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2013

# The University of New Hampshire Engaged Scholars Academy: Instilling in Faculty Principles of Effective Partnership

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## Recommended Citation

French, C., Williams, J.E., Tang, J., Abrams, E., Townson, L., Sabin, M., Sandmann, L., & Wake, C. 2013. The University of New Hampshire Engaged Scholars Academy: Instilling in Faculty Principles of Effective Partnership. *Journal of Public Scholarship in Higher Education*. Vol. 3, pp. 19-42.

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## **The University of New Hampshire Engaged Scholars Academy: Instilling in Faculty Principles of Effective Partnership**

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*Over the last decade, the University of New Hampshire (UNH) has promoted mutually beneficial partnerships between faculty and community partners vis-à-vis the Engaged Scholars Academy (ESA), a faculty development program aimed at enhancing faculty understanding of the principles of partnership and engaged scholarship. This research seeks to determine whether and how the ESA has impacted faculty-community partnerships around engaged scholarship. Findings suggest that Engaged Scholar Academy participants – as compared to non-participants – have a deeper understanding of the principles of partnership, are more likely to feel their scholarship is enhanced, spend more time with partners, engage their partners throughout the process of inquiry, and focus more on sustaining partnership outcomes.*

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## Purpose of Study

Until the 1990s, empirical examination of campus-community partnership outcomes for faculty and their respective community partners was limited (Giles & Eyler, 1998). Over the last decade, however, scholars have explored various types of campus-community partnerships and the attributes that characterize effective partnerships (Bell-Elkins, 2002; Holland, 2004; Maurrasse, 2002; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Williams et al., 2011). Institutions of higher education have also begun to emphasize campus-community partnerships in their strategic plans (University of New Hampshire, 2010; University of Richmond, 2009; Virginia Commonwealth University, 2011). Typically, these plans emphasize faculty scholarship that connects with external partners – what is now widely known as engaged, or “public,” scholarship (Fitzgerald, Burack, & Seifter, 2010; Williams, Abrams, & Shea, 2009).

Missing from the literature is empirical data documenting the results of institutional efforts to build institutional capacity to collaborate with community partners in reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships. The purpose of this study is to determine if an institution’s efforts to foster engaged scholarship impacts how faculty characterize engaged scholarship, how they engage with community partners, and the benefits both scholars and their respective community partners perceive. This study further examines the outcomes of the University of New Hampshire’s (UNH) Engaged Scholars Academy (ESA), a semester-long faculty development program launched in 2004. The ESA was designed to build the capacity of a six cohorts of faculty members to help develop and sustain collaborative, mutually-beneficial relationships with community partners (Abrams, Townson, Williams, & Sandmann, 2006; Sandmann, Williams & Abrams, 2009; Williams, Abrams, & Shea, 2009). For this study we primarily draw on the perspectives of UNH faculty members, while also including a limited number of their community partners. Future research will include a larger number of community partners to more fully examine their perspectives.

Utilizing mixed methods, including a survey questionnaire, interviews with faculty and a limited number of their respective partners, we explore how faculty – both those who participated in the Academy and those who did not – collaborate with community partners in their research and scholarship. We also examine how each has benefitted from partnering and how they perceive their community partners benefitted. We hypothesize that Academy graduates will have a deeper understanding of the of engaged scholarship, influencing how they define partnerships, engage with partners, and perceive the benefits as compared with faculty peers who were nominated to but did not participate in the Academy. Our three research questions are:

- How does formal training in the principles/practice of engaged scholarship – vis-à-vis the Engaged Scholars Academy (ESA) – impact how scholars characterize their partnerships?
- Do ESA participants engage with community partners differently than ESA non-participants?
- Are the benefits of engaged scholarship to both the scholar and the community partner perceived differently by ESA participants, non-participants, and their respective partners?

### **The Engaged Scholars Academy (ESA)**

The Engaged Scholars Academy (ESA) was the first cohort-based faculty development program of its kind in the nation specifically focusing on engaged scholarship. It became a model for other universities (e.g., UNC-Chapel Hill, East Carolina, Xavier University), who later developed similar faculty development academies. The ESA includes six half or full-day workshops, coaching from experienced engagement leaders, panel discussions with Academy alumni, and dialogue between scholars and national experts. Throughout the Academy semester, workshop topics include principles of partnership, identifying community partners, how to collaborate with partners to help frame problems, structuring accountability, working with federal agencies, engagement and philanthropy, and documenting engaged scholarship outcomes. To help put their training into action, each is given seed funding to work on a partnership project.

Since 2004, the six cohorts completing the program represent about 15% of the University's full time faculty and are deeply embedded into the institutional fabric (Wenger, 1998; Williams, 2011). Additional programs based on the ESA are supported by the President's office to help advance the UNH Strategic Plan (University of New Hampshire, 2010).

### **Literature Review**

For over three centuries, public and private higher education institutions have served the public good by providing resources, information, and technical support to people, communities, businesses, and governments to enhance their capacity to contribute to the social and economic well-being of society. In spite of these efforts, a Kellogg Commission report, *Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution* (1999), asserted that today's institutions fail to effectively engage public stakeholders in mutually beneficial relationships. With the exception of community colleges, the public widely perceives the knowledge generated by institutions of higher education as disconnected from community needs (Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Morse, 2009). The Kellogg Commission's call to action states that higher

education must realign teaching, research, and service missions to address community needs and engage the public in mutually beneficial partnerships (1999), an idea echoed by Brukardt, Holland, Percy, and Zimpher (2004).

### **The Meaning of “Partnership”**

According to Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001, p. 39) partnership refers to a “...a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.” Boyer’s seminal work on engagement (1996, p. 21) suggested that higher education partnerships require, “...connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic and ethical problems.” These problems often span multiple realms – social, economic, ecological, political – requiring that both the scholar and respective partner function as boundary spanners (French & LaChapelle, 2012; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). It is important to note that partnerships that occur between faculty and community stakeholders may also include engaged scholarship that involves community-based participatory research, participatory action research, and collaborative science (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Holland & Gelmon, 1998; Jacobs, 2002; Seifert, Shinnamon, & Connors, 1997).

Other critical elements of partnerships include shared decision-making between the institutional scholar and the community partner; shared problem definition, goal setting, planning, implementation and evaluation; and transparency, mutuality and reciprocity (Bell-Elkins, 2002; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Packard Foundation, 2010; Williams, et. al, 2011). The section that follows examines two principles that are critical to the analyses for this study: 1) mutuality and reciprocity, and 2) shared decision-making and accountability to sustain outcomes.

### **Mutuality and Reciprocity**

One generally agreed on tenet is that effective engaged partnerships require a two-way, mutually beneficial relationship between the scholar and the community partner (Williams et al., 2009). Partnering with community stakeholders enables researchers to gain access and community knowledge, while communities often gain insight about critical challenges and direct assistance to improve their conditions (Baum, 2000). Holland and Gelmon (1998) further note that effective partnerships enhance partners’ capacity to fulfill their missions and work together towards a common goal. They observe that some scholars have misused or misinterpreted the core principles of engaged scholarship to gain access to subjects without truly engaging them as partners (Holland & Gelmon, 1998). Community partners must feel they have something to gain from the relationship or the partnership will be short-lived (Fitzgerald et al., 2010). Bruininks (2000)

notes that simply producing a publication or a grant proposal may be necessary for scholars, but insufficient to sustain an ongoing partnership with community collaborators.

### **Shared Decision-Making and Accountability**

Shared decision-making is an essential part of mutuality and reciprocity. The scholar and community partner should communicate on an ongoing basis to convey their interests, values, and objectives for the partnership, as well as decide their respective roles (Torres & Schaffer, 2000). Shared decision-making is not merely something that happens during the dissemination stage of a project. It should occur at all stages, starting with joint creation of mission, values, and goals (Bell-Elkins, 2002; Cotton & Stanton, 1990).

A David and Lucille Packard Foundation report titled “Linking Knowledge with Action” (2010) argues that joint production is the best way to create knowledge that is credible, relevant, and perceived as valuable to the public. Knowledge is most likely to be effectively utilized by public stakeholders if the public stakeholder collaborates with the scholar. This approach runs counter to the centuries-old tradition of scientists producing knowledge without participation of public stakeholders and decision-makers (Peters et al., 2005). In addition to shared decision-making, there must be shared commitment by those involved in a partnership to sustain its activities over the long term. Savan (2004) notes that the sustainability of a partnership is directly associated with the ability of the partners to leverage each other’s knowledge, resources and skills.

Given the importance of the factors discussed above – mutuality and reciprocity, shared decision-making, and joint accountability for sustaining campus-community partnership outcomes – it is clear that forging strong partnerships may be both difficult and time-consuming. However, failure to take this into account can result in ineffective partnerships wrought with conflict, competing needs, lacking follow-through, and mismatched expectations (Bierle, 2002).

### **Methods**

This study relies on two primary sources of data: a survey of 198 UNH faculty and interviews with 12 faculty and their respective community partners. The following briefly outlines the survey and interview methodology and analysis.

## Survey Questionnaire

The 19-question survey consisting of a matrix of open-ended and demographic questions was conducted with 86 UNH faculty who participated in the Engaged Scholars Academy and 112 who were nominated but did not participate. This study utilizes data from four specific questions pertaining to partnerships, paraphrased below:

- Who were/are the external partners?
- What was the nature of the work with external partners?
- How did the scholars benefit from their partnerships?
- How did the external partners benefit?

Drawing from these questions and respondents' demographic data, statistical analyses were used to explore various aspects of community partnerships, including the types of partners, partner roles, the nature of the work, and the resulting mutual benefits. Frequencies were calculated and compared between groups to examine differences, t-statistics were used for specific questions to determine significance levels of these differences, and regression analyses tested relationships between variables. Of the faculty members who responded to the survey, 64 were identified as participants in the ESA, and 67 were identified as non-participants.

## Interviews

In addition to the surveys, twelve structured interviews were conducted of UNH faculty and their 12 respective partners. The purpose of the interviews was to generate a deeper understanding of how engaged scholars worked with community partners, and the tangible and intangible ways they each benefitted (Creswell, 1997). Questions of the faculty included:

- What does the term community partnership mean to you in the context of your own work?
- What role did your community partner play in your engaged scholarship?
- How has partnering benefitted you or your own work, if at all?
- How do you perceive that your community partner benefitted, if at all?

The ESA participants and non-participants were selected using purposive quota sampling, whereby a specified number of subject were chosen at random within each category – three ESA participants and three non-participants. Both the ESA participants and non-participants were each asked to identify a key community partner with whom they worked. The researchers then interviewed the respective community partners asking a

parallel set of questions.

The purpose of interviewing the community partners was to gain the partner's perspective of how they were engaged in the scholarship, what benefits they attained, and how they define partnerships. Interview transcripts analyzed and coded into 12 primary themes, or nodes, using NVIVO, a qualitative analysis software program and the process of open coding (or inductive coding) was used to identify common themes.

## Findings

### What Were/Are the Backgrounds of the Faculty?

The 64 ESA participants and 67 non-participants that completed the survey – with 66% responding – came from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and spanned the University of New Hampshire's colleges, institutes, and programs. Table 1 shows a breakdown of respondents by unit. Note that the gender balance for participants and non-participants was roughly equal, with 46% of respondents overall being female and 54% male. In terms of experience, 37% of the respondents were at the Associate Professor level, 14% Assistant Professor, and 13% Professor. The remaining 36% of respondents were extension, research, and clinical faculty at various ranks.

	Participants		Non-Participants		Total	
Business & Economics (WSBE)	6%	8	3%	4	9%	12
Engineering & Physical Sciences (CEPS)	4%	5	12%	15	15%	20
Health and Human Services (CHHS)	2%	2	5%	7	7%	9
Liberal Arts (COLA)	9%	12	12%	15	21%	27
Life Sciences & Agriculture (COLSA)	11%	14	11%	14	22%	28
UNH Manchester	2%	2	1%	1	2%	3
Institutes	6%	8	3%	4	9%	12
Cooperative Extension (UNHCE)	6%	8	2%	2	8%	10
Other (i.e., Library, UNH offices)	4%	5	3%	4	7%	9

*Note:* Percentages may not add up due to rounding.

Table 1. Breakdown of survey respondents by college/academic unit (N=131)

**Who Were/Are the Community Partners?**

To determine the types of community partners UNH faculty typically engage with, respondents were asked to list their most significant current external partner. Using multiple responses frequency analysis to account for each person providing two response selections for a single question, Table 2 depicts the percent breakdown by community partner category for ESA participants and non-participants for each time period. *Government agency* and *non-profit* were the two most significant categories. Percent differences calculated from responses by each group were not statistically significant at .05 alpha level in terms of how the two groups categorized their primary partners. In sum, both groups engaged a diversity of partners.

	ESA Participants	Non-Participants	% Diff.	Total
Non-Profit	14%	14%	<1%	28%
Government agency	9%	13%	-4%	22%
School (K-12)	8%	7%	1%	16%
Business/Industry	6%	5%	1%	11%
Community Group	5%	5%	0%	10%
Municipality	1%	2%	-1%	3%
Other	5%	5%	0%	10%

Table 2. Overall percentages of *current* most significant external partner by groups (N=131)

Interview findings closely reflect the survey data with respect to the breadth of community partners represented. Across the six ESA participants and six non-participants interviewed, their respective partners included representatives from two non-profit organizations, a government agency, a civic group, a business, and a municipality. Given the range of partners, no differences were immediately evident between ESA participants and non-participants.

However, further analysis of the survey data revealed that faculty

non-participants were more likely to name funding agencies as external partners as determined through discrepancy analysis. The preliminary variable of “Funding Partners” was cross-referenced with respondents’ answers to five survey items related to funding. Based on the discrepancy analysis, adjustments to the “Funding Partners” variable were made. Responses that were previously coded as “Maybe” were coded into either a “Yes” or “No” category, “Definitely Yes” in the “Yes” category, and “Definitely No” in the “No” category. Table 3 summarizes the readjusted percentages of respondents selecting funding agencies as external partners by participants and non-participants of ESA. The difference of eight-percentage points between the two groups was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 2.97$ ,  $p = .085$ ), suggesting that ESA non-participants are more likely than ESA participants to define funding agencies as partners.

	Participants		Non-Participants		% Diff.
Yes	12%	15	19%	25	-7%
No	37%	49	32%	42	5%

Table 3. Overall percentages of funding agencies selected as external partners by groups, adjusted for discrepancies (N=131)

This finding is exemplified by one particular ESA non-participant who was interviewed who defined his partnership almost exclusively as a funding relationship. This non-participant faculty scholar had a contract with a funding agency, which he defined as his partner, to provide a specified product: an economic impact study. His description of the partnership did not include jointly identifying the problem or collecting data with that agency. This relationship appeared to be more of a consulting contract than a two-way partnership. In contrast, one ESA participant described her partnership as a holistic process that necessitates the partners “...informing the research questions...and benefitting directly from the results.” She indicated that she strives to integrate her partners throughout the research process.

### Time Investment in the Partnership

When asked to describe how much time they spent with external partners over the last three years, there was a statistically significant difference between ESA participants and non-participants ( $t = -2.776$ ,  $p = .007$ ). On average, ESA participants spent 10.62 months working with partners, while non-participants spent 6.26 months over the prior three years, albeit there is variability within each group. Interviews further suggest that this variability may be in part due to the nature of the tasks involved, the status of the research project, and because some tasks

simply require more time with partners than others. One ESA participant that was interviewed noted that the Academy drills into participants the importance of engaging their partners at multiple stages in the scholarship. She noted that doing this, "...is a lot of work, but the reward is in the outcome."

**What Was the Nature of the Work with External Partners?**

To identify the role of community partners in engaged scholarship activities, faculty were asked to select from a list of options that describe the nature of their work with external partners in their most recent collaboration. Each option was coded as a dichotomous variable (i.e., 0 = No, 1 = Yes) to enable group comparisons between ESA participants and non-participants describing the nature of their work with the external partners.

	Participants	Non-Participants	% Diff.	$\chi^2$	p
Presentation/workshop to external group	34.4%	33.6%	0.8%	0.324	0.569
Engaged students in community project	21.4%	21.4%	0.0%	0.051	0.821
Collected data and applied research with external partners	29.0%	30.5%	-1.5%	0.983	0.612
Designed course/educ. program with external partner(s)	22.9%	11.5%	11.4%	8.703	0.003
Jointly developed a grant proposal with external partner(s)	16.8%	24.4%	-7.6%	2.421	0.120

Table 4. Nature of the work with external partners with percent differences by groups (N=131)

Table 4 summarizes the nature of the work with external partners, in percentages with respect to partners' involvement with defined activities. While statistically significant differences were not present between groups for most variables, a statistical difference at the alpha .05 level was present for one: "designed course/educational program with external partner" ( $\chi^2 = 8.703, p = .003$ ). This result suggests that designing courses or educational programming is a greater priority for ESA participants than for

non-participants.

This finding was evident in one particular partnership between an ESA participant and their community partner, where the partnership centered on providing information, tools, and resources to local decision-makers to help them formulate sound environmental policy. The ESA participant noted, “They [local decision makers] often don’t have the time to seek out the best information. That is where I can help.” Because the goal of the partnership was information sharing with decision-makers, the community partner helped to conduct workshops and trainings targeting local decision-makers. She noted that the partner first identified the need for training. Furthermore, she said that without her ESA experience, she may not have viewed working with her community partner as a valid form of engaged scholarship. She suggested that the ESA instilled in her a broader definition of engaged scholarship.

To ascertain a more detailed understanding of the specific types of scholarship community partners engage in with faculty, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which their external partners engaged in a set of defined activities. Each activity was rated on a Likert scale, with 0 being *not at all* to 4 being *all the time*. Table 5 shows the calculated group means for each activity and the mean differences. Although not statistically significant, the data suggest that partners of ESA participants were *somewhat* more likely to help with data collection and jointly evaluating project results with faculty, whereas non-participants were *somewhat* more likely to jointly publish the results. These are small differences.

	Participants	Non-Participants	Mean diff.
Partners identify topic for discussion/inquiry	2.84	2.83	0.01
Partners help with data collection	2.52	2.38	0.14
Partners assist in data analysis	2.00	2.04	-0.04
Partners jointly evaluate results of project	2.90	2.69	0.21
Partners jointly present results of project to others	2.53	2.50	0.03
Partners jointly publish the results	1.83	2.00	-0.17

Table 5. Group mean differences of engaged scholarly activities by groups of ESA (N=131)

The data in Table 5 also suggest that ESA participants are less likely to publish with their partners than non-participants. Qualitative analyses of interviews revealed that ESA participants had a broader definition of what constitutes engaged scholarship – aside from peer-reviewed publications – including co-creating an anthology, jointly developing a course, conducting a controlled performance evaluation, and engaging students in internships. One ESA participant pointed out, “...my definition of a tangible product is different from a pure researcher’s. For me, a guide or community project is an outcome that can be a form of scholarship.” She further noted that the ESA made her more deliberate about engaging with partners from the outset.

**How Did the Faculty Benefit From Their Partnership?**

To understand how UNH faculty perceived partnership benefits, they were asked to select from a list of defined options. Each option was coded as a dichotomous variable (i.e., 0 = No, 1 = Yes) to enable between-groups comparison. Table 6 shows the item percentages of how ESA participants and non-participants perceived themselves benefitting from the partnership.

	Participants		Non-Participants		% Diff.	$\chi^2$	p
No benefit	3%	4	5%	7	-2%	0.750	0.387
External funding was awarded	15%	19	23%	30	-8%	3.183	0.074
Additional venue for publication	15%	19	16%	21	-2%	0.042	0.837
Enhanced scholarship	46%	60	41%	53	5%	5.924	0.015

Table 6. Item percentages and frequency counts of how respondents perceived themselves to benefit from the partnership by groups of ESA

The results indicate that the difference between groups was statistically significant at the alpha .05 level for “enhanced scholarship” ( $\chi^2 = 5.924, p = .015$ ). This means that ESA participants were significantly more likely than non-participants to view collaborating with community partners as benefitting their scholarship. Also notable, the difference between groups for the variable “no benefit” was not statistically significant between

ESA participants and non-participants (3% of ESA participant; 5% of non-participants).

Qualitative analyses of the interviews revealed that all faculty interviewed perceived some benefit from partnering, although specific forms of benefit varied widely. For one ESA participant, partnering gave her access to information that she would not otherwise have been able to obtain. She noted, "...it made me think differently about how literature gets circulated and how it gets used in the community. I was trained to analyze

### How Did the External Partners Benefit From Their Partnership?

As previously noted, this study did not survey partners to determine perceived benefit from partnering with UNH faculty. Instead we conducted in- depth structured interviews with a 12 randomly selected community partners. The survey did attempt to better understand how UNH faculty perceived their external partners to benefit and these respondents were asked to select from a list of defined response options. Table 7 depicts between-groups comparisons of how ESA participants and non-participants perceived their partners to benefit. The highest ranked response option among both groups was "gained knowledge or skills." Group differences were not statistically significant, although ESA non-participants were somewhat more likely to select "had appropriate data to make a decision."

	Participants		Non-Participants		% Diff.	$\chi^2$	p
Gained knowledge or skills	55	42%	53	41%	1%	1.056	0.304
Received assistance with a project	41	31%	39	30%	2%	0.472	0.492
Had appropriate data to make a decision	23	18%	33	25%	-7%	2.372	0.124
Gained monetary resources	14	11%	14	11%	0%	0.019	0.891

Table 7. Item percentages and frequency count of respondents perceived external partners benefit from the partnership by groups of ESA

Perhaps more salient, in-depth interviews with community partners revealed that they also perceived some level of benefit by partnering with UNH faculty. From the partner of an ESA participant writing an anthology, the benefit of partnering was described as her ability to share her cultural

heritage and record her story for future generations. A partner of an ESA non-participant, who was contracted to conduct an economic valuation, described the benefit as the ability to, "...do grant funded studies along the line of [our organization's] mission.... so that that understanding can be built into [its] decisions." Another partner noted the value of his partnership focused on his ability to exchange ideas and present his work and stated, "I go to look at [and present in] university galleries because they are more interesting, more advanced, more sophisticated....it pushes the limits of my mind and what we do as artists."

What became apparent through the qualitative analysis of the 12 structured interviews was that both the faculty and their community partners needed to feel that their efforts were being reciprocated and that both benefitted from the partnership. One partner noted that the partnership experience itself was just as important as any tangible outcome of the partnership. She further noted that she "would not have been able to put on workshops without the support of her faculty partner." Another ESA participant noted, "...the reason we collaborate is that it makes all of us more effective and it reflects positively on *all* of our organizations."

### **Partnership Challenges**

While this study focuses primarily on the multiple perceived benefits of community partnerships, a number of challenges were also identified through interviews with faculty and their respective community partners. Through qualitative coding of interviews with faculty and their respective partners, two issues emerged as the most commonly-identified challenges. First, faculty members described challenges associated with the significant amount of time and energy it takes to form and sustain community partnerships. Second, several faculty noted limited understanding and negative perceptions of engaged scholarship by peers.

Forming and sustaining partnerships was identified as challenging for both faculty members and their respective community partners. Of the faculty interviewed, all but one said that forming partnerships takes considerable time; time that could be spent on other faculty work. As one ESA participant noted, "building the level of trust necessary to embark on a partnership can take months to years and sustaining it beyond the grant cycle can be challenging."

Community partners identified similar challenges associated with forming and sustaining community partnerships. One noted that many partnerships that he engaged in with faculty "...failed to result in tangible community outcomes." As a result, he expressed a reticence to partner with faculty unless there was a clearly-defined outcome. He further noted

that some faculty are unwilling to spend time up-front defining the outcomes. In fact, community partners were just as vocal about the challenges of partnerships as faculty. One noted, “We are volunteers and give our time to keep the partnership going...I just get burned out.”

Partnerships focusing on engaged scholarship can also carry a stigma for both the faculty and the community partner. Some faculty interviewed stressed that their institutional peers do not consider engaged scholarship a true form of scholarship. This frustration was particularly manifest amongst ESA participants who have focused their energies on engaging community partners in their research activities as a result of the ESA. Likewise, community partners felt that their peers did not always recognize or value their collaborations with faculty. One community partner in the arts noted that he often partnered with faculty to gain knowledge and experience, but his peers did not feel that engaging with faculty contributed to their creative work.

While the above summarizes common challenges associated with institutional-community partnerships, it is important to note that most faculty and community partners interviewed stressed the importance of partnering and wanted to do so. For faculty, engaging with community partners in real-world problems was often described as rewarding. And for community partners, working with faculty provides them with new insights and knowledge that they can bring to bear on solving problems.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The overall goal of this mixed-methods study was to compare how Academy participants and non-participants engage with community partners. Findings suggest that the Engaged Scholars Academy has begun to change the way that faculty collaborate with community partners in their scholarly work. We note here a number of similarities between the two groups: ESA participants and non-participants. For one, faculty in each group reported multiple benefits to working with partners and they felt strongly that their partners benefited. Each also experienced a sense of satisfaction about working with partners to address real-world issues. However, there are several key differences between ESA participants and non-participants with respect to who they partner with, how they forge partnerships, and the outcomes that result. These differences shed light on how ESA participants put into practice the principles of partnership that they learned through the Academy.

Faculty who participated in the Academy tended to have a deeper understanding of the principles of effective partnership. Both survey data and interviews suggest that they are better able to articulate the value of

engaging with partners in the early stages of their scholarly work, as well as mutually framing problems and collaboratively evaluating outcomes. As a result, they tend to place greater emphasis on engaging their partners in data collection, designing courses, and disseminating and evaluating results compared to those who did not participate in the ESA.

ESA non-participants, on the other hand, were more apt to conflate engaged scholarship with applied scholarship that has a practical outcome for public stakeholders, but does not engage them in the scholarly process. As a result, they often focused their scholarship on issues of public import, but without directly collaborating with their partner. Furthermore, the ESA appeared to help faculty become more cognizant of the principles of partnership, particularly the need to engage partners up front in the process so that research problem(s) are jointly defined. These findings also suggest that faculty characterize their community partners differently if they participated in the ESA. Non-participants were more likely to identify funding agencies (i.e., government) as their primary community partners, while ESA participants were more likely to identify non-profits and other public beneficiaries of their scholarship.

Interviews provided additional texture to the study and revealed that faculty members' definitions of partnership are often determined by the nature of their project, their disciplinary background, and their previous experience. For faculty in the arts and humanities, partnerships tended to center around the exchange of ideas and creative expression. In contrast, those in the sciences tended to be more data-driven and problem-focused. With regard to the benefits perceived by the ESA participants and non-participants, there were notable differences. ESA participants were more focused on how working with community partners enhanced their scholarship. Also of considerable significance to both faculty and their respective community partners was the need to experience reciprocity. ESA participants more clearly emphasized reciprocity and accountability as key partnership elements. However, survey results did not sufficiently address perceived differences in reciprocity and accountability between the faculty and their respective community partners to make any statistical claims.

Clearly, a case can be made that those who participated in the Academy have increased awareness and knowledge about partnerships, thus impacting the way in which they engage their community partners. The lack of more marked differences between ESA participants and non-participants can be explained by the interviews with participants. These interviews suggest that the participants' newfound knowledge has not had sufficient time to translate to measures of success, such as joint publications, funding, and better decisions by community leaders. Further, while it is clear that ESA participants gained knowledge as well as personal benefit

through the Academy, they also identified a number of challenges preventing them from forging stronger partnerships. These include insufficient rewards for engaged scholarship, lack of time to build effective partnerships, and limited internal funding to sustain work with community partners, and at times difficulty ascertaining common goals with community partners.

So what lessons have we learned that might translate to other institutions who are interested in programs similar to the ESA on their campuses? First, this is a program that can help shift institutional culture – perhaps this is its greatest strength. Partnering with the external community has remained a priority over time, even through multiple leadership changes and strategic plans. Second, programs such as the ESA can have a positive impact on how faculty frame their work and engage partners throughout the process. Third, for similar programs to have broad institutional impacts, buy-in from faculty colleagues, department chairs, and other institutional leaders is key. At UNH, this buy in is partly due to the fact that we have sought to link engaged scholarship with federal agencies priorities – thus linking our work to enhancement of external funding. And finally, other institutions must understand that engaged scholarship and these types of partnerships is more than applying academic results to address public issues. Engaged scholarship necessitates the joint, albeit co-creation, of knowledge in partnership with those who will benefit from it, and shared accountability to achieving jointly-defined outcomes.

### **Future Research and Study Limitations**

This study focused on identifying differences in how ESA participants and non-participants at the University of New Hampshire characterize engaged scholarship, how they engage with community partners, and how they perceive the benefits for themselves and their partners. This study is specifically focused on one institution, thus a limitation of the study is that it may not be broadly generalizable. However, future research plans to build from lessons learned in this research and conduct a parallel survey of community partners, as well as more in-depth interviews. Such research will help us to better understand whether institutional efforts to embed engagement and principles of partnership into faculty culture also impact the ways in which faculty work and how partners perceive engagement and the outcomes they gain from it.

This study also leaves a number of unanswered questions that could be explored. For instance, why do ESA participants spend more time with their partners than non-participants? Why are ESA non-participants more likely to identify funding agencies as collaborators? And does engaging community partners in research result in better outcomes for both the faculty and community partners? These are questions that we hope others

The University of New Hampshire Engaged Scholars Academy  
will pursue.

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