The Art of Partnership: Engaging Individuals to Empower a Community

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Taking education outside of the classroom is an exciting, yet daunting, proposition. Community-based education can provide students exposure to the richness and complication of the world outside of academe—the people, politics and interconnections that both challenge and complement our traditional modes of teaching. These educational experiences also play many other important roles within the institution, reinforcing the mission, providing relevance within the communities the institution serves, and fulfilling the citizenship roles many colleges and universities value. This paper uses experiences and insights gained planning and staffing an annual community arts festival to develop a model of campus-community partnership that is based on a broad conception of reciprocity. Incorporating the perspectives of a faculty member, a student, a college administrator and a community partner, the paper describes the process by which the project, and an associated course, have been (and continue to be) developed. We argue that applying the broader concepts of reciprocity enhance the success, sustainability and satisfaction of working in partnership.

Keywords: **Sustainable Partnerships, Networking Theory, Service Learning Models, Reciprocity**

This paper chronicles the development of a partnership between faculty, staff and students from a small liberal arts college and members of a neighboring community. Students from an interdisciplinary course on community development worked actively with members of the

Norristown (Pa.) Arts Council to plan and launch what has become an annual Arts Festival that is the centerpiece of a newly-formed municipal arts district. The stories, experiences and reflections of the four co-authors (a student, a faculty member, a college staff member, and a community partner) form the basis of a new model of campus-community partnership. The model emphasizes the development of reciprocal trust-relationships and acknowledges a variety of power dynamics between institutions, faculty, community members and organizations, and students. We argue that engaging both the individual and institutional motivations of each participant leads to stronger, productive and sustainable campus-community partnerships.

Our paper begins with a history of the Norristown Arts Festival, followed by a brief review of the literature on campus-community partnerships. We draw upon three branches of literature to situate our discussion. Like many campus-community partnerships, the relationship between Cabrini College and the Arts Council is simple yet complex. While the Arts Council has a formal structure, its members represent a wide variety of organizations and individuals within the community. We draw upon and extend the research literature on: reciprocity to describe aspects of our partnership; networking and capacity building that describes the context in which the festival takes place and highlights the challenges of coalition building; and community building that helps position our discussion of how to empower and motivate people to participate to their fullest extent.

Next we present a model of campus-community partnerships that positions individuals on the *edge* of organizations. Being on the edge, people are motivated partly by institutional motivations and partly by individual motivations. Personal stories and the observations of the four authors are used to describe the elements of the model and show the context from which the model arose. Our model highlights power-relationships within an organization—for example, between students and faculty, students and community members, and faculty and staff. Each relationship is modeled as reciprocal, suggesting that relationships will be most fruitful if they have an element of mutual respect. The model also includes people who are not members of the campus or community organization, but instead are volunteers who act out of personal interest and passion. These volunteers, who are part of an informal network that exists only to the degree that the network is useful to its members, provide much of the "mojo" of partnership work. The model draws heavily on what Kenneth Boulding (1989) calls "integrative power," as well as Alison Gilchrist's (2009) concept of the "well- connected community." Both of these concepts highlight the power of individuals working in community with one another.

The paper concludes by using the model and arts festival experiences to describe ways in which broad reciprocity can invigorate partnership work. Respect for every individual is key. Without this respect, individuals (students, staff, community members, faculty) either stop

participating, or participate only to the degree that they must. Partnerships work best when participants (especially institutions) are comfortable with less-than-full control. Providing individuals the space in which they can act on and express their individual interests and passions helps make work enjoyable and productive. For partnership work to persist over time, trust is imperative. Yet despite the difficulties and obstacles, effective partnerships are truly greater than the sum of their parts. By leveraging "integrative power," a "well-connected community" can achieve incredible things.

THE NORRISTOWN ARTS FESTIVAL: A SHORT HISTORY

Norristown, Pa., is a former industrial town located in the midst of Philadelphia's affluent suburbs. Over the years Norristown has lagged economically. Suburban development, the King of Prussia Mall, and a highway bypass have contributed to the municipality's economic struggles. While its suburban location and status as county seat provide possible fuel for growth, this growth has been elusive. In late 2009, a group of community members representing local government, business, residents, and representatives from select arts-related organizations rallied around the idea of using the arts as an engine for economic growth. A public contest to name the district resulted in its christening as Norristown Arts Hill.

A new organization, the Norristown Arts Council, was formed to help make the district a reality. A festival was planned for April 2010 to officially launch the Arts Hill district. The hope of the council was that the Norristown Arts Festival would become an annual event that would highlight local arts and artists, and eventually bring consumers, businesses, and more arts organizations to town. Yet with just a few thousand dollars from the municipal government, this vision was far from reality. Enter Cabrini College, a small Catholic liberal arts college located a few miles away. Cabrini has a strong tradition of community engagement, and had been actively partnering with a variety of organizations in the Norristown community for several years. A member of Cabrini's business faculty was able to act as a liaison between the arts council and the college, eventually creating an ongoing course dedicated to the Arts Festival.

The four co-authors of this paper are all involved in the Arts Hill effort. Gabriela Prete is the business development coordinator for the Norristown Municipality and is the single point of contact for current and prospective businesses in the community. Prete sits on the Arts Council as part of her job with the municipality, but is also an active member of the local community. Stephen Eberle is the Director of Partnerships at Cabrini College. He is responsible for the strategic health of partnerships at the institutional level and oversees the logistical support for community projects. With relationships throughout the Norristown community, Eberle is involved in projects with several arts-related groups in the town. Eric Malm is an assistant

professor of business who created an interdisciplinary course called Norristown Arts, which has provided students the opportunity to examine how their skills and actions can contribute to societal change. An economist and former entrepreneur, Malm was excited to bring a business perspective to the Arts Council. James Calamia was a business student and Norristown native who took the Norristown Arts course in 2010 and has continued to participate in the effort to revitalize his community as a researcher, classroom coach, and advocate. The creation of this written document provided an opportunity for Prete, Eberle, Malm and Calamia to view and discuss their work on "Arts Hill' in a slightly different context. We hope that our story will help encourage others to engage in similar work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The model described in the next section draws upon three different literature bases. From the literature on reciprocity, we highlight the importance of considering the needs of every participant in a partnership. We extend the definition of reciprocity beyond the institutional level to consider each person involved in the work of the partnership. From the literature on community networking, we highlight the idea of the organic, or grass roots, network. Organic networks can be powerful since they may include many participants, but the lack of strong central control means that extra consideration needs to be given to the needs and motivations of network participants. Finally, we draw on literature that describes the ability of individuals working together to build value that is greater than the sum of individual contributions. Sometimes termed "a well-connected community" or "integrative power," the idea is that in the right circumstances ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things. Our model and experience suggests practices that can make partnerships between campuses and loosely-defined community groups successful and fulfilling.

Reciprocity in Campus-Community Partnerships

Ernest Boyer (1990, 1996) presented a notion of reciprocity in his widely publicized work, which challenged the existing role of the university and charged that in order to be relevant in today's society, the academy would need to become more fully engaged in the community. His call for the academy to "become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems" implied working *together* and *with* communities. Barbara Holland, as director of the National Service Learning Clearinghouse, defined reciprocity as "respect for different sources of knowledge, different contributions of each participant, a fair exchange of value, and the assurance of benefits to all participants " (Holland, 2002, p. 2). While reciprocity can be viewed transactionally, respect and fairness are important to the concept.

The core idea of reciprocity is important to many in the field. Lorilee Sandman (2008), in tracing the evolution of engagement scholarship, discusses the importance of establishing "bi-directional reciprocity," or the idea that both partners must contribute and benefit from a partnership. For Stoecker (2005), reciprocity and listening ought to pervade the decision-making process to ensure that the partner maintains a level of control over the work product. Stoecker (2008) also chronicles some of the institutional barriers that could make reciprocal relationships difficult. For example, he describes how university calendars and procedures can—sometimes inadvertently—wrest control of projects from community partners. The key idea is that both the university and the community partner need to be represented equally in the partnership. Still, definitions of reciprocity that focus on the university and the partnering organization are inherently limiting, as there are many other participants in most partnerships.

Several models have been developed to describe the interrelationships between the participants in partnership work. McLean and Behringer's (2008) Give-Get model, for example, focuses on the active participation of all parties. The authors state, "a true partnership is one in which each party contributes (or gives) to the partnership and receives (or gets) benefits from it" (p. 66). The SOFAR (Students, Organizations, Faculty, Administrators, and Residents) model of Bringle, Clayton and Price (2009) provides a framework in which five stakeholder groups are explicitly considered. They use the terms *equity* and *integrity* to describe how partnership participants view the quality of the relationship between students, faculty and community members. Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq and Morrison (2010) extend the SOFAR model by empirically evaluating the relationships among participants. They differentiate between transactional and transformative relationships, using data from 20 partnerships. While the SOFAR model made an important contribution by acknowledging sub-groups of participants, it does not explicitly focus on the wants and needs of individual participants.

Networking Theory

Many campus-community partnerships represent a relationship with a community, not just a community-based organization. To help understand the dynamics of a community partnership, it is helpful to examine the structure and attributes of a community network. Alison Gilchrist's (2009) *The Well-Connected Community: A Networking Approach to Community Development,* explores the important role that networking plays in community development work. She describes networks as being either "organic" or "engineered," a distinction which is related to both the origin and structure of networks. Organic networks arise from a particular need, and often have no hierarchical structure. Engineered networks, in contrast, are set up by a particular agency for a particular purpose. In this sense, the organic network is more likely to reflect the focus many authors place on developing work *with* the community. Speaking of organic networks, Gilchrist states, "Networks have no centralizing or organizing mechanism. Function and authority is distributed across the nodes and linkages, such that decision-making and

implementation are conducted through informal and temporary coalitions of actors and resources" (p. 53). As such, organic networks are not beholden to an organization, although people within organizations can also be part of networks. She also observes,

Networks generally operate on the basis of shared values and informal connections that are maintained by a general reciprocal commitment. They differ from formal organizations in being less dependent on structure and tend to action through personal interactions between people who know (or know of) each other. (p. 61).

Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh and Vidal (2001) viewed networking as an essential component of community capacity building. They defined capacity as the ability of a community to "do," which relies on the success of engaging residents, volunteers, institutions and organizations (p. 10). While the campus and the partnering organization represent actors within the community, it is important to recognize that there may be many other actors within the community. We see the ability to leverage networks as central to community capacity building. The implication is that campuses must acknowledge the needs and motivation of all participants in a community, if capacity building is to be effective. To be part of a strong and powerful community, the campus must go beyond a relationship with a single organization and leverage the organic meta-networks that tie together individuals, organizations and various community networks to achieve a common goal.

In his book *Community Building: Building Communities Without Building Walls* (2001), Gerald Frug reminds us that successful community building needs to acknowledge the multiplicity of groups and identities that each individual embraces. Drawing upon postmodern identity theory, which states that each individual has many identities, Frug believes that successful communities are those that are able to connect individuals and groups around shared goals. This requires building bridges, acknowledging the perspectives of others, and sharing one's own perspective. While networking is central to Frug's argument, his view is ultimately an individualistic one as successful community building requires respecting each individual in the community.

The Power of Well-Connected Communities

The power of people working together in a voluntary community is an enormous, but often untapped resource. Protesters and activists working together overthrew powerful regimes in Egypt and Tunisia. Consumer groups have worked together to change the labor and procurement practices of corporate giants like Nike. Yet the question of why people participate in these types of voluntary communities is not often asked. In the business world, employees are paid. Students are required to attend class. Faculty members are expected to do research and participate in community work as part of their professional development. How and why individuals move beyond self-interest to making larger contributions is a critical

question. For virtually any volunteer-driven organization, it is essential to motivate people to participate and help not because they *have to*, but because they *want to*.

Gilchrist's (2009) core idea is that a "well-connected community" is one in which many networks (meta-networks), working together, accomplish things that could not be accomplished by working separately. According to Gilchrist, a core job of a community leader is to get to know the wants, needs and limitations of each individual. Similarly, Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh and Vidal (2001) acknowledge the importance of leadership for the development of community capacity. They discuss the importance both of individual leadership development, as well as the role of organizational structures to help facilitate capacity building. Trust and social capital-building are important. Clearly leadership is a critical factor in a community's ability to accomplish goals.

Yet, leadership cannot be limited to a campus' "vision," or statements made in memorandums of understanding. For campus-community partnerships, leadership needs to translate down to the individual level. Tryon, Hilgendorf and Scott (2009) describe the important role that communication plays in campus-community partnerships. They argue that all too often, community partners are left to negotiate with and manage students, and may have little or no contact with faculty, service learning coordinators, or administrators. They state, "for service learning to be successful, finding effective ways to build relationships and communicate with faculty are essential" (p. 113). The implication is that all actors in a partnership—students, faculty, staff, and community members—must be included in the relationship and in communication between campus and community.

Economist Kenneth Boulding (1989) builds on these leadership themes in his book *The Three Faces of Power*. Boulding identifies three main types of power: political, economic, and integrative. His "major thesis … is that it is integrative power that is the most dominant and significant form of power, in the sense that neither threat power nor economic power can achieve very much in the absence of legitimacy, which is one of the more important aspects of integrative power" (p. 10). He defines integrative power as "the power to create such relationships as love, respect, friendship, legitimacy, and so on" (p. 10).

Within the context of community work, the idea of integrative power is an important one. While people may be pressured to work together for economic or political reasons, high quality work is most likely to result when people *want* to work together. This is especially true with campus-community work. In many cases, community-engaged courses involve more work for faculty and more (or at least different and potentially "uncomfortable") work for students. For this work to go beyond meeting a requirement, participants must have some additional motivation for putting in effort. In creating a space that allows for multiple views

and motivations, a sense of legitimacy is created that forms the basis for sustained effort and integrative power.

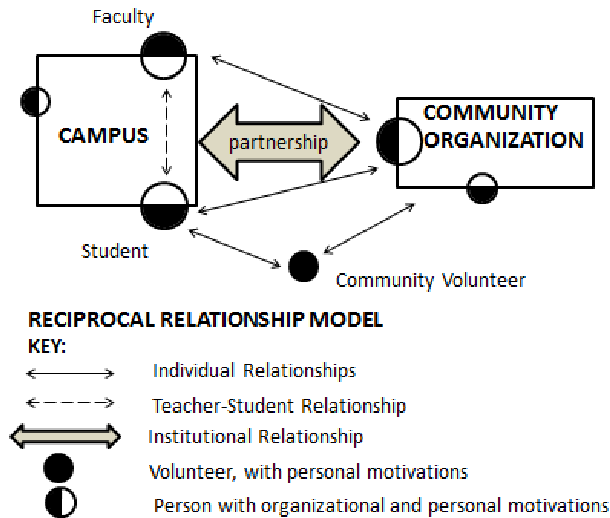
While it is easy to envision students, faculty, staff and community members working together in harmony, it is easier said than done. And creating a context where students do not just complete assignments, but actively contribute to a community project is even tougher. We argue that part of the solution is extending notions of reciprocity beyond the institutional level to the individual level, in a way that acknowledges the roles of students and community volunteers. Acknowledging the "network" context of many campus-community partnerships, and recognizing the multiplicity of roles and goals, is also important. Finally, leveraging the network to create a "well-connected community" or a "community with capacity" requires a special kind of leadership. The model developed in the next section joins together ideas of reciprocity, networking, and the power of community to provide a framework for assessing and molding partnerships.

MODEL: A PARTNERSHIP MODEL INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATIONS

Students in a service-learning class enact different, and more complex, roles than in a traditional classroom. While ultimately students will receive a grade from a teacher, it is often the case that the most significant work may be done outside of class. While the campus may have a formal relationship with a community organization, ultimately the success of the partnership may rest upon the dynamics between the individual students and members of the community. In this section we develop a model that places the individual within the context of both organizations and broader community networks. While the model describes a relationship between a campus and a community organization, the primary focus is on each individual involved in the work.

Our model emerged from the discussion and experience of the co-authors, reflecting on two years of experience with the Arts Festival partnership, plus the wisdom and insight gained from other partnership work. In describing our model, we draw on these individual experiences and observations to explain the model's structure and illuminate its meaning. First-person narratives are used extensively. To personalize the story, the narratives of each author are identified using the author's first names. Gabriela provides context from the perspective of a community partner, James provides a student perspective, Stephen provides a staff perspective, and Eric provides a faculty perspective.

Figure 1: A Reciprocal Relationship Model of Community Networks



Our model is depicted in Figure 1. Each circle in the figure represents an individual. The rectangular boxes represent institutions (in this case, a campus and a community organization). We place individuals, represented by circles, on the edge of the organizations to which they belong to symbolize the dual motivation of the individual. People do some things because they want to, and other things because they have to. While many individuals are part of an organization, others are unaffiliated volunteers acting with strictly personal motivations, and are represented by solid circle. The institutional boxes also act to differentiate the types of relationships that exist between individuals. Students have a relationship with the teacher, but also with community partners and outside volunteers. They may learn from anyone, and may also teach others. In a traditional classroom, the teacher has significant power over the student. In community work, students have power too, since faculty success depends on student motivation and behavior. The lines that connect individuals ideally describe reciprocal relationships, as each actor can both “give” and “get” from the relationship.

Campus-community partnerships frequently include individuals who are not employed by the campus or the community organization. For example, while many people involved in the Arts Festival are professional artists, or employed by the municipality or an arts organization, others give their time because they believe in the vision of the Arts Hill. In our model, these individuals exist strictly outside of the box and are termed volunteers. It is important to recognize that some volunteers participate for personal reasons and continue only if they feel that the work is beneficial. Without respectful, supportive relationships with campus and community organizations, volunteers may begin to wither away, leaving the campus standing alone.

Relationships Between Organizations

The rectangular boxes representing the relationship between organizations justifiably receive much of the focus in partnership literature. Yet in practice, the relationship between organizations can be complex. For example, Cabrini College has relationships with many organizations in the greater Norristown area. Stephen says,

As Director of Norristown Partnerships, I'm responsible for a broadly-defined partnership with a target community. But there is, in fact, no single organization that represents the community. So our job is to build and maintain relationships with many of the key organizations and players in town — from the municipality, to social service agencies, and even the prison. While the Arts Council is an important partner, we need to be aware that the Arts Council is one player in a larger community.

Gabriela faces similar challenges as a representative of the municipality. She says:

I serve as the single point of contact for prospective and existing businesses, providing informational support and guidance necessary to begin or maintain business operations, including assistance with zoning and code enforcement requirements. A big part of the job is to work with the many constituencies within the Norristown community. Whether it's working with others within local or county government to secure grant funding, or talking directly to many local businesses about the challenges they face, the ability to work across traditional boundaries is important. The Arts Hill initiative is one such example. I became involved in the newly-formed group and sat on the Board as a part of my business development role. But things aren't always that simple. For example, I also sit on the town's Bicentennial Committee which competes for funding with the Arts Council. Several of our arts non-profits also compete for similar sources of funding, so while we're all working together we also need to be conscious of the varying organizational relationships.

Gabriela and Stephen may be working with several organizations on several projects simultaneously. The dynamics and complications of these relationships must be recognized and respected.

Without a doubt, organizational relationships are important. Organizations provide the context, tools, resources and support that make partnership possible. As Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh and Vidal (2001) stressed, empowering a community to work together toward a common goal often requires the participation of a wide variety of participants—from individuals, to organizations, to groups of organizations. The multiplicity of partners and interests complicate the world, but also provide the opportunity and tools to do work that has greater impact than what can be expected from a single organization acting alone.

Thinking Inside The Box:

Inside the box each individual has, at least in part, a role as a representative of his or her organization. Eric says:

As a teacher I wear many hats when participating in a community-based course. While the course content and student learning experience are front of mind, I've come to realize that what we do as a class has a long-term impact on the college. As a former business owner, a personal goal of mine is to build a long-term working relationship with the Norristown business community. And as the husband of an artist, I feel a connection to the arts community. I hope that all I do reflects positively on my institution, but this specific goal isn't always top-of-mind.

To varying degrees, employees of an organization are likely to carry out the mission of their institutions, but this may be one of many motivations for action.

A faculty member entering the community must consider personal and institutional relationships and reputations. Both are important. Eric continues,

Before teaching my first community-based course I had two important experiences that impacted my entire approach. One long time veteran, Brother Raymond Fitz of the University of Dayton, spoke at our college. Brother Fitz was very clear in his belief that campus-community partnerships don't really work unless the faculty member is *part* of the community. Some months later I attended the Emerging Engagement Scholars Conference. When hearing my enthusiasm for my newly-found community partner (Gabriela), the workshop mentor asked "and what do people in the community think of the municipal government, and Gabriela?" Of course I hadn't a clue! I also became conscious of the impact that the work that my students and I did in the community had on our institution. As one Engagement Scholars Conference speaker reminded us, a bad experience with one faculty member or one group of students can hurt an entire institution.

The motivations, risks and benefits of community work are many. Recognizing and acknowledging this complexity is likely to make partnership work more productive for everyone.

The role and relationship between students is also different "inside the box." In traditional classes there is a clear power relationship between teacher and student. But these dynamics can be different with partnership work. James recalls the start of his work in the partnership:

Being a native of Norristown and a business major, I was motivated both by the course content as well as a desire to be of service to my community (and interested to learn how my classmates would perceive my Norristown community). But not everyone in the class shared

the service motivation. While several class members seemed to have clear ties to the course content, either through an interest in the arts, a connection to the community, or the business focus of the course, this was more the exception than the rule.

This dynamic was clear to Eric as well.

That first year I was excited, but also nervous. I was trying to teach a class, build a relationship in the community, and provide students with a very realistic experience. I didn't want to tell students exactly what to do, since "figuring it out" is a big part of the experience. But I also recognized that some students may do very little, and that this would reflect negatively on me and the college, and would not help the student or the community. Going into the second year I started to realize how much I relied on my students for the success of the project; for it to be a success I would need to figure out how to motivate them.

The following year James became a classroom coach:

I spent a great deal of time absorbing oral history from my grandfather, a second generation resident. His stories and memories of a once vibrant community center spoke to the mission of what the Arts Hill aims to reestablish, and inspired me to remain involved. I enjoyed sharing my experience and knowledge of the community to guide students through the process. Eric and I decided to restructure the course to provide more student input and buy-in. Some of the volunteer leaders of the Arts Council came to class and talked about why they were involved in the community, and described how their background and passions led them to this work. We then had a dialog with students about what they were interested in, and how they might be able to contribute their skills to the Festival.

I was excited to see how students responded. A few students asked if they could make a video. Another said he played guitar and would like to play in the festival. A communications major was interested in designing the festival program. Others volunteered to work on a social media platform with a community partner. It was clear that the dynamic had changed; by engaging students personally they seemed to become part of the community and had more of a stake in the outcome.

James reflects,

That first year there was a coercive element; while students signed up for the class and chose committee assignments many of them were disengaged and resented the idea of mandatory service. In the second year most students were able to identify something that interested them personally; the acknowledgement and respect of these personal interests really seemed to help engage students.

This engagement stems from a reciprocal relationship between teacher and student in the model.

Thinking Outside The Box

There can be a natural tendency to ignore or underestimate the needs, capabilities and perceptions of those who are outside of an organization. Since these community members are not always at the table during intra-organizational conversations, their views need to be consciously considered. In Stephen's words,

Successes or failures with other projects carry forward into future work; experience with a community clean-up day or tree-planting event impact the ability of other members of the college community to participate meaningfully in other, seemingly unrelated, efforts. An important part of my job is to monitor how all these individual projects are being perceived among the community, faculty, students, and other stakeholders. Personal involvement and conversation provides the 'bread and butter' of this work. By understanding the needs, capabilities and limitations of those in the community I can help ensure that projects succeed.

Recognizing that an institution exists within a broader context and community is important for all participants to understand. The success of a project relies on the cooperation and success of the various individuals and groups involved in the project. Gabriela speaks to the importance of structures that ensure that all voices are heard:

Schedules and timelines keep the Arts Council on time, on budget and within boundaries to accomplish their goals. Otherwise with the chaos of the arts festival things can be forgotten and/or miscommunicated. The members of the Arts Council are passionate about what they do so it's easy to work on this committee. But establishing stronger connections between student interests and the needs and interests of Arts Council members benefits everyone. Of course it takes time for members of any group to figure out how best to work with one another.

Just as the campus needs to understand community needs, the community also needs to understand the capabilities, limitations, and motivations of campus partners.

Leveraging Individual Motivation

Our model represents each individual as a circle. Individuals are placed on the edge of the organizational box, with the shaded portion of the circle representing individual motivation and the unshaded area representing organizational motivation. Volunteers are placed outside of the organization and are shaded completely, suggesting that they may be motivated completely by individual interests. Eric recounts,

As I got to know the various people who were involved in the arts community I slowly started to understand what was important to each individual, and see new ways of working together. While I was initially reluctant to ask busy volunteers to take time out to come to campus, I now realize this isn't always a burden. Two community leaders, both former teachers, came in to talk with the class about the vision of Arts Hill. It wasn't until they were there that I realized that they enjoyed being in front of the class, and also saw how the students responded to their stories and energy. Another community volunteer came to talk about social networking, and provided a wonderful training session for the students. The community partners helped teach the class, and the students became more involved in the shared project. I also made a point to reciprocate, taking extra time to do small things to help the volunteers.

By leveraging both individual and institutional motivations, the "whole person" is invited to participate.

Stephen agrees that understanding individual interests and motivations is key.

Opportunities began to arise organically, that is, through community connections, one-on-one conversations, and meals shared before and after projects. You talk, get to know what people are interested in and what they're doing, and you begin to see opportunity. The Norristown Arts Hill project came about through just such a connection. That I (and the college) had been involved in projects with many of the stakeholders before the Arts project began illustrates the 'network' aspect of community. It was through these prior encounters that trust and understanding began to emerge.

James recounts,

I had no idea that I'd continue working with the arts after the course was over. I have an interest in both local and national politics, and had the opportunity to intern for a U.S. Senator. Knowing this interest, Eric asked me if I'd be interested in presenting a poster on economic development in our state capitol. I presented a poster on the Arts Festival and enjoyed talking with my state representative and local congressman in the process. I continued as a classroom coach the following year. Now I've graduated and just started working full time for a community development corporation in a neighboring town. My first project was to organize an arts walk and exhibition. If you follow your interests you never know where it will lead!

Individual motivation is the fundamental building block of partnerships, yet these motivations are too often left unconsidered. Whether it is the academic tendency to pretend to be a dispassionate observer, or to hope that students will just do what they are told, it is easy to brush aside the importance of individual motivation. This is challenging institutionally as well. Institutions want to have control over partnerships and the activities on campus, yet exerting too much control can squelch individual passion and enthusiasm for engaging in community

work. And of course, the volunteers that contribute so critically to the education of our students must be honored and respected. Ultimately the energy and motivation of community volunteers is often at the heart of campus-community work.

Trust in Relationship Building

Trust is not directly visible in our model, but is implicit in each reciprocal relationship. Whether it is the trust a teacher places in a student, the trust a student assumes with her teacher, or the trust a community member places in the institution, trust is the glue that makes partnerships work. According to Stephen,

Developing and building relationships was my first priority. I needed to develop relationships with Cabrini's faculty, students, and community partners. First I scheduled appointments with each of Cabrini's new faculty members to introduce myself and learn about the faculty members' professional and personal interests. I wanted to know about where they come from and how they chose their career paths. I wanted to know identify their self-interest in order to work together for individual successes as well as the collective successes of our institution. Over the years I've gotten to know the faculty and community members. They know me, and I know them. Sometimes the trust that's built up over time can be the thing that allows us both to take the risks that can result in great work.

Eric continues,

I think it was important that I was actively involved in the Norristown community before the Arts Festival came into being. Having worked on several small projects in previous years I started to get to know people, and I think they started to know of me. I still remember the first Arts Council meeting I attended. I was pleasantly surprised that I recognized most of the people in the room, even though I only really knew one or two. Being present in the community (both personally and as an institution) provided the level of trust that allowed the Arts Council to place a good deal of responsibility on my class. Of course, that the first festival was just a few months away didn't hurt either!

Reciprocity and respect, when present consistently over time, builds trust. Part of reciprocity is the commitment to do one’s best, and the expectation that others will do the same. Whether it is an institution’s confidence that faculty and students will succeed in an uncertain endeavor, or the teacher’s faith that students and partners will work well together, trust is a critical component to the sustainability of partnerships over time.

Losing Control

Losing control is uncomfortable. Yet, psychologists say that that boundary space just beyond comfort and control is where learning is most likely to take place (Wass, Harland, & Mercer,

2011, for example). Navigating that boundary between control and chaos is important for partnership work. Trusting that people have the skills and ability to do good work, and allowing them the space to make their own contributions, is a difficult but necessary part of partnership work.

For many teachers, the classroom is a highly controlled environment where they are in charge. Eric recalls,

As a teacher it's hard to let go. One hopes that students will successfully engage with the community volunteers, both learning and contributing in the process, but you don't want to be too present. An important part of the learning experience is for the students to navigate the waters themselves. For example, it was neat to see a student perk up in class when she recounted visiting a community volunteer to learn about social networking; it was clear that she felt good about visiting the business herself and took pride in her contribution. By giving control and responsibility to the student, they seem to feel a sense of empowerment.

Letting go of control is not easy for the institution either. According to Stephen,

One of the hard parts of my job is keeping a pulse on what's happening in the community, without always being at every meeting or interaction. Capacity building means empowering people to carry out the work of the institution or community. While the work students and faculty do reflect on the Wolfington Center and the college, I have to trust people to do their best. I find that many small conversations with many constituents can help alert me to a problem before it gets too bad, or make me conscious of the good contributions that people are making.

For universities to leverage the full power of their students and employees, structures must be put in place that provide positive incentives for people to work on behalf of the institution; too much institutional control will likely inhibit productivity.

The Power of Community

Boulding (1989) calls it integrative power. Gilchrist (2009) calls it the power of the well-connected community. Both describe the same thing—the power of a diverse community of organizations, institutions, and volunteers to work together to accomplish more than participants acting independently. As our model and narrative illustrates, this power can be manifested when networks are able to balance of organizational and individual motivations of participants. Over time trust is established and allows the kinds of small leaps of faith that can result in unique and energizing partnerships.

As James explains,

My experience as a student, community member, and classroom coach has helped me gain a much broader understanding about how community partnerships work. Successful partnerships between the community and the classroom require interest and drive. A partnership is as useful as the common interest being developed. While the coercive power of the classroom has some impact, unless students can be motivated by some other factor, student output will be limited. This year's class showed that by leveraging strong personal student motivations everyone wins, and the potential for the partnership to be a success is greater over the long run.

Gabriela adds,

I stared working with Cabrini College staff back in 2007. I have worked on community outreach programs with Cabrini students–volunteers assisted with clean up events throughout Norristown. Students and staff were to donate volunteer hours to an outreach project and we were able to partner to obtain both a cleaner Norristown and meet the student's needs to finish out a service project. While I have worked with several other colleges in the area, no group has been more dedicated and determined to make a difference. Cabrini students and staff really do follow the mission of the college. They give far beyond what is expected from them. I have truly enjoyed the partnerships with Cabrini and the many people I have met.

BENEFITS OF INDIVIDUAL RECIPROCITY

True community partnerships are fragile. Like any relationship, they take time to develop and time for trust to be built. This is particularly true for partnerships that involve diverse groups of volunteers. Since participants are typically unpaid, they serve because they want to, and because they see value and are treated with respect. Campuses need to be sure that campus-community partnerships are set up to engender these values from the start. And as with other relationships, if trust and respect are present, great outcomes are possible.

Our experience and study of the literature has led us to the following list of attributes that are likely to lead to successful, sustainable campus-community partnerships:

Reciprocity: While the term reciprocity is often used in the partnership literature, it is not always applied to everyone involved in the work. It is not just being open to comments from a spokesperson from the community organization, but also actually hearing and respecting every person involved in the project. For example, acknowledging student interests and inviting them to bring their personal talents and skills into the partnership work makes them more authentic members of the community, and provides a stronger motivation to participate. While encouraging reciprocal relationships with all participants is not an easy task, it is

something to strive for that creates what has been termed *legitimacy*, *integrity*, or a community with ample *capacity*.

Control: For both teachers and academic administrators, control is a sacred concept. Most teachers feel the need to manage what goes on in the classroom, and academic leaders feel the need to control what goes on in the name of their institution. By sharing control of the classroom with community members, faculty can bring new perspectives to the classroom and acknowledge community members as equal partners in education. In giving students the responsibility to engage with community members outside of class, faculty cannot directly observe what students do. However, this uncertainty can be balanced with positive experiences in which students direct their own education.

Individual Motivation: People work hardest when they are doing something they like. The adage "follow your bliss" need not be checked at the classroom door. Positioning community work so that students can choose topics in which they have a personal interest, allowing them to contribute to projects in ways that they find personally rewarding, results in higher quality work. The same is true for community volunteers. The social media expert was excited to be invited into the classroom, and enjoyed sharing her knowledge with students. Providing people opportunities to contribute in personally meaningful ways is critical for creating a sustained community effort.

Trust: Trust takes time to develop, yet is critical if people are to work closely together. In our case, community members had to trust members of the Arts Council, and Arts Council members needed to earn this trust from community members. Students and some community volunteers may only be involved in a project for a semester (for students) or a few days (for a volunteer), but establishing some level of trust with these shorter-term partnership members remains important.

Nontraditional Roles: Partnerships require people to assume non-traditional roles. Students may learn about social media from a community member, and then in turn, educate their teacher. Whether it is the community member as teacher, a student who is directing a class project, or institutions that are listening and learning from the public, successful partnerships need to be flexible enough to allow for non-traditional ways of learning and participating in the community.

Reciprocity, a willingness to share control, respect for the individual motivations of every participant, trust, and an appreciation of nontraditional roles can all work together to contribute to the creation of sustainable and productive campus-community partnerships. As campuses strive to do community work that lasts over time and makes a difference, they must

also strive for legitimacy at all levels. This can only be done through a culture that embodies reciprocity at all levels and among all participants.

FUTURE AREAS OF STUDY

Participating in this partnership and working together on this article has helped us focus not just on what we were doing individually, but also allowed us to see and understand the perspectives and motivations of the co-authors. The process has also lead to some important next steps, both on campus and in the community.

First, as instructors and as an institution, we need to find better ways to embed the notions of reciprocity and sustainability introduced in this article. Admittedly, it was rewarding to see the excitement of students engaging in community work that was of personal interest. For example, students seemed to take pride in visiting a local video production studio and then creating their own high-quality promotional video. In the future, the instructors in several community-based courses will begin employing a self-directed learning model where students create their own vision statements describing what they hope to learn and contribute, and how they hope to accomplish their goals. Faculty will participate in the visioning process as well, modeling what it means to be part of the classroom community and enabling the individual goals of the faculty to be recognized and discussed along with those of students.

Second, from a community perspective we have become increasingly aware of the importance and challenges of including representatives from many organizations in the Arts Council. While many varying perspectives can make progress slower at times, we also recognize that in the long term, Arts Hill will be successful only if there is broad participation and support. From within the Arts Council, we also recognize potential areas of conflict. For example, several arts organizations may potentially compete for funding or donations from similar sources; the Council has thus adopted a policy of not asking members of non-profits to serve on the fundraising committee. Consciously recognizing this dynamic helps keep things moving, without asking people to engage in activities that may conflict with other responsibilities.

Our study has also raised awareness of the role of campus culture on partnership work. Clearly, reciprocity and respect are challenging enough to discuss at the individual level. Asking questions about respect and reciprocity at the institutional level is even more difficult. A group of faculty and staff are currently examining attributes of the Cabrini College academic community that may make it an even more “partnership-friendly” institution. Through reflection and broad discussion, we hope to identify more ways our campus can help facilitate the development of strong, sustained partnerships and also identify areas for improvement.

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