Measuring Scholarly Outreach at Michigan State University

Tools, Challenges, and Faculty Perceptions

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Outreach is 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, University Outreach at Michigan State University: Extending Knowledge to Serve Society
Reason for Measurement

- Planning Data
- Public Story
- Cross-Institutional Comparisons
• Developmental Process

- Evaluating Quality Outreach
  Points of Distinction
  Reappointment, Promotion, & Tenure

- Counting Outreach—
  Measuring Outreach Quantitatively
  Project-based Pilots
  Interview Protocol
  Faculty-based Format
Online Survey Questions

- Total Time Spent on Outreach
- Indicate Area(s) of Concern
  - Arts & Humanities
  - Business & Industrial Management
  - Children, Youth, and Families (non-school related)
  - Civic Responsibility & Leadership
  - Community & Economic Development
  - Education, Pre-Kindergarten – 12
  - Food and Fiber Production & Safety
  - Health & Health Care
  - Labor Relations, Training, & Safety
  - Natural Resources, Land Use, & Environment
  - Public Safety & Corrections
  - Technology Transfer & Diffusion
Online Survey Questions (continued)

• Identify Form of Outreach Work
  Outreach Research
  Outreach Instruction
  Student Experiential/Service Learning
  Public Events & Information
  Clinical Service

• Kinds and Number of Participants

• Location

• Revenues
Online Survey Questions (continued)

• Actions for Whom, about What
• Collaborators/Co-sponsors
  - External
  - Internal
• Kind/Number of Personnel
• Outcomes, Evaluation
• Plan for Sustaining the Work
Interview Protocol

- Need for the project, issue addressed
- Expertise drawn on
- Approach, strategy, methodology
- Effect on community, public policy, practice
- Documentation
- Sustainability
- Value added of university involvement
Interview Protocol (continued)

- Scholarly impact—on research and teaching, on role as academic
- Communication and products/publications
- Impact of outreach work on faculty scholarship
- Impact of faculty outreach work on the broader community
- Implications for outreach research
Challenges and Tensions

- Vocabulary
- Whose Activity Is Reported
- “Resource Consciousness”
- Using Technology
Vocabulary

• Developing a Vocabulary to Describe Outreach/Engagement that...
  distinguishes scholarship based outreach from “service” in general
  is well understood by faculty
  allows us to classify different forms of outreach
  has meaning to the general public
  supports comparisons across institutions
Whose Activity Is Reported?

- Who counts as having scholarly expertise?
  Range of faculty and academic appointments
  External partners
  Different priorities and perspectives
  New kind of scholarly process and product
“Resource Consciousness”

- Developing Greater “Resource Consciousness” Among Those Involved in Outreach
  Toward making outreach a planned activity
  Overcoming conflict between “counting the cost” and “doing good”
  Finding ways to value external partnerships
Using Technology

- Web Usability & Accessibility
- Security v. Timing Out
- Prompting Use in a Paperless, 24/7 Environment
• To the provost, deans, chairs, directors for planning
• To the public, by thematic areas, for university involvement
• Across institutions—developing common data sets
For more information about Measuring Scholarly Outreach at Michigan State University, please contact:

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