania and the Decatur Community Association in rural Ohio. Air and water were polluted by a chemical from a nearby DuPont production facility. Information disparities between the community, regulators and industry were problematic. The partnership undertook CBPR research with an Environmental Justice grant that found very high levels of the chemical (considered a probable human carcinogen by EPA) in the blood of residents, and identified water as the source. On the day the results were released to the community, DuPont announced it would supply free bottled water to residents served by the water distributor. 78% of eligible residents accepted the offer. Dr. Emmett from the University stated “high-quality CBPR empowered the community and led 95% of studied residents to voluntarily change their drinking water source with subsequent measurable decreases in their blood chemical levels” (Dr. Emmett, personal correspondence, December 1, 2014).

The CCPH hosts a CBPR funders’ interest group committed to advancing CBPR, conducts research to identify CBPR benefits, challenges and best practices, and provides scholarships and other grants for new curricula. CCPH also promotes CBPR through their listserv, training and technical assistance, resource toolkits, and consultancy on topics including research ethics. Founding executive director Sarena Seifer, who served CCPH for seventeen years, has authored or co-authored dozens of oft-cited articles and resources and has acted as a galvanizing force in the organization and the field. Other networks associated with CCPH include the Community Network for Research Equity & Impact, Living Knowledge and Community-University Expo.

Conclusion

As was mentioned earlier, limitations of space make it unfeasible to name every noteworthy CURP in the U.S. and more are being created all the time. Change is happening quickly by academic standards; in the few decades since the rise of service learning as a popular pedagogy, many HEIs are moving toward
a more evolved, equitable practice of community engagement. A National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement convened by the White House in 2012 and commissioned by the Department of Education released a report called “The Crucible Moment”, which calls on the nation to reclaim higher education’s civic mission (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement). Some of the responses by higher education institutions to this unfunded mandate include developing innovative civic engagement activities, involving more academic staff in campus committees that promote civic learning, and integrating engaged scholarship as part of faculty and instructor professional development and in some places even in new guidelines for tenure review.

The Carnegie Foundation Classification is becoming more sophisticated in its ability to assess authentic CURP work as a part of overall community engagement, and universities and colleges with the designation must prove continuing progress in goals every five to ten years, including assessing community impact, faculty rewards for engaged scholarship, and nurturing collaborative, two-way partnerships (Campus Compact, n.d.).

Looking outward toward global movements and trends will become increasingly important. As one indicator, the U.S. based Engagement Scholarship Consortium’s annual conference was held in Canada for the first time in 2014. Many American participants were able to hear fresh perspectives by Canadian institutions performing groundbreaking CBPR work that could influence U.S. theory and practice. Ties to Living Knowledge Network have strengthened through regional coalitions such as the Midwest Knowledge Mobilization Network. The TRUCEN membership voted unanimously to endorse GACER’s platform and work of the UNESCO Chairs in 2012. Also entering the U.S. conversation is the “collective impact” work based on Canada’s Tamarack Foundation (HanleyBrown, Kania & KraMer, 2012) as well as dialogue around knowledge mobilization, critical engagement and democratization of research.

Mathews (2014) points out that while the civic engagement movement on U.S. campuses has “much to admire”, institutions may be missing opportunities to allow communities the chance for self-rule as opposed to fixating on proving impacts of their academic programs. It seems common sense that solutions devised in an academic vacuum are not likely to be sustained, while collective decision-making in an iterative and democratic fashion has a better chance of creating change. In a recent UW-Madison PhD’s dissertation research on the impact of community-campus partnerships in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans, residents shared experiences about the swarms of academic researchers who descended on the Lower 9th Ward at that time of crisis. Some, even when trying to behave in “mutually beneficial ways”, did not possess the skills to listen and collaborate authentically, while a small number actually helped them move their community-wide rebuilding agendas forward. Those are the academic partners who will be invited to return, and whom younger generations of students and new faculty aspire to emulate.
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