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EDITORS

# Engaging Campus and Community

The Practice of Public Scholarship  
in the State and Land-Grant  
University System



“In pages that exude conviction, passion, and energy—the very ingredients of any engagement effort worth pursuing—Scott Peters and his colleagues upshift the scholarship of engagement by enabling deep understanding of this work in its complexity. You’ll find evocative self-portraits about work “in the trenches” that are as rich in description as they are in self-reflection and critique. These case experiences are framed by a compelling ethos of engagement: how campus and community collaborations can enhance the quality of democratic life. By framing engagement that way, the co-authors are explicit about their answer to a fundamental (and sometimes unanswered) question: Engagement for what? And by writing this volume as a learning community, the co-authors give readers a concrete example of how discourse among scholar-practitioners can advance the engagement state of the art. This thoughtfully prepared book is a must-read for participating intelligently in the engagement movement.”

—FRANK FEAR, *College of Agriculture and Natural Resources,*  
*Michigan State University*



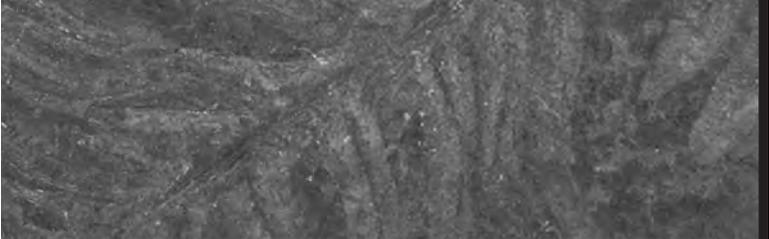
“The future vitality of American higher education and the quality of the lives of our nation’s children and families are increasingly, interdependently linked to the engagement of universities with communities. Through such engagement the expertise of the academy is integrated with the expertise and voices of community members in the service of creating and applying knowledge to increase life opportunities for the diverse people of our nation. This timely and unique book is required reading for all educators, practitioners, policy makers, and citizens seeking an intellectually compelling and empirically tested vision for bringing to scale and sustaining university-community collaborations that promote positive human development, enhance the diverse sectors of our nation, foster civil society, and advance American democracy.”

—RICHARD M. LERNER, *Bergstrom Chair in Applied Developmental Science,*  
*Tufts University*



“Engagement, the public university’s 21st century effort to better serve society, is one of the hottest issues in public higher education today. The case studies assembled by the editors of this book show how engagement is and can be successful. The book is a must read for anyone involved in engagement, either inside or outside the university.”

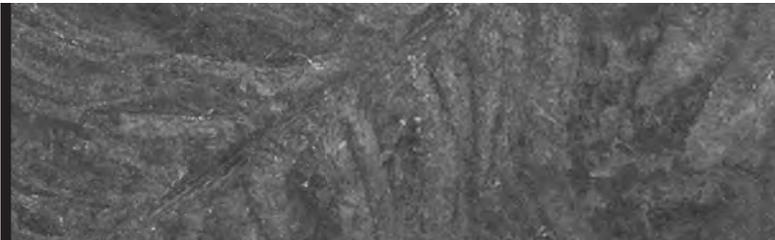
—JOHN BYRNE, *President Emeritus, Oregon State University,*  
*former Executive Director, Kellogg Commission on the Future of*  
*State and Land-Grant Institutions*



# *Engaging Campus and Community*

*The Practice of Public  
Scholarship in the  
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University System*

*Scott J. Peters, Nicholas R. Jordan,  
Margaret Adamek, and Theodore R. Alter*



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*In memory of Ron Prokopy (1935-2004)  
and Dick Broeker (1942-2004)*



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*We owe a great deal to the members of our research project team, our case study authors, and all those who offered their reviews, criticisms, and suggestions for improving this book at various points in its development. Included among them are Don Wyse, Okey Ukaga, Paul Schultz, Harry Boyte, Naomi Scheman, David Pelletier, David Campbell, Gail Feenstra, Karen Lehman, Dan Cooley, Bill Coli, Steve Simmons, Susan White, Jeffrey Gunsolus, Roger Becker, Hana Niemi-Blissett, Frank Clancy, Bob Williamson, Ellen Smoak, Margo Hittleman,*

## *Engaging Campus and Community*

*Marianne Krasny, Victor Bloomfield, Neil Schwartzbach, Steve Hamilton, Francille Firebaugh, Peg Michels, Karl Lorenz, Craig Hassel, Alton Thompson, Robert Zabawa, John Gerber, Katherine Asher, Katherine Barrett, Jeffrey Bridger, Jennifer Wilkins, Frank Fear, Gerry Campbell, George McDowell, Richard Lerner, Mel Hill, Noëlle McAfee, Maria Farland, David Brown, Claire Snyder, Anna Sims Bartel, Estus Smith, Julie Fisher, and Derrick Barker. Our families and friends also provided us with support and inspiration in ways beyond counting. For everything, thanks. Maggi would like to extend her special gratitude to the elders at the White Earth Reservation, who taught her to think and know very differently about what relationship means in its fullest definition.*

*For many reasons, this was not an easy book to edit. Ilse Tebbetts, our skilled and insightful editor, deserves a huge thanks for the time she spent working with our manuscript. In numerous ways, the book is much better because of her efforts.*

*Finally, we wish to acknowledge our profound sorrow over the loss of Ron Prokopy and Dick Broeker, two extraordinary people you will meet in this book who unfortunately died before it was published. For nearly 30 years, Ron served as a professor of entomology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The internationally recognized program of integrated pest management in apple production that he established and led demonstrates the promise of public scholarship in the natural sciences. Dick was a highly skilled and savvy organizer and a lifelong civic leader in his home state of Minnesota. In his work as executive director of a community-university partnership in southeast Minnesota, he demonstrated how indispensable the craft of organizing is in pursuing the challenge of engaging campus and community in respectful and productive ways. We are honored to have had the chance to learn from Ron and Dick, and we dedicate this book to their memory.*

*-The Editors*

# Preface

My admiration for what Scott Peters and the other authors in this book are attempting knows no bounds. But more may be afoot here than they modestly claim. I see *Engaging Campus and Community* as pushing far ahead on the issues raised in the Kellogg Commission Report. I think it points to more than institutions of higher education engaging communities, as important as that is. “Putting the scholar in the world” takes on a more precise and richer meaning in these chapters.

This book may be the harbinger of a public-scholarship movement that will prove to be as profound as the one Christopher Jencks and David Riesman wrote about in 1968 in *The Academic Revolution*. Although talk today speaks of “engaged universities,” most of the initiatives I have seen when invited to campus meetings have been faculty initiated and faculty led. Their initiatives could become counter to the trends that Jencks and Riesman wrote about. Public scholarship doesn’t reflect the meritocratic politics that Jencks and Riesman found dominating higher education in the late 1960s and 1970s.

This book is evidence that scholars are reconsidering both what it means to know as well as what knowledge contributes to society. The epistemological issues raised by public scholarship push much farther into the terrain that Ernest Boyer explored when he raised questions about research. And, as the authors recognize, public scholarship has significant implications for democracy. Although at this point in time, no one can say where this movement will go, like democracy itself, it may be more a journey than a destination.

Certainly this is a book that other public scholars will find useful. Yet it deserves a much wider audience. Because the book takes higher education outside the confines of institutions, it has a great deal to say to those who stand at the intersection of society and academe—particularly trustees and alumni associations. It even has implications for institutional governance. Although there isn't a chapter on governance, how could "engaging communities" not have implications for those who make decisions about the role of colleges and universities? Furthermore, shouldn't the communities to be engaged have something to say about those decisions? If so, what forum should be available to them?

Having made claims for this book that may be, on some points, more than the authors intend, I should say a bit more about the potential I see in these pages. For instance, the public that public scholars come to see as they go about their research is critical. Perhaps the book's greatest contribution will come from raising questions about exactly what kind of public American higher education is supposed to serve. Juxtaposing *public* and *scholarship*, two words not usually seen together, begs for clarification of both, particularly today. *Engaging Campus and Community* has been published at a time when citizens feel pushed out of the political system. People aren't sure whom they can depend on. The government? Their fellow citizens? Most want to be able to make a difference in combating the problems that endanger them, but they aren't sure they can. What does public scholarship have to say to them?

"The public" can mean anything from just everyone to an aggregation of interest groups. And there is a tendency to think of citizens as consumers of services or the constituency of institutions like colleges and universities. Citizens are the served, not the producers. The obvious problem with these concepts is that American democracy is based on a different notion of citizenship. Collectively, the people are sovereign in our political system. And "sovereignty" is defined by the strength or power to act—to

decide, to judge, and to institute change—the actions that make it possible to rule. It follows, then, that as the sovereign, the public must do the kinds of things that monarchs once did—make decisions and act on them. This is why the public is more than an audience to be addressed, a market to be enticed, or a constituency to be served. Sovereign citizens have work to do, which Harry Boyte calls public work.

The authors recognize the issues that are implicit in this concept of the public: If the public is a citizenry-at-work, what does academic research contribute to that work? One answer—and a defensible one—is that academics are not responsible for contributing anything. Should the worth of theoretical physics be measured by what it contributes to citizens doing public work? Surely not. A more acceptable answer is that scholars provide the public with useful expert knowledge. But while essential, that kind of knowledge may not be sufficient for public work to go forward. Here is where the epistemological issues come in. Expert knowledge describes *what is*, but public work requires still another type of knowledge—“practical wisdom” about *what should be*. That is, the central question in public work is What *should* we do to solve a problem? It is a normative question, and there are no expert answers.

Practical wisdom is sound judgment about what should be done, and it isn't the same as local knowledge. It is socially constructed in a type of dialogue called “deliberative.” The ancient Greeks considered this the talk we use to teach ourselves before we act. Public deliberation is weighing possible courses of action to solve a problem against what people consider deeply important to their collective well-being. Perhaps the ultimate challenge for public scholarship is to find ways to contribute to the formation of practical wisdom.

The potential of the public-scholarship movement off campus is as great as the potential on campus. Since public scholarship takes the academy outside its institutional boundaries, it has implications for how colleges and universities deal with the

communities that are being engaged. Some would probably argue that trustees are citizens who represent their communities, so there is no problem. Others might advocate public hearings or the other ways official bodies open themselves to citizens. Public scholarship calls for something different, and that is a way of relating to communities so that public work—the work of citizens—flourishes. The usual board meetings and public hearings are not well-suited to building these kinds of relationships. Citizens have to do more than present needs, and institutions have to do more than provide information. Institutions and communities need to create more space for public work to be done, both on and off campus.

Some of this space could be created in the governance structures of colleges and universities. I have met trustees who want a relationship with the public, based on a two-way exchange to identify points at which community organizations and academic institutions have interdependent interests. Trustees need an environment that is conducive to making these connections. One way to create such a setting would be to add a special kind of town-gown forum to the panoply of board committees. I am not suggesting unstructured, open meetings; I have in mind the original meaning of *forums* as “marketplaces.” Communities and institutions both have things to trade, which have been identified in this book’s discussions of mutual benefits and meshing self-interests.

I am reminded of a proposal for a town-gown exchange once made by one of the American Association of University Professors’ (AAUP) founders, Professor James McKeen Cattell. He proposed something more legalistic than a forum, but the purpose was similar to what I have in mind. Cattell advocated combining internal and external constituencies in a unified governance system, an arrangement I always thought had considerable merit. He favored an inclusive corporation of professors, administrators, alumni, and even “members of the community who wished to pay dues to belong.” I don’t consider such a

“United Nations” as an alternative to separate student, faculty, alumni, and other associations, but as useful public space. Cattell’s colleagues in the AAUP rejected his plan, but I cite it now as an example of the governance restructuring that might be done if advancing public scholarship is embraced as a way for a university to engage communities.

My speculations on how far and where the journey into public scholarship may take higher education aren’t made to lobby for any particular direction, although I have my own biases. I only want to make the point that the journey is far from complete. Fundamental change in institutions takes decades, and the public-scholarship movement is relatively new. Nonetheless, it has strong traditions to draw on, as well as the energy generated by restless faculty members seeking what the Greeks called “public happiness” (these are scholars who want to validate their public identity in their professional careers). The movement might also make common cause with efforts at civic renewal. Today, we know a great deal more about how the democratic world needs to work and why it fails to live up to its promise. So the public-scholarship movement can go well beyond what was possible during the last decades of the twentieth century. These case studies demonstrate what can happen when scholarly inquisitiveness is joined with democratic commitment. They also show how much more waits to be done.

—*David Mathews, President  
Kettering Foundation*

“Neither a glorified form of service nor an add-on to the traditional purposes of universities, the public scholarship described in *Engaging Campus and Community* is—or should be—the heart and soul of academic work. Public scholarship integrates the tripartite university mission of research, teaching, and service to foster democracy, community, and deep learning among faculty, other university staff, students, and community members external to the university. Thoughtfully articulated case studies illustrate how theoretical and practical knowledge can be developed and shared through meaningful and respectful communication among all partners involved in a public scholarship effort. Comparing the several public scholarship cases, the editors derive lessons about how to foster public scholarship that can be applied at many types of higher education institutions, including the land-grant universities that are the focus of this analysis.”

—CAROL L. COLBECK, *Director and Associate Professor, Center for the Study of Higher Education, The Pennsylvania State University*

“State and land-grant universities must play a leading role in America’s future that matches their historic contributions. This book shows how these universities can meet their fundamental obligation to strengthen democracy by partnering with citizens and their communities. Its provocative case studies and essays illuminate the great opportunities that public scholarship presents. And, if you worry about the resource base for these universities, it is precisely public scholarship and engagement—doing it and explaining it—that will bring the support we need to serve society in this new century.”

—C. PETER MAGRATH, *President Emeritus, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), Senior Advisor to the College Board*

“This book makes a compelling case for the contemporary relevance of the land-grant tradition of public scholarship that meshes scholarly work with community knowledge to produce societal benefits. The book includes a unique combination of in depth case studies that examine faculty motivation, successes and challenges, with broader analysis of what this means for the civic engagement movement in higher education. This is a great read for all who care about reasserting the public purposes of higher education, both in land-grant and other colleges.”

—ELIZABETH L. HOLLANDER, *Executive Director, Campus Compact*

“This is a wonderful work, in my judgment the single best treatment of the theory and practice of public scholarship. It brings to light hidden, remarkable public work of a group of scholars in land-grant universities who have worked, often for years, in creative partnerships with citizens to solve problems, improve food systems, and build democratic communities. It also does more. By brilliantly drawing out general theoretical lessons of this work for scholarship and public engagement in higher education, *Engaging Campus and Community* uses case studies related to agriculture and food systems sustainability to suggest new possibilities for pursuing a democratic way of life in an era when vast economic and technological changes are threatening democratic culture on every front.”

—HARRY C. BOYTE, *Founder and Co-Director, Center for Democracy and Citizenship, University of Minnesota*

