An Analysis of Community Engagement in Institution-Level Strategic Plans

Lauren A. Wendling
Collaboratory

Kathryn Evans
Collaboratory

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Lauren Wendling at
lauren.wendling@gmail.com

An Analysis of Community Engagement in Institution-Level Strategic Plans

Lauren A. Wendling and Kathryn Evans

Abstract
Higher education institutions face the challenge of adapting to an increasingly complex society, facing shifting demographics, globalization, and polarization. As such, campuses must respond to the evolving needs of their communities. This article examines how community engagement is positioned within the strategic plans of 42 American higher education institutions. Utilizing content analysis, this study explores the prevalence and distribution of community engagement terminology, identifies where it appears, and examines whether community engagement efforts are integrated or siloed within institutions' strategic plans. Additionally, the study investigates how metrics are, or are not, utilized to assess institutional engagement efforts, providing insights into how institutions articulate and prioritize a commitment to community and offering guidance for fostering strategic alignment within institutional planning.

Keywords: *community engagement, institutionalization of engagement, organizational change, strategic planning*

Un análisis de la participación comunitaria en los planes estratégicos al nivel institucional

Lauren A. Wendling and Kathryn Evans

Resumen
Las instituciones de la educación superior tienen que enfrentarse al desafío de adaptar a una sociedad cada vez más compleja con demográficas vacilantes, la globalización, y la polarización. Así, los campuses académicos necesitan responder a las necesidades reales de sus comunidades. Este artículo examina como la participación comunitaria se posiciona dentro de los planes estratégicos de 45 instituciones de educación superior americanas. Utilizando el análisis de contenido, este estudio explora la prevalencia y la distribución de la terminología de la participación comunitaria, identifica donde aparece dicha terminología, y examina si los esfuerzos de la participación comunitaria estén integrados o aislados dentro de los planes estratégicos de la institución. Aún más, el estudio investiga cómo se utilizan las métricas (o no) para evaluar los esfuerzos colaborativas de la institución, así dando una visión de cómo las instituciones articulan y priorizan un compromiso con la comunidad y sirviendo como guía al fomentar el alineamiento estratégico con la planificación institucional.

Palabras clave: *la participación comunitaria, la institucionalización de la colaboración, el cambio de la organización, la planificación estratégica*

As a complex industry, higher education institutions operate within different organizational structures, hold diverse missions, serve varying constituencies, and compete in many differentiated markets (Blumenstyk, 2015; Lombardi, 2013). Today, developments such as the impending enrollment cliff, globalization, shifting demographics, and an increasingly polarized society require change within higher education and a rethinking of how campuses engage external communities (Bok, 2013; Grawe, 2018; Lombardi, 2013). These forces are among many others that are intensifying pressures within and driving institutions to adapt and restructure themselves efficiently to align their efforts with an ever-changing society.

Today, this unique character of higher education is being shaped by the distinctive visions of academic leadership, political leaders, and industrialists vying to shape institutional identity within a sea of competing interests and resources, in both the United States and abroad (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Kezar, 2018; Weerts et al., 2014). For colleges and universities seeking to adopt an identity as an engaged institution, such efforts need to be strategically woven into future-oriented campus-level planning and assessment. Thus, the establishment of a campus-wide strategic plan that positions community engagement as both a singular, identifiable goal *and* an integrated strategy throughout all planning efforts is essential. Further, metrics to assess community engagement efforts are crucial to ensure its sustainability and importance to the institution. This content analysis of over 40 institutions' strategic plans sought to better understand how community engagement is woven into their planning efforts. The following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. To what extent is community engagement terminology prevalent in institutions' strategic plans?
2. Where does community engagement terminology appear within institutions' strategic plans?
   A. Do engagement efforts serve as singular, or siloed, goals within institutions' plans? Or are they dispersed within multiple goals of institutions' strategic plans?
3. How are institutions of higher education aligning community engagement within other campus priorities?
4. What metrics, if any, are campuses using to assess their community engagement efforts?

Literature Review

Since its foundations, American higher education has been intimately connected to advancing the collective well-being of society—training tomorrow's leaders, forging new paths in science and technology, and cultivating a sense of social responsibility for its graduates and the larger public (Chambers, 2005; Newman & Couturier, 2002). Today, many institutions continue to embrace the mission of educating their students to be civically and community minded while also encouraging their faculty and staff to devote their work to public advancement. As such, engagement in the community not only strengthens the public's perception of postsecondary education but also illustrates how institutions of higher education are of critical significance to society. In today's deeply divided world, engagement with community is of the utmost importance (Wendling, 2023).

The term *community engagement*, as defined in 2006 by the Carnegie Foundation, describes "collaborations between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (American Council on Education, 2023). As an umbrella term, community engagement encompasses various methods by which institutions apply their resources (e.g., knowledge and expertise) to address and solve issues faced by communities. This articulation advances the idea that institutional engagement with community can take a variety of forms. For the purposes of this study, the term *community engagement* was broadly leveraged to encompass all aspects with which campuses can partner with their communities.

Institutional Image and Identity

Institutions of higher education are complex organizations that exist in an ever-changing environment that exerts social, political, and economic pressures upon them. Always evolving and adapting, colleges and universities have proven to be remarkably resilient, enduring centuries of change while maintaining a similar mission throughout—to educate individuals for productive membership into the national and global society. However, individual campuses are prone to struggle when it comes to sustaining a cohesive identity. Due to the fact that institutions are highly complex, visible, and vast organizations, they tend to produce diverse, or scattered, images of their institutional identity (Janke et al., n.d.; Price et al., 2008; Yaping et al., 2023). Further, this complexity causes individuals to interpret and generate very different, often conflicting, identities of an institution and its relationship to its external communities.

In today's quick-paced online world, institutions are facing an image control problem on a scale never before experienced, finding it increasingly difficult to control the diverse, public interpretations that they project (Gordon & Fischer, 2015; Price et al., 2008; Yaping et al., 2023). Due to the fact that higher education is particularly image conscious, institutional leaders spend significant time, resource, and energy to manage their image (Balaji et al., 2016; Fombrun & Shanely, 1990; Janke et al., n.d.). Attempts to alter or change the public perception of an institution's identity often amount to statements of intention that seek to tighten and influence top leadership's focus and direction. Although efforts to intentionally change an institution's public image and identity are often in response to external forces (e.g., COVID-19, social unrest, and decreasing funding/enrollments), they are usually guided by and grounded within a campus' mission and vision (Breznik & Law, 2019; Daft & Weick, 1984; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Thomas & McDaniel, 1990).

During eras of proactive or reactive change, it is crucial for leadership, in planning, to operationalize the reenvisioned image and identity of a campus in ways that are interpretable not only by senior leaders but also by faculty, staff, students, and the external community. As such, substantive strategic-planning efforts demand reconsidering how the campus' existing identity and image may be concretely reenvisioned in future-oriented, aspirational terms and include clearly articulated standards for interpreting and assessing the stated goals to advance organizational change (Balaji et al., 2016; Fiol, 1991; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Hinton, 2012).

Organizational Change and Strategic Alignment With Community Goals

Renewed calls for swift institutional change have been ushered in with growing challenges to educational access (specifically for minorities), increasing costs, a steady decline of the public's belief of higher education's contributions to society, and the increased politicization of education. Given these recent calls for fundamental changes in higher education, researchers have turned to organizational change research to interpret, guide, and advance institutional system change (Kezar, 2011; Yaping et al., 2023; Zemsky, 2013).

When it comes to strategically changing their approach to community engagement, institutions must reflect on how organizations change and how their strategic-planning efforts will convey the realignment of community-based priorities. Organizational plans, alongside mission and vision statements, convey priorities and identities, as well as short- and long-term goals and objectives at the campus level (Kaplan & Norton, 2006; Kezar, 2018). The planning process at the institutional level typically guides the planning and prioritization that occurs within campus units. This alignment is critical if campuses are to achieve synergies not only throughout the institution but also within and across the supporting units (Kaplan & Norton, 2006).

Further, when working to align institutional-community engagement goals more effectively, it is imperative that campuses recognize their positioning within their community and their larger, external environment. As such, campuses may benefit from taking a systems approach to organizational strategic change (Bannister & Barczak, 2018; Hage & Aiken, 1970; Kapp & Rauch, 2017; Oshry, 1995; Senge, 1990; Sharma & Mishra, 2019). This perspective acknowledges that institutions are living systems that exist in a larger environment (e.g., community) upon which they depend to meet many of their needs

(e.g., funding and student enrollment). If institutions are to survive and prosper, they must understand their communities, acknowledge the interdependence between themselves and their communities, and continuously work to achieve a suitable balance (Kapp & Rauch, 2017; Morgan, 2006). This view of understanding institutions as living systems that operate in specific communities inspires a break from the heavily bureaucratic thinking campuses may easily fall victim to and encourages institutions to increase flexibility and adapt more quickly to the needs of their communities. A deeper, more nuanced understanding of their external communities inevitably pushes institutions to adapt to meet the evolving needs, often more quickly than the traditional, self-paced incremental change of which campuses are more familiar (Bannister & Barczak, 2018; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Kapp & Rauch, 2017).

Thinking through implications of institutional-community alignment calls campuses to further demonstrate internal and external collaborations and partnership, as well as interdisciplinary, innovative approaches to teaching and research, effectively working to change campus culture. Faculty, staff, and students are more likely to embrace the change as part of the new culture of the organization when resources are allocated to reflect re-prioritization and structures exist to support changes, enabling "civic engagement to put down roots in the groves of academe" (Harkavy & Hartley, 2012, p. 18).

Strategic Planning and Alignment of Metrics

In the diverse American higher education landscape, there is no one model of an engaged institution that excels over others. Though there is no one-size-fits-all approach to embedding community engagement within institutional strategic plans, it is increasingly important to understand more broadly how institutional environments, missions, and cultures encourage engagement to "take root in some institutional contexts more readily than others" (Holland, 2005, pp. 235–236). Research has shown institutions that are more likely to adopt an engagement-centered mission and plans are those that: (a) emphasize teaching and learning more than research, (b) enroll mostly local students, (c) are centered in areas with significant social and economic challenges, and (d) exhibit some confusion about the institutional mission, priorities, and/or focus of academic programs (Holland, 2005; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008).

However, a common critique of the larger community engagement movement is that it has not yet fulfilled its mission of transforming institutions to be deeply engaged and connected to their local communities (Janke et al., n.d.). Higher education, more broadly, still struggles to generate and uphold systems, processes, and plans to guide their efforts of upholding their unique roles and responsibilities in society (Bess & Dee, 2008). Though a growing number of institutions respond to these challenges by infusing more community-engaged initiatives into their campus-wide strategic plans, there is still much work to be done to guide transformation and community responsiveness. Although campus-wide strategic plans facilitate the outline of and structure the desired evolution of an institution, equally important is the creation of aligned metrics to benchmark and assess the campus' idealized goals.

Image management is especially crucial within higher education, as campuses, unlike other sectors, do not have straightforward, public indicators of progress and success such as market shares or bottom lines (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Janke et al., n.d.). Metrics of success for institutions of higher education are "relatively harder to determine, define, track, and defend" (Hinton, 2012; Janke et al., n.d., p. 6). In order to establish, or reestablish, institutional identity and image, campuses must not only articulate their desired futures but must also construct ways they can demonstrate plausible evidence of their change efforts. Thus, metrics to assess the articulated goals for institutionalizing community engagement hold institutions accountable to not only themselves but also their larger communities.

Aligning Community Engagement With Other Institutional Priorities

Strategic alignment between efforts to strengthen an institution's engagement with community and other campus priorities is fundamental to ensure meaningful, sustainable change. It is important for institutions to consider what avenues for strategic alignment might exist between their community engagement efforts and other institutional priorities. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) increasingly comes up as a place

for natural collaboration, as well as where institutional change stagnates at many institutions. Research has found that strategic-planning processes and other institutional messaging convey DEI as a consistent goal area, without addressing substantive policy or practical change.

Community engagement and DEI on many campuses complement each other, from facilitating diversity/inclusion training as part of professional development for faculty in teaching community-based courses to community-engaged LGBTQ+ or multicultural centers on campus, alongside many other examples (Green, 2022; Hurtado, 2007). An example of a campus that already recognizes this alignment: George Mason University's 2023 Quality Enhancement Plan hopes to "[embed] community engagement and anti-racism in student learning and engaged experiences" recognizing that this approach is "most aligned with Mason's mission, strategic plan, and vision for our graduates" (George Mason University, 2023, p. 1). More broadly, scholars have called "for linking diversity with central educational and civic goals is to better position the next generation of leaders for the project of advancing social progress" and "to achieve greater coherence in undergraduate preparation" (American Council on Education, 2023; Carwile, 2021; del Rio & Loggins, 2019; Hurtado, 2007, p. 186; Mitchell, 2008; Sturm et al., 2011). Sturm et al. (2011) emphasized:

> There is tremendous untapped potential for knowledge and resource sharing and collective impact if these efforts are more effectively connected with each other and built into the core values and practices of higher education.… The systems that take account of these synergies are likely to enable the successful pursuit of both public engagement … and diversity, and [will] enhance the legitimacy, levels of engagement, and robustness of higher education institutions. (p. 6)

Though this study focuses intentionally on how campuses are infusing community engagement into their strategic-planning efforts, the motivations calling for institutional change through the lenses of both community engagement and DEI are similar and well aligned. With intentional alignment, both efforts could simultaneously progress institutional change.

Methodology

This study analyzed the content and terminology of 42 campus-level strategic plans to assess ways in which community engagement and similar terms were communicated and woven into the fabric of their larger campus visions. This analysis sought to understand both the breadth and depth of engagement terminology across and within institutions' strategic plans. As such, both quantitative frequency counts identifying the prevalence of engaged terminology within campus plans and a qualitative interpretation of the context, placement, and relationship of engaged terminology to other aspects of each campus plan were warranted. Employing a quantitative and qualitative lens allowed the authors to identify correlations and patterns in how the concept of community engagement is communicated and measured within institutions' strategic plans and better understand the prioritization of community engagement within larger campus visions.

Population and Sampling

The study sample included 42 public and private American institutions of higher education. All the campuses included in this study utilize Collaboratory, a software tool that helps institutions collect, document, and assess their community engagement at the institutional level. Additionally, campus administrators within these select institutions take part in various Collaboratory-led communities of practice to assist with the advancement of community engagement across their campuses. As such, the selected institutions have shown to prioritize community engagement at the institutional level and have considerable stakeholder buy-in for the prioritization of community engagement. All institutions within the study's sample are American based, as Collaboratory is currently positioned only within the United States. However, findings are applicable to all American-based and international institutions seeking to prioritize community engagement in their strategic-planning efforts.

Both authors work closely with each of the study's institutions to assist with their collection and strategic use of engagement data via Collaboratory. In their work with the identified campuses, the authors field many questions about the ways in which similar data-focused institutions integrate community engagement into their campus strategic plans. The decision to limit the study's sample to the campuses currently utilizing Collaboratory was intentional. In so doing, the authors initially sought to provide specific, tailored insights to the campuses with whom they work. However, due to the diverse nature of the campuses within the Collaboratory network (e.g., size, setting, basic Carnegie classification, location, and degree of urbanization), insights gleaned from this research serve to strengthen the larger field of higher education community engagement. The institutional characteristics of campuses included in this study are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1.

Institutional Characteristics.

Control	
Public	84%
Private	16%
Size/setting	
Four-year very small	2%
Four-year small	21%
Four-year medium	35%
Four-year large	40%
Exclusively graduate/professional	2%
Carnegie basic classification	
Doctoral universities: very high research activity	16%
Doctoral universities: high research activity	14%
Doctoral/professional university	7%
Master's colleges and universities	35%
Baccalaureate colleges	23%
Special focus	5%
Degree of urbanization	
Rural/distant town	23%
Suburb	26%
City: small/midsize	28%
City: large	23%

Sampling was determined by the public availability of the campus' strategic plans; all strategic plans included in the sample were publicly accessible on the Internet. At the time of analysis, 44 institutions were a part of the Collaboratory network. Of the 44 total institutions within the network, 42 had a current strategic plan publicly accessible via the Internet and were included within the sample. Two institutions did not have public plans and were omitted from the sample. Though the plans were presented in a variety of formats and the time spanned by each plan varied substantially (see Figure 1), all were current at the time of analysis.

Figure 1.

Number of Years Spanning Institutions' Strategic Plans.
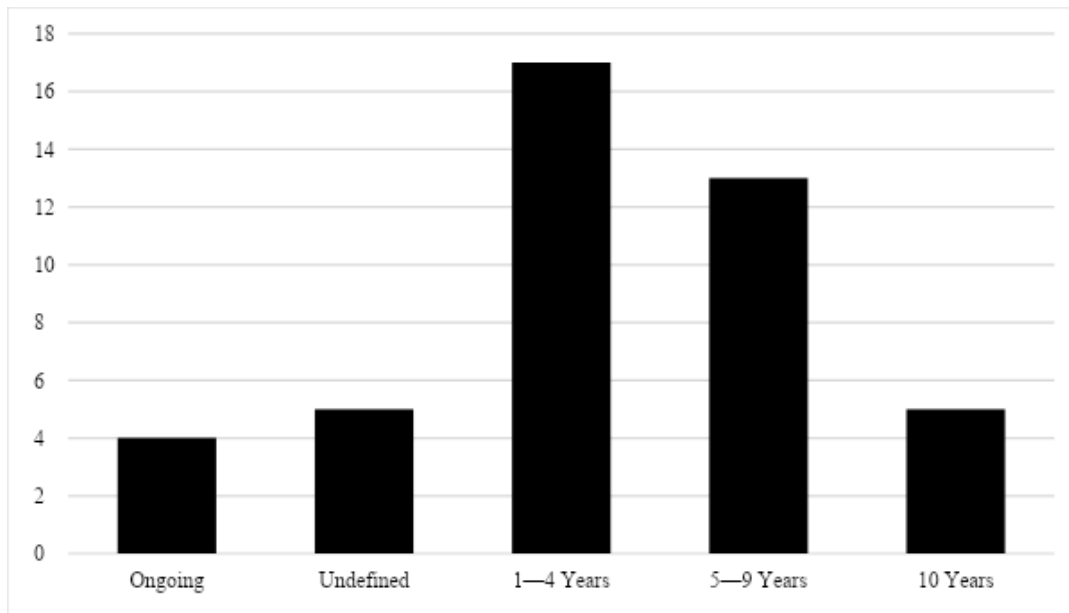
Data Collection and Key Terms

All strategic plans were accessed and downloaded in the spring of 2022. The formats of the individual strategic plans ranged from lengthy texts with structured paragraphs and complete sentences to more stylized bulleted lists and imagery. To analyze the contents of the strategic plans, each plan was downloaded and copied into two separate Google documents, one for each author. For this analysis, 10 terms were selected for review within all 42 institution-level strategic plans. These terms, provided in Table 2, are identified to be among the most frequently used to reference institutions' community-engaged efforts. The selection of these terms was influenced by (a) a thorough review of the most recent literature regarding the institutionalization of community engagement, (b) recommendations from current scholarly experts within the field of higher education community engagement, and (c) previous content analyses of promotion and tenure and accrediting body guidelines with a focus on civic education and community engagement (Weiss et al., 2018; Wendling, 2023; Wendling & Bessing, 2018).

It is important to note that the authors intentionally did not identify or adhere to a specific definition of each selected engaged term. This allowed for a more holistic and inclusive review of community engagement terminology across all campus strategic plans and helped to ensure that the review was free from bias (e.g., accepting one campus' definition of *partnership*, but not others). Campuses define and interpret engaged terminology differently, based on their location (e.g., urban, rural), primary focus (e.g., medical, teaching, and research), and so forth, many generating campus-specific definitions of engaged

terminology (Wendling, 2022). Further, the focus of this research was not to emphasize the specific terminology leveraged in campus strategic plans, but rather to explore the prevalence, distribution, and integration of terminology at a high level within campuses' larger strategic visions.

Table 2.

Community Engagement Terminology.

Term
Community(ies)
Partner(ship)(ing), Collab(orate/oration)
Engage(ment)(ed)
Impact, outcome, output
Service
Social, society
Public
Civic, citizen
Outreach
Volunteer

Data Analysis

Semantic analysis was used to analyze the strategic plans, identifying the engaged terminology within each plan and the larger context within which it was placed. In doing so, the authors were able to gather the necessary semantic information surrounding each engaged term (Goddard, 2013). Each author performed an initial line-by-line coding of every strategic plan, highlighting sections of the text that included key terms when they appropriately referenced engagement initiatives. Line-by-line coding helped to ensure the authors remained attuned to the text and understood the larger context in which the engaged terminology was situated (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To ensure that each identified term referenced campus efforts as related to the larger undertaking of community engagement, the authors omitted terminology that did not reference, or was not couched within, the broader concept of external community engagement (e.g., *partnerships* between institutional units, references to the internal campus *community*). Examples of key terms/phrases within strategic plans are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3.

Community Engagement Terminology and Examples of Coded Text.

Term	Example Text
Community(ies)	"Recover and adapt to significant difficulties or challenges and recognize our responsibility to forge resiliency in the *communities* we serve." "Develop an applied research center that sponsors faculty, student and *community* research."
Partner(ship), collab(orate/oration)	"Develop strategic K-12 *partnerships* that encourage students, especially those from underserved and underrepresented populations, to pursue higher education." "*Partners* seek us out because they know we'll *collaborate* with them to find answers and solve problems."
Engage	"Show evidence of meaningful faculty, staff and student engagement in [local city] programs." "Expand and advance our *engagement* with and service to [state] and beyond, defining the standard for a 21st-century land-grant university."
Impact, outcome, output	"Produce annual evidence of the extent, nature, and impact of our external engagement activities." "Expand *outreach* and partnerships with P-12 schools, community colleges, nonprofits, and business and industry to increase educational opportunities that serve the needs of both students and the community."
Service	"Achieve a *service* culture of excellence that is supported by a shared *service* philosophy and reflected in all interactions between students, colleagues, and other constituencies."
Social, society	"By supporting the local community and ensuring its health and vitality, we encourage *social* adaptability and the well-being of future generations."
Public	"Advance health equity research and promote *public* health interventions for the benefit of those greatest in need."
Civic, citizen	"Encourage curricular and co-curricular opportunities for *civic* engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world and prepare students for informed *citizenship* and workplace success."
Outreach	"Incentivize and support research and creative activities that promote student learning, expand university *outreach* and service, and bolster the regional economy."
Volunteer	"Communities, especially the nonprofit sector, will be supported through *volunteerism*, service-learning and capacity-building."

Following the coding of engaged terminology within each strategic plan, each term was counted and the frequency of each term was calculated, identifying the most common terminology leveraged within the entire sample of strategic plans. As the counts of engaged terminology differed slightly between the authors, an average of the frequency of terms identified by each author was calculated. To identify the dispersion of engaged terminology throughout the various sections of each campus' strategic plan, the authors identified the titled section (e.g., Faculty Research, Campus Climate) within which each engaged term was located. Key terms were again counted and an average frequency count of each term within the named sections of each campus' plan was calculated.

Results

Table 4 provides the frequency counts of all engaged terminology coded within the sample of institutional-level strategic plans. A total of 2,049 engaged terms were identified across all 42 plans. The most frequent term, *community/ies*, was cited 599 times, 29% of the total coded terminology. The least frequently identified term was *volunteer/ing*, cited only 11 times, with a 0.5% share.

Table 4.

Frequency of Engaged Terminology Across Campus Strategic Plans.

Term	Frequency Count
Community	599
Partner collab	441
Engagement	340
Impact outcome output	218
Service	141
Social	113
Public	84
Civic citizen	80
Outreach	23
Volunteer	11
Total	**2,049**

Below, Table 5 illustrates the placement (distribution) of engaged terminology within distinguished sections of campuses' strategic plans, as well as examples of engaged terminology coded within identified sections. As illustrated, sections organized under the larger headings of "Community Engagement," "External Partnerships," and "Anchor Institution" employed the highest use of engaged terminology (54%), followed by sections that were arranged under headings such as "Teaching" and "Student Success" (21%). As the framing, organization, and categorization of institutions' strategic plans varied widely, the authors generated the following seven code categories to provide structure when identifying patterns among the distribution of terminology across all plans:

- *Service, Engagement, Anchor, External Partners*: sections explicitly organized around and titled to represent the institution's involvement with the external community.
- *Teaching, Students, Academics*: comprises sections relating to student success, faculty teaching and classroom support, and student learning (both curricular and co-curricular). *Research*: sections detailing efforts to support faculty scholarship, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- *Enrollment, Financial, Marketing*: sections organized around efforts to increase institutional funding (often through increased enrollment and efforts to engage alumni).
- *Institutional Support and Infrastructure*: includes sections outlining the allocation of internal resources, often references to staff and unit supports.
- *DEI and Campus Climate*: sections detailing efforts to improve DEI-related initiatives specific to/contained within a campus.
- *Other*: sections of plans that are present in only one or two campuses (e.g., environmental sustainability, religion, athletics).

Table 5.

Distribution of Terms Across Sections of Strategic Plans.

Strategic-plan category	Terms in category (%)	Example text
Service Engagement Anchor External partners	54	"Convene regional *partners* for *collaborative* leadership, research, and planning." "Encourage active and multilateral *community* and campus participation in relevant local strategic-planning initiatives for *communities*, municipalities, and the region."
Teaching Students Academics	21	"Increase student *engagement* in *service* and *community*-based learning opportunities and consider how [institution] can facilitate these activities reflective of our designation as a *Community Engaged* Campus by the Carnegie Foundation."
Research	6	"Connection of the [institution] community's accumulated knowledge and University resources to inform *community engagement* and *service*, and to contribute to economic and *social* advancement."
Enrollment Financial Marketing	6	"Market the value of a college education to employers and *community partners* to increase enrollment." "*Partner* with businesses to increase and market employer-paid for credit and non-credit academic programming and training opportunities."
Institutional- support Infrastructure	5	"Invest in physical infrastructure that facilitates inquiry and discovery with a particular emphasis on the expansion of public-private-*partnerships*." "Investigating, developing and funding new centers that expand academic and regional opportunities (sustainability, creativity, health and wellness, problem solving, *civic engagement*)."
DEI Campus Climate	4	"Ensure *community engagement* activities are culturally responsive."
Other (e.g., sustainability, religion, athletics)	4	"Develop and implement curricular and co-curricular programs to promote undergraduate and graduate student *engagement* with all aspects of the university's mission, identity, and values, including *service*, faith development, inter-religious dialogue, and advocacy for systemic change and *social* justice." "The University will strive to model best practices to conserve natural resources and increase environmental awareness within the local *community*."

Discussion

Form and Function of the Plans

Although strategy-guiding organizations are a universal idea, higher education institutions distinctively approach their own strategic planning. Two campuses in this sample did not have publicly available, active strategic plans. Some campuses appeared to approach their institution-level strategic planning more broadly, leaving more specific details and metrics to unit-level planning, whereas other campus-level plans were more specific, including unique measures of success at the institutional level. This approach creates challenges in implementation, as a goal may not be integrated or well thought out and communicated, demonstrating how campuses can often unintentionally portray a scattered institutional identity (Janke et al., n.d.; Price et al., 2008). Types of institutional strategic planning include academic master plans (deep dives into curriculum, academic programs); campus master plans (investigating/recommending changes to the physical structures); administratively focused plans (finance and operations); and a more general institution-wide plan encompassing people, policy, practices, programs, and infrastructure. The majority of plans included in this study fell into the latter category of

general, institution-wide plans. Some plans highlighted specific academic units, such as a medical school or music conservatory, whereas others focused broadly on research, reputation, and/or the student experience.

A few of the strategic plans categorized, or siloed, their goals very specifically, whereas other strategic plans emphasize how priorities interrelate. Institution C's strategic plan includes "purposeful teaching integrating community" as a priority for academic curriculum, demonstrating community engagement and academic collaboration. This example showcases community engagement alongside teaching and learning as a foundational campus value and thus more likely to receive institutional support and resources (Harkavy & Hartley, 2012). Meanwhile, Institution H discusses the connection to DEI and community via "the curriculum, pedagogical methods, professional development, and co-curricular activities that contribute to cultural competency," ensuring community-based activities are culturally responsive. This strengthens the notion identified by other scholars that there is potential for a larger collective impact when aligning DEI and community engagement and strengthening the resulting social progress (American Council on Education, 2023; Carwile, 2021; del Rio & Loggins, 2019; Green, 2022; Hurtado, 2007; Mitchell, 2008; Sturm et al., 2011). Regardless of how plans were structured, almost every institution explicitly named community engagement (i.e., "Regional Partnerships," "Career and Community Engagement," "Community and Global Impact") as a specific goal area within their plan.

When engagement is categorized as a specific goal, some institutions articulate it in relation to other key focus areas of the institution. Although some campuses isolate community-engaged experiences as a priority for student learning, others mention faculty-led impactful or applied research for the public good, addressing complex societal and community issues. Institution G provides a good example of community engagement's alignment with faculty scholarship, positioning themselves as "a high-impact research university that aspires to be a community where humanity, science and technology meet to create a just and thriving world," recognizing that "problems facing community are complex, solutions fall across disciplines, methodologies, ways of knowing," while also highlighting the need for "opportunities for learning outside the classroom … ensuring community access to classrooms/scholarship." Institution G, alongside other campuses, articulates the belief that when faculty scholarship "expands public knowledge" and addresses community needs, it contributes to institutional civic missions. All these examples describe what is called for in institutional change literature, realignment of priorities to incorporate engagement alongside other core institutional values (Harkavy & Hartley, 2012).

Defining "Community" and to What Ends

Within their strategic plans, campuses refer to community in a variety of ways, often referencing both internal and external community(ies). In this study, only references to external communities were coded. When speaking of external communities, campuses tended to characterize their community(ies) and partner(s) as local, regional, neighborhood-based, national, and/or global entities. A few campuses join Institution HH in choosing to work with "primarily local partnerships, but also beyond borders of the nation," prioritizing local, while mentioning a broader service area. Overall, the inclusion of community-based work and these descriptions are a vital first step in connecting with their external communities (Morgan, 2006).

Many campuses talk about engaging to build reputation and PK-12/community college pipelines for enrollment, whereas some institutions identified relationships they hope to engage in and expand. As an example of the latter, Institution C declares it "will become a model of community engagement that will revitalize communities while centering mutuality and reciprocity with partners." Institution F plans to "emphasize university-community partnerships that are collaborative, participatory, empowering, systemic, and transformative." Others, including Institutions H and R, discuss allocating institutional resources to meet community needs and bring in funding that will simultaneously assist institutional efforts. All are examples of Carnegie's definition of and leading scholars' interpretations of community engagement, whereas the first sentiment (e.g., reputation, pipelines) by itself represents more self-serving than community-oriented engagement. As Carnegie's community engagement classification expands

globally, international institutions planning to apply would be wise to look to a similar definition, including these sentiments in their planning processes while sharing their unique societal contexts (American Council on Education, 2023).

Campuses often mention specific populations (e.g., underrepresented students, African American, LGBTQ+) and specific focus areas (e.g., knowledge, arts, and culture, health and wellness, racial equity, sustainability) in relationship to their engagement with community:

- Institution JJ recognizes the "intolerable gaps in quality of life among POC and White residents in the community they serve."
- Institution S "prioritizes engagement with [and] serving indigenous populations … free tuition for those from whom the area land was stolen."
- Institution U

  identifie[s] key fields that impact all communities, although often in different ways: climate change, sustainability, and resilience; the promise and perils of new technologies, including in the life and computer sciences; and the complex and often fraught interactions between health, social justice, equity, and our urban environments.

Articulating a commitment to specific populations can serve as a means for campuses to recognize ways in which their previous engagement efforts created harm while acknowledging and promoting more equitable ways in which to work with the public. Further, specifying certain groups or populations where engagement is focused may assist in future, targeted evaluation efforts.

Types of Engagement

This analysis found that campuses appear to prioritize working with certain partners more than others, many mentioning nonprofit organizations specifically, while some also calling out industry partners (e.g., healthcare, business). Many mention connecting with K-12 school systems to build partnerships and pipelines. Additionally, some discuss how to connect with community more informally, such as specific neighborhoods or individuals in their unique rural, suburban, or urban context. Urban institutions were more likely to articulate partnerships with government officials or city government. A few tie their involvement of alumni to their community outreach efforts.

Beyond types of partners, the types of activities and how community engagement would aspirationally occur varied from campus to campus. Beyond discussing the strength and longevity of community partnerships, campuses routinely connected their community engagement efforts to:

- high-impact practices, student learning, and student retention and success: Institution F encourages students to "engage in experiential learning and internships with [their local] communities and beyond";
- DEI: Institution H seeks to "Ensur[e] that the population of the Institution H's community reflects the diversity and social conditions of the surrounding communities". Institution M plans to "recruit and retain highly qualified, diverse employees who are committed to being engaged in the [regional community]";
- resource and arts/culture/intellectual hubs: Institution U articulated the need to develop "community-facing spaces emphasizing co-creation" for research and creative activity sharing with their communities;
- workforce development, education, and community outreach that meets workforce demands; and
- faculty, staff, and students' democratic participation and civic discourse.

Although the aforementioned examples illustrate a diverse and varied integration of community engagement efforts with other institutional priorities, as recommended by scholars (Janke et al., n.d.; Price et al., 2008), the most prevalent integration was with initiatives regarding student success and faculty research. As illustrated in Table 5, student success was the second most frequent category of strategic goals articulating engagement efforts, following only categories explicitly labeled community

engagement. Aligning engagement with student success primarily seeks to leverage student community engagement as a tactic to achieve various student outcomes such as retention and/or the cultivation of a global citizen mindset. Across the majority of strategic plans was the articulation of a universal desire to prepare students for the entrance into an increasingly polarized society. Institution D calls for students to be "productive members of their communities" and that the institution "[drives] public good through our graduates making a difference in community." Institution E hopes for their "students [to be] catalysts for community social and economic progress." Institution Y explicitly refers to their students as "community members." Similarly, Institution GG mentions that students are active contributors not only to their local community but also to the global community. This distinction, relevant from an engaged learning perspective, as facilitating local-global learning, is key to an in-depth approach to engagement. As some communities adjacent to campuses are predominantly white and/or more affluent, a hyper-local approach would not result in diverse community understanding and engagement.

In addition to purposeful alignment with student success, campus strategic plans also focus their engagement efforts through the lens of collaborative faculty work, interdisciplinary approaches to applied research, and meeting community needs through scholarship, synergies that are critical to successful alignment (Kaplan & Norton, 2006). Though campus plans tended not to explicitly draw in engagement efforts within categories focused on faculty research (only 6% of engaged terminology was found in research categories), faculty scholarship was heavily discussed within engagement-specific plan categories. Although this illustrates a depth of community engagement, it is a missed opportunity for institutional alignment and integration with specific institutional research goals. Further, mentioning faculty involvement and public-impact research only goes so far when institutions do not go deeper to mention changing their reward and promotion practices.

Many campuses seek to establish or maintain units to facilitate faculty's engaged research like Institution H's plans to "increase interdisciplinary centers to address community needs," demonstrating one example of resource allocation and/or re-prioritization (Harkavy & Hartley, 2012). Others support "interprofessional education and collaborative practice to improve the wellbeing of communities and tackle important public health challenges," like Institution O. Institution R "integrate[es] scholarship, worship and action" while "nurtur[ing] interconnections and impact on [the local/regional] community." A strong example of language articulating community knowledge and its benefit to institutional planning and faculty scholarship and teaching is shared by Institution FF:

> [Institution FF] honors, acknowledges, and values community sovereignty and the wisdom of our neighbors and actively integrates the knowledge, experience, and expertise of community members to measure and document the impact of [Institution FF]'s health, legal, social, and economic development programs.

Depth, Integration, and Use of Metrics Within Strategic Plans

As the breadth of engagement terminology across institutional plans is articulated in the above discussion and illustrated in Table 5, the depth or degree to which campuses discuss the specific nature of their community partnerships is more challenging to assess. Although some campuses characterize community engagement in a well-thought-out, detailed manner, simply including that detail in a singular goal area does not fully reflect engagement as a core institutional priority. Beyond depth, the integration of engagement within key goal areas and articulation of metrics to assess success demonstrates how truly committed an institution is to aligning and prioritizing engagement.

Although almost every campus highlighted community engagement as a core goal area and many connected engagement to other institutional priorities, fewer institutions list explicit metrics to measure the success of identified engagement goals. In an effort to articulate the presence of engagement-focused metrics more clearly within campuses' strategic plans, the authors utilized the below scale to characterize the depth, integration, and presence of engagement metrics within campus plans. Table 6 characterizes the rubric the authors used to characterize depth, integration, and metrics. Table 7 illustrates the percentage of campuses in the study that exhibit levels of depth, integration, and use of engagement-focused metrics.

Table 6.

Level of Depth, Integration, and Metrics in Strategic Plans.

Level	0	1	2	3
Depth	No goal area on CE[a]	Goal area that minimally mentions CE	Goal area that has more context, specificity for CE; sub-goals (i.e., developing reciprocal partnerships)	Goal area that meets 2, with more detail (i.e., includes how CE touches other functional areas, CE + teaching or research, infrastructure support)
Integration	No mention of CE in goal area where alignment could exist (i.e., DEI, Academics)	Minimal CE references beyond goal area	Multiple references to CE in other goal areas, but not in all goal areas that could be aligned and/or not specific	Mentions CE throughout the plan with detail and measures of success
Metrics	No metrics in plan	Vague and/or inconsistent mention of metrics	Plan includes metrics but lacks detail/more measurable goals connected to CE	Measurable, comprehensive metrics that relate specifically to CE

Note. [a] CE = community engagement

Table 7.

Percentages of Depth, Integration, and Metrics in Campus Plans.

	Depth (%)	Integration (%)	Metrics (%)
3—High	32	11	27
2—Medium	28	46	16
1—Low	38	32	28
0—No mention	0	11	27

For institutions that include metrics, most are utilizing quantitative measures of success—increased student enrollment and degree attainment, increased student/faculty participation in engaged activities, increased number of partnerships, and increased resources to sustain engagement (e.g., "Secure $1 million in new grant funding focusing on the convergence of rural development and engaged scholarship over the next 12 months"). Other more qualitative measures include collecting partner feedback via surveys or within advisory councils. Institution MM plans to "convene annual think tanks on key regional issues such as, but not limited to, community health, workforce housing, transportation, broadband, childcare, and homelessness." Some mention increased infrastructure (e.g., resources for engagement, physical space(s), center(s), and/or initiatives that focus and/or support community engagement). A few plans mention goals to create annual reports, which Institution H mentions by using "to impact future activities." Lastly, some institutions discuss accreditation or recognitions such as achieving the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The inclusion of metrics is required for institutions to both be accountable to their named priorities and assess their progress.

The review of campus plans illustrates that while almost all institutions clearly articulated community engagement as a priority for their institution, there is opportunity for more clearly identifying key metrics upon which to measure figure success. Many campuses included metrics, which are quite vague. Though it can be challenging to identify specific metrics for campuses-level priorities, it is essential that institutions generate and contextualize distinct metrics to assess their engagement efforts (Janke et al., n.d.). For example, campuses who seek to "spend more money on community partnerships"; what qualifies as "more"? In what ways will expenditures be tracked and assessed? Beyond just articulating broad metrics, campuses would benefit to be more detailed in the ways they leverage specific measurable metrics to enact real change and assess impact. Though there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to measuring community engagement, to measure success, metrics must be included and be measurable (Balaji et al., 2016; Fiol, 1991; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Hinton, 2012).

Limitations and Future Research

Like any research, this study's limitations are important to acknowledge and clarify to contextualize the findings and elicit future research. Though content analysis was the best methodological approach to answer the identified research questions because it allowed for unobtrusive data collection, flexibility for the authors, and transparent and replicable methods that can be leveraged to explore strategic plans from other institution types, it is important to identify the limitations it inherently presents. As content analysis encourages focus on specific, isolated terminology, it can lend itself to being overly reductive (Luo, 2023). Acknowledging this, the authors took great efforts to account for and understand the context, nuance, and positioning of identified terminology. However, a certain level of subjective interpretation is required, which can affect reliability and validity due to researcher bias (Luo, 2023).

Further, as this study included only a select number of institutions that were members of the Collaboratory network, the transferability or applicability of findings is less strong for international campuses and/or institutions who have not taken steps to collect and aggregate institutional-level community engagement data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study intentionally narrowed its sample to extract deeper, more focused data and minimize the variance of institutions within the sample, focusing on the strategic-planning efforts of American campuses that are intentionally supporting and providing resources for community engagement at the institutional level via Collaboratory. In future, the model could be used beyond Collaboratory institutions to investigate unique institution types (e.g., research universities, private colleges) and international campuses, or to dive deeper into different types of campus planning (e.g., academic master plans, campus master plans, campus units' plans). Further, additional follow-up research to this select cohort of institutions would provide insights into what resulted from these stated plans and what changes were made.

In addition to the narrowed study sample, the diversity of the selected dataset presented its own unique challenges and limitations. The strategic plans included in the study all differed in terms of length, organization, audience (e.g., internal/external), and structure. This diversity required the authors to generate larger, more encompassing codes at times to accommodate the variety of approaches campuses took to organizing and presenting their strategic plans. Further, the plans differed in terms of the number of years they encompassed. Although the majority of institutions were utilizing plans that covered a span of one to four years, some campus plans covered up to 10 years. As such, campuses often chose goals that were able to be accomplished within their designated time frames, causing the larger sample to include goals, strategies, and metrics of varying degrees.

It is also important to note that in a post-2020 world, higher education is in an era of change. Many institutions are currently in, or preparing to enter, a new phase of strategic planning aimed at addressing the most pressing issues facing their campuses. Due to the dynamic and iterative nature of institutional planning, there is a benefit in future research exploring the evolution of campus plans in the coming years. Case studies of specific institutions that have more thoroughly embedded community engagement into their strategic plans could provide deeper understanding of how they are working to embed and institutionalize engagement through policy and infrastructure. How might community engagement efforts

be physically positioned on a campus? Is the work more centralized or decentralized? These questions, among others, would help to shed more light on what factors lead to strategic placement and priority.

Conclusion

This content analysis of over 40 campus-level strategic plans highlights the need for institutions to develop campus-wide plans that position community engagement as both a singular goal and an integrated strategy throughout all planning efforts. Intentional positioning ensures that community engagement becomes a part of the institutional identity and guides transformative change. Furthermore, the significance of metrics in assessing community engagement efforts and holding institutions accountable cannot be understated. Metrics provide tangible evidence of progress and success and help to ensure campuses are advancing in their efforts to more meaningful engagement with their community. This study identified that even, among campuses that have institution-level resources and infrastructure to support community engagement, prioritizing engagement as both an intentional goal area and an effort that is aligned with other institutional priorities is challenging. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Further, institutions seeking to prioritize community engagement must consider how they will measure success and sustain initiatives across all campus goal areas. This effort must begin with a campus's strategic-planning efforts. Fundamental areas in which to align community engagement include DEI initiatives, faculty, staff and student recruitment efforts, fundraising and alumni relations, faculty teaching and research, and workforce and economic development. By embracing community engagement as a central component of their strategic plans, institutions can position themselves as responsive, adaptable, and socially responsible entities that contribute meaningfully to their communities and address the evolving needs of society.

References

American Council on Education. (2023, December 11). *Carnegie elective classifications*. https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu/elective-classifications/community-engagement/

Balaji, M. S., Roy, S. K., & Sadeque, S. (2016). Antecedents and consequences of university brand identification. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(8), 3023–3032. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.017

Bannister, B. D., & Barczak, G. (2018). A system dynamics approach to strategic planning in higher education. *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing, 30*(3), 1–23.

Bess, J. L., & Dee, J. R. (2008). *Understanding college and university organization: Theories for effective policy and practice*. Stylus.

Blumenstyk, G. (2015). *American higher education in crisis? What everyone needs to know*. Oxford University Press.

Bok, D. (2013). *Higher education in America*. Princeton University Press.

Breznik, K., & Law, K. M. Y. (2019). What do mission statements reveal about the values of top universities in the world? *International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 27*(5), 1362–1375. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-08-2018-1522

Carwile, C. (2021). Race, power, and place: Lakota lessons from Pine Ridge Reservation. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 27*(1), 129–153. https://doi.org/10.3998/mjcsloa.3239521.0027.106

Chambers, T. C. (2005). The special role of higher education in society: As a public good for the public good. In A. Kezar, T. C. Chambers, & J. C. Burkhard (Eds.), *Higher education for the public good: Emerging voices from a national movement* (pp. 3–22). Jossey-Bass.

Cohen, M., & Kisker, C. B. (2010). *The shaping of American higher education: Emergence and growth of the contemporary system* (2nd ed.). Wiley.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Daft, R. L., & Weick, K. (1984). Toward a model of organizations as interpretive systems. *Academy of Management Review, 9*, 284–295. https://doi.org/10.2307/258441

del Rio, E., & Loggins, J. (2019). Aligning equity, engagement and social innovation in anchor initiatives. *Metropolitan Universities, 30*(1), 37–50. https://doi.org/10.18060/22377

Fiol, M. (1991). Managing culture as a competitive resource: An identity-based view of sustainable competitive advantage. *Journal of Management, 17*, 191–211. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700112

Fombrun, C., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(2), 233–258. https://doi.org/10.2307/256324

George Mason University. (2023). *Transformative education through anti-racist community engagement*. Quality Enhancement Plan. https://provost.gmu.edu/academics/accreditation/quality-enhancement-plan

Gioia, D. A., & Thomas, J. B. (1996). Identity, image, and issue interpretation: Sensemaking during strategic change in academia. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 41*(3), 370–398. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393936

Goddard, C. (2013). *Semantic analysis: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Gordon, G., & Fischer, M. (2015). Strategic planning in public higher education: Management tool or publicity platform? *Educational Planning, 22*(3), 5–17.

Grawe, N. (2018). *Demographics and the demand for higher education*. John Hopkins University Press.

Green, P. (2022). Making explicit connections between experiential learning and justice: New approaches to teaching and learning through an imagination for justice. *Experiential Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, 4*(2), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.46787/elthe.v4i2.3437

Hage, J., & Aiken, M. (1970). *Social change in complex organizations*. Random House.

Harkavy, I., & Hartley, M. (2012). Integrating a commitment to the public good into the Institutional Fabric: Further lessons from the field. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 16*(4), 17–36. http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/276

Hinton, K. E. (2012). *A practical guide to strategic planning in higher education*. Society for College and University Planning.

Holland, B. A. (2005). Institutional differences in pursuing the public good. In A. Kezar, T. C. Chambers, & J. C. Burkhard (Eds.), *Higher education for the public good: Emerging voices from a national movement* (pp. 235–259). Jossey-Bass.

Hurtado, S. (2007). Linking diversity with the educational and civic missions of higher education. *Review of Higher Education, 30*(2), 185–196. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2006.0070

Janke, E. M., Medlin, K. D., & Holland, B. A. (n.d.). *Collecting scattered institutional identities into a unified vision for community engagement and public service* [Unpublished manuscript]. University of North Carolina Greensboro.

Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (2006). *Alignment: Using the balanced scorecard to create corporate synergies*. Harvard Business School Press.

Kapp, J. A., & Rauch, C. F. (2017). Systems thinking for higher education leaders. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 49*(4), 23–31.

Kezar, A. (2011). Organizational culture and its impact on partnering between community agencies and postsecondary institutions to help low-income students attend college. *Education and Urban Society, 43*(2), 205–243. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124510380041

Kezar, A. (2018). *How colleges change: Understanding, leading, and enacting change* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Lombardi, J. V. (2013). *How universities work*. John Hopkins University Press.

Luo, A. (2023, June 22). *Content analysis: Guide, method & examples*. Scribbr. https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/content-analysis/

Mitchell, T. (2008). Traditional vs. critical service-learning: Engaging the literature to differentiate two models. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning, 14*(2), 50–65.

Morgan, G. (2006). *Images of organization*. Sage.

Newman, F., & Couturier, L. K. (2002). *Trading public good in the higher education market*. Observatory on Borderless Higher Education. https://www.academia.edu/1941399/Trading_public_good_in_the_higher_education_market

Oshry, B. (1995). *Seeing systems: Unlocking the mysteries of organizational life*. Berrett-Koehler.

Price, K. N., Gioia, D. A., & Corley, K. G. (2008). Reconciling scattered images: Managing disparate organizational expressions and impressions. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 17*, 173–185. https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492608314991

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday.

Sharma, R., & Mishra, P. (2019). Systems thinking approach for change management in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 27*(3), 249–263.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Sage.

Sturm, S., Eatman, T., Saltmarsh, J., & Bush, A. (2011). Full participation: Building the architecture for diversity and public engagement in higher education. *Imagining America*. https://surface.syr.edu/ia/17

Thomas, J. B., & McDaniel, R. R. (1990). Interpreting strategic issues: Effects of strategy and top management team information processing structure. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*, 286–306. https://doi.org/10.2307/256326

Weerts, D. J., Freed, G. H., & Morphew, C. C. (2014). Organizational identity in higher education: Conceptual and empirical perspectives. In L. W. Perna (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8005-6_6

Weerts, D. J., & Sandmann, L. R. (2008). Building a two-way street: Challenges and opportunities for community engagement at research universities. *The Review of Higher Education, 32*(1), 73–106. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.0.0027

Weiss, H. A., Wendling, L. A., & Norris, K. E. (2018). *Methods for exploring faculty experiences with community engaged research* [Conference presentation]. Assessment Institute. https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/19361/Final.Combined%20Handout.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Wendling, L. A. (2022, April 19). *Defining community engagement*. Collaboratory. https://cecollaboratory.com/defining-community-engagement/

Wendling, L. A. (2023). Evaluating engaged research in promotion and tenure: Not everything that counts can be counted. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 27*(1), 221–233.

Wendling, L. A., & Bessing, K. L. (2018). *Valuing the engaged work of faculty: An analysis of institutional promotion and tenure guidelines at IUPUI and peer institutions*. IUPUI Scholarworks. https://hdl.handle.net/1805/17191

Yaping, X., Huong, N., Nam, N., Quyet, P., Khanh, C., & Anh, D. (2023). University brand: A systematic literature review. *Heliyon, 9*(6), e16825. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16825

Zemsky, R. (2013). *Checklist for change: Making American higher education a sustainable enterprise*. Rutgers University Press.

About the Authors

Dr. Lauren A. Wendling serves as the director of institutional success at Collaboratory, assisting institutions capture and leverage community engagement data. Lauren's scholarship focuses on the institutionalization of community engagement.

Kathryn Evans, MPA, works with institutions to leverage Collaboratory in tracking community engagement. Previously, Katie worked at Marietta College and Bowling Green State University (BGSU) and researched the alignment of DEI and community engagement.