

## **Campus Wide Listening Session # 15 “Community Engagement: Opportunities for Growth”**

**April 27, 2023**

### **What we heard**

#### **Definition of Community Engagement**

The university’s Office of Community Engagement defines community engagement as *“the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”*

#### **Service leave policy**

- Not all the employees are aware of this opportunity.
- In the last year only 70 people took advantage of the community service leave. The community engagement office has goals to dramatically increase those numbers.
  - The numbers in years past were much higher. I remember taking busloads of faculty and staff to three different locations on a single day. Some of the activities the office of community engagement has included: painting homes in the west end of Louisville, sorting medical Supplies at Supplies over Seas and others. I would like to see more of these kinds of opportunities.
- Questions about if it must be a university sanctioned event for the service leave policy to be used.
- If staff and faculty were allowed more time off for community engagement would that make you more likely to take advantage of the paid time off? Can you use research time as part of your time off?

#### **Sense of Belonging**

- As somebody who's a lifelong West End resident, I've served on several committees with the Office of Community Engagement, and it's nice that people can feel like they are connected to the university outside of just athletics.
- Imagine the impact we could make on the community by promoting service amongst faculty, staff and students and showing up in our U of L t-shirts that promote that we care and we're giving back. For several years the ULSOM has participated in the American Heart Association Heart Walk in September. It's great to see a “Sea of Red” t-shirts walking together for a common cause.

#### **Service vs Engagement**

- It is important to make a distinction between community engagement and service, as they can be different and have different goals.

- Community engagement work gives people a sense of pride and demonstrates to our students and colleagues that there is need out there, strong sense of appreciation and helps the community feel a connection to the university and our shared work.
  - Students who work on community engagement projects have the potential to learn more by doing than in an actual classroom.
  - If done well both the community and the students, faculty or staff will benefit from the experience.
- Community service,
  - with students primarily is getting students out into the community. The “engagement” is when we interact with partners in the community looking at opportunities to make an impact in our metropolitan area and putting resources back into the community. It isn't just our signature partnerships.
- As a Carnegie Designated Institution for community engagement. Every 8 years the university must be recertified. It's coming up in 2025 to be reaffirmed. Are we just checking boxes or are we actively working to make a difference?

### **Reciprocity/Mutually Beneficial**

- Reciprocity/mutually beneficial is often overlooked in the community engagement definition, involving the community as an equal partner rather than as someone disenfranchised or taken advantage of is important to consider in the university's responsibility.
- There are some falsehoods or misunderstandings that the university just goes out to the community and does what they want to do. But that is not the case, we work with people and communities, it is a two-way street, working to meet their needs.
- A Community engagement component should be part of any kind of research project at UofL.
  - College of Business has students doing research on hypothetical businesses or super large businesses that already make a lot of money.
  - How can we develop those types of engaged learning opportunities with students across campus. I think that every curriculum has the capacity to have student research as part of it.
- if we conduct research with members of the community, ask questions TO THOSE BEING RESEARCHED on the front end (regarding language, need, etc.), and then communicate the results to them at the conclusion of the research. That's "engagement."

### **Strengthening community relationships**

- We don't want to come into a community and have different units and schools all trying to do different things that could better work if they worked together.

- It would also be great to see the work of the Southern Police Institute be more closely engaged with LMPD given that it was (I think!) created to help improve police relationships with communities experiencing racial issues in the south.
- Speed School has engineering summer camps that offer scholarships to students who traditionally don't have the means to sign up for camps.
- The Center for Engaged Learning (CEL)
  - Having conversations with community agencies to find out if they are looking for volunteer opportunities or if they want to hire students as interns. They work with the three career centers: Community Engagement, Student involvement as well as economic development partners.
  - Undergraduate Research Office facilitates students working with faculty and community partners.

### **Opportunities**

- The New Cardinal Career System allows faculty to post undergraduate research opportunities, this allows access to a wider community of students.
  - The Cardinal Career System also allows for internal as well as external research opportunities.
  - The research office is interested in getting more freshmen involved in research opportunities as well as underserved and underrepresented students.
  - Pilot programs are underway, and they plan to contact every department chair to share the guidelines. They hope to have everything ready by Fall 2023.
  - Office of Student Involvement - Helper Helper system that posts community engagement opportunities for students. – collaboration through several groups across campus.
- What about opportunities for our Online students?
  - With COVID the university saw some interesting stuff happen with students. Students with tech skills were helping build websites for community partners, offering analytic skills for non-profits, arts organizations having online concerts, telehealth and counseling services with Kent School. So, there are a lot of ways that students can connect over the internet and help provide support engaged learning
- Has UofL ever explored programs in prison education?
  - A Dental School faculty member does work with people in prisons, but it was not clear if that was a part of community engagement or just a personal project.

### **Barriers**

- Prolonged timelines for research can be a barrier to community-based research. It often takes more than a semester to get projects off the ground. Some ideas to overcome this were mentioned.
  - Have a long-term ongoing project, have student come in and just work on them for a semester or two without the artificiality of a one semester space.
  - Have projects that cover two semesters, by the time students really get involved in research and collecting data the semester is already coming to an end.
  - sometimes community partners have their own requisites that can delay the community-engaged project (for example conducting research or outreach in the school system may require additional IRB approvals and compliance).
- Many faculty don't receive credit for doing community engagement unless it brings in funds associated with a grant or publication to evaluate the faculty's work, community engagement is not held in high esteem. Promotion & Tenure committees are looking for you to bring in the big bucks.
  - Untenured faculty are looking for projects within the community that have a larger base to pull data from. Some smaller businesses just don't provide enough data to incentivize those types of opportunities.
  - Some faculty do not understand why community engagement data is important to our Carnegie designation.
- Barriers can be just is the time it takes to have the Institutional Review Board (IRB) go over and answer all their questions.
- One of the biggest things is breaking down silos. Knowing who else is doing the work and how we can collaborate across units. Prioritizing and incentivizing the work. If it's part of our university's strategic plan, then faculty should be incentivized for doing this work on the tenure track.
  - We must figure out how to increase information-sharing and collaboration.

### **Data tracking**

- Do we have data across the units on level of community engagement (such as engaged learning or community internships) - % of students? Are the opportunities equitable across units?
  - Covid presented some problems as activities halted and then the administration decided to end the annual tracking of activities.
  - New administration brought tracking back, so there are some holes in the data and the Community Engagement office is working on rebuilding participation in reporting.

### **Recommendations**

- Collaborate with other units and schools. Learn what other schools maybe already working on and how we can collaborate.
  - We need to create a philosophy that allows us to partner in ways to collaborate that are beneficial to the communities.
  - Have ongoing relationship with community groups, students can come and contribute what they can when they can still learn and get that sense of pride.
- There were people in the listening session that had not heard of the Community Service Leave policy.
  - Need better promotion of Service opportunities.
- Opportunities for departments to volunteer,
  - it not only serves the community, but it allows for team building amongst the people who are volunteering together, and it and it gives you a sense of community with the other people that you're volunteering with.
- A single UofL database of community engagement opportunities
  - a mechanism for individuals to express interest in connecting with specific efforts?
- Certain Schools prefer that your research projects are published in certain journals based on impact factors.
  - A list of what publications in what schools would be a benefit.
- Focus on civic engagement and how that translates to changing communities.
  - Can we start an initiative that connects with smaller minority owned businesses where students partner directly with folks in our communities, that could benefit from this research.
- A newsletter or website that lists and promotes the work being done.
  - The campus community wants to know what we are doing to support the communities that surround us, like Churchill Downs. Could these “stories” be better told/highlighted.

### **Links to engagement resources provided**

- A link to the [HR Community service Leave Policy](#) (CSL) was provided in the chat
- [Community-Engaged Scholarship Faculty Handbook](#)
  - The School of Medicine (SOM) used that as a basis to create [SOM policies for promotion](#). A link was provided Pgs. 16-19 cover CES
- [Major Community Partnerships](#)
  - [Partnerships, Outreach, Engaged Scholarship, & Curricular Engagement Map](#)
  - [UofL Community Engagement Search](#)
  - [Community-based Learning](#)
  - [In the News](#)
  - [Reports & Publications](#)

- [Follow us on Twitter](#) account
- Link to [Community Outreach And Engagement: Journals list](#) from Ekstrom Library
  - Ernest Boyer, [The Scholarship of Engagement:](#)