

Scholarly Outreach and Engagement Reported by Successfully Tenured Faculty at Michigan State University, 2002-2006

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A TYPOLOGY OF PUBLICLY ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

What do we Mean by Publicly Engaged Scholarship?

Michigan State University has defined publicly engaged scholarship as a “form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with University and unit missions” (Provost’s Committee on University Outreach, 1993). Private consulting and individual volunteerism are not considered to be publicly engaged scholarship because they fulfill individual or personal goals and not unit or university missions. Faculty contributions to university, college, or departmental committees as well as to scholarly and professional associations are also not considered to be publicly engaged scholarship because they do not directly benefit audiences beyond the campus and the academy.

Community is defined broadly to include more than geographic communities, such as neighborhoods, cities, or regions bound by a physical place. Our definition of community includes communities of identity (e.g., communities of individuals who share race, gender, or other individual characteristics); communities of affiliation or interest (e.g., groups of people who feel connected to one another through a common set of values they act upon together); communities of circumstance (e.g., community that forms around a common experience such as surviving a flood); and communities of faith, kin, and profession (Fraser, 2005; Ife, 2002; Marsh, 1999; Mattessich & Monsey, 1999).

In essence, we considered faculty members’ work to be publicly engaged scholarship when it includes (Checkoway, 2001, p. 143):

...research [that] promotes public scholarship relating their work to the pressing problems of society; [or] teaching [that] includes community-based learning that develops substantive knowledge, cultivates practical skills, and strengthens social responsibility; and [/or] service [that] draws upon their professional expertise for the welfare of society.

Why was this Typology Developed?

The research team developed this typology to use in an institutional study examining how faculty reported publicly engaged scholarship on their promotion and tenure forms. Once we determined that faculty did indeed report publicly engaged scholarship (90% reported at least one scholarly outreach and engagement activity), we knew the natural next question would be, “What types of activities did they report?” Discovering that there was no commonly accepted typology of publicly engaged scholarship, we developed one of our own to use in the study.

How was this Typology Developed?

The research team developed this typology through both deductive and inductive means. We read publications by foundations, higher education institutions, and scholars of engagement to learn about how they differentiated among types of publicly engaged scholarly activities (Barker, 2004; McLean 2005; Michigan State University, 2009; Provost’ Committee on University Outreach, 1993; Sandmann, 2008; Schomberg, 2006). At the same time, we read 224 promotion and tenure documents submitted by tenure track faculty at Michigan State University. Bringing together ideas from these two sources, we developed a 12 category typology to describe common types of publicly engaged scholarship to use in our institutional research study.

What are the Twelve Types of Publicly Engaged Scholarship?

We categorized publicly engaged scholarship into the following four broad categories:

- Publicly engaged research and creative activities
- Publicly engaged instruction
- Publicly engaged service
- Publicly engaged commercialized activities

The first three categories relate to faculty member’s traditional academic responsibilities and assignments in research, teaching, and service. The fourth is an emerging category that is generating discussion at some institutions (Hill, 2006; Sandmann, 2008; Schomberg, 2006). The four broad categories were further broken down into 12 mutually exclusive categories.

Publicly Engaged Research and Creative Activities

1. Research—business, industry, commodity group funded

Sponsored research or inquiry supported through grants or contracts from businesses, industries, trade associations, or commodity groups (e.g., agricultural or natural resource groups) that generates new knowledge to address practical problems experienced by a public (non-university) client or audience. Research conducted specifically for academic purposes or that is shared solely with academic audiences is not included.

2. **Research—nonprofit, foundation, government funded**

Sponsored research or inquiry supported through grants or contracts from community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations (e.g., health or disease prevention), or local, state, regional, or national governments that generates new knowledge to address practical problems experienced by a public (non-university) client or audience. Research conducted specifically for academic purposes or that is shared solely with academic audiences is not included.

3. **Research—other**

Receiving intramural support or unfunded; applied research or community-based research that is not funded externally; demonstration projects, policy analysis, evaluation research, needs assessments, and other scholarship to generate new knowledge at the direct request of, or in conjunction with, a public (non-university) client. Research conducted specifically for academic purposes or that is shared solely with academic audiences is not included; however research that is disseminated to practitioner audiences does count.

4. **Creative activities**

Original contribution to knowledge, expression, or activity of a creative discipline or field that is made available to, or generated in collaboration with, a public (non-university) audience. Examples include musical compositions, public performances, artistic exhibitions, and curatorial activities.

Publicly Engaged Instruction

5. **Instruction—credit**

- Classes and instructional programs that offer student academic credit hours and are designed and marketed specifically to serve those who are neither traditional campus degree seekers nor campus staff. Such courses and programs are often scheduled at times and in places convenient to the working adult. Examples include: a weekend MBA program; an off-campus master’s program in nursing offered in a rural area; and an online certificate program in medical technology for laboratory professionals.
- This category includes classes and instructional programs that offer student academic credit hours with an **academic service learning** or civic engagement component. These experiences include frequent, structured, and disciplined reflections on the linkages between the activity and the context of the academic experience. Service learning experiences that are not associated with credit hours are not included (see service—service learning category). Other forms of experiential education, such as internships or career-oriented practica, are not included because they do not meet the definitional threshold of “for the public good.”
- It also includes classes and instructional programs that offer academic credit hours delivered overseas through **study abroad** or through international internships as long as the experiences **include service to host country nationals or communities**. Most study abroad programs will not be included.

6. Instruction—noncredit

Classes and instructional programs, marketed specifically to those who are neither degrees seekers nor campus staff, that are designed to meet planned learning outcomes but for which academic credit hours are not offered. Workshops and conference presentations for practitioner (not academic) audiences count. In lieu of academic credit, these programs sometimes provide certificates of completion or continuing education units, or meet requirements of occupational licensure. Examples include: short courses for practicing professionals; pre-college programs; personal enrichment programs; leisure learning tours; and virtual university programs (noncredit). Programs designed for and targeted at faculty and staff (such as professional development programs) or MSU degree-seeking students (such as career preparation or study skills classes) are not included.

7. Instruction—public understanding

Resources designed for the public include managed learning environments (e.g., museums, libraries, gardens, galleries, and exhibits); expositions, demonstrations, fairs, and performances; educational materials and products (e.g., pamphlets, encyclopedia entries, educational broadcasting, CD-ROMs, software, textbooks for non-traditional audiences); and dissemination of scholarship through public media (e.g., speakers' bureau, TV appearances, newspaper interviews, radio broadcasts, Web pages, and POD casts where these are scholarly and available to the public). MSU Extension bulletins would count here. Most of these experiences are short term, learner directed, and learner initiated.

Publicly Engaged Service

8. Service—patient, clinical services

All client and patient (human and animal) care provided by university faculty through unit-sponsored group practice, diagnostic labs, or as a part of clinical instruction by medical and graduate students as part of their professional education. Examples include medical/veterinary clinical practice and counseling or crisis center services.

9. Service—technical assistance, expert testimony, legal advice

Provision of assistance, expertise, capacity-building, and advice through direct interaction with clients (not indirect like via a Web page or bulletin) in response to a request from a public (non-university) client. Examples include: consulting work that is performed for the benefit of the constituent; expert testimony and other forms of legal advice; and assisting agencies and other organizations with management and operational tasks (e.g., strategic planning, human resources consulting). Research questions do not drive this process/relationship with the public.

10. Service—community service

Civic engagement or service learning experiences that are not associated with a course or instructional program and service learning activities that do not include reflection components or links to content in academic courses. Examples include: service learning

organized by student organizations (e.g., service fraternities or sororities); alternative spring break, as long as it is not associated with a credit class; or programs offered under the auspices of a unit generally (e.g., Honors College).

11. Service—other

Contributions made by MSU faculty, staff, and students to benefit public (non-university) audiences directly. The category does not include: service to scholarly, disciplinary, or professional organizations; contributions to departmental, college, or university units, committees, or task forces or academic governance; or voluntary community service unrelated to an individual's research and creative activities.

Publicly Engaged Commercialized Activities

12. Commercialized activities

Translation of new knowledge generated by the university to the public through the commercialization of discoveries. Examples include copyrights, patents, and licenses for commercial, entrepreneurial, and economic development.

As researchers and advocates of publicly engaged scholarship, we do *not* believe one type of publicly engaged scholarship is inherently more valuable than another. Like The Research Universities Civic Engagement Network (TRUCEN), we believe that different types of publicly engaged scholarship are appropriate for, and responsive to, different community and campus needs and contexts (Stanton, 2007).

What are the Next Steps?

Our hope is that researchers will refine and expand this typology so that scholars of engagement will begin to have a common framework for research across institutions. Please contact us with your comments and critiques. We welcome your input in the further development of a systematic way to categorize the types of activities faculty are involved in as engaged scholars.

We also hope that institutional leaders, faculty developers, college deans, school directors, department chairs, faculty members, and graduate students will use this typology to become more aware of the myriad of choices they and their colleagues have for incorporating publicly engaged scholarship in their academic careers.

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* NOTE: “Form of outreach” definitions are available as popups from “What to report?” section. Text may vary slightly from year to year.

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John Schweitzer is a professor in the Center for Community and Economic Development and adjunct professor in the National Center for the Study of University Engagement. Throughout his professional career he has used his knowledge of the social science research process to study the impact and effectiveness of a wide variety of educational and social programs and policies. In addition to teaching courses in statistics, research methodology, educational measurement and program evaluation, Dr. Schweitzer has formally served on doctoral and master's committees of over 100 graduate students in 21 different departments at MSU, and has informally assisted a similar number of graduate students with various aspects of their research.

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