

Critical Reflections: Evolution and Outcomes of Graduate Certification in Community Engagement

Diane M. Doberneck

National Collaborative for the Study of University Engagement

Robert E. Brown

University-Community Partnerships

Laurie A. Van Egeren

Community Evaluation Research Collaborative

Miles McNall

Community Evaluation Research Collaborative

University Outreach and Engagement
Michigan State University

National Outreach Scholarship Conference, East Lansing, Michigan
October 2-4, 2011

Graduate Certification in Community Engagement

Purpose

- Prepare next generation of engaged scholars by helping graduate and professional students to develop systemic, thoughtful, and scholarly approaches to community engagement

Program elements

- Seminars (7 competency areas)
- Mentored community engagement experience (60 hrs.)
- Reflective portfolio and presentation
- Learning community—in person & on-line

Credential appears on their transcripts



Seminars (7 competency areas)

1. Engaged scholarship and the scholarship of engagement
2. University-community partnerships
3. Capacity building for mutual benefit
4. Community-based, participatory research
5. Taking strategic action with community partners
6. Evaluating partnerships
7. Ethics of engaged scholarship

All seminars include pre-readings, in-class discussion or active learning activities, and assignments that appear in the students' final portfolios.



Research Question

What are the students' perceptions of the impact of their participation in the program on their careers as engaged scholars?



Research Design

Mixed Methods Research

- Quantitative and qualitative combined

Data Sources

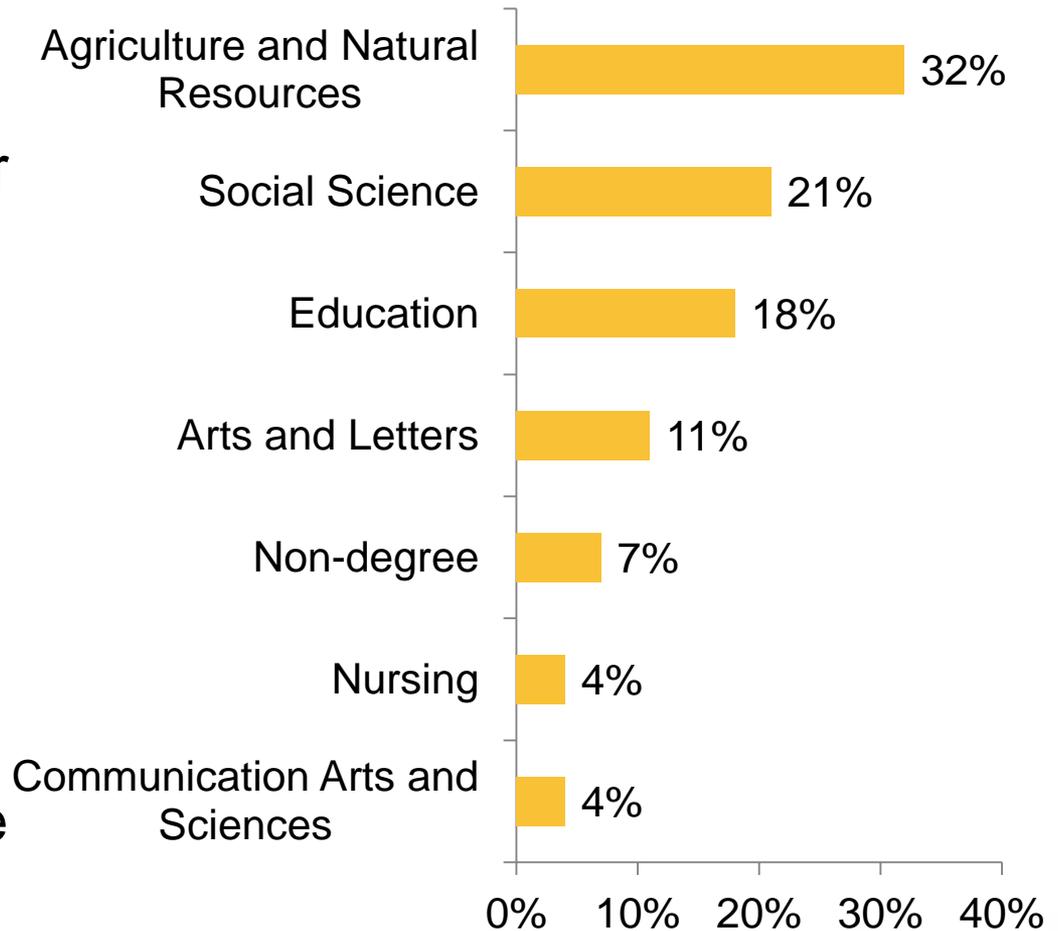
- Surveys at end of each cohort year; 67% response rate.
- Open-ended interviews of cohort 1 & 2 (qual), spring 2011
 - 10 completers

Data Analysis

- Quantitative
 - Descriptive statistics
- Qualitative
 - Thematic coding of qualitative data
 - 2 coders for reliability

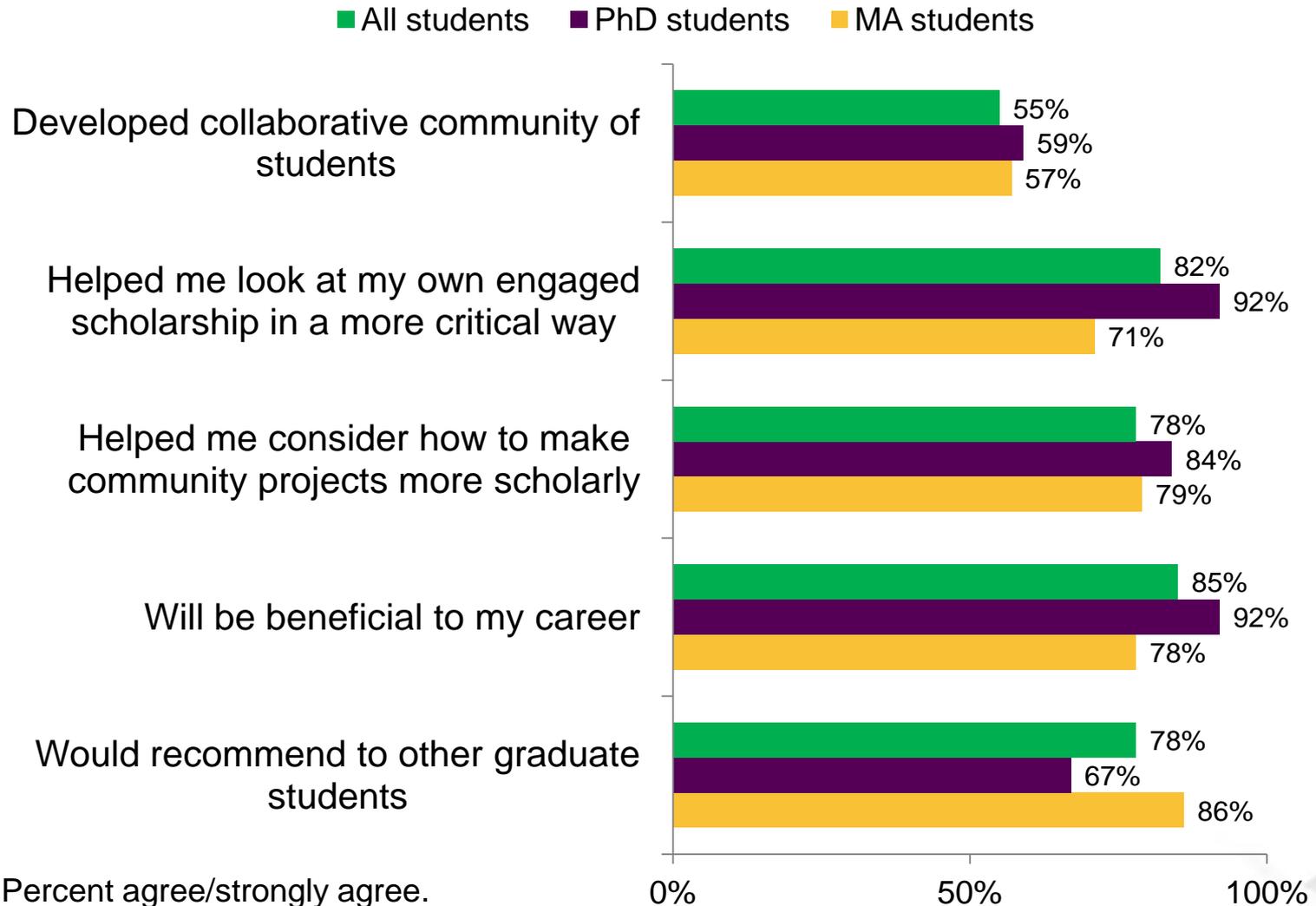
28 Participants Over 2 Years

- 71% female
- 39% students of color
- 43% doctoral students
- Career paths*
 - 64% engaged research
 - 60% engaged teaching
 - 50% engaged service



*Asked only in Year 2.

Results: Overall Impacts



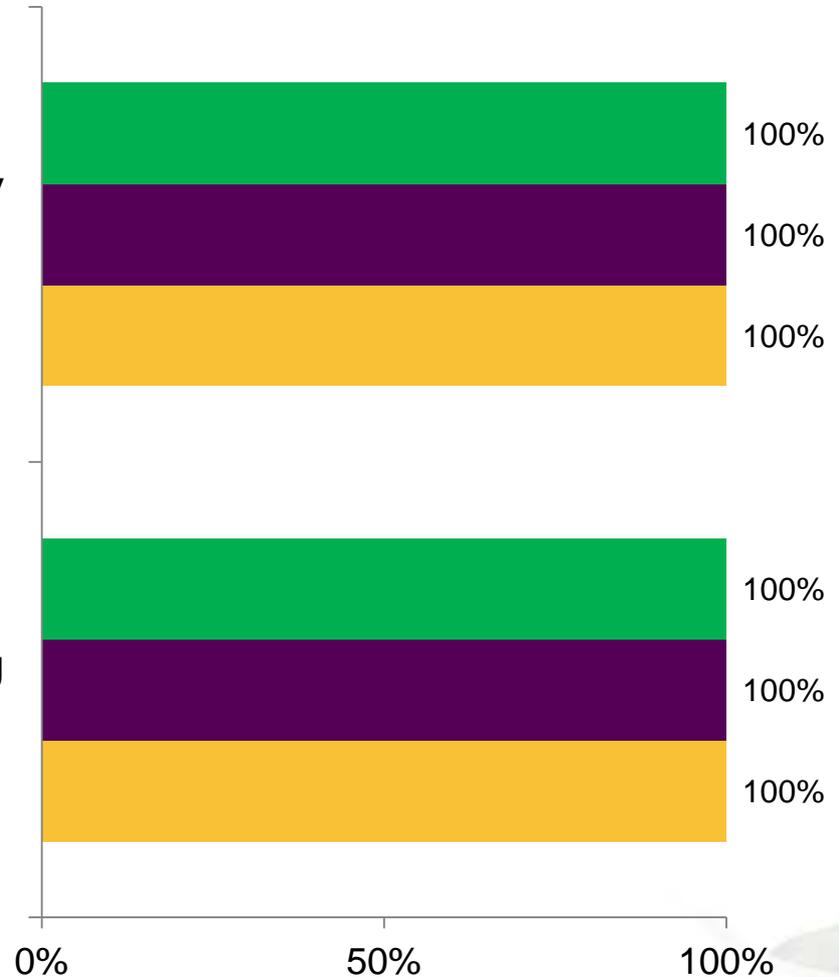
Note: Percent agree/strongly agree.
Includes completers & those still in program.

Results: Practice and Reflection

■ All students ■ PhD students ■ MA students

Mentored experience offered opportunity to learn key collaboration practices with partners, develop engagement skills

Will draw on engagement portfolio during job interviews or to support my career



Note: Percent agree/strongly agree.
Includes completers & those still in program.

Results: Interviews

- Overall, how do you think his program will help your career? (9/10 completers answered this question)
- Major Themes:
 - It created a new mindset and shaped who I am (7/9)
 - It gave me a new skill set and shaped how I work (4/9)
 - It increased my marketability (4/9)
 - It provided an opportunity to be part of a learning community (2/9)



New Mindset (7/9)

- *I think it made me have deeper critical reflection on processes that I'm involved in, whether it may be consumer buying or just decision making at many different levels.*
- *I think that going through this has given me a new way to look at what I do. Not just what I do for [my] career, but what I do [for] my vocation, my avocation, my parenting...*
- *...it's...helped shape me*



New Skill Set (4/9)

- *I got useful concepts, useful toolkits for what I do definitely, that it will help my career because the more of those I have the better.*
- *[I gained] a perspective of how to work with communities effectively at the grass root level. whether it is with a...with a project a development or whether it's a research or whether it's finding a creative way to connect what is happening in the classroom to realities out there in the field.*

Increased Marketability (4/9)

- *[It] will make us more effective and marketable. And I'm planning, I haven't started actively job hunting yet, but...that is definitely something I will accentuate in my job applications.*
- *I can say I'm an engaged scholar in such and such, and it makes me stand out. So I think it's very helpful, I know how to use it, so it's going to help me a great deal I think. It already got me a job.*

Learning Community (2/9)

- *...the opportunity to get to know some more folks and really just talk about some of these things in depth...it was like the ability to go to a conference and talk about all of these things in these seminars without having...to go to a conference.*
- *And being able to communicate with engaged scholars is added benefits...*

Implications of Findings

What are the students' perceptions of the impact of their participation in the program on their careers as engaged scholars?

- Helped them with new ways to think about their scholarship and engagement
- Provided them with new tools for engaged scholarship
- Gave them a competitive advantage on the job market



Next Steps

Future Evaluation Research

- Individual outcomes
 - Are there differences in masters, professional, and Ph.D. student experiences in the program?
 - Are there differences for individuals pursuing engaged research, engaged teaching, or engaged service?
 - Are there differences for individuals pursuing academic careers and non-academic (e.g., nonprofit or government) careers?
- Program evaluation
 - Did improvements made between year 1 and year 2 make a difference in student learning?
 - What elements of the program are making the biggest difference? the least difference? for student learning?

www.outreach.msu.edu/gradcert/

Graduate Certification in Community Engagement — *Developing the skills and competencies needed for exemplary university-community engagement*

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [REQUIREMENTS](#) [SEMINARS/COMPETENCIES](#) [APPLICATION](#) [CONTACT](#)



“ Who would have imagined 150 years ago that we would become the global prototype of a genuinely American brand of higher education – one that is an engine of the economy, a force for democratization of public learning, the model for engagement with the world beyond the campus, and a catalyst for improving the quality of life in Michigan and around the world.

Lou Anna Kimsey Simon, Ph. D.
President, Michigan State University
*Founders' Day Address
February 11, 2005*

”

WELCOME TO THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATION IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WEB SITE!

Deadline for Applications: September 16, 2011

Michigan State University's new Graduate Certification in Community Engagement prepares students for academic careers that integrate scholarship with community engagement.

The Certification is designed to help graduate and professional students develop systemic, thoughtful, and scholarly approaches to community engagement. With approval from the student's Graduate Committee chairperson and University Outreach and Engagement, students tailor their program of study to strengthen their scholarly and practical skills in engaged research, engaged teaching, or engaged service.

Graduate students who fulfill all requirements will receive a certificate of completion from the Associate Provost for University Outreach and Engagement and the Graduate School and an official notation on their academic transcript through the Office of the Registrar.

[Learn more about the Graduate Certification.](#)

[Download the Graduate Certification in Community Engagement Guidebook \(PDF, 525 KB, 93 pages\)](#) for complete information about the requirements, seminar content, and application process.

[Download one page flyer about the Certification.](#)

Contact Information

University Outreach and Engagement

Michigan State University
Kellogg Center, Garden Level
East Lansing, MI 48824-1022

Phone: (517) 353-8977

Fax: (517) 432-9541

E-mail: outreach@msu.edu

Web: outreach.msu.edu