

Topic 1:
**Measuring Faculty/Staff
Scholarly Work to Fulfill the
Engagement Mission**

Plenary Session Summary

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Measuring Faculty/Staff Scholarly Work to Fulfill the Engagement Mission

We started with the question above, and several sub questions, that were to frame our discussion. Our intent was to detail challenges, current practices, and conclusions.

We also agreed we would make up our own questions, when appropriate, and we did! So, the result of our discussion relates loosely but substantively to our designated starting point.

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We had good discussion, and many good, provocative ideas surfaced. It is difficult to capture the essence and dynamic of our discussion, but I have tried to make sense of it, and, as I promised, I absolve all session participants of what I am about to say. I will attempt to highlight, in brief form, some of the salient points from our discussion.

Measuring Faculty/Staff Scholarly Work to Fulfill the Engagement Mission: Discussion Points

1. Institutional variability complicates thinking about the issues; institutional uniqueness must be respected in our thinking and discussion about engaged scholarship and how to measure it.
2. Language and definitions are very important, and we need to work toward a more commonly-shared language and definition with regard to distinctions, such as engagement versus outreach, various views of outreach, the meaning of scholarship, and engaged scholarship versus scholarship of engagement.

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3. It seems like we spent most of our time talking about why or if we value engagement and engaged scholarship as opposed to how we measure it. Perhaps this is where we are in our discussion of these matters in higher education, and it seems we must get through that discussion before we can deal with the measurement question.
4. Is engaged scholarship as a “stand alone” or is it an integral element of the scholarship of teaching, research and creative accomplishment, and service? How do we conceptualize engaged scholarship? There appears to be a difference of view.

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5. Peer review is an essential element of scholarly process. Who are appropriate peers for assessing engaged scholarship? Those we usually ask, or a different, broader set of peers, which may not always include the those we typically involve. What role do “community partners” have in peer review of engaged scholarship?
6. Be clear on who is the audience for benchmarking engagement and measuring the impact of engaged scholarship. What we benchmark and what we measure will most likely vary by audience. Knowing who our primary audiences are is key to success in benchmarking and measuring engagement.

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7. We must approach benchmarking cautiously and with care. Benchmarking against the current and past performance of peers is inherently retrospective and, at best, oriented toward the status quo. It might be more appropriate for institutions, individually and collectively, to benchmark against parameters that reflect a progressive, cutting-edge vision of the future, so as to stake a leadership position with regard to engagement and engaged scholarship. Also, we must be sure to get a positive return from benchmarking to make it worth the individual and institutional investment of time, energy and financial resources.

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8. In the context of faculty and staff reward and recognition systems, how do we treat collaboration, teamwork, and interdisciplinarity, all essential for effective engaged scholarship? Perhaps the collaborator who catalyzes others across disciplines in the context of important societal issues is evidencing just as powerful scholarship, if not more so, than the lone investigator.

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9. We discussed engaged scholarship in a tenure-track faculty context, primarily. What are our scholarly expectations for academic staff who lead and support engaged scholarship, and how do we measure whether or not these expectations are achieved?
10. Organizational change with respect to engagement and engaged scholarship is challenging, frustrating, and time intensive. How can we catalyze and drive such change in positive, productive ways? Such change is a long-term process that requires both constant attention and great patience.

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11. With respect to cultural change, graduate education is a key leverage point. The next generation of faculty and academic administrative leaders are socialized with respect to scholarship and the academy as graduate students. How should graduate education be changed, if at all, to strengthen engagement and engaged scholarship in our disciplines and institutions in the future?

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12. What is our institutional commitment to engagement and engaged scholarship? Does reality align with our rhetoric? What is the variability by institution and type of institution with respect to such commitment?
13. We seem to have a congruence problem. Expressed goals for our institutions do not always seem to be consistent with our institutional incentives and supports. What are the implications for engagement and engaged scholarship if such lack of congruence does indeed exist?

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Thanks to Linda Chapel-Jackson for doing a great job of recording our session.