

***Building the Field of Higher Education Engagement*. Edited by Lorilee R. Sandmann and Diann O. Jones. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. 2019. 263 pages. ISBN # 9781620368558 (paper) \$37.50, ISBN # 9781620368541 (hardcover) \$125.00.**

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Community engaged scholars and campus administrators need to be concerned with *Building the Field of Higher Education Engagement*, a task taken on by the editing team of Lorilee Sandmann and Diann Jones. The book reproduces the 20th anniversary issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* (available through open access publishing at no cost to readers at <https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/jheoe/issue/view/102>) and expands upon it slightly with discussion questions by established researchers and brief essays from nine “next generation” scholars on future directions for community engagement. Taken together, the book offers a critical look at how the scholarship of and about community engagement has progressed over the past few decades to earn a respected place in higher education today. Engagement as a practice of democracy is another message interwoven throughout the book more subtly, but still evident as the underlying purpose and passion for many scholars partnering with the community (Jovanovic, Moretto & Edwards, 2017).

The book, as did the 20th anniversary journal issue upon which it is based, includes a collection of high impact articles “reflecting the evolution of the field of outreach and community engagement” (Sandmann & Jones, xv). The value of the original articles, by well-established scholars in the field (Boyer, 1996; Lynton, 1996; Byrne, 1998; Holland, 1999; Driscoll & Sandmann, 2001; O’Meara & Jaeger, 2006; Sandmann, Saltmarsh & O’Meara, 2008; Giles, 2008; Franz, 2009; Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco & Swanson, 2012) is extended with updates and responses by the original authors or if the author is deceased, by another prominent scholar.

Ernest Boyer’s words, in “The Scholarship of Engagement,” leads the distinguished list of seminal works. He says, “Our outstanding universities and colleges remain, in my opinion, one of the greatest hopes for intellectual and civic progress in this country” (p. 15). His proclamation, that “the work of the academy ultimately must be directed toward larger, more humane ends” and thus, “higher education in this country has an urgent obligation to become more vigorously engaged in the issues of our day” (p. 22) is music to the ears of those in the academy dedicated to improving the lives of people through the gifts of education, research, and action.

A look back at Boyer’s work, by R. Eugene Rice, rightly notes that Boyer’s vision remains urgent, particularly in addressing economic misery, a regrettable and defining feature of growing social inequalities. Rice is unequivocal in stating that it has been protestors, not scholars who have been the voice of conscience in advocating for changes in labor policy and practices. Thus, he says, academics would do well to better recognize the critical contributions from the community and join with them in paving the way to needed social and political transformation.

John Byrne’s review of his original article lifts up further the critical dimensions of democracy as central to engagement practice with a focus on “integrity trust, respect, accountability and sharing” (p. 51).

Ernest Lynton’s 1996 article, on ensuring the quality of outreach scholarship based on evaluation and inclusive documentation of both processes and outcomes clearly advanced Boyer’s thinking according to John Saltmarsh who crafted the response essay. Saltmarsh notes it is Lynton who promoted knowledge not as a linear activity, but as a dynamic, holistic practice that emerges through ever-deepening partnerships.

If readers are wondering what motivated faculty to initially take on time-consuming community work, the essay written in 1999 by Barbara Holland delivers the answer. She said then that individual achievement and positive outcomes, along with previous

personal experiences were the top factors influencing scholars to pursue public scholarship. However, since the original article was published, she notes (as others in the volume do) that support from institutions themselves, as well as the Carnegie Classification of Community Engagement, influenced cultural changes. Now, more so than earlier, faculty consider the (external) community impact of their work, a positive step according to Holland and like-minded colleagues.

O'Meara and Jeager picked up on Holland's research to consider how we ought to prepare future faculty to produce public scholarship. With only 12 years between the time of their original article and the look back, they note with their co-author, Shauna Morin, that higher education institutions have changed, with community engagement occupying a more central role and interdisciplinary studies valued more than ever. These two developments are gaining momentum, a positive sign for the future say the authors.

To ascertain the importance of early engaged scholarship, Driscoll and Sandmann reviewed various modes of documenting and reviewing the scholarship of engagement. They also noted the organizations that propelled the field forward and then revisited the status of those organizations. In reflecting on their original ideas, they document the key role accreditation bodies have assumed more recently to encourage institutions of higher learning to advance the public good as a mainstream practice.

Frank Fear and Lorilee Sandmann wrote in 2001 that Ernest Boyer's "new" scholarship of engagement was indeed successful in challenging traditional modes of education, offering an important critique to technical rationality. For them, community engagement in higher education offers a direct route to critical conversations about our values and commitments to society. Their response essay is even stronger and stands out as among the best in this volume. They admit that their original position left too much unsaid. More specifically they regret not pointing to the growing influence of the neoliberal or corporate-influenced directions that seized higher education. They see now that university officials failed to adequately confront that. The market-based approach is used too consistently in administrative circles today and has come to define higher education. Thus, the authors say we need to call for a halt to any further progression and return higher education to its rightful place as a site for difficult conversations about how to make "the world a better place" (p. 108).

Sandmann, Saltmarsh, and O'Meara hoped to create academic homes for community engaged scholars in their 2008 article, "An integrated model for advancing the scholarship of engagement." They posit that transformation in disciplines and campuses happens by investing in the intersections of future faculty socialization and institutional support. Their response essay, though primarily self-congratulatory in tone, points out an important shortcoming of their original piece—they underestimated the role of power and politics in the shaping and trajectory of community engaged scholarship. They conclude that scholars need to form alliances, be strategic, and recognize that public scholarship is ultimately "political work aimed at dismantling privilege and exposing the power exerted by hegemonic epistemic paradigms and the inequalities that are created" (p. 156). Doing so requires careful, pointed conversations and likely, practices of resistance to traditional university cultures.

Dwight Giles offered in his original essay a look at the varying definitions circling a new field—public scholarship, publicly engaged scholars, scholarship of engagement, critical engagement and more. Definitions matter, to be sure, but as new forms of scholarship unfold, the natural occurring jockeying for positioning can divert attention away from the deeper, more substantive matters at heart. To Giles' credit, in writing his response essay 11 years later, he notes simply that community engagement is now the preferred term.

Nancy Franz's 2008 article, "A holistic model of engaged scholarship" argues for integrating engaged scholarship throughout higher education not just in the discrete buckets of teaching, research, or service. She advocates that engagement in all areas should overlap for coherence and highlight as well how community members and scholars each contribute value to the other. She unabashedly credits her model for "furthering the engaged scholarship movement" (p. 194). Franz predicts that

consequential relationships between academia and the community will continue to develop as models like hers are used and modified.

“The centrality of engagement in higher education” by Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco and Swanson completes the contributions in this volume of long-established scholars in the field. Like Franz, they advocate for engagement to be threaded throughout all aspects of higher education. For them, “four foundational characteristics” (p. 206) are necessary: that the work be scholarly; that it be foundational within teaching, research, and service; that it display a commitment to reciprocity; and that it asserts the values of democracy.

Following on the heels of the classic articles and updated reflections, *Building the Field of Higher Education Engagement* features one chapter of “next-generation voices of community engagement” (p. 229) opining on future directions. The scholars (Brady, Dang, Davenport, Dostilio, Janke, Kliewer, Morales, Purcell and Saija) see universities as sites of both oppression and liberation that too often erect barriers to engagement. The authors included in this chapter point to the need for social justice as a grounding point, and courageous actions to dismantle inequalities where they exist. They advocate for activism and recognize the changing complexions and processes by which community action works best. The message may not be new to some scholars (Hagenhofer, 2014), but remains revolutionary to most.

Judith Ramaley’s parting words in the volume affirm the contributions of the next-generation authors before leaving readers with deep questions of her own. She asks, how will technology, professionalism of the field, and publication requirements influence future scholars? Ramaley acknowledges the moral responsibilities in engaged scholarship and wonders what kind of communities are we creating amidst the economic, climate, and political challenges of our time? She concludes that engaged scholarship, once primarily an individual endeavor driven by select scholars and students, has developed into a stronger collaborative enterprise with a growing number of partnerships visible within our colleges and universities and among our community organizations and organizers.

Collectively, the mission of engaged scholars, like higher education itself, is best achieved by continuing to lift up community voices that can push students, faculty, and administrators to do more, and do better in their commitment to making the world a more just place for all (Poulos, Hamilton, Jovanovic & Moretto, 2015). The authors in this volume recognize that fact, even as they sometimes over-estimate the role of scholars in the equation. Focusing attention on the ethics of engagement, notably by several of the next-generation scholars, is worthy of applause, attention, and commitment.

Building the Field of Higher Education Engagement provides a comprehensive record of the arguments made in favor of community engagement scholarship in the past, present, and future. As a result, the book is well suited for those just beginning their careers. It is also an important resource for more experienced professionals who may need to step away from their own activity in order to consider the larger issues, trends, and themes that drove the growth of the field, along with challenges encountered along the way. For scholars approaching promotion decisions, the book provides critical documentation of the significance and historical record of how community engagement advances the democratic purposes of higher education, particularly when read alongside complementary texts (Ayers, 2004; Dean, Johnson & Lhumann, 2019; Overton, Pasque, & Burkhardt, 2017; Stoecker, 2016). Adding such detail into tenure and promotion dossiers helps committee members better understand and appreciate the rigor, philosophy, and values associated with engaged scholarship.

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