INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: CASE STUDY OF PROCESSES TOWARD ENGAGEMENT

by

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(Under the Direction of Lorilee R. Sandmann)

ABSTRACT

Many higher education institutions use community engagement as a way to partner with communities to collaboratively address pressing societal needs. A growing body of literature documents that quality authentic community engagement can generate mutual benefits for higher education and communities. Nevertheless, many colleges and universities struggle to understand and institutionalize community engagement, defined as "collaboration 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" (NERCHE, 2016).

The aim of this qualitative single-case study was to describe and understand how leaders at a selected land-grant university attempted to institutionalize community engagement. Specifically, the institutionalization of community engagement was examined using Holland's assessment matrix for institutionalizing community engagement, and boundary-spanning roles and activities were examined using Weerts and Sandmann's boundary-spanning framework. The study was guided by three research questions: (a) What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement? (b) According to university leaders, what

qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess? and (c) In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge? The study participants included leaders from a single university who had previously attended the Engagement Academy for University Leaders. Thematic analysis and constant comparison were used to examine data from university artifacts and transcripts from open-ended survey questions, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. Findings showed that institutionalizing community engagement represented an adaptive challenge that required a critical mass of boundary spanners enacting a variety of roles inside the university. Three conclusions were drawn from the study finding. First, the case institution created conditions for personnel to experiment with community engagement. Second, the university engaged in strategic thinking and planning around the sustainability of community engagement. Third, in its institutionalization efforts, the case institution fostered an "adaptive braid" model.

INDEX WORDS: Community engagement, Higher education leadership, Boundary spanning, Institutionalization, Change agents, Adaptive challenges

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher education face an increasingly complex and constantly changing environment (Weisbrod, Ballou, & Asch, 2008). In order to retain public value, universities in the United States must be more attentive to pressing problems facing the nation and the world (R. Barnett, 2004; Block & Estes, 2011). Scholars indicate such institutions must evolve to remain relevant and accountable, and to meet the needs of society, while maintaining effectiveness and efficiency in their operations and methods (Bloomfield, 2005; Botha & Albertyn, 2012; Holland, 2009). The traditional unidirectional model of information dissemination in university outreach falls short of meeting current societal needs and expectations, and represents a disconnect between higher education institutions and the broader society. An example of the unidirectional approach to knowledge creation and dissemination would be when knowledge is created through research at a university and then disseminated into communities through community-based outreach channels. Complex problems require adaptive strategies to identify solutions that meet external expectations and an institution's internal mission.

Universities and colleges have adopted the approach of engaged learning and discovery as a strategy to build civic capacity of students and address complex issues within the community, thereby legitimizing their public value in society. Community engagement differs from the unidirectional delivery system for public service and outreach in land-grant universities, where information from the university is pushed out into communities, because it involves

university interaction with community partners to co-create mutually beneficial knowledge. The approach also prioritizes reciprocity (New England Resource Center for Higher Education [NERCHE], 2016). Since the 1990s, there has been a growing interest in community engagement within higher education, and a growing body of literature maintains that quality community engagement can generate benefits to universities and communities (e.g., Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2007; Bloomfield, 2005; Boyer, 1996b; Boyte & Hollander, 1998; Bringle, Hatcher, & Games, 1997; Butin, 2007; Driscoll, 2008; Hollander & Saltmarsh, 2000; Kellogg Commission, 1999; Sandmann, 2008). By working in mutually beneficial ways with communities, community-engagement practitioners are working to change the perception of universities as ivory towers disconnected from society.

A major challenge in higher education, however, is the shift to implementing community engagement as an integrated strategy rather than as simply a new word for service or as an onerous extra activity disconnected from the primary business of the university (Furco & Miller, 2009; Holland, 2009; Sandmann & Weerts, 2008). In order for community engagement to be effective, it must be integrated into the daily routines and mainstream organizational culture of colleges and universities. In other words, community engagement must be institutionalized. Yet, most higher education institutions struggle to institutionalize any innovation because, generally, individuals in organizations often resist new practices (Holland, 2009). The challenges of institutionalizing community engagement into the fabric of higher education institutions are adaptive in nature. Adaptive challenges do not have straightforward solutions but are systematic and involve multiple stakeholders (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Such challenges require changes in behaviors and thinking because they cannot be solved by expertise or technical solutions alone (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004).

## Background of the Problem

Beginning in the 1940s, the reputation of higher education has shifted from a grassroots environment producing productive citizens to a culture including elitism including faculty disengagement from society that still exists in some areas today (Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonk, Furco, & Sawnson, 2012). This disengagement has been attributed to colleges and universities moving away from the practical application of knowledge toward specialized expertise contained within the walls of the institution (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010). Consequently, higher education institutions were coined "ivory towers," where faculty became increasingly perceived as detached from the context and pulse of communities (Boyte, 2000; Driscoll 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 2012; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010).

In the 1990s, Boyer (1996) challenged higher education to recommit to its public service mission by infusing scholarly work into interactions with community partners to address challenges outside campus boundaries. Since then, his call has inspired scholars to build definitions, theories, and best practices around community engagement. As noted earlier, community engagement differs from traditional unidirectional public service and outreach in higher education due to its fundamental principles of mutuality, reciprocity, and partnership. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) has defined community engagement as "[a] collaboration 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" (NERCHE, 2016). By utilizing community engagement principles, university faculty are re-constructing and re-conceptualizing teaching and research projects to focus on discovery, teaching, application, and integration (Boyer, 1990; Holland, 2005). Through mutually beneficial routes, Boyer's call to

action (and society's needs) can be answered while enhancing scholarship. Many within the academy have been working toward answering Boyer's call over the last 30 years as evidenced by formal national recognition of community-engaged universities and by the growing literature on community engagement. A formal community engagement classification for colleges and universities was created by CFAT in 2006, with the most recent round of classifications and reclassifications taking place in early 2015 (NERCHE, 2016). Additional substantiation is found in a growing number of academic journals related to community engagement in higher education (e.g., the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, established in 1996, and the *Journal of Community Engagement and Higher Education*, started in 2009, along with many others; see http://www.uidaho.edu/outreach).

**Legitimizing and Institutionalizing Community Engagement**

Integrating the community into academic scholarship blends the historic mission of higher education with the current emphasis on increasing the public value of colleges and universities. A sustainable commitment to community engagement can be accomplished by institutionalizing engagement at all levels of an institute of higher education. This integration has the potential to motivate more citizens to take advantage of lifelong and distributed learning, build capacity for enhanced public benefit, and thereby increase public support (Bloomfield, 2005).

The CFAT took an important step toward legitimizing higher education's bidirectional involvement with society when it created an elective Community Engagement Classification (CEC), and with it a consistent national standard and vernacular for institutionalized community engagement (Butin, 2007). Increased interest in institutionalizing community engagement has been at the forefront of many campus agendas, as evidenced by the 361 institutions that have

achieved the CEC or reclassification since 2006 (NERCHE, 2016). This elective classification allows institutions to provide evidence for a baseline of community engagement and also serves as a structure for self-evaluation relative to the process of institutionalizing community engagement—thereby supporting institutions in organizational change.

**Adaptive Challenges**

Because of traditional norms around research, teaching, and service in academia, a shift to institutionalizing the community engagement approach comprises an adaptive challenge. Adaptive challenges call for different solutions and new ways of thinking in order to address complex problems that require systemic change (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001); they differ from technical challenges, which are typically routine and utilize solutions that have worked in the past. Expertise alone cannot resolve adaptive challenges because they involve changes in behaviors and approaches, as well as technical strategies (Corazzini & Anderson, 2014; Heifetz & Linsky, 2004). In the context of higher education, the change needed is a different way of thinking about the work being done in universities.

An organizational change becomes institutionalized when it moves from a shared meaning and norm within a part of the organization to an element of the larger culture and norms of the overall system (Holland, 2009). Organizational norms are embedded in the routines and mindset of an organization and impact how members within the organization act, interact, and decide how to accomplish daily tasks (Scott, 2001).

To address adaptive problems of organizational change, leadership and collaboration are needed at all levels within an institution (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004; Lachance & Oxendine, 2015). Those inside and outside higher education institutions agree that change is necessary for higher education to remain relevant (Alexander, 2007). However, the speed of positive change is

oftentimes slow due to the complexity and autonomy of individual colleges and universities (Alexander, 2007).

Institutionalizing community engagement within a higher education institution requires the campus to incorporate information gathered at the organizational and individual levels. Change agents, individuals who negotiate power, information, and relationships, are needed to facilitate institutionalization (Torres et al., 2013). More specifically, boundary spanners are change agents who can facilitate addressing an adaptive challenge such as expanding a university's reach beyond campus. Identifying the activities of individual boundary spanners is important for understanding how to operationalize the institutionalization process, while, at the organizational level, it is instructive to understand how separate components of institutionalization come together to effect fully integrated change. Leadership is an essential component for adaptive work such as this; college and university leaders can take on roles and promote activities that foster the institutionalization of community engagement. This study explored how organizational infrastructure and the activities of university leaders addressed the adaptive challenge of institutionalizing community engagement.

**University Leaders as Boundary-Spanning Change Agents**

University leaders represent the intersection of organizational and individual change because of their administrative roles. Understanding change in an institution from their perspective can offer insight into multiple levels of change and interaction. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) (2002) has argued that leadership at the highest levels (i.e., president and chancellor), while critical, must be coupled with a network of leaders at various lower levels in order to effect change. Such collaborative leadership goes

beyond traditional administrators to include program and center directors, department chairs and heads, deans, chief academic officers, and chief executive officers (Sandmann & Plater, 2013).

One way to understand university leaders' change agency and to examine collaborative leadership, particularly as they relate to institutional community engagement, is by exploring individuals' boundary-spanning activities. Existing institutional boundaries can be expanded, constricted, or maintained (Holland, 2009; Levine, 1980); to beneficially expand the boundaries of a university into the community requires negotiating, translating, and filtering internal and external information. Such boundary-spanning activities can be accomplished by people internal and external to the organization through formal and informal roles.

Weerts and Sandmann (2010) developed a framework that identifies four roles of boundary spanners: engagement champions, community-based problem solvers, technical experts, and internal engagement advocates. Weerts and Sandmann (2008, 2010) expanded upon Hutchinson and Huberman's (1993) notion that "instead of broadcasting knowledge and offering alternatives to users, boundary-spanners act as conveners, problem solvers, and change agents who negotiate the wants and needs of parties involved in the process of creating and disseminating knowledge" (p. 79). Boundary spanners go beyond the organizations' parameters and thus add to their formal institutional roles (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Miller, 2008). The gap between higher education institutions and communities can be narrowed, if not closed, by individuals assuming boundary-spanning roles that enhance community engagement strategies.

## Statement of the Problem

Higher education institutions are using community engagement as a way to address pressing societal needs. These needs are complex and require new knowledge creation that involves collaboration among partners within and outside the academy. As with any change in

higher education institutions, infusing a mindset of the usefulness and importance of community engagement in teaching, research, and service is not an easy or straightforward process. Like other transformational innovations, institutionalizing community engagement within organizational priorities, resource allocation, structure, and culture requires change in daily routines and ways of thinking (Holland, 2005). Changing the ways in which people think is an adaptive challenge, and any adaptive challenge must be addressed in order to reach desired levels of institutionalization.

Existing literature has examined both individual- and organizational-level work around the institutionalization of community engagement. This study sought to extend the literature related to incorporating community engagement into the day-to-day operations of colleges and universities, specifically by enhancing the understanding of how that institutionalization process occurs in practice. Focusing on such daily routines represents including activities at both the individual scholarly level and at the organizational level. Thus, the intention of this study was to meld individual and organizational perspectives in an effort to examine the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge. Specifically, the study focused on a Carnegie community-engaged public land-grant university and its leaders, namely those who attended the Engagement Academy for University Leaders (EAUL) individually or as a team between 2008 and 2014. The EAUL is a program for leaders dedicated to developing institutional capacity for community engagement in higher education (see http://www.cpe.vt.edu/engagementacademy for more information about the academy).

## Purpose of the Study

The aim of this qualitative single-case study was to describe and understand how leaders at a selected university enacted the institutionalization of community engagement. The case was

identified for implementing best practices evidenced by two criteria: (1) Carnegie classified community-engaged higher education institution, and (2) participated in EAUL many years. Meeting these criteria, the case, a public land-grant university, demonstrated a desire to work toward institutionalizing community engagement. Specifically, the study explored leaders' perceptions of the nature of boundary-spanning activities and the complexity of how the university operationalized the institutionalization of community engagement. The following research questions guided this study:

(1) What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement?

(2) According to university leaders, what qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess?

(3) In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge?

As shown in Table 1, the components of the study purpose align with specific topics and themes of the literature review and with the study design.

Table 1

*Connecting Study Concepts to Design*

| Concept | Literature Review Topics | Design |
|---|---|---|
| The purpose of this study was to explored *leaders'* perceptions | • University leaders | • Participants |
| of the nature of *boundary-spanning* activities | • Boundary spanning | • Lens to analyze data for research question two |
| and the *complexity* | • Adaptive challenges | • Lens to analyze data for research question three |
| of how the *university* | | • Context for case study |
| operationalized the *institutionalization* | • Institutionalization theory | • Lens to analyze data for research question one |
| of *community engagement* | • Community engagement | • Lens to analyze data for research question two |

## Significance of the Study

This study makes both theoretical and practical contributions to community engagement scholarship and practice. It adds to the current bodies of literature on community engagement, boundary spanning, and higher education by drawing connections between roles and activities that university leaders perform related to the adaptive challenges of institutionalizing community engagement. Understanding which roles and activities help or hinder this adaptive process can assist in meeting internal and external demands of relevancy and value.

### Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to research utilizing Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) boundary-spanning framework in conjunction with Holland's (2006) matrix of institutional commitment to

community engagement. This research endeavored to utilize the framework and matrix in a new way, including integrating the two for a more complete picture of the complex process of institutionalizing community engagement. In applying Holland's matrix to a specific higher education institution, the study offered insights into how researchers can meaningfully utilize this framework in complex organizational settings. The study was also informed by boundary-spanning theory based on the constructivist paradigm and institutional theory (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Constructivism embraces the concept that people create their own understanding and knowledge of the world, or worldview, through their own experiences within it (Hua Liu & Mattews, 2005). According to the constructivist perspective, context matters, and in the case of higher education institutions, there are long-held traditions and belief systems about what qualifies as legitimate work in academia that may be difficult to change. This study illuminated certain behaviors and activities that may help overcome specific barriers to reaching an institutionalized level of community engagement. In addition, by applying boundary-spanning theory as a lens for examining the adaptive challenge of changing the hearts and minds of people at the university—and transforming the university as a whole—this study demonstrated how boundary spanning occurs within such a complex organization.

**Practical Significance**

Practically, this study highlighted the specific ways in which one public land-grant university addressed the adaptive challenge of institutionalizing community engagement through individual- and organizational-level activities. Moreover, conclusions from this study related to leadership development and training, recruitment and hiring, and organizational development and management inform future strategic planning and curriculum development efforts.

The results of this study also serve as a useful resource for university recruitment and hiring professionals by providing direction in seeking candidates and writing job descriptions with specific roles and activities designed to meet the boundary-spanning needs of the institution. The findings also inform organizational development in higher education institutions through the formation and implementation of strategic plans. Finally, the results are useful in a formative evaluation for the EAUL because study participants were alumni of the program who shared how they applied competencies after returning to their university and they provided feedback on the impact the EAUL had on them individually and collectively.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study explored university leaders' perceptions of boundary-spanning activities and the complexity of operationalizing the institutionalization of community engagement. This chapter offers a review of the literature relevant to the study. It begins with a discussion of the history of community engagement in higher education, followed by an examination of the more recent national conversation on community engagement taking place at colleges and universities. The chapter reviews key theories informing this study: institutionalization, boundary spanning, and adaptive challenges.

## History of Community Engagement within Higher Education

Throughout the last two decades, scholars, administrators, and funders have championed increasing the breadth and depth of research (including encouraging a variety of methodologies) around connections between institutional missions and community engagement (Brewer, 2013; Boyer, 1996; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Fitzgerald, Burack, & Seifer, 2010; Hale, 2008). The concept of engagement, however, has a variety of meanings. Some define engagement as scholarship related to higher education's public mission, while others characterize it as specific formal agreements between researchers and outside entities involving shared goals, strategies, and outcomes (Brewer, 2013). Yet, at the core of community engagement is a belief that knowledge and expertise can and should be generated outside of the academy (Fitzgerald et al., 2012).

The concept of community engagement contrasts with the service roots of U.S. higher education—that is, the traditional model of public service and outreach, described as a one-way dissemination of information that is hierarchical and views faculty in a unidimensional role (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). From this perspective, professional work in higher education is conceptualized as separate from the community, adhering to a charity model rather than a justice model when interacting with society (Keener, 1999; Morton, 1995). Consequently, many communities have felt used by universities as "laboratories" or "dumping grounds" of knowledge (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Holland (2006) observed that faculty often perceive their role in a university-community partnership as only to teach, the student's role as only to learn, and the community partner's role as only to supply an environment for research.

The one-way transfer of specialized knowledge has proven insufficient to meet complex societal needs; thus, a bi-directional philosophy of community engagement was created to address this disconnect with the understanding that most societal issues are innately multifaceted (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). The process of conceptualizing a free-flowing dialogue between university-community partners who co-create knowledge for mutual benefit has taken many forms and has therefore been difficult to operationalize (Fear, Rosaen, Bawden, & Foster-Fishman, 2006; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010). A few examples include service-learning courses, participatory action research, and local cooperative extension service programs; however, not all such courses, research, or extension programs comprise community engagement, nor do any two examples look the same either. Two service-learning courses that meet the definition of community engagement could look and "feel" very different from each other in terms of the type

of interaction with community members, the amount of time interacting with communities, and how the students are graded.

Community engagement is expressed through principles of curricular engagement, outreach, and partnerships. At the institutional level, community engagement provides a strategy for simultaneously advancing institutional goals and strengthening society (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). Particularly in the case of a research university, in which there are long-held traditions of university work separate from communities and of unidirectional knowledge transfer, embracing engagement requires a shift in cultural values within the context of teaching, service, and research (Boyte & Kari, 1996; Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, 2002; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010). Integrating community engagement practices into all three of these mission areas has been found to require a research university to revise its infrastructure, epistemology, pedagogy, and, ultimately, the entire campus culture (Fitzgerald et al., 2012; Tufts University & Campus Compact, 2012).

Systemic change is not new to higher education, and the institutionalization of community engagement would require such change in many universities (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). Universities, however, have experienced many similar shifts in the past—and with them various challenges. For example, as a result of the passage of the GI Bill after World War II, the increased access to college quickly altered the higher education system in the United States, shifting higher education from serving a relatively percentage of the population to serving the masses (Boyer, 1996). With this surge of students and cultural transition came friction between the traditional faculty reward system and the new educational role that faculty were expected to fulfill. As the original goals of teaching were thought to be "achieved," the post-World War II faculty began to be thought of as "experts" in specialized areas (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). As this

perspective—later coined the "ivory tower"—grew (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010), faculty were increasingly perceived as disconnected from the context and pulse of communities (Boyte, 2000; Driscoll 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 2012). An examination of the reversal of this trend has comprised a strong focus of the research on institutionalizing community engagement.

## National Conversation on Community Engagement in Higher Education

Over the last several decades, community engagement has become a focus of colleges and universities across the U.S. as the momentum for this movement has grown. National organizations have strategically promoted their civic-oriented agenda to students, faculty, campus administrators, and community stakeholders (Boyer, 1990; Boyte & Hollander, 1998; Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Hollander & Saltmarsh, 2000; Kellogg Commission, 1999; Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Specifically, Campus Compact, the Kellogg Commission, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching are three key organizations that have been instrumental in the evolution of community engagement in higher education.

Campus Compact was created in 1985 as a national nonprofit promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education, with the goal of reversing public perceptions of higher education institutions as materialistic and profit-driven (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010; Hollander, Saltmarsh, & Zlotkowski, 2001). The establishment of Campus Compact represented the beginning of the movement to revitalize the civic purpose of higher education (Cox, 2010). Since Campus Compact's creation, discussions centering on and linking teaching, research, and service have advanced the community engagement movement by raising for public debate potential changes in roles, definitions, allocation of resources, and infrastructure within higher education (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010). As a result, in the 1990s,

community engagement started to become integrated into the third mission area of higher education (i.e., service) (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008).

Also during the 1990s, a new vision for higher education was influenced by public inquiry into how higher education was sustaining communities, based on a growing awareness that public troubles can jeopardize the sustainability and viability of the larger society (Boyer, 1990; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010; Zlotkowski, 1996). Boyer (1990) urged colleges and universities to more actively engage in society by addressing societal problems with community partners in an effort to create transformational change and preserve democracy. In 1995, recognizing that structural changes in higher education were on the horizon, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges received funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to create a body of experts, later called the Kellogg Commission, to examine the role of public higher education in the United States (Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010; Hollander et al., 2001; Kellogg Commission, 1999) and to encourage dialogue and movements on campuses to revive student experiences and access, and invigorate and enrich partnerships with the public as a learning community (Byrne, 2006). The Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges published reports including: leading change in the State and Land-Grant Universities, student experience, student access, engaged institution, a learning society, coherent campus culture, and renewing the commitment to learning, discovery, and engagement. The formation of the Kellogg Commission catalyzed a national conversation.

Shortly after the final Kellogg Commission published its findings, several organizations (e.g., the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the American Association of

Community Colleges, the Council of Independent Colleges, Campus Compact, Imagining America) developed their own definitions of engagement (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). The main values shared by the various definitions included integrating scholarship, mutual benefit, reciprocity, and civic responsibility within and across teaching, research, and service missions and units of an institution. In 1999, Driscoll and Lynton noted that although many typologies and categories had been created, none were universally accepted for service or outreach. This led the CFAT to establish best practices and benchmarks to assist institutions in understanding where they are in their capacity and desire to be a community-engaged campuses, and how to reach their goals using this new set of values (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Thus, the CFAT advanced the movement of community engagement in higher education in the U.S. by streamlining the definition and enhancing accessibility, sustainability, and transferability of community engagement.

Founded in 1905, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is as an independent policy and research center that strives to build scholarship of teaching and learning by collaboratively inventing approaches to complex issues facing education. The combination of reciprocity, community orientation, partnership, and scholarship differentiates community engagement from other types of higher education community or civic service. This particular definition serves as the foundation for the documentation and review processes for the CFAT's elective Community Engagement Classification (Driscoll, 2009). The elective CEC was announced in 2005 and was the first institutional classification related to community engagement (Driscoll, 2009). CEC were awarded in 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2015 with an administrative partnership since 2010 with the New England Research Center for Higher Education.

Today, thanks largely to Campus Compact, the Kellogg Commission, and the CFAT, and more recently organizations such as the Engagement Scholarship Consortium and the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Community Engagement among server others, the community engagement movement has a space for dialogue and tools related to community engagement in higher education. Though the specific contributions of these organizations have varied, the collective results of their work included (a) introducing the term "engagement" as an all-encompassing concept describing service, extension, and outreach that is mutually beneficial to the community and higher education and (b) providing a sustainable entity for continual growth within the movement toward fully integrating (or institutionalizing) community engagement in higher education.

## Theories of Institutionalism and Institutionalization

Nearly 30 years ago, institutionalism was conceptualized by scholars from the fields of economics, political science, sociology, and psychology (Miner, 2007; Scott, 2001, 2003, 2008) who were building on institutional theory. Institutional theory focuses on the resilient aspects of a social structure, including the norms, rules, and cultural-cognitive elements of an organization (Scott, 1995). Norms, in this context, relate to social obligations, moral expectations, and professionalism; rules are developed to maintain order; and the cultural-cognitive element, from a social-constructionist perspective, represents a shared social reality in which people co-construct meaning (Scott, 2001). Cultural-cognitive elements relate to more abstract cultural and social rules than the normative or regulative elements. Order is created through beliefs that are so embedded in the culture of an organization that they are taken for-granted, rather than originating from normative or regulatory expectations (Scott, 2001, 2008). According to institutional theory, social structures are upheld through social exchanges that are built into the

normative behaviors of the members (Bacharach, Bamberger, & McKinney, 2000). A defining property of an institution is that it is acknowledged as a social structure with norms, rules, and shared meanings (Scott, 2001).

Systems and levels of interaction within an organization provide a structure for stable and meaningful connections both individually and organizationally. In this study, where a research university was selected as the case, some of these interactions include the tenure and promotion process, in which faculty are expected to publish at a certain rate and quality, allocate a specific portion of their time to teaching, and participate in various service activities. From this perspective, institutionalization is larger than the sum of individuals making up the system and is embedded in socio-cultural forces within and beyond the boundaries of the organization. In the context of a land-grant research university, not only does the internal academic culture affect the potential for change, but it is also embedded within a tradition of academia that is larger than any one institution.

Institutionalization is a process by which an action, idea, or practice develops a shared meaning and becomes part of the cultural norms and daily practices of an organization (Scott, 2001). Institutional conventions are the result of a social process by which a shared definition of social reality comes to be accepted. The institutional role of research universities in society has been in large part hierarchical, in which the university and its faculty disseminate information and knowledge uni-dimensionally (Benson, Harkavy, & Puckett, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Campuses wishing to become more fully engaged would have to challenge and revise such traditional notions. There would need to be a shift in the professional culture (a change in beliefs about what qualifies as legitimate professional work in the university); a redefinition of the university in society; and a revision of the academic mission of higher education institutions.

Moreover, there would need to be consideration of the history, culture, and level of influence at the university that influence forms and motivations for campus engagement with communities (Hollander et al., 2001).

Higher education needs a new way of "doing business" as global societal, economic, and technological changes drive colleges and universities to reassess their values, strategies, processes, and policies in order to remain viable (Fitzgerald et al., 2012). Ramaley (2006) argued that "the preparation of a generation must [focus on] adaptive expertise rather than routine expertise" (p. 89). Whereas routine expertise involves the acquisition of information and knowledge, adaptive expertise centers on the creation and innovative use of knowledge. Institutions of higher education and their leadership are thus facing adaptive challenges related to their relevancy and public value. As Heifetz and Laurie (2001) explained, "adaptive work is required when our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values that made us successful become less relevant, and when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge" (p. 6). In addition, Marques-Quintero and Curral (2012) maintained that adaptive challenges require changes in orientation, from a focus on outcomes to a focus on lessons learned—thereby altering the very definition of success. Likewise, LePine (2005) showed that when people are learning-oriented instead of product-oriented, adaptation is positively influenced, and research has suggested that having a performance orientation instead of a learning orientation may have a negative effect on goals (Chen & Mathieu, 2008).

Individually and organizationally, adaptive skills aid in combating external pressures during the change process. Providing experiential opportunities and offering cognitive and behavioral guidance are key organizational strategies for supporting adaptability. Frame-switching and cognitive flexibility are adaptive skills that allow an individual to move between

lenses, or perspectives, when viewing a change-related situation or problem (Nelson, Zaccaro, & Herman, 2010). This study considered individual- and organizational-level perspectives together because "the use of multiple paradigms may be particularly important for organizations that pursue multiple, competing goals, such as higher education institutions" (Dee & Leisyte, 2016, p. 278).

Global leaders in competitive environments are defined by their ability to motivate others to "do" adaptive work within organizations (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Adaptive work will be discussed further in the final section of this review; however, it is important to first examine change within institutions and highlight the ways in which flexible boundaries may shape the change process.

## Theories of Change

At the institutional level, the change process has been described on a continuum from *managed* to *transformational* (Levy & Merry, 1986). Managed change is planned in a way that gradually modifies an existing system, while transformational change creates a new system. This study examined managed change because the change agents attempted to embed community engagement within their respective university norms, rather than disregard or completely change those norms. However, change in this context could also be considered transformational because the normative, regulative, and cultural-cognitive aspects of the institution may have to change in order to fully institutionalize community engagement.

One mechanism of change that applies to large institutions across several change theories is the diffusion of innovation. This perspective draws on some of the principles of institutional theory, such as managing norms and cultural-cognitive rules, but focuses primarily on how an innovation becomes institutionalized through individuals' actions and interactions. An

innovation is defined as a concept, action, or object that is new to the entity that adopts it; diffusion is defined as the spread or movement of a concept from its source to the adopter within a social system through communication and influence (Strang & Soule, 1998). In this study, community engagement comprised the innovation diffused throughout a higher education institution. As with many theories, there are classic and contemporary versions of the diffusion of innovation theory. The classic version draws from sociology and communications to examine how ideas and technology have adapted over time. The key theorists of classic innovation of change theory are Hägerstrand (1967), whose work centered on geographic space as a factor of diffusion of innovation, and Coleman, Katz, and Menzel (1966), who highlighted the importance and influence of opinion leaders on diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 2003). Additionally, Rogers (2003) depicted the adoption of innovation as an S-curve, in which adoption of an innovation is slow at first but then increasingly gains momentum until eventually it reaches a climax. Critics of the S-curve have questioned whether or not adopters are equal and support the need for examining change at various levels in an institution (Wolfe, 1994).

The classic diffusion of innovation theory outlines five stages for achieving the institutionalization of an idea, activity, or object (Rogers, 1971): agenda setting, matching, defining, clarifying, and routinizing. Agenda setting requires the recognition of a particular need or problem. Matching involves creating a plan and developing a solution that aligns with the organizational context. Defining includes restructuring or redefining the innovation from both external and internal perspectives. Clarifying occurs during the initiation and implementation of the plan, which is used widely throughout the organization. Routinizing takes place if institutionalization is achieved and the new concept or process is incorporated into regular

activities. Understanding these five stages of the diffusion of innovation can be useful in evaluating an organization's positionality within the change process.

A contemporary version of the diffusion of innovation theory evolved from many of the same scholars who developed institutional theory. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) contributed to diffusion of innovation literature with their theory of fields which holds that early adopters are beneficial for increasing the opportunity for institutionalization. Levine's (1980) work focusing on boundary expansion and contraction also contributed to the diffusion of innovation literature. Levine applied the principles of the diffusion of innovation to higher education which served as a foundation for other scholars (e.g., Colbeck, 2002; Holland, 2005; Sandmann & Weerts, 2008). Levine referred to the acceptance of institutionalization as boundary expansion. The acceptance of an innovation happens either through enclaving (i.e., when the innovation is only accepted in sections of the organization) or through diffusion (i.e, when it spreads throughout the organization). Conversely, boundary constriction occurs when the organization's boundaries withdraw from the innovation. Subsequently, either the innovation is involuntarily interjected into the existing norms, values, and goals of the organization, or the innovation is eliminated. Boundary expansion or constriction can occur through consensus from those within the organization or forced from the top down.

Critiques of the diffusion of innovation theory have focused on assessment, bias, hierarchy, and models (McMaster &Wastell, 2005). Assessing an innovation directly is challenging due to the difficulty of determining if the failure of an innovation has to do with the people involved or the innovation itself. Additionally, the conceptualization of diffusion of innovation can be viewed as constructed from a linear managerial hierarchy of decision making; however, not all organizational structures are linear. Lastly, this perspective does not seem to

make space for models at the individual level, even though individual actions may influence the change process. Individual change agents negotiate power, information, and relationships within a social process to accomplish specific goals during a change process (Torres et al., 2013). Understanding how individuals contribute to the change is important because during the change process other members of the organization are persuaded to accept change due to new meanings and perspectives in relation to existing organizational norms (K. Barnett, 2011).

In the context of institutional change—such as infusing community engagement into research, teaching, and service at a land-grant research institution—there is a tendency for individuals to respond isomorphically, meaning they hold more tightly to their previous schemas of legitimate research, teaching, and service. According to Scott (2008), isomorphism is the natural shift toward structural, cultural, and output homogeneity associated with the institutional change process. The challenge for change agents is to alter the orientation of these long-held schemas (i.e., norms).

Within higher education, the concept of loose coupling is useful in thinking about how idea change occurs in complex organizations. Weick (1969) described loosely coupled higher education institutions as those that can constantly evolve based on the symbolic interaction among individuals as they create and interpret meaning from shared experiences. This concept helps explain why some rules are followed more closely than others and why information does not always flow predictably along the chain of command. According to Orton and Weick (1990), "loose coupling suggests that any location in an organization (top, middle, or bottom) contains interdependent elements that vary in the number and strength of their interdependencies" (p. 204). Applying this theory to institutional change is useful for identifying the elements of change at multiple levels and how they interrelate. Apathy in loosely coupled

organizations is common; larger numbers of people embrace change slowly while they observe a smaller number of change agents to help determine their stance.

Leading an autonomous decentralized workforce brings with it unique challenges since individuals make self-directed choices within the organization (Cohen & March, 1974). In this study, higher education faculty were considered loosely coupled within the selected institution because of the relative autonomy afforded them through shared academic governance. As Birnbaum (2004) explained, academic governance in higher education comprises a system that balances legal control of the institution with the professional authority of faculty roles. Generally, the degree of coupling in the institution depends on the strength of shared variables present in this balance (Glassman, 1973; Weick, 1976).

Shared governance and loose coupling relate closely to organizational decision making. Universities have been described as organized anarchies due to their collective decision-making structures (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). As such, the decision makers may not possess consistently shared goals; in fact, autonomous faculty in higher education institutions often have goals that compete (directly or indirectly) with those of administrators and external stakeholders (Cohen & March, 1974; Dee & Leisyte, 2016). As Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) observed, "situations of decision making under goal ambiguity are common in complex organizations" (p. 1).

To help understand the institutionalization process in the complex context of higher education, it is important to examine how a land-grant research university transforms social exchanges at the individual and organizational levels. However, in order to contextualize these social exchanges, it is useful to first explore the role of change agents. Change agents are critical to the change process because formal policy changes and "hard" (rational) and "soft"

(interactional) governance alone have only minor effects on change. Hard governance refers to the regulatory structure of control by the organization over policies and procedures. Soft governance, however, conveys a system of interactive and social connections to shape norms (Birnbaum, 2004) and usually overrules hard governance if the two are placed in competition. Change agents, however, can span the boundaries of hard, soft, and shared governance.

**Role of Change Agents**

A change agent's role is to create context and meaning while also fostering opportunities for meaning making and interpretation for others (Barge et al., 2008). Many change agents wrestle with this oftentimes competing and contradictory duality of the roles they fill. In the following section, the roles of change agents are discussed in reference to research on institutional change in a variety of contexts.

Effective change agents must manage the dual roles they perform by finding mutually beneficial interaction between inclusion/exclusion, preservation/change, and centrality/division as they strategically prepare for and implement a change initiative. They may encounter barriers to change which may arise from many sources, such as those who are impacted by the change, other change agents (i.e., different styles or opinions on implementing change), or organizational structures (i.e., policies, approval paths, accessibility to decision makers). Moreover, change agents may encounter defensive reactions when trying to persuade others to change their perspective (Kezar, 2009). In identifying how change agents can overcome these challenges, several scholars have used case studies to examine the change process, leading to the creation of recommended tools and strategies.

Including external stakeholder perspectives during the change process—so that they feel heard, valued, and respected—has been found to facilitate change. For instance, in a study of

administrators' experiences implementing an innovation requiring organizational change (i.e., new admissions criteria), researchers found that the leaders had to navigate a multitude of stakeholder perspectives (K. Barnett, 2011). The study identified two change strategies used by change agents to manage conflicting meanings and perspectives among stakeholders during the change process. The first strategy involved creating an infrastructure for those who felt alienated during the change process so that they could feel that their voice was represented. The second strategy centered on fostering a sense of shared goals and values around the strategic plan in order to accomplish the desired change. The study findings supported the need for enhanced communication and interpersonal relations and highlighted the importance of involving others in the development of the change. It also highlighted the complexity of the higher education system, which adds layers of difficultly (i.e., stakeholders) to the implementation of fruitful change. The study also showed that trying to avoid duality is not as useful to change agents as valuing its importance, especially considering change agents' role in accounting for existing and new modes of thinking simultaneously (Barge et al., 2008; Seo, Putnam, & Bartunek, 2003).

Research has also identified leadership and interpersonal communication skill-building as important factors in the organizational change process. In a study of a police agency undergoing a transition to a community policing organization, the leadership focused on specific skills and strategies to facilitate change, including conflict management, communication enhancement, interpersonal relations development, and resource management (Ford, 2007).

In addition to their leadership and communication skills, change agents' structural position within the organization influences the change process. For instance, in a study of 68 clinical managers, Battilana and Casgiaro (2012) examined formal and informal roles, including the managers' hierarchical level, tenure status, professional status, and prominence in the task-

advice network. Results indicated that change agents' informal status in their organizations was a critical source of social influence, suggesting the importance of examining both the formal and informal roles that change agents play.

Torres et al. (2013) examined the goal of transforming institutional culture in a mixed-methods study of eight community colleges trying to link themselves more closely to their communities and to economic development initiatives. From their research, four themes emerged around sustained institutional change: (a) supporting the function of change agents, (b) planning with mission in mind, (c) boosting student success, and (d) making inventive efforts to uphold change which create institutional capacity. The researchers concluded that the key to increasing institutional capacity was to create change rather than impose change on the organization. Analysis of the study data reinforced prevailing practices in the literature on change, such as (a) strategically fostering collaborative problem-solving-oriented relationships with community stakeholders, (b) leveraging funding to sustain change initiatives, (c) customizing the onboarding process for faculty and staff to understand and support the collaborative mission of the college, and (d) securing buy-in at the highest level of organizational leadership (e.g., president's office). Collaboration with stakeholders, resource allocation, connection to mission, and organizational leadership buy-in will also be examined in this study.

Research on implementing and sustaining change has demonstrated the importance of interpersonal activities such as communication and conflict management, fostering relationships, preplanning, increasing cohesion, and using effective listening skills (Barlett & Chase, 2004; K. Barnett, 2011; Curry, 1992; Ford, 2007; Nicholls, 1983; Torres et al., 2013). Research has also shown that it is important to secure resources and to increase the number of change agents (Barlett & Chase, 2004; Curry 1992; Ford, 2007; Torres et al., 2013), and that organizational

structure can, at times, impede change. For example, if a high number of stakeholders seek simultaneously to change the organization, it becomes difficult for any one of those changes to be successfully implemented.

The literature on change agents informed this research project by bridging the research on institutionalization and boundary spanning. The change process within universities is difficult in part because of the multiple, often contradictory perspectives continuously present in systems of higher education (K. Barnett, 2011). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, boundary spanners are examined as a type of change agent.

## Boundary-Spanning Theory

Effective organizations must balance independence with interdependence. Individuals who work between the internal and external boundaries of organizations—that is, boundary spanners—play a major role in this balance (Burkhardt, 2002). The roots of boundary-spanning theory are found in open systems theory, which will be explained in the next section, followed a more detailed examination of the research related to boundary spanners.

**Open systems theory.** Systems theory helps to orient organizations as open structures constantly interacting with their surroundings in ways that all pieces of the organization are interconnected; thus, one variable is likely to impact others (Walonick, 1993). Moreover, the causal relationship between variables has the potential to be disproportionate: A small change in one variable may create a large change in another, or vice versa—or have no effect at all. Early versions of this open systems theory were first shared in 1928 but were not applied to organizations until over 40 years later by Kast and Rosenzweig (1972) and Scott (1981).

According to open systems theory, organizations are constantly adapting and responding to environmental changes in a state of dynamic equilibrium (Walonick, 1993). The nonlinear

relationships between variables within the system reflect the complexity of organizations. From the perspective of systems theory, organizational structure comprises an "established pattern of relationships among the parts of the organization" (French, Kast, & Rosenzweig, 1985, p. 348). Patterns of relationships and individual behaviors specific to roles are of particular importance in this theory, which encompasses the following themes (a) integration (i.e., the way activities are coordinated); (b) differentiation (i.e., the way tasks are divided); (c) the structure of the hierarchical relationships (i.e., authority systems); and (d) the formalized policies, procedures, and controls that guide the organization (i.e., administrative systems) (Walonick, 1993). It is important to understand the components of open systems when exploring the boundaries of organizations.

**Organizational boundaries.** Fundamentally, open systems theory explains the transaction of information or energy across a system in terms of inputs (movement into the system) and outputs (movement out of a system), where either crosses a defined boundary of the system (D. Katz & Kahn, 1966; Walonick, 1993). Many have contributed to an understanding of organizational boundaries, described as characteristics of an organization that form a distinction between the members of an organization and nonmembers (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Elaborating on this definition, Miller (2008) referred to boundaries as "mechanisms" for establishing a separation between the organization and the external environment in order to create independence. Additionally, early work on boundary conceptualization included the idea that boundaries represent a defense against an overload of information. The role of boundaries has also been explained as connecting the organization to aspects of the external environment by "buffering, moderating, or influencing the environment" (Aldrich & Herker, 1977, p.218). Finally, researchers have noted that boundaries can differentiate between entities on micro and

macro levels (Bacharach, Bamberger, & McKinney, 2000; Cohen, 1985). The boundaries in the current study refer to those of the institution with respect to the community but also to social and professional boundaries within the university, such as relationships between and among faculty, deans, students, staff, and other leaders.

**Boundary management.** Boundary management involves activities that uphold, protect, or expand boundaries, while requiring the individual to balance issues of independence, interdependence, and dependence that are internal or external to the boundary (Bacharach, Bamberger, & McKinney, 2000). In a qualitative study exploring boundary management and its role in helping support providers to resolve certain dilemmas, Bacharach, Bamberger, and McKinney (2000) conducted 60 interviews with individuals who worked as flight attendants and concluded that boundary management is the art of the person managing the boundary to invest just enough resources to support a relationship to the point that the person or group they are in negotiation with accepts the change suggested. This delicate balance is maintained through tact and deliberation, fluctuating between inclusion and exclusion, reliance on others or oneself, and building or dismantling boundaries.

Internal and external actors converge at the boundary of a system or organization (Bonaccio et al., 2013; Martinez-Moyano, 2006). Three aspects of knowledge transfer that are internal and external to the boundary include the amount, comprehension, and context of the shared knowledge. Interpreting the knowledge at the boundary is a key to reaching goals (Bonaccio et al., 2013); collaborative translation can be used to negotiate knowledge transfer (Carlile, 2004); and the type of boundary determines the type of knowledge sharing and activities that need to take place to expand boundaries(Bonaccio et al., 2013; Carlile, 2004).

**Boundary spanners.** Historically, boundary spanners connect groups, units, and purposeful areas within or across organizations (R. Katz & Tushman, 1983; Tushman, 1977; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). Within higher education, the term *boundary spanner* is defined as one who expands the boundaries of higher education institutions beyond the campus into communities through mutually beneficial relationships (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). Boundary spanners also build leadership capacity by becoming knowledge brokers, creating, transferring, and interpreting knowledge at the boundaries (Bonaccio et al., 2013). In doing this, they create shared experiences that help to move an effort forward, while also honoring individual contributions toward reaching shared goals. In addition, boundary spanners work with external partners from the community, including employees and volunteers from nonprofit, private, and/or public organizations (Brewer, 2013), to link their organizations with the university (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Tushman, 1977). Utilizing external experts as partners demonstrates the value a higher education institution places on local social capital (Bonaccio et al., 2013). In this context, universities that work with communities can increase their public value; thus, boundary spanners are essential to the process of developing a bidirectional relationship with communities (Brewer, 2013).

The seminal research on organizational boundary spanning can be traced back to James Thompson, who, in 1967, identified organizational actors within the context of their formal school-based role (Miller, 2008). Aldrich and Herker's (1977) work focusing on boundary expansion, in connection with organizational structures, furthered the development of the boundary-spanning concept. Parsons' (1956) three levels of authority in organizations (strategic, managerial, and technical) were then applied to clarify the processing and comprehension of external information. According to Parsons, the authority to facilitate change, coupled with the

role of expanding boundaries, requires the dual activities of filtering and facilitating information. As understanding of boundary spanners has evolved, scholars have examined the various roles that internal and external boundary spanners perform.

In the context of higher education and community engagement, Weerts and Sandmann (2008) defined boundary spanners as those who expand the boundaries of higher education institutions outside the campus walls and into communities through mutually beneficial relationships. They also created a framework (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010) of university-community engagement boundary-spanning roles at public research universities, based in part on Havelock's theory of knowledge flow (Weerts, 2005). The framework identifies factors that inhibit and facilitate knowledge flow within organizations—factors that are essential to the community engagement tenets of reciprocity and mutuality—with specific emphasis on how organizations negotiate knowledge production and sharing with external partners.

According to the boundary-spanning framework, boundary spanners originate from either the community or the institution and fall near the middle of a continuum separating a solely institutional focus and a pure community orientation. They are also positioned along a continuum between technical/practical tasks and socio-emotional leadership tasks. A boundary spanner can identify with more than one point on the continuum simultaneously due to the complexity of their roles. According to Weerts and Sandmann (2010), specific types of boundary spanners include engagement champions, community-based problem solvers, technical experts, and internal engagement advocates. An actor can play any of these four roles simultaneously or move from one to another; that is, boundary spanning roles are complex and fluid. As Weerts and Sandman explained:

> *Center directors [play] important roles in advocating for service learning/other civic programs among technical experts (i.e., internal advocate role) and in some cases*

> *[possess] technical expertise themselves (i.e., technical expert). Campus actors involved in engagement may play multiple roles at various times, depending on their skill sets and current organizational responsibilities. Furthermore … some spanners, such as center directors, may be most central to boundary spanning efforts, and are the "glue" that holds all of the spanning roles together. (p. 651*)

The current study aimed to explore the roles and activities of university leaders (many of them directors) to determine if they "fit" into Weerts and Sandmann's framework or if different roles were present in the institutionalization of community engagement.

More recent studies have explored aspects of the boundary-spanning framework in relation to the community-based problem-solver role (David, 2013; Skolaski, 2012); the influence of work/organizational characteristics on boundary-spanning activities (Mull, 2014); and the task verse social continuum component of the framework (Botha & Albertyn, 2012). A challenge for boundary spanners in higher education is confronting resistance from the academic culture in relation to including engagement (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Additionally, they may feel internal pressure regarding time, workload, workplace culture, productivity, politics, specialized knowledge, and skills (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999).

In Skolaski's (2012) mixed-methods examination of the institutional system of higher education, academic and cooperative extension staff (832 specialists and non-tenured faculty) from three different land-grant institutions were surveyed to better understand the roles and activities of staff who had boundary-spanning opportunities. Findings confirmed the widely accepted notion that that boundary spanning is a form of outreach that narrows the chasm between higher education and communities. The researcher suggested that universities can better support boundary spanning by explaining the distinctiveness of academic and extension boundary spanners by explicitly detailing their roles and activities, as well as the obstacles they face daily. Effective boundary spanners are likely to possess effective listening skills, a service

ethic, shared power, and a sense of neutrality for invoking trustworthiness and genuine interest in shared goals (Weerts & Sandmann, 2008). As Brewer (2013) held, trustworthiness can also be earned by developing and engaging in relationships beyond formal expectations.

Purcell (2013) conducted an action research study of the institutional capacity for community engagement at a community college using interviews, interventions, written case reflections, and observations. The researcher concluded that distributed leadership (leadership through group activity rather than an individual action) spreading, strong communication skills, and increased community and organizational learning all support the advancement of institutionalizing community engagement. Purcell also found that although context matters in regard to institutionalization, authentic engagement can occur at any strong of the process. Moreover, the quality and frequency of communication are critical to the expansion of community engagement.

Studies have demonstrated that communication, at a variety of levels, is crucial to the success of meeting the goals and objectives of institutionalizing community engagement in higher education, specifically as it relates to the role of boundary spanners in the process. For example, Adams (2013) found that strong communication skills were an essential characteristic of community boundary spanners in fostering university-community partnerships. Similarly, David (2013) also examined community boundary spanners, focusing on the complexity of communication such as the nuances of translating information and of persuasive communication.

Friedman and Podolny (1992) conducted a longitudinal study using network data that examined union negotiations at two higher education institutions, with a particular focus on boundary-spanning characteristics and conflicts related to task orientation and social closeness functions. Findings showed that persuasive communication was needed to accomplish mediation

at the boundaries and to represent both sides of the boundary in order to work toward mutual objectives. As the findings strongly suggested, effective and frequent communication is critical to the advancement of community engagement.

From the institutional level to the individual level, communication can serve as either a barrier to or a facilitator of the boundary expansion needed to incorporate community engagement into the foundation of a higher education organization. Table 2 summarizes recent, relevant research on boundary spanning in higher education that informed the current study. Communication, negotiation, translation, and duality of roles emerged as important layers that provided insight into the complexity and ambiguity of boundary-spanning roles. Research related to boundary spanning over the last few decades has grown in breadth and depth, but a plethora of avenues has yet to be considered.

Boundary spanners take on many activities—such as connecting, moderating, translating, and/or mediating (Brewer, 2013)—which oftentimes build upon each other. For example, connecting similar as well as contrasting groups may require a boundary spanner to moderate communication between groups, which may in turn entail translating terminology that can lead, once again, to mediating perspectives and stances between the groups. Boundary spanners negotiate investments of resources to maintain cooperative relationships between groups through continual management and maintenance, as well as a high level of neutrality, which is especially important if a relationship extends over time and its nuance wears off (Brewer, 2013).

Expanding the boundaries of an organization requires organizational change, but not all change is uniform. The level of congruency a proposed change has with existing organizational norms determines the amount of change needed and can also indicate the potential amount of resistance to the change. Organizational change can connect to or differ from norms embedded

within the organizational culture. Agents of change, specifically those that expand boundaries, have a role in modifying the norms of the organization through a duality of roles, balancing and fluctuating between closeness and distance to existing norms as they persuade others to adopt the change which challenge those norms (Battilana, 2006; Battilana & Casgiaro, 2012; Greenwood & Hinings, 2006).

Table 2

*Selected Boundary-Spanning Empirical Studies*

| Author | Date | Purpose of Study | Sample | Methodology | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adams | 2013 | To examine characteristics, roles, and motivations of community boundary spanners in university-community partnerships | 3 Archway Partnership Counties<br>n=10 | Instrumental; Multi-case study; Focus groups; Interviews | Found that community boundary-spanner characteristics include communication skills, multiple perspectives, and broad vision. Boundary-spanning capacities of community partners were derived from motivations over roles. Community boundary spanners entered partnership with boundary-spanning abilities and actively contributed. |
| David | 2013 | To explore behaviors educators use to navigate resistance between sponsoring institutions and the audiences they serve | 8 States<br>Urban Cooperative Extension Educators<br>n=8 | Action research; Interviews; Multi-case study; Critical incident | Found that community-based problem-solver boundary spanners demonstrated behaviors of assessing, engaging, reformulating, and advocating. They used knowledge collected to build relationships, initiatives, and programs. |
| Friedman & Podolny | 1992 | To explore distinct roles through task orientation and social closeness of union negotiations Boundary-spanning role conflict | 2 universities<br>n=60 | Longitudinal; Network data; Collected over the 3-month span | Found that functions of boundary spanning included persuasive communication to mediate and represent both sides of the boundary in order to work toward mutual objectives. |

| Author | Date | Purpose of Study | Sample | Methodology | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Miller | 2008 | To examine boundary-spanning leadership in community-based contexts | Urban regions<br>Exceptional leaders of university-school-community partnerships<br>n=2 | Semi-structured interviews; Observations; Document analyses | Found that important boundary-spanning attributes include the desire to sustainably connect people across boundaries and encourage teamwork for shared goals. Research confirmed contextual knowledge, interpersonal skills, trust, and connectedness, and extended previous research by suggesting that community loyalty and social consciousness are the foundation of successful boundary spanners. |
| Mull | 2014 | To investigate boundary-spanning activities and behaviors | Higher education contractor with military families and the Department of Defense<br>n=178 | Exploratory factor analysis | Found that work/organizational characteristics were significant predictors of boundary-spanning behaviors, while personal characteristics were not as influential as predicted. Boundary-spanning behavior were encouraged by the organization in a variety of ways. Communication remained an important influence. |
| Purcell | 2013 | Institutional capacity for community engagement | Community colleges<br>n=3 | Action research; Interviews; Interventions; Written case reflections; Observations | Found that boundary-spanning behaviors utilizing distributed leadership advanced community engagement and that effective and frequent communication was critical. Context mattered in regards to institutionalization; however, authentic engagement is possible at any step. Organizational learning associated with community engagement enhanced the institutionalization of engagement. |

| Author | Date | Purpose of Study | Sample | Methodology | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Skolaski | 2012 | To identify and describe the role of academic and extension staff who have boundary-spanning responsibilities | 3 land-grant higher education institutions<br>n=832 academic and cooperative extension staff | Mixed methods; Online survey; Existing documents | Found that, at the institutional level, campus leaders can better understand the roles and potential conflicts for boundary-spanning staff by actively helping them to feel recognized (supportive communication, rewards), valued (initiative, individual boundary spanners), and supported (financially, emotionally), and by providing flexibility to accomplish goals within the system. |
| Weertz & Sandmann | 2010 | To examine how research universities build bridges to community partners and increase institutional capacity for community engagement | 6 research institutions<br>n=80 | Multi-case study; Interviews; Document review | Identified specific qualities of boundary spanning in community engagement categorized within four clear yet flexible roles: community-based problem solver, technical expert, internal engagement advocate, and engagement champion. |

The current study considered participants to be internal engagement advocates—spanners situated at an intersection between the institutional and socio-emotional domains of leadership tasks—because they were university leaders holding positions of expertise within the higher education institution. However, the participants were not constrained by this role; rather, it was one of many roles they performed. What the participants observed in others and what experiences they had fit within or beyond any role in the framework.

**University Leaders**

At the organizational level, universities must redesign methods and practices of doing business to create space for innovation (Kezar & Elrod, 2012), which can help to solve adaptive problems. While exceptional change has taken place at individual universities in response, for instance, to natural disasters (e.g., Tulane University after Hurricane Katrina) and economic and social pressures, higher education as an industry is generally sluggish to accomplish substantive, sustainable change (K. Barnett, 2011).

Due to the decentralized structure of higher education institutions, university leaders may be part of a small group of people able to access information about the multitude of projects and change efforts taking place within the organization at any given time. University leaders are critical to the change process due to their potential influence on institutional priorities, resource allocation, and mass communication (Kezar, 2009). Thus, leaders' ability, or lack thereof, to take on the roles of change agents has a tremendous influence on organizational change (Ford, 2007; Kotter, 1990).

Over the last 30 years, the average tenure of a university president has been seven years (ACE, 2007), and trustees' terms often rotate every two or four years (Kezar, 2009). Given that they typically serve for longer periods of time, university leaders other than presidents and

trustees typically serve for longer have an integral role in achieving sustainable outcomes for change processes. Other individuals with formal leadership roles at a variety of levels include faculty committee members/chairs, department heads, unit heads, deans, directors, vice provosts, and provosts. Such leaders have varying levels of institutional power needed to influence institutional culture, whereas, by comparison, change agents often have passion, technical expertise, and a finger on the pulse of multiple organizational levels to help facilitate change (Ginsberg & Bernstein, 2011). This study examined the perspective of university leaders who enacted dual roles as leaders and change agents to address adaptive challenges.

**Leaders Addressing Adaptive Challenges**

According to Drew (2010), greater complexity is needed in the ways leaders evaluate necessary change within higher education. Adaptive work can challenge the traditional leader-follower relationship (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). When facing change or any other pressure from outside the university, such as the necessity to remain relevant as a higher education institution, traditional leaders protect those they lead; however, adaptive leaders support their followers by exposing them to the sometimes harsh realities of change and then observe their response. In this way, the adaptive leader demonstrates belief in the strength of his or her followers by insisting that they better themselves. Though this can involve emotional costs, it focuses more on the well-being of the followers rather than their comfort and potentially false feelings of safety. It is the job of the effective leader to think about and prioritize these short- and long-term issues.

The types of responsibilities typical of traditional leadership are different in an adaptive situation. As Heifetz and Linsky (2004) explained, it is a myth that leadership means providing answers in order to resolve problems; instead, a leader generally directs, protects, orients,

manages conflict, and shapes norms. These responsibilities, however, look different in technical and routine situations. A technical response to directing would be to define problems and provide solutions, while an adaptive response would be to identify the challenge and develop important questions for framing key issues. In this way, the adaptive leader shows trust in people's abilities to address solutions. A technical response to protecting would be to shield individuals from external threats, while an adaptive response would be to let people feel these external pressures but manage the range of threats so that they can be withstood. A technical response to orienting would be to clarify the roles and responsibilities of people and the organization, whereas an adaptive response would be to take time to challenge and redefine the roles while resisting the pressure to redefine reactively. A technical response to managing conflict would be to restore order; an adaptive response would be to either let conflicts emerge or expose them. Finally, a technical response to shaping norms would be to maintain them, while an adaptive response would be to challenge norms that no longer serve the organization. Albano (2007) added that adaptive leadership builds on the repetitive interactions among people in the organization. In this way, the adaptive leader doing is less of a top-down entity imposing his or her will on others and more of a facilitator of individuals' strengths, showing trust in people's capabilities.

One of the most challenging undertakings leaders face in effecting change is rallying individuals throughout the organization to do the necessary adaptive work:

> *Solutions to adaptive challenges reside not in the executive suite but in the collective intelligence of employees at all levels, who need to use one another as resources, often across boundaries, and learn their way to those solutions. (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001, p. 6)*

Because adaptive work occurs in the larger context of the organization, adaptive leadership, in the context of higher education, is also needed on the part of people from various parts of the

university. Traditional leadership approaches typically focus on formal positions of authority, but the leadership needed for change in such a complex system is interdisciplinary and may require leadership from people who are not formal leaders but who have a leadership orientation through their interactions with their work and others (Lachance et al., 2015). For example, leadership would be expected of a dean or director at a university, but the need to change norms and beliefs requires individual faculty, staff, and students who are comfortable with the uncertainty and who ask questions and perform tasks that addresses the adaptive challenge.

Connecting people across hierarchies, from different levels and units, is necessary for adaptive change to occur (Corazzini & Anderson, 2014). In this way, when it is adaptive in nature, leadership can be infused throughout the institution. Another term used to describe adaptive leadership is sustainable leadership (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012) because leadership that is rigid cannot be sustained in the face of changing circumstances. In the case of institutionalizing community engagement in higher education, leadership must transcend the individual and instead become a pattern of shaping and guidance, identifying and connecting with the appropriate people, knowledge, behaviors, and actions (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012). James (2011) expanded the definition of leadership that is adaptive to one in which multiple actors take up formal and informal leadership roles, working collaboratively across established social boundaries in an organization.

According to Berger (2012), a central characteristics of leaders who think complexly is seeing an array of possible patterns and connections between polarities by considering multiple perspectives, including nonlinear pathways. Using a multiple case-study design focusing on three higher education leaders, Yeyinmen (2016) examined how the participants' complex thinking was operationalized to understand and lead adaptive change. Yeyinmen's findings revealed five

action strategies associated with complex thinking: (a) balancing autonomy and oversight, (b) creating shared frames illuminating larger realties, (c) engaging and reorienting the community, (d) co-constructing and interpreting goals, and (e) orchestrating co-construction. This concept of leaders working at multiple levels mirrors the concept of boundary spanning and represents a significant shift in the definition of leadership because it moves the focus from leader attributes and relations to processes and interventions.

## Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter comprised a review of literature relevant to this single-case study, namely research focusing on the institutionalization of community engagement within higher education, university leaders as boundary-spanning change agents, and aspects of adaptive challenges. Each topic is independently important, while intersecting with the others to help constitute the conceptual framework of the study.

Higher education has had an uneven relationship with communities throughout history. Community engagement has emerged as an innovation to help recommit to a relationship that is more mutuality beneficial and reciprocal. Individually and collectively, scholars associated with a variety of organizations continue to contribute to the national conversation on how to define, operationalize, and institutionalize community engagement. Many university leaders seek to embed community engagement—recognized as a viable strategy for meeting teaching, research and outreach missions of universities—within the day-to-day routine, infrastructure, and cultures of higher education institutions. However, as indicated in the literature, tension exists between the priorities and perspectives of university and community stakeholders—a tension that requires the transformational activities of change agents to create shared goals (Latham, 2001). Boundary spanners are a specific type of change agents. According to open systems theory, an

organization interacts constantly with the external environment. The boundary is the threshold between the internal and external environment. Several studies have explored the characteristics of boundary spanners and ways to expand the boundaries of higher education organizations to include community engagement. Such characteristics include fostering relationships, securing resources, pre-planning, increasing cohesion, increasing the number of change agents, and possessing effective listening skills. Change agents navigate multiple roles and allegiances both internal and external to the change. Within higher education, because of its decentralized structure, usually only a small number of people possess access to information, power to influence change, and technical expertise to serve effective as change agents.

Boundary spanners simultaneously manage information, access, and communication, and constantly negotiate boundary expansion and constriction. Weerts and Sandmann (2010) created a framework of university-community engagement boundary spanning roles at public research universities based on Havelock's theory of knowledge flow (Weerts, 2005). In the framework, boundary spanners originate from either the community or an institution, and connect, moderate, translate, and mediate to help the university balance independence with interdependence.

In summary, the process of institutionalization contains adaptive challenges that include organizational- and individual-level factors that must be identified and described together due to the complexity of challenges. Adaptive changes center on altering long-held values that had desired outcomes in the past. Solutions related to challenges of this type are not straightforward or solvable by technical expertise alone; challenges are multi-dimensional and require a change in behaviors. One of the most arduous and crucial responsibilities leaders have is achieving buy-in from a critical mass of individuals for the adaptive work to be carried out at all levels.

This literature review provided a conceptual as well as empirical base for the institutionalization of community engagement within higher education institutions—thereby informing the method for design, data collection, and analysis of the current study. Research question one focused on institutionalization of community engagement extracted from literature on higher education, institutionalization, and community engagement. Research question two drew from literature on higher education, community engagement, and boundary spanning. Research question three was derived from literature on adaptive challenges in relation to the organizational-level of institutionalization and the individual-level boundary spanning of community engagement. This study aims to extend current literature on connecting boundary spanners with the institutionalization process taking into account the complexity of the process through theoretical contributions and practical implications of how this process was operationalized at one university. The next chapter describes the methods of this research study.

# CHAPTER 3

## DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of this qualitative single-case study was to describe and understand how leaders at a selected university enacted the institutionalization of community engagement. The case was a Carnegie community-engaged public land-grant university identified as working toward institutionalizing community engagement. Participants were active employees of the university who were also alumni of the Engagement Academy for University Leaders (EAUL). Data related to university leaders were gathered from EAUL and study site documents, open-ended questionnaires, two focus groups, and individual interviews. This study explored university leaders' perceptions of boundary-spanning activities and the complexity of operationalizing the institutionalization of community engagement. The case study was guided by the following questions:

(1) What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement?

(2) According to university leaders, what are qualities of boundary spanners within this case?

(3) In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge?

This chapter outlines the study design, sample selection, data-collection methods, and data analysis. Criteria for assessing the quality of the study (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) and researcher bias and assumptions are also discussed.

## Conceptual Framework

The epistemological framework for this qualitative inquiry was based on the theory of constructivism, which is rooted in the belief that individuals gain knowledge and understanding through multiple realities. The theoretical framework was also informed by ideas related to meaning making through experiences, including interactions between subjects and objects, as well as how subjects impose meaning on objects in ways that allow them to create meaning in different ways (Crotty, 1998). The axiology taken up was an appreciation for individuality. An appreciation of the social construction of reality was advantageous in this study for building close relationships between the researcher and participants so that the latter were comfortable sharing their stories and perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This study focused therefore on the participants' constructed reality in regards to individual and organizational facilitators of or barriers to the institutionalization of community engagement within their university.

The conceptual framework guiding this study incorporated Holland's (2006) assessment matrix of institutional commitment to community engagement on the organizational level and Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) boundary-spanning framework on the individual level, together addressing the adaptive challenge of institutionalizing community engagement in one university. Community engagement has emerged as a strategy for higher education institutions to remain relevant and accountable, meet the needs of society, and operationalize the university's mission. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework for the study.

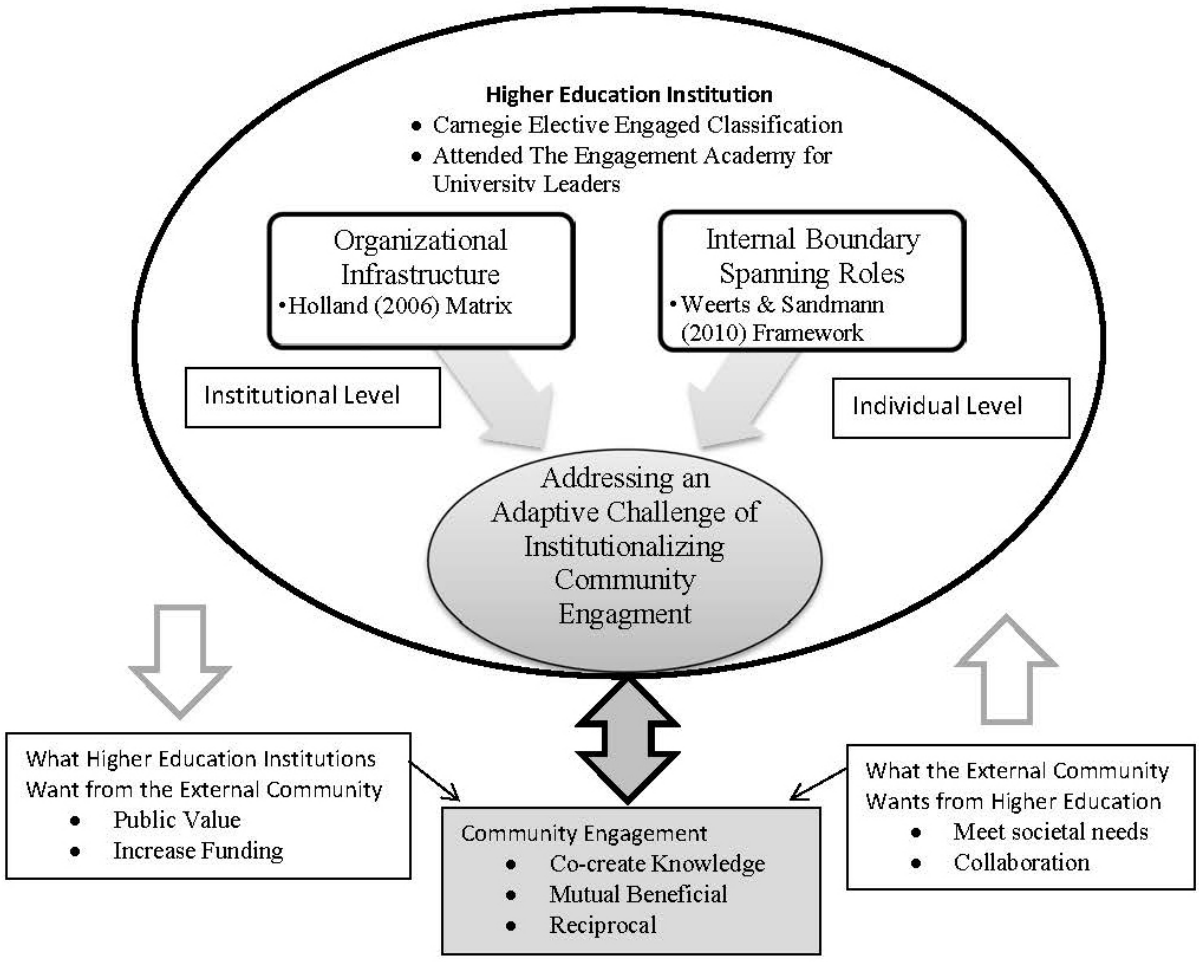


*Figure 1*. Conceptual framework of the study.

**Organizational levels of institutionalization.** Holland's (2006) assessment matrix of levels of commitment to community engagement is characterized by key organizational factors evidencing relevance to institutional mission. The matrix provides a framework by which levels of institutionalization. With roots in institutionalization theory, Holland's (1997) frameworks was among the first designed "to describe and interpret the dimensions, approaches, and levels of institutional commitment to community service and service-learning and, thereby to facilitate institutional planning decision-making and evaluation" (p. 33). This matrix has been utilized nationally and internationally in many contexts for a variety of intentions. Specifically, the

Holland matrix identifies seven institutional components (mission; promotion, tenure, hiring; organizational structure; student involvement; faculty involvement; community involvement; campus publications) and relates them to four levels of integration (low relevance; medium relevance; high relevance; and full integration) to help leaders to determine the current state of engagement on their campus, in their unit, or within the larger institution in relation to their goals for the institutionalization of community engagement (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Levels of Commitment to Community Engagement*

| | Level One: Low Relevance | Level Two: Medium Relevance | Level Three: High Relevance | Level Four: Full Integration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Mission* | No mention or undefined rhetorical reference. | Engagement is part of what we do as educated citizens. | Engagement is an aspect of our academic agenda. | Engagement is a central and defining characteristic. |
| *Leadership* (Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans, Chairs) | Engagement not mentioned as a priority; general rhetorical references to community or society. | Expressions that describe institution as asset to community through economic impact. | Interest in and support for specific, short-term community projects; engagement discussed as a part of learning and research. | Broad leadership commitment to a sustained engagement agenda with ongoing funding support and community input. |
| *Promotion, Tenure, Hiring* | Idea of engagement is confused with traditional view of service. | Community engagement mentioned; volunteerism or consulting may be included in portfolio. | Formal guidelines for defining, documenting and rewarding engaged teaching/research. | Community-based research and teaching are valid criteria for hiring and rewards. |
| *Organizational Structure and Funding* | No units focus on engagement or volunteerism. | Units may exist to foster volunteerism/ community service. | Various separate centers and institutes are organized to support engagement; soft funding. | Infrastructure exists (with base funding) to support partnerships and widespread faculty/student participation. |
| *Student Involvement & Curriculum* | Part of extracurricular student life activities. | Organized institutional support for volunteer activity and community leadership development. | Opportunity for internships, practica, some service-learning courses. | Service-learning and community-based learning integrated across curriculum; linked to learning goals. |
| *Faculty Involvement* | Traditional service defined as campus duties; committees; little support for interdisciplinary work. | Pro bono consulting; community volunteerism acknowledged. | Tenured/senior faculty may pursue community-based research; some teach service-learning courses. | Community-based research and learning intentionally integrated across disciplines; interdisciplinary work is supported. |
| *Community Involvement* | Random, occasional, symbolic or limited individual or group involvement. | Community representation on advisory boards for departments or schools. | Community influences campus through active partnerships, participation in service-learning programs or specific grants. | Community involved in defining, conducting and evaluating community-based research and teaching; sustained partnerships. |
| *External Communications and Fundraising* | Community engagement not emphasized. | Stories of students or alumni as good citizens; partnerships are grant dependent. | Emphasis on economic impact of institution; public role of centers, institutes, extension. | Engagement is integral to fundraising goals; joint grants/gifts with community; base funding. |

*Note*. Adapted from Holland, B. (1997). Analyzing institutional commitment to service: A model of key organizational factors. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 4*(fall), pp. 30-41.

**Boundary-spanning framework.** Boundary spanners function as both insiders and outsiders using negotiation skills to mediate needs of all parties involved with a desired outcome of adopting shared goals (Friedman & Podolny, 1992). This study focused on internal boundary spanners working to effect organizational change within an institution. Weerts and Sandmann (2010) built on the concept of boundary spanning to create a framework for leaders at a research university. This framework includes a continuum connecting socio-emotional leadership tasks on one end with technical/practical tasks on the other, and a continuum between a community-oriented focus and an institution-oriented focus. Figure 2 illustrates the boundary-spanning framework, which includes the roles of community-based problem solver, engagement champion, internal engagement advocate, and technical expert situated in quadrants of the continua.

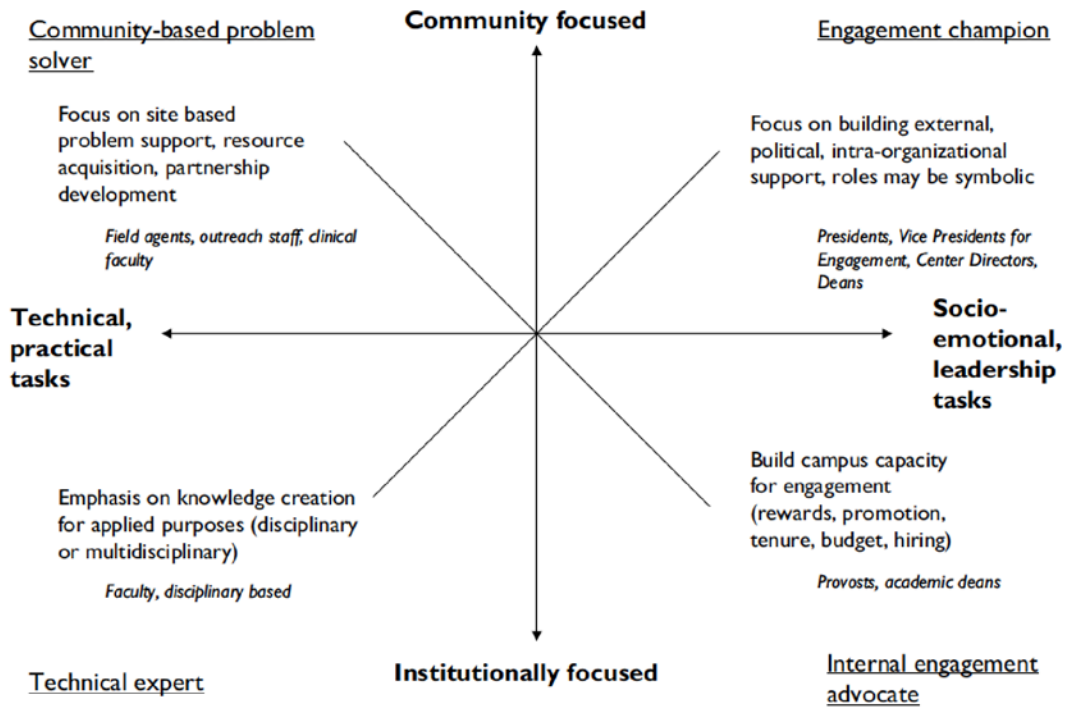


*Figure 2*. University-community engagement boundary-spanning roles at public-research universities (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

Weerts and Sandmann (2010) further explained that the framework is intended to be fluid: One person may potentially experience more than one role simultaneously, though the extent of each may differ. Weerts and Sandmann's framework was validated through Mull's (2014) empirically derived conceptual structure correspondences model. For the purposes of this study, the participants who attended the EAUL represented their university in order to learn how to better institutionalize community engagement and thus ultimately to expand the boundaries of their university to include this innovation as an embedded cultural norm.

## Study Design

### Case Study

Because the research questions aimed to identify linkages between real-life roles and activities that were too complex for other methodological strategies (Yin, 1994), this research employed a single-case study approach. The case was one university in the U.S., and the study described a phenomenon in relation to the real-life context in which it was situated (Yin, 1994). A case study must be bound by specific parameters to determine clearly what should be included or excluded from the case (Yin, 1994); therefore, this case was bound by the selection of only one university. The following sections describe the parameters of the case, including justification for how the specific university was selected and how the criteria for participant selection were formulated.

This single-case study sought to identify and describe the ways in which people facilitate or hinder the institutionalization of community engagement (Yin, 1994). It was designed with the objective of fostering an understanding of the contemporary phenomena of institutionalizing community engagement, with the researcher serving as the primary data gatherer (Creswell, 1995). Prior to conducting the study, the researcher participated in one session of EAUL as a graduate assistant. During the study, the researcher conducted campus visits (i.e., to the main campus and a few other campus locations) to collect data, including individual interviews and the second focus group.

This empirical inquiry met the criteria of Yin (1994) as a case design because it tested existing frameworks. The case was unique in that it was the only Carnegie community-engaged institution to send a participant multiple years to the EAUL, and the findings revealed roles and

activities related to institutionalizing community engagement that had not been documented previously (Yin, 1994).

## Sample Selection

### Institution Selection Criteria

The researcher utilized purposeful sampling to provide the richest, most in-depth understanding of the subject matter, (Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 2002). Two salient criteria were employed to identify eligible institutions for the case. One criterion was institutional participation in the EAUL; the other was that the university had earned the Carnegie Foundation's elective Community Engagement Classification. Together, these criteria provided evidence that the institution was self-identified as focusing on community engagement, allocating funding and time for its leaders to enhance their level of community engagement on campus.

In applying these selection criteria for the study, the institution must have sent participants to the EAUL multiple years the program was offered (i.e., 2008-2014). Meeting this criterion indicated a substantial investment by the institution and also suggested that the university had achieved a critical mass of leaders to facilitate institutionalization efforts. Since this study began, the EAUL had been offered six times, and 93 institutions and organizations had enrolled at least one participant in the program.

The second criterion for inclusion in this study was that the institution had received the CEC from the Carnegie Foundation. Serving as another indicator of commitment of institutionalizing community engagement, institutions that earned the CEC also had to submit the extensive application and earn the certificate within the tenure of the EAUL. Receiving the CEC served as clear evidence of a university's commitment to, understanding of, and allocation of

resources for institutionalizing community engagement. Additionally, continued participation in the EAUL suggested not only a commitment to institutionalizing community engagement at the organizational level, but also the existence of an expanded network of leaders on campus.

Significant resources of time and funding were necessary to sustain multiple years of participation in the EAUL. Of the 83 institutions that participated during the six years, only one institution met both criteria. This institution and its leaders constituted the case study site and will be referred to pseudonymously as Boyer University (BU). (Chapter 4 describes the case and specific characteristics of Boyer University in detail.)

**Participant Selection Criteria**

Twenty-one people from Boyer University attended the EAUL individually or as part of a team. However, three individuals from this group were excluded from the study because they either worked for a community college or K-12 educational system, situating them as partners outside the university. Table 4 offers a brief profile of the participants in the order they attended the EAUL, their job title while at the EAUL, and their current job title. The first year of the EAUL saw the lowest number of participants from Boyer University (1) and the last two years the highest (5).

Table 4

*Study Participant Profiles*

| **Job Title at the EA** | **Current Job Title** (if different from previous title) |
|---|---|
| Interim Associate Provost; Associate Director, Cooperative Extension Service | Associate Director, Extension Service; Associate Provost of University Outreach and Engagement |
| Vice Provost and Director of Outreach | Vice Provost of University Outreach and Engagement; Director, Extension Service |
| Department Head and State 4-H Program Leader | Associate Dean, Outreach and Engagement |
| Director, Entrepreneurship Program | |
| Director, Student Leadership and Involvement | |
| Associate University Librarian | |
| Program Leader, Cooperative Extension Service | Program Leader, Cooperative Extension Service |
| Director, Cultural Initiative | Director, Intercultural Student Services |
| Project Director of Strategic Development | |
| Interim Director for Student Engagement | Executive Associate Dean |
| Director, Bridge Campus Outreach and Engagement | Urban Specialist/Director, Bridge Campus Outreach and Engagement |
| Regional Administrator, Extension Service Administration | |
| Department Head and Professor | Associate Dean, Graduate School Administration |
| Bridge Campus Coordinator, Cooperative Extension Service | Bridge Campus/Special Initiatives Leader, Cooperative Extension Service |
| Communication College of Engineering | |
| Bridge Campus Coordinator, County Level | |
| Associate Dean | |
| Marketing Manager, University Outreach and Engagement | |

## Data Collection

Data sources for this study consisted of existing documents, including EAUL pre-work, open-ended questionnaires, transcripts from focus group one, and documents describing BU's history, structure, and current activities. Additional data sources included audio recordings and transcripts from focus group two, as well as individual semi-structured interviews.

### Pre-Work Case Statements

The EAUL pre-work case statement is an open-ended questionnaire created by the faculty of EAUL and is completed by participants before attending the program (see Appendix A). The purposes of the document is to (a) provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on the current state of their institution in preparation for the program; (b) aid EAUL faculty in program planning during the academy; and (c) inform the creation of an action plan as an outcome of the EAUL program. The pre-work templates are filled out by EAUL participants either individually or in groups (though participants are encouraged to work in teams). Participants authorized this materials could be collected for research purposes. The study "The Leadership of Community-Engaged Higher Education Institutions" (study # MOD00001382) was approved by the institutional review board (IRB) at the University of Georgia. The template includes questions related to the mission of the institution, a critical challenge or issue to reaching the desired level of community engagement at that institution, other barriers, and participants' idea of success and change drivers. Participants are encouraged to consult with an "engaged president" to collaborate on the pre-work. The document includes questions about identifying barriers to implementing community engagement and how they define success. Table 5 shows the number of pre-work data sources related to the number of study participants by year. A total of nine pre-

work case statements were completed during the six EAULs, and in four of the six years only one pre-work case statement was completed to represent all that attended that year.

Table 5

*EAUL Participation*

| Year Participated in EAUL | Number of Participants | Number of Pre-Work Case Statements |
|---|---|---|
| Year 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Year 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Year 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Year 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Year 5 | 5 | 1 |
| Year 6 | 5 | 1 |
| **Total** | **21** | **9** |

**Focus Groups**

The first focus group included EAUL participants homogenous in regards to their university of employment and their past participation in the EAUL. It was conducted by Dr. Lorilee Sandmann, EAUL leader and researcher, during a site visit in June 2013, and included 10 participants. The purpose of the focus group was twofold. First, it gave participants an opportunity to reflect upon and evaluate their experience attending the EAUL; second, and more importantly, it allowed for a stock-taking of individual and group actions toward institutionalizing community engagement on their campus and to assess of those efforts since attending the EAUL. The invitation to attend the focus group was extended to past EAUL participants via email. The focus group took place on campus for approximately two hours. As Patton (2002) indicated, an informal conversational (i.e., unstructured) approach can offer the

greatest ability for information to emerge from an interview context. In reading the transcript of the recorded focus group meeting, such interaction was clearly evident. The first focus group was helpful in answering research questions one and two as it offered insight into perspectives and actions taken after participants attended the EAUL. The use of this data was also covered under University of Georgia IRB approved study "Adaptive Challenges of Institutionalizing Community Engagement (study # STUDY00002010)."

The second focus group was conducted specifically for this study in conjunction with individual interviews in 2015. It took place in the middle of the week, while interviews were conducted during the quarterly meeting of the University Council on Community Engagement (see Chapter 4 for more details). The participants in the second focus group included eight alumni of EAUL (who were also interviewed individually) and two other stakeholders who were part of the council. The meeting took place as the second of two agenda items starting 25 minutes into the hour-and-a-half meeting and lasted approximately one hour. Eight interviews (including four with participants who were present in the second focus group) had been conducted prior to the second focus group. All potential participants who attended the focus group also participated in individual interviews before or after the focus group. Appendix B includes the semi-structured questions for focus group two. Focus group questions centered on sharing feedback on interpretations of interviews summaries completed at that point, describing the history of community engagement at BU, the history of BU's participation in EAUL, and organization-level questions related to all three research questions. Consent to use this data for research purpose was authorized by University of Georgia IRB approved study "Adaptive Challenges of Institutionalizing Community Engagement (study # STUDY00002010)."

Both focus group two and interview data (described in the next section) provided insights into participants' shared definitions and contexts related to institutional community engagement because these data were collected after participants attended the EAUL (even though participants attended the academy different years). All participants in the focus groups signed a consent form allowing the researcher to use this existing and new data for the current study.

**Interview Data**

Fifteen individuals who attended the EAUL and who represented Boyer University (individually or as part of a team) were available to participate in an individual face-to-face interview at a location of their choice on campus. As noted previously, the participants excluded from this stage of data collection had attended the EAUL as part of the Boyer team but were not actually employed by the university.

The potential participants were invited by email to be interviewed and to attend the second focus group. First, Dr. Sandmann, the EAUL leader, shared a letter of introduction describing the study with the vice provost for outreach and engagement, who endorsed it and connected the researcher to a staff member (and past EAUL participant) in the division to assist with introductions and site support. Next, the staff member paved the way for including a focus group as an agenda item for the quarterly meeting of the University Council for Engagement and Outreach, whose members included BU alumni from the EAUL. The staff member corresponded with the focus group participants for the meeting. The researcher corresponded with potential participants through email to formally request the interview and to set up dates, times, and locations with interested participants. All potential participants responded to the invitation, and 14 out of 15 potential participants were interviewed. One potential participant was out of the country during the data collection; therefore, that individual was not included in

the study. Thirteen of the 14 interviews were conducted in person on Boyer's campus, and one was conducted over the phone due to the participant's limited availability and was coved by University of Georgia IRB approved study "Adaptive Challenges of Institutionalizing Community Engagement (study # STUDY00002010).

The researcher attained an in-depth understanding of context from (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007) by in conducting the interviews onsite and in-person; she had an opportunity to experience the physical main campus and the bridge campus of Boyer University, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the case in tandem with observational notes. The interviews were conducted several months to several years after participants attended the EAUL. This varied, intervening timespan—between attending the EAUL and participating in the interviews—allowed for projects, initiatives, and change process to occur on campus. Interviewing participants after they had attended the EAUL provided them an opportunity to reflect on roles, activities, and action plans implemented post-EAUL from individual and organizational perspectives.

A semi-structured interview design was used to provide flexibility, as needed, in adapting questions and probes for each interview and the second focus group (Patton, 2002). The researcher employed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix C), constructed of open-ended questions, as the foundation for follow-up questions. This guide maximized the potential of collecting rich data by strategically maximizing the time allotted for the interviews. The format consisted of open-ended questions for the structured section of the interview, followed by specific, customized questions based on participants' responses (Patton, 2002; Roulston, 2010). The interviews and second focus group addressed all three of the research questions. Research question one was addressed through participants sharing examples of each level of

institutionalization they had experienced or observed, and a handout of Holland's (2006) assessment matrix provided a visual aid to participants for answering questions related to examples of different matrix components. To assist in addressing research question two, participants were asked to discuss and "map out" where they fit on Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) boundary-spanning framework. Interviewees were also asked if they fulfilled boundary-spanning roles not represented in the framework. They were also asked if specific roles and activities they observed in others related to the framework. Research question three was addressed through questions that required participants to identify and describe ways in which the individual and organizational levels together add context to addressing the adaptive challenge of institutionalization. For example, question seven of the interview guide asked the participants describe aspects of the adaptive challenge that are related to the institutional-level and individual- level and included several sub-question, such as, to describe how beliefs and values have been challenged.

The interviews were approximately one hour in length, with the possibility of a follow-up interview if needed. (No follow-up interviews were conducted.) Each participant signed an interview consent form prior to the start of the interview. The researcher obtained permission from participants to record the interviews for data collection. Two recording devices were used in case there was any technical difficulty with one of the units. The recordings were transcribed and checked for accuracy by comparing the audio recordings to the transcripts.

In summary, the study comprised three timeframes of data collection. Time one (T1) represented first data collected from the pre-work prior to each participant attending the EAUL, in the form of a template containing open-ended questions for a case-study statement. Time two (T2) represented the focus group (audio-transcribed from an EAUL curriculum coordinator) that

occurred during a site visit to the institution the last and second-to-last years of the EAUL sessions considered for this study. This focus group was not conducted for the purpose of this study but was used as existing data. Academy participants from all years up to that point were considered for the focus group. Time three (T3) included individual interview transcripts with all EAUL participants who were still employed by the case-study university, except for one employee who was out of the country during data collection. The second focus group was also conducted during T3. The research questions were analyzed in numerical order building on findings from previous questions. Datasets were analyzed in chronological order so that the timeline remained intact and the order of the individual and institutional journey of institutionalizing community engagement was preserved.

## Data Analysis

The following section details the process of analyzing the data and addresses the rigor and trustworthiness of the study. In this research, data analysis involved utilizing raw data from the EAUL pre-work, transcripts from the two focus groups, and interview transcripts to address the research questions (Yin, 1994). Analysis began as soon as data were collected and continued throughout the data collection process (Ruona, 2005).

### Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) characterized six phases of thematic data analysis, each of which was relevant to this study: (1) becoming familiar with the data, (2) creating preliminary codes, (3) identify themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining themes, and (6) reporting syntheses of findings (to be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6). First, individual identifiers were removed from each dataset and pseudonyms were created to prepare data for the analysis process. The same pseudonym was used for each participant throughout all of the data.

T1 data were originally formatted as Microsoft Word documents. For T2 data, the focus group audio file was transcribed by a transcription service (www.rev.com) and saved in text format as a Word document. T3 data were audio recordings transcribed into Word documents. Next, the researcher reviewed transcriptions for accuracy by listening to the audio recordings and comparing them to the transcripts. The transcripts were read several times for familiarity before the code phase began.

Creating memos—whereby the researcher writes personal notes that attempt to capture the thought process of defined codes and themes (Wertz et al., 2011)—was an important aspect of the data analysis. Memos are valuable as a way to analyze data as they come to the researcher, which could be at any time or place (Corbin & Strauss, 2008); they help to capture thoughts immediately, potentially deepening insight into interpreting data. Memos were taken during both the interview and data analysis processes. Methodological notes were also taken to demonstrate transparency of the researcher's thought processes.

Phase two of the data analysis included creating preliminary codes, also referred to as surface coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Corbin and Strauss (2008) described coding as "deriving and developing concepts from data" (p. 65). Microsoft Excel, an electronic spreadsheet program, was used to organize and code the data. Initial codes were crafted by reading each data source line by line in chronological order using the participants' words, when possible, and then identifying themes from the codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After the preliminary coding was complete, the researcher performed open coding on the data. Open coding is described as "breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 195). Deductive coding through a theoretical lens was then utilized to identify specific types of codes connected to the literature review,

including the assessment matrix for institutionalization and the boundary-spanning framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The focus was not only on the words, sentences, or paragraphs within a document, but on the context. While looking at the document as a whole was necessary for quality analysis, the researcher understood that, in practice, it was often realistic to use written words as the master code (Prior, 2003).

Phase three of the data analysis consisted of thematic coding. In this phase, codes were examined to determine if themes could be derived from connected codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Throughout this phase (and the next), the researcher employed constant comparison techniques, moving back and forth between raw data and codes. Glaser and Strauss (1967) described this as evaluating event-to-event or incident-to-incident throughout the phases of data analysis and within and between data sources and sets so that similar incidents are grouped and differentiated from others. This divergence and convergence serves as a way to determine the properties and dimensions of themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Preliminary basic themes were created by grouping codes into basic themes, and the original data were reexamined to confirm fit.

Phases four and five of the data analysis involved theme development. Specifically, phase four included reviewing themes to ensure that the connections among the raw data, codes, and themes held true to the properties and dimensions defined within and across datasets, sources, and individual/organizational levels (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Axial coding was utilized at this phase. Corbin and Strauss (2008) described this type of coding as "crosscutting or relating concepts to each other" (p. 195). For example, if one memo referred to two concepts, those concepts were coded as axially connected (Wertz et al., 2011). During these phases of

analysis, the researcher also completed a search for negative cases (described in the next section).

Coding and themes were examined at the individual level regarding activities and roles participants implemented themselves or witnessed others implement. This level of analysis was used to understand the individual boundary-spanning roles of the leaders. In addition, data were analyzed at the institutional level of the case study, with a focus on organizational elements such as culture, infrastructure, mission, and policies. Coding and theme revision continued until saturation of themes was reached—that is, when no new themes emerged (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Due to a typical void of set formulas in case-study data analysis (Yin, 1994), careful consideration of all options for interpretation and a sufficient demonstration of evidence were central to demonstrating rigor. The goal was to handle evidence properly, construct logical conclusions, and scrutinize all possible interpretations. Basic themes were combined into organizational themes and then synthesized into global themes. The themes and codes were then organized into networks to show visually the connections between the codes and global themes. Figure 3 provides examples of how codes from research question one connected to the themes within conclusion two.

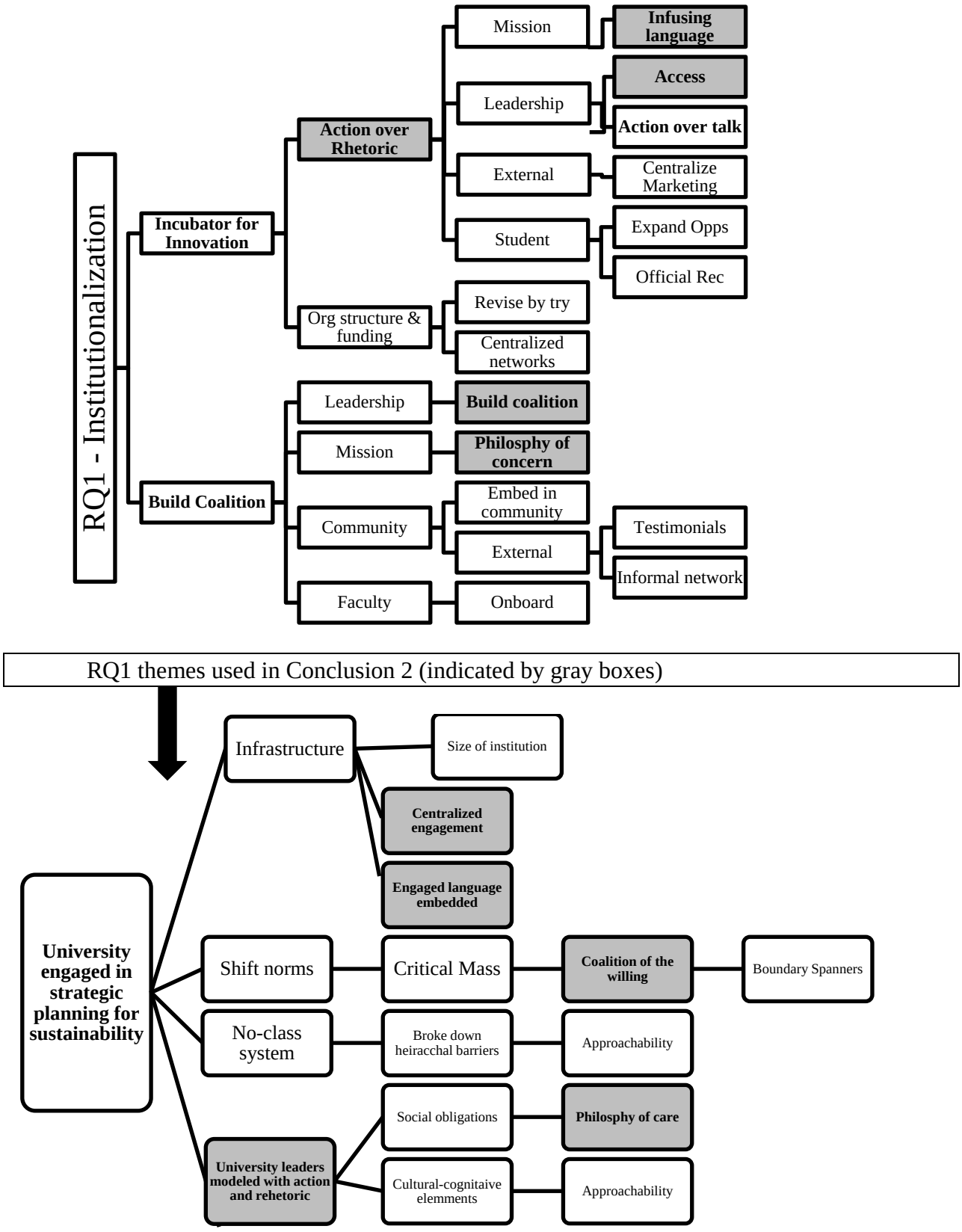


*Figure 3.* Connections between research question one codes and conclusion two themes.

**Assessing Data Quality: Establishing Trustworthiness**

From a social-constructivist perspective, trustworthiness parallels rigor and encompasses qualities of credibility and transferability (Patton, 2002). Trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative research replace objectivity as measures of data quality, requiring the research to be "balanced, fair, and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspective, multiple interests, and multiple realities" (Patton, 2002, p. 574). The credibility of a qualitative study is determined by the rigor of data collection methods, credibility of the researcher, and philosophical beliefs in the value of qualitative research itself (Patton, 2002).

A constructivist's inquiry equates credibility with internal validly (Patton, 2002). One strategy employed to increase trustworthiness in this study was by using negative cases. The purpose of using negative cases is to understand instances in which proposed patterns or trends may not work but can be used to help refine conclusions (Patton, 2002). Utilizing negative cases added to the credibility of this study by showing different perspectives that were taken into consideration, while illustrating examples of complexity in real life (Creswell, 2003). The outcome of finding negative cases illuminated a contradictory view to the description for the theme, leading the researcher to revise or disprove the rule altogether (Patton, 2002).

From the constructivist perspective, transferability is equivalent to external validity (Patton, 2002). Transferability relates to how well the conclusions derived in one setting fit into similar contexts (Patton, 2002). Thick description was a strategy used in this study to address transferability by including information on behavior, context, and meaning (Geertz, 1973). The researcher's dissertation committee provided peer/colleague examination (Merriam & Simpson, 2000) by giving feedback on the data analysis to help verify the credibility of the findings and interpretations of data during the write-up of results and conclusions.

A member check—which increases credibility and trustworthiness of a study (Schraw, Wadkins, & Olafson, 2007)—was performed by summarizing preliminary findings from the first eight interviews during focus group two. Half of the participants in the focus group had been interviewed prior to the focus group meeting. This was an opportunity to receive feedback on the preliminary synthesis of data collected in the field. Participants confirmed the preliminary analysis summary and added information that enhanced data collection.

A representative member check was accomplished through the review of the case description (Chapter 4) and findings (Chapter 5) by one participant in the study. This representative provided feedback on the interpretation of data for factual accuracy to insure that the researcher reflected the original intent of the participants and accurately represented Boyer University in this study (Creswell, 2003). The representative was chosen based on his or her formal and informal roles as an internal convener of university leaders around community engagement.

Triangulation was also used to understand different aspects of the data. Bentz and Shapiro (1998) explained that "the idea of triangulation is that different theories, cultures of inquiry, methods, and techniques will elucidate and cover different aspects of a situation" (p. 88). That is, various sources are used to explore the evidence to build a sound justification for themes (Creswell, 2003). In this study, triangulation was achieved in two ways: individual and group data sets, and comparing collected data to artifacts on the BU website related to such as organizational structure, mission, divisions, and programs. Data were collected during group and individual sessions. Participants were able to share information privately in the individual interviews and publicly in the focus group, where others could agree with, disagree with, or add to their perspective. Triangulation was also achieved by comparing participants' reflections

about the BU president's support of community engagement to videos in which the president spoke about the importance of community engagement at the university.

Consistency within data collection is more important than reliability of replication (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The goal of this research study was to maintain the authenticity of the specific case, participants, and data. A data trail was used to enhance consistency and to demonstrate that the researcher utilized a consistent process with all data within a set. Another goal of this qualitative research was to leave undetermined the generalizability of the study findings; rather, as Merriam and Simpson (2000) encouraged, it was left to the reader to determine how well the findings could be applied to other contexts. Thick description was used to give the reader enough information in order to make decisions about trustworthiness and transferability to other contexts and situations by explicitly describing the research steps and data.

**Subjectivity Statement**

Acknowledging the researcher's positionality is important for establishing transparency in qualitative research. As Patton (2002) explained, "In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument," (p. 14) and the rigor of the credibility is dependent on acknowledging the researcher's experiences, philosophy, and skills. Merriam and Simpson (2000) wrote:

> *Being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis carries with it a responsibility to identify one's shortcomings and biases that might impact the study. One does this not to make a qualitative study more "objective" but to understand that one's subjectivity shapes the investigation and its findings. (p. 98)*

The researcher's history and past participation in the EAUL could be considered limitations to this study. Specifically, the researcher conducted this study having observed, as a graduate assistant, the 2011 EAUL session. While onsite, the researcher became acquainted with the participants, read their case studies numerous times, and grouped participants based on different variables within their cases throughout the program.; therefore, she may have exhibited

unintentional bias toward the program which may have influenced her perspective and insights. The reflections and other data points related to the EAUL may also have been inflated by the participants knowing that the researcher's major professor was also a past leader of the EAUL and that the researcher was using existing data collected from the EAUL. Also, the selection of the sample only included alumni from the EAUL and only included university leaders. Future studies should examine different populations within a higher education institution.

The researcher came to this project holding a deep personal belief that community engagement in higher education can enhance teaching, research, outreach, and student experiences to fulfill institutional mission. The experience of observing and assisting with the academy gave the researcher an insider perspective. Simultaneously, the researcher was an outsider in contrast to the high-profile faculty of EAUL. The researcher's beliefs impacted data collection and analysis by serving as an interpretative lens. The level of familiarity, passion, and understanding of the complex context and content held the researcher accountable to applying the methodology of the study accurately and transparently. Maintaining the balance of insider and outsider was an asset to the researcher for relating to the study participants. A representative member check helped to mitigate this limitation of the researcher having served as the "instrument."

## Limitations of Study Design and Methods

In this section, the limitations of this single-case study are discussed, along with the limitations of the specific datasets, including the interview data. The section concludes with a critique of thematic analysis.

## Case-Study Design

The primary criticism of using case-study design in conducting research is its perceived lack of rigor in demonstrating strength of evidence, identifying bias in findings, and drawing conclusions (Yin, 1994). To address such concerns of rigor in this study, the researcher shared specific strategies for achieving credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Researcher bias and the researcher's assumptions were also disclosed. Additionally, methodological procedures were based on existing peer-reviewed literature and methodological research findings.

The second central criticism of case-study design is its lack of ability to generalize findings (Yin, 1994). There was no intention or expectation of generalizing the findings from this case study. Rather, the intent was for the findings to inform theoretical propositions (Yin, 1994) and provide a rich example of one approach to studying the role of leaders as boundary spanners and how and why the institutionalization of community engagement was facilitated or hindered within the context of a specific university.

Limitations exist in choosing a research-extensive, land-grant university as the case-study site. Other types of higher education institutions, such as non-land-grant, liberal arts, faith-based, for-profit, or community colleges, may behave differently. Also, using data from only a select group of participants may not represent accurately the institution as a whole.

## Participants

While community engagement centers on a relationship between the university and the community, this study focused only on the voices of university leaders within a community-engaged higher education institution. It did not account for the voices of students, community partners, and most faculty. For participants that attended the EAUL in the earlier years of the

program, several years elapsed between experiencing the EAUL and participating in this study through focus groups or interviews. Thus, their recollection of the institutionalization process may have been distorted over time. This is both a potential strength and weakness. It could be a strength because if a concept is still memorable years after originally attaining it, perhaps it is of greater importance; however, it could be a weakness if the memory is inaccurate. To address this weakness, thematic analysis of findings was conducted using the recollections of more than one person and, when possible, compared to artifacts from the university.

A member check was completed during the second focus group for preliminary findings related to the first half of interviews. A representative member check was also completed for data relevant to describing the case and findings of the full dissertation. Participants were excited to take part in the study because they were genuinely passionate about community engagement. Many also stated during the second focus group that participating in this study was beneficial to them in several ways, such as providing an opportunity for them to reflect individually and collectively about the past, current, and future state of community engagement at BU.

**Data Sources**

EAUL pre-work, focus groups, and interviews were used for data collection in addition to artifacts. Participants completed the pre-work open-ended surveys prior to attending the EAUL. This dataset may have shared commonalities with perceptions of community engagement by others within the university who had not experienced the EAUL. These data may not have been representative of their thoughts and feelings by the completion of the EAUL, and how their perceptions individually and as an institution evolved after attending (along with other factors) may have affected their perceptions. Another limitation to using EAUL pre-work data was that

these data were not collected for the purpose of the study. However, an advantage to the requirement that EAUL participants complete the pre-work was that the motivation to be truthful included direct application of the document during the EAUL. These data were collected between 2008 and 2014; to account for changes in perceptions, interview questions and focus groups provided opportunities for participants to share their current perspectives.

Focus group one data comprised a pre-existing dataset collected by a leader of the EAUL and conducted with alumni from the program. However, the participants may not have answered questions the same way had the EAUL leader not conducted the inquiry. The point here is that the responses may have been different, but that does not assume the answers would have been better or worse. A limitation was that the focus group was not conducted for the purpose of this study; therefore, it did not address the study's research questions directly. Moreover, the recording of the focus group was not preplanned and did not have specific research objectives. However, the benefit of the rich conversations during the focus group outweighed the limitations. Neither focus groups nor interviews were piloted prior to implementation.

A focus group of non-EAUL alumni could have been conducted at the same time as focus group two in order to compare EAUL participants with university leaders who had not attended the training. This might have strengthened the design of the study by revealing levels of institutionalization beyond the group of insiders who had acquired a shared experience and shared language from the EAUL.

Limitations of the interviews related to time and context. The limited time available for conducting onsite data collection was a limitation of the study. Only two potential participants were unavailable during the times and dates available to participant in the study in-person; one was interviewed over the phone at a later date, and one was not interviewed at all. The

researcher determined beforehand that the minimum number of face-to-face interviews needed for this study was two thirds of the potential participants. This minimum was far exceeded. The interview conducted over the phone did not allow for the researcher to observe the participant's non-verbal communication. The interview was intended to be live-streamed online to create an experience as similar as possible to a face-to-face experience, but technical difficulties at the participant's location required a phone interview as a back-up plan. Finally, a limitation and strength of this study was that the researcher was not affiliated with the university that served as the subject of this case. Though there were benefits to being an outsider to the university, outsiders generally did not understand the context, culture, or institutional knowledge needed to pick up on nuances during interviews. Again, however, the potential knowledge gained from the interviews outweighed the limitations. Participants were passionate about the topics of this study and were open and honest individually and in group settings.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

A boundary-spanning and institutionalization frameworks were used for data analysis in this study. Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) boundary-spanning framework is used extensively in growing bodies of research but has only been available for less than 10 years for replication and utilization in other studies. One of the authors of the framework served also as the dissertation committee chair, which offered great insight and expertise, but might also have brought bias to the use of the framework. Potential bias was offset by including committee members who did not use the framework in their research, thus providing a balance to the discussions.

Holland's (2006) assessment matrix has been utilized widely in higher education institutions around the world, including institutions that have sent attendees to the EAUL. A potential limitation to using the framework was that participants who were interviewed may not

have had insight into all the levels and dimensions of the matrix to represent the whole story of the institution. Also, the author of the framework sat on the researcher's dissertation committee. This provided expertise around using the matrix properly, which outweighed the risk of potential bias. Even so, two committee members who did not use this matrix in their research provided an outside perspective.

The case study was limited by a lack of formal observations. Though observations would have added thick description to the case, Carnegie's CEC process does not require institutions to not use observations as part of their applications for the classification. Therefore, it is possible to study the institutionalization of community engagement without observations. Alternatively, the participants' examples and observations aided in providing thick description in the case.

**Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis has been criticized for being overly flexibility, not providing adequate structure and guidelines, and lending the perception that "anything goes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, the flexibility of this approach outweighed the limitations of the approach. Guidelines for determining the boundaries of the themes are explained in later sections.

The study's credibility was addressed by preforming a representative member check, and a member check was completed during the second focus group by providing participants with initial themes that emerged from the first half of interviews. Generalizability was not the aim of this study; yet, insights gained from this study have applicability and transferability in other contexts. Dependability was addressed by utilizing an existing framework and matrix, both of which have been used previously by many researchers, and replication could be accomplished by another university that met similar criteria. Confirmability was addressed by the researcher maintaining neutrality around the findings of a study shaped by university leaders, not researcher

bias or interest. The researcher was not affiliated previously with the selected university, which was chosen based on criteria that had been established before knowing how many universities would meet those criteria.

## Summary of Design and Methods

For the purposes of this study, community engagement was viewed as a bidirectional, constructivist paradigm of systematic change through social learning whereby reality is an active network of experiences and interactions with no absolute truth (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The boundary-spanning theory and levels of institutionalization of community engagement in a university were used as lenses through which to analyze qualitative single-case study data situated within the constructivist paradigm and based on the idea of multiple realities. The particular phenomenon investigated in this case was community engagement at a selected higher education institution (i.e., Boyer University), which met two criteria: (1) BU sent participants to the EAUL every year it was offered, and (2) BU had earned the Carnegie Foundation's elective Community Engagement Classification.

A single-case study was the most appropriate methodology for addressing the research problem because the context was important, and there was no clear demarcation between phenomenon and the context of the study (Yin, 1994). The case was bounded by the time between preparing for the first EAUL in 2008 and interviews that were conducted in 2015. Rich descriptions of the case came from a combination of document analysis of pre-work case statements and transcripts from onsite campus focus groups and interviews, as well as existing documents describing BU.

# CHAPTER 4

# INSTITUTIONALIZING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT BOYER UNIVERSITY

In an effort to contextualize the study's findings, this chapter describes the process Boyer University followed in working toward the institutionalization of community engagement. This study explored university leaders' perceptions of boundary-spanning activities and the complexity of operationalizing the institutionalization of community engagement. A recent history of Boyer University is detailed, including BU's elective Carnegie classification, its involvement in the Engagement Academy for University Leaders program, and anecdotes from university leaders about how institutionalizing engagement took place. Specifically, this case description includes stories about developing a new university mission, establishing and maintaining a new Division for Outreach and Engagement, and developing programs whose organizational structure support and sustains community engagement at BU.

## Background

Boyer University is a public research university founded in the mid-19th century as a land-grant university. Dating back to the colonial era, land-grant universities were founded under a three-part mission of teaching, research, and service focusing on creating productive citizens and enhancing the community (London, 2001). By the early 19th century, the service branch of the land-grant mission had become firmly planted throughout the institution (Boyer, 1996). In 1862, Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Morrill Act, which established the land-grant university system by granting federal land to each congressional delegation to support colleges that benefited agriculture and the mechanical arts (Library of Congress, n.d.).

According to Boyer (1996), the act served as a critical "link" among higher education, agriculture, technology, and the industrial revolution. Sixty-nine institutions, including BU, were supported by the original grant, each guided by the underlying principle that educating the public was the keystone of a sustainable democracy. In accordance with this principle, the land-grant institutions prepared professional workers to improve and grow industrial society, thereby creating wealth and prosperity (Bonnen, 1998; Fitzgerald et al., 2012). In later years, additional legislation, such as the Hatch Act of 1887 and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, would help to expand the land-grant university system by annual federal appropriations for research and outreach work (Fitzgerald, et al., 2012). With later extensions of the land-grant acts and the further expansion of the land-grant system, accessibility to higher education increased significantly.

Today, BU is a public research university whose enrollment exceeded 30,000 students in 2015, and whose external funding was approximately $300 million. At that time, every U.S. state and nearly 80 countries were represented in the student body. Students had a choice among more than 200 undergraduate degree programs and more than 80 graduate degree programs housed within 12 colleges. The administration of Boyer University currently includes a president, provost/executive vice president, vice presidents, vice provosts, associate provosts, division executive deans, and deans of colleges. A foundation associated with the university functions as a philanthropic arm of the university as well as an alumni association.

The main campus is located in a college town known for providing its residents a safe, clean, friendly, and family-oriented environment, according to the university's website. The nearest large city (which includes a major airport) is less than three hours from the main campus.

The surrounding metropolitan population is increasingly targeted by BU for outreach and engagement, accomplished through professional, non-credit, and credit distance education.

The BU Cooperative Extension Service has a presence throughout the state, with combined experiment and extension centers, branch experiment stations, and offices in every county. The university also has bridge campuses (pseudonym) located in communities around the state that strive to provide educational opportunities, such as degree completion, professional credentials, economic development, workforce advancement, and lifelong learning, to meet the community's needs (university website).

The language used on Boyer University's website illustrates that the institution considers their entire state its campus. The institution's mission is to serve the state, the nation, and the world. BU partners with school systems, industries, state and federal agencies, and other colleges (including community colleges and universities) to provide access to education. As a land-grant institution, BU is devoted to teaching, research, and outreach and engagement with primary areas of interest including economic, social, cultural, and environmental issues. BU describes its deliverable outcomes as graduates who attain academic excellence and foster an ability to build knowledge and solutions to address societal problems.

### Participation in the Engagement Academy for University Leaders

Boyer University has actively supported the professional development of its leaders in many ways, including sending participants to the national Engagement Academy for University Leaders (EAUL) every year the program was offered (2008-2014). A national advisory group created the EAUL to empower planning activities that developed strategic engagement operations and policies (Engagement Academy Programs, n.d). The program was hosted by the Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and

State University. The goal of the program was for participants to develop an institutional plan for engagement that effectively incorporated community engagement into the teaching, research, and service missions of their respective institutions and then implement the plan when participants returned to campus. According to one university leader, BU became aware of the opportunity to participate in EAUL through Engaged Scholarship Consortium and Extension networks. During interviews, some university leaders explained that the EAUL was very helpful in presenting participants with an opportunity to bring an institutional challenge or problem to the program to create an action plan that addressed the issue by the end of the week. They attributed at least part of the success of institutionalizing community engagement at BU to the quantity and quality of people sent to the EAUL over the years. The requirement of having a project with specific outcomes that were implemented upon return to BU and then continually evaluated as the project evolved was identified as an important catalyst for applying the knowledge gained at the EAUL. One university leader said:

> *A few of us at [Boyer] University were tapped, and each one of us worked on our own individual unit's challenge. Mine, as the Diversity Unit on campus, was diversity with students and community, some of the challenges we have here. It was timely, because we were going through a re-organization. We were just beginning to embark on an external review. I had the opportunity to bring my unit's challenge, and then to meet with the other colleagues sent with me to discuss the larger institutional challenge around engagement was really a great exercise for all of us. We saw where we are embedded, where we can position ourselves to leverage our best talent, and where our best energy to make institutional change should be focused. The way everything was organized you could actually see everything scaffolding as far as cognitive understanding of what engagement is, how we can embrace that, and where we can infuse engagement throughout the institution. We also had a wonderful opportunity to interface with amazing colleagues from all over the United States who are grappling with many of the challenges in higher education that we have.*

Participants' attendance at the EAUL was evident in the evolution of engagement at BU; there are several EAUL projects that have become programs at BU. For example, the project one year was to create an internal EAUL that started by establishing a BU council on engagement; another

year, the project was to create a new faculty onboarding engagement experience that was developed and managed by the internal engagement council. As more teams attended EAUL, more projects were built on previous projects. Another university leader described how attending the program represented a transformative experience:

> *First of all, I've always had a passion for being with communities and listening to communities. My heart had always been there, even though my tools were still somewhat structured and restrictive. When I went to the Engagement Academy, it confirmed my passion, so it was wonderful to be in a space to be listening to people, to be sharing with colleagues who were further along in this work who shared my passion, who shared the values, and it was just like all of a sudden arriving at a community that got what I had been doing … It was that validation of the fact that what I had been doing had a place in academia.*

This university leader went on to explain that attending the EAUL was also transformative because of the knowledge and methods gained to implement community engagement within academia:

> *The second thing that happened was I was given valuable tools to expand in innovative ways the methodology and the discipline that I had found so restrictive. When I was given those tools it was like my brain grew to three times its size because all of a sudden, I saw possibilities where I had not seen them before and I saw different approaches, and I was given a language to express what I wanted to express. So being able to have the common language was amazing. The key piece for me, being a faculty member in academia, was the measurement piece. Probably the final catalyst to my transformation was when I attended the workshop on measuring impact on documenting engagement and how potentially someone who's going through the promotion and tenure could do that, and that was powerful. So it was those keys that make me realize, wow, this has huge potential, and it helped me to put the pieces together to the fact that here I am at a land-grant institution, what a perfect complement to this type of institution, it just sort of turned the whole Ivory Tower upside down to me. It became less about how do we figure out what we need from community, to how do we fully exploit what academic institutions have as assets to impact communities in ways that change society, change people's lives and empower people to go and do greater things. So that was to me, just a mind-blowing experience.*

Another university leader explained the value of gaining a greater awareness of other higher education institutions' level and capacity of community engagement:

> *Being a person who has spent their entire career at land-grant universities, sometimes we get a little bit isolated in our thinking, believing that land-grant universities are the only ones that do community outreach and engagement. It may be true that it is part of their charter and expectation, but we discovered that a lot of the institutions that are participating in the [EAUL] are not land-grants, and in a lot of those cases they are actually ahead of us in terms of understanding what community engagement is. The Extension Service is historically what land-grants have done and was really the diffusion of innovation models that was very one-way in terms of we've got knowledge for you and we think you need to know this and we know you will change your behavior. That was not really an engagement model. A lot of the other institutions [non land-grant] progressed more or farther than some land-grants have in terms of really institutionalizing the concept of engagement rather than just the one-way outreach we tend to do.*

This university leader was unaware of his or her land-grant bias and narrow perspective before attending EAUL. University leaders in this study agreed that the perspectives and knowledge gained from attending the EAUL were valuable on an individual level, and with a number of BU faculty attendees indicated that it has also been valuable at the organizational level.

Continued participation in the EAUL demonstrated BU's commitment to institutionalizing community engagement at the organizational level, creating an expanded network of leaders on campus advocating for engagement. One university leader explained:

> *We have run the meter up pretty high as we have invested in people, but the university is led in change by the faculty and staff here … in the aggregate, as a result of all these years of teams going into the national Engagement Academy, we have developed a critical mass of thinking.*

Resources of time and funding were necessary for each year of participation in the EAUL, and as indicated earlier, Boyer University was the only U.S. institution to participate all six years (the EAUL was not offered in 2013), demonstrating their support of leaders in community engagement above and beyond that of other institutions.

In the EAUL's first year, Boyer University sent one person, the director of extension. The university leader explained:

> *I was in the first class, and I went alone because we obviously hadn't sent anyone before and I went to explore. I had been in this assignment as associate provost for outreach and engagement and associate director [for cooperative extension] for a little over a year. I was really trying to get my head around the concept of outreach and engagement, the difference between and how do we really promote engagement because [BU] had that outreach piece down. We did that very well, but we didn't do the engagement piece like I thought it needed to be done. I really went to learn more about the concept and immerse myself into thinking for a week and they did that for me. People weren't talking about it on campus yet. There just wasn't enough of an understanding of what it meant, and we had arguments about what it meant, not how we were going to implement it. So that was really good for me to get that immersion and have those conversations with other colleagues. Some institutions were far more advanced in their thinking than we were. Others were struggling like we were. It was nice to get that mix of people who were in charge of building it from the ground up and others who had inherited something they were trying to take in a new direction. All types of people from all different places. It really helped me understand the full breadth and depth that engagement could be.*

The next year, BU sent four people as a team to the EAUL. BU intentionally sent individuals and groups to the EAUL to encourage more people to advocate for and facilitate the institutional shift toward embedding community engagement into the university. Three of the second-year participants served in upper-administration positions at BU (one was the Vice Provost of the Division of Outreach and Extension, another was the Associate Dean of Outreach and Engagement), and one partner from a community college was included in the team. The composition of the team evidenced BU's awareness of the concept of engagement because it included an external partner in the team. In later years, BU sent participants from across campus and across the state as a way to embed advocates of community engagement in units and colleges beyond those that were specifically charged with outreach and engagement. Throughout the years, BU became increasingly strategic about whom they sent to the EAUL, and with changes in people came changes in the dynamics of each EAUL team. BU utilized the composition of the teams and specific projects identified for each team as a strategy to advance university institutionalization.

Participants returned from the EAUL and implemented the plans that were created during the academy and referenced their materials from the program during the implementation process. One university leader explained:

> *After I came back from the Engagement Academy, I was on fire! It was such a transformative experience. The first thing I did when I came back was do a Google search on all things engagement related. I went from the local to the global. The second thing I did was help the institution move forward with a service-learning and center for civic engagement which resulted in the creation of that here at [BU]. I used everything in the engagement academy to inform the reorganization of our diversity units here on campus.*

Implementation of action plans upon return from EAUL year after year added continually to the breadth and depth of community engagement at BU. In addition to internal awareness of building community engagement efforts, BU earned external recognition through an elective community-engaged classification.

## The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

In 2010, Boyer University was awarded the Community Engagement Classification through the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Institutions that earn the CEC are required to submit an extensive application to demonstrate institutionalization of community engagement on their campus. BU earned the CEC during its tenure at the EAUL. Over 360 higher education institutions have earned this classification (NERCHE, 2016), which evidences commitment, understanding, and resources allocated to institutionalizing community engagement at a college or university.

As part of its application process for this classification, Boyer University conducted a self-assessment of indicators describing its institutional identity, culture, and commitments, as well as their curriculum, community-based learning initiatives, and other community outreach efforts. The application required a portfolio detailing partnerships with community agencies

(including the scope, purpose, and timeframe for each partnership), grant funding, and outcomes of each program; it also required an assessment of the impacts of these partnerships and programs on communities and the university. Other sources of information included oral or written public documentation of community engagement such as speeches, websites, and publications. Additionally, a major part of this application included an examination of the university's mission and culture.

Boyer University was committed to institutionalizing community engagement prior to perusing the CEC. Moving through this process of self-assessment for the classification, university leaders developed an awareness of engagement across campus with communities and identified areas that required attention and growth in order to sustain their commitment to community engagement. These leaders discovered that student engagement was one area in need of improvement, and they were able to address it immediately. The application process also revealed programs on campus that were working on engagement in isolation and thus could be supported more systematically. One university leader said, "*We found that when we went through the Carnegie application we found things that were going on all around campus that really helped with the Carnegie application and nobody really knew about it* [before working on the application]." Another university leader explained that due to going through the CEC process serval committees were established and are still active today who work on course designation and civic engagement and service learning. Several actions were taken during this transition both before and after BU earned the CEC, including: the revision of the university's mission statement to incorporate community engagement, the establishment of a Division of Outreach and Engagement, the development of Community Councils for Engagement, and the development of programs through Bridge campuses that exemplified community engagement.

Table 6 illustrates the timeline of recent events at BU related to the institutionalization process of community engagement.

Table 6

*Timeline of Engagement at Boyer University*

| Date | Event |
|---|---|
| Mid-1990s | • BU diversified the definition of scholarship |
| Late 1990s to Early 2000s | • Current president started presidency<br>• Strategic plan developed |
| Late 2000s | • Report of the President's Commission on Outreach and Engagement<br>• Division of Outreach and Engagement created<br>• Internal Council on Outreach and Engagement established<br>• First year of the Engagement Academy for University Leaders (EAUL)<br>• New strategic plan created |
| Early 2010s | • Earned Carnegie Community Engagement Classification<br>• BU Engagement Academy created and first Bus Tour<br>• Center for Cultural Studies and Engagement established<br>• United Families Program started through Bridge Campus<br>• *Outreach and Engagement* magazine started |
| Mid-2010s | • Makers Fair started<br>• Bridge Campus blog started |

The following sections outline each of these areas. Overall, according to one university leader, earning the CEC created a sense a pride at BU and the University President shared these feelings publicly often with internal and external audiences alike.

## Community Engagement at Boyer University

### Infusing Engagement into the Mission

As an outcome of its CEC application process, Boyer University developed a new version of its strategic plan, which led to the revision of the language in the then-current mission to include community engagement. The new strategic plan was created by a committee that included several leaders who had attended the EAUL. The strategic plan had gone through three versions throughout the Boyer's history. The language in the new strategic plan indicated institutional support of community engagement. As one university leader explained, "*the words 'engagement' and 'learner' instead of 'student 'are more fully integrated.*" The new language served as a point of reference in advancing engagement across and within units, colleges, and divisions of BU. More specifically, engagement advocates could reference the language in the new strategic plan as part of their case to encourage others to embrace community engagement. Another university leader explained, "*Engagement has become the language by which we communicate across boundaries and connect across disciplines to explore shared problems.*" "Service" or "Extension" has long resided as core to the University mission. In the past this has been seen as separate, but critically important. Today the Mission of Outreach and Engagement is embedded University-wide and seen as integral to all of the other functions of the University. Many university leaders indicated that BU had advanced in its commitment to the institutionalization of community engagement in part because of the updated mission language resulting from the new strategic plan. The new plan—implemented for a five-year timespan—aimed to provide transformational experiences for learners, strengthen BU's impact throughout the state and beyond, and provide leadership in addressing global issues.

**Establishing the Division of Outreach and Engagement**

In the late 2000s, the President's Commission on Outreach and Engagement at Boyer was charged with defining the future of outreach and engagement at the university through the creation of a vision and plan to guide the campus in becoming a model for full institutional engagement in the 21st century. The commission drafted a consensus report to document suggestions for future directions that was based on document analysis, self-study report, and site visit. The same year the report was released, BU established the Division of Outreach and Engagement to unite existing major contributors to the outreach and engagement mission of the university. According to one university leader, a major catalyst for creating the division was the failed search for an administrative position within the previous organizational structure.

At the time, BU's Cooperative Extension Service was a traditional extension model within the College of Agriculture. The creation of the Division of Outreach and Engagement included restructuring (and bringing into the fold) the Cooperative Extension Service and outreach campuses. The division was developed to oversee the interdisciplinary work needed for community engagement within and outside of extension to be sustainable. The division also brought together programs from several units on campus that served the community, including Virtual Campus online degrees (pseudonym), and special projects and initiatives.

The mission of the division was to enhance BU's national presence and to utilize the strengths of the land-grant infrastructure to increase access to knowledge and problem solving by partnering with individuals, organizations, and communities. To this end, the division served as a centralized unit to support the vision of the university to enhance the lives of all state residents through engagement.

To operationalize the mission, the division developed strategic goals in six categories: access, partnerships, scholarship, integration, culture, and resources. The intent of the goals was to create, broaden, integrate, and expand previous frameworks to include community engagement and outreach. One university leader explained:

> *From the time that the division was created we tended to try to broaden the definition of what we are talking about. Getting an opportunity to redefine in people's minds whether it is a community of interest or a community of place or a community of practice. If your tent is that large, then you can bring in a large diversity of people into the discussion. If you are just talking about how we are on the ground with experientially learning in this community, that is a relatively narrow approach, but if we talk about communities in the broadest sense possible, then you can have people at the table from multiple points of view.*

The strategic goals were aimed at addressing current and future needs of individuals, as well as organizations within communities in the state, nation and world. Examples of ways the division specifically worked to reach the objectives included requesting proposals for massive open online course (MOOC) development, providing online academic programs, hosting nonprofit fairs, and organizing bus tours to educate faculty about community engagement in an interactive way, and creating a magazine about outreach and engagement (available online and produced twice a year).

The Division of Outreach and Engagement also coordinated Virtual Campus online degree programs, which gave students access to education that was not restricted by physical boundaries and time constrains. Online classrooms were developed to create a “feel” of a virtual campus, including multimedia platforms and the newest technologies for optimal interactive learning environments. Courses were offered asynchronously via blended delivery methods to provide flexibility in meeting students’ needs.

Several university leaders acknowledged that the restructuring, specifically the creation of a new vice provost position for the division, provided strong evidence of institutionalization,

serving as a catalyst for continued advancements of engagement within the division and across the entire institution. The Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement position was equivalent to existing vice provost positions, thus elevating access to the top decision makers in addition to elevating the status and priority of outreach and engagement at BU. The Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement was active within various organizations (including the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, a national policy development organization advancing the outreach capacities of land-grant universities) and served on many boards (including the national Engagement Scholarship Consortium).

**Cooperative Extension Service**

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is part of the Division of Outreach and Engagement and is the major outreach delivery system for Boyer University. Generally, cooperative extension services have comprised the main outreach arm of land-grant institutions since their inception. The county delivery system connects research from the university with community needs. Extension translates and brings the knowledge from university research into communities related to agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and youth development. One university leader explained the connection between extension and community engagement:

> *We have been doing [community engagement] for 100 years and I think there is something to that. It is so much engrained in all of us that we don't think about it. [The Vice Provost of Outreach and Engagement] used the phrase many times, 'We were engaged before engagement was cool.' I think that is a lot of it. One of the things we do have to recognize is that we have an existing network of extension offices across the state that people are seeing the value of more and more.*

Community support of extension is evident in new tax-service districts, which are communities that fund local extension outreach activities. One university leader added:

> *Passing the service districts counties are assuming a bigger share of the load having an extension office in their county because our federal funds have been flat and the state*

> *funds until this year have become a smaller part of. People are standing up. I think that is an indicator [of institutionalizing community engagement]*.

Such funding from communities is clear evidence of public value of and support for community engagement.

The director of extension is also an associate vice provost in the division and a key partner in institutionalizing community engagement. Extension offices are located in every county in the state. Extension employees and offices collaborate with community partners and university partners.

In the mid-1990s, according to university leaders, the definition of scholarship was diversified to include more than just refereed journals. This changed the promotion process for extension field faculty, and they shifted in organizational structure from comprising separate entities to academic departments. Originally, field faculty went through a separate process for promotion but were later integrated into the process of each of their disciplinary departments and held to the same performance criteria. One university leader described the early stages of BU becoming more engaged through structural changes:

> *Back in the mid-90s we diversified our definition of scholarship to … [embrace] more diverse activities that are scholarly related. That was to actively include our field faculty as part of the university members of departments wherever they fit and go through the promotion process in those departments rather than be a separate something off to the side the way it had been anyway. So, that integration in the mid-90s brought all of our field faculty into the academy. I think that was a significant part but was certainly only a piece of what was embedded over [BU's] 100 year history.*

Tellingly, the promotion rate was 100% in the last ten years, according to one university leader.

Extension has expanded the boundaries of the university as it has evolved throughout the generations and set a foundation for community engagement within and outside of extension work. One university leader described these connections between the university and community in the following way:

> *In the community we are BU and I think that has been part of this engagement movement. The fact that we are blurring those lines and they know they are touching the university verses the extension service, which is a slice of the university. I've watched that trend really speed up. We have moved to this engagement mindset. That will make some people very nervous and other people will celebrate it. I thinking being BU in the community is a positive thing because we cannot be the Extension Service that our grandparents enjoy. I want to be the extension service that our great grandchildren will enjoy.*

Another university leader added:

> *I'd like to add to the blurring of the lines, I'm very encouraged and grateful that we are able to expand beyond Boyer University. We collaborate with extension online [national online extension network] with other land-grant universities, and personally engage with communities online through social media, which is exploding. It's just awesome to be able to take that to the next level. It's not just BU, [the state], it's the U.S. and the world. We have a further reach than BU.*

Extension is a point of entry into communities for other units and projects housed within the division and across BU. Extension works closely with Bridge Campuses, which are also managed through the division.

**Bridge Campuses**

Bridge Campus was an initiative within the Division of Outreach and Engagement that became a unit. Its mission was to provide coordination and oversee collaboration of BU personnel working in communities with community partners to address educational needs in their community. Bridge Campuses build and broaden the reach of the extension service to provide access to university resources. This concept emerged through community involvement and was developed as a team project for the EAUL. The concept was implemented slowly through a pilot process and then scaled up.

The concept of Bridge Campus was a different model for both the community and university relations. Bridge Campus coordinators are conveners who co-create knowledge by initiating work in communities and then reaching out to university colleges and units as potential partners. This differs from extension field faculty, who initiate work from within the university

to partner with communities. A Bridge Campus is different from a university satellite campus because it is not a degree-granting program of BU. The work of a Bridge Campus is based on the communities' needs and housed on property that is often not owned by BU. Many Bridge Campuses are housed on local community college campuses.

Bridge Campuses utilize connections throughout the entire university to support the co-creation of knowledge and solutions. Community partners have included community colleges, regional economic development groups, P-12 education systems, businesses, and local government. Many Bridge Campus programs require community partners to match resources of money, materials, or time, and Bridge Campus coordinators are advocates and ambassadors for the communities they work in. Coordinators are charged with connecting institute learning and development opportunities to address the needs of their community. The Bridge Campuses website describes them as "champions for their region."

Bridge Campuses specifically target support for underserved and place-bound community members. Areas of primary focus areas include community and economic development, college readiness, and degree completion. Curriculum and specific programs or initiatives are determined based on community needs and partner involvement; therefore, every site has a different agenda and work plan for meeting the specific and ever-changing local contexts.

Needs assessments are typically performed in each region to inform decision makers as they customize a program to address identified needs. Community education councils work with Bridge Campus coordinators to prioritize and design a work plan. Specific community engagement efforts have emerged from Bridge Campuses including community education councils and United Families programs.

**Community Educational Councils.** Community Educational Councils were created through the Bridge Campus program. Located within the communities, the councils are composed of community stakeholders and university representatives. Their purpose is to bring stakeholders together to find common language and to manage expectations while meeting community needs, such as increasing the high school graduation rate. The meetings are not run by the university representatives; rather, all university and community representatives participate as equal members. As one university leader explained, "*We don't run the meetings. We pull the group together, but we're just another chair around the table when they work.*" Through the councils, community needs are discussed and addressed collectively.

The Welding Project exemplifies successful community engagement through a Bridge Campus Community Education Council. This project was designed to address the shortage of qualified welders in one county where Bridge Campus was established. In this county, the community college served as BU's key partner, with the Bridge Campus housed on the campus. Neither the community college nor BU had a welding program. A project coordinator explained the scenario in an interview: "*One guy said this is great that we're talking about getting kids through high school, but I'm going to lose my business and I don't have any welders. I can't find welders*." The specific Community Education Council comprised representatives from the public school, the community college, elected officials, and county commissioners. The project coordinator further explained:

> *At the end of the meeting, the community college said, "We'll provide an instructor." The high school said, "We used to teach welding, we have a lab, but we don't use it anymore, you can use that space." Community partners against poverty said they would come up with $20,000 to support whatever it would take to buy equipment. Within six weeks, we had offered scholarships, recruited people, had 16 or 17 guys signed up for an eight-week program, purchased the equipment.*

Out of those who signed up, 10 people received full training through the welding program. Six of the 10 gained employment immediately. This exemplified how the community came together to meet a need—which may not have happened in a community without a Bridge Campus.

**United Families program.** The United Families program emerged through Bridge Campuses as a result of recognized a need in a community. Specifically, one Bridge Campus coordinator spoke with a community member who confided that she did not know how to read her child's report card since English was not her native language. A university leader explained the scenario:

> *A community member came to the [Bridge] Campus coordinator and said, "Can you help me read this report card?" This was an individual who knew [the coordinator] very well, and [the coordinator] was appalled that a parent couldn't understand the report card and [that] our educational system wasn't providing the resources to help these parents understand.*

At the time, the high school graduation rate in that community was low, with little family support available. The university leader explained the community's needs in this way: "*We had a really high dropout rate, and this school was a third native, a third Latino, and a third White. There was definite gaps between those ethnicities.*" One technical solution would have been to provide support for translating the report cards. Through a community engagement lens, the Bridge Campus coordinator was able to identify a larger need of families for whom English was not the first language or whose native culture created barriers to understanding, valuing, and supporting their children as they completed high school and advanced to college. This type of effort required a variety of perspectives, roles, and resources to co-create solutions by engaging with the parents.

The United Families curriculum was an existing outreach and engagement program offered by another higher education institution that supported youth from different cultural

backgrounds in graduating from high school and preparing for college. Working with eighth- to 12th-grade students and their families, this program used culturally relevant curricula and expanded as the community's needs became better understood over time in an effort to empower students and families to embrace education. One example of the expanded curriculum was the creation and implementation of culturally relevant college campus tours at BU and other higher education institutions. Activities implemented through the United Families program included after-school programs, parent clubs, weekly workshops, and college visitation trips. In the first community that implemented the United Families program, the high school graduation rate increased, as did access to higher education (which is discussed further in Chapter 5).

Success at the initial site sparked interest among funders in expanding the Untied Families program into other communities. A family foundation focused on investing in rural communities gave a six-figure gift for four years to support the expansion of the United Families program across the state in nine rural communities. In addition, scholarship programs and endowments have been funded because of positive outcomes from the program. With the expansion of the United Families program, a coordinator was hired to oversee the individual location coordinators. One university leader explained:

> *We had a community member step up to volunteer to teach the curriculum who's now moving to [the main campus] to be our statewide [United Families] coordinator. Four years down the road, we have a 100 percent high school graduation rate of students who go through not only the six-week program that we have for [another state], but now we have [United Families] is so much more than that. It is after-school programs, it's parent clubs, and it's weekly workshops. We have trips to [the main campus], trips to other colleges, the community college is engaged at every step along the way with us. We've created scholarship programs and endowments because of [United Families].*

This program that emerged from a community was piloted, the curriculum enhanced, and the program expanded into additional communities.

There are also several additional examples of community engagement related to the Bridge Campus program. Training food entrepreneurs and the Two-Plus-Two program were two such examples mentioned throughout interviews. One university leader described training food entrepreneurs:

> *We know over a million people come a year to a cheese factory to get a little piece of cheese and then ice cream. They have this wonderful gift shop of local products that local community members with food business ideas didn't know how to get into that space. Working with the food innovation center in [the city], we created a curriculum that was for food entrepreneurs to learn food safety. They actually went to the food innovation center and learned about testing and weighing and labeling. We brought in graphic designers and marketers to talk about how to build a brand around a food product. The end was sort of building a business plan and then a business launch where they were able to pitch products. We had three businesses launch out of that program in the first year, and actually one of them is featured in the cheese factory lobby area.*

Another university leader described the Two-Plus-Two program:

> *[A local] community college … had a general art culture degree where students did two years at the community college and then some would go on to a four-year, but most didn't. The individuals that weren't going to the four-year degree explained that a lot of time it had to do with kids, families, or they couldn't afford it. Students from rural communities have different challenges and expectations and they're not going to necessarily perform as well as they could if they came up here. The general ed. degree went online from main campus…. So we designed a system where they would get their associate's degree there, the extension and experiment station director served as the research support for those individuals who wanted to do the online degree. They could bring the cohort together. They had a cohort of students who were actually getting their four-year degree at the community college.*

These previous examples provide compelling evidence that the Bridge Campuses have assisted Boyer University operationalize community engagement.

### Positionality of Engagement for Sustainability

Community engagement at BU was positioned to be institutionalized and sustained through internal buy-in from all levels of administration, faculty, staff, and students. Access to the university president was elevated through the creation of the Division of Outreach and Engagement, led by a newly created vice provost position. This restructuring elevated the

positionality of engagement at BU; for example, the Provost for Outreach and Engagement has sat on the committee for university promotion and tenure. The organizational structure of BU now provides more direct and constant access to the president by vice provosts compared to other roles within the university leadership.

Because the Vice Provost of Outreach and Engagement is organizationally equivalent to the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Research (for example), the status of outreach and engagement was elevated symbolically and by positionality when the new job was created. With this new position and division, engaged university leaders were able to coordinate and increase the critical mass needed to influence change and provide a central unit on campus to coordinate efforts.

The transition of the extension service to the Division of Outreach and Engagement allowed leaders to scale-up outreach and engagement. The term "scale-up" refers to the concept of scalability that is defined as a process to handle growth. Merriam-Webster's dictionary describes it as growing based on a fixed ratio ("Scale-up," 2016). Other central units identified as having positive impacts on the institutionalization process included central university relations and the marketing office, a center for cultural studies and engagement, and a service-learning initiative for curricular engagement. The central university relations and marketing unit unified consistent messages internal and external to the university. A center focusing on one cultural group incorporated the word "engagement" in its title to convey its mission more explicitly. The service-learning initiative for curricular engagement provided central support for service-learning efforts, including engaged service-learning.

**Outreach and Engagement Advisory Structure**

The Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement has a council to advise current and future directions for the Division of Outreach and Engagement. The council is made up of representatives from inside and outside the division. In addition to advisory roles, the council oversees initiatives sponsored by the council.

The leadership for the Division of Outreach and Engagement developed a University Council on Community Engagement, which by the time of this study, comprised mostly alumni from the EAUL. The council meets quarterly or as requested by the Vice Provost of Outreach and Engagement. The council was established the same year that the vice provost position was created. Initial priorities included designing a strategic plan for the division and hosting a presidential commission that examined future opportunities. The membership of approximately 30 seats includes a representative from each BU college selected by the respective dean for two-year terms with the opportunity for reappointment. Additional members are considered based upon specific recommendations of the council. The purpose of the council is to provide integrated, campus-wide guidance to the vice provost related to the future of the division and the status of outreach and engagement throughout the university. The council also provides advice and recommendations for strategic planning. Policy development for the division specifically took into consideration implications for represented units/colleges. The council is also tasked with motivating and rewarding faculty innovation in developing, implementing, and evaluating outreach and engagement activities. Another important charge to the council was to identify and prioritize opportunities to advance outreach and engagement, including needs, partnerships, resources, approaches, and business models.

**Internal Engagement Academy**

The council manages an Internal Engagement Academy (IEA). This group is comprised solely of alumni from the national Engagement Academy with the purpose of making progress toward specific goals of engagement. One university leader explained:

> *The [BU] Engagement Academy was a project out of the [EAUL], which created an Engagement Academy advisory group. Members of this group are all participants of the [EAUL]. This is a way to stay connected, check in on projects, talk about who else is doing engagement on campus, then prioritize the next team [to attend the EAUL]. They prioritize … the Bus Tour that goes out into communities to show new faculty how they might be involved or where some of the gaps might be for them to participate. So we've created some mechanisms to help work around this matrix [i.e., the Holland Matrix].*

The IEA was modeled after the national EAUL program according to university leaders. Another university leader indicated that it provides "*opportunities for faculty and staff to explore new ideas that engage learners ... it promotes effective leaders, bringing innovative learning concepts to communities throughout [the state]*." IEA makes specific decisions and sponsor events related to spreading engagement. Activities include an annual bus tour for faculty new to community engagement, quarterly engagement conversations in the form of council meetings, and sending a team to the National EAUL during the years it is offered.

The bus tour started as a project developed by one of the teams that attended the national EAUL. At the time individual interviews were conducted for this study, the bus tour had been implemented four consecutive years. The objective of the tour was to provide an onboarding experience for faculty new to community engagement. The target audience was faculty who had been employed for three years or less at BU. The sometimes the abstract concept of community engagement was shared with faculty in tangible ways in hopes they would consider incorporating community engagement into their teaching, research, and service. University personnel were taken by bus to various communities over several days to help them understand what community

engagement is and how they could incorporate the concepts of engagement into their work. The maximum number of participants was 50 people. Each year the tour was designed differently as new ideas were piloted and modified. Recent tours have included a pre-tour luncheon a week prior to the main event in addition to required pre-reading and self-work. Participants were required to pay a $20 registration fee, and all expenses for the tour (including pre and post sessions) were paid by the Division of Outreach and Engagement.

The Baker Project illustrates the one example of a new faculty member embracing community engagement. This faculty member, from the engineering department, participating in the bus tour. In one of the communities visited during the tour, the new professor met women in the community that were hand-making a specific type of food. The demand for the product was higher than they could keep up with due to the labor-intensive process. The faculty member realized that he had the expertise to facilitate a solution. He supervised students to work with the business owners to create a machine to increase production. Students partnered with BU's Center for Multicultural Studies and Engagement to work through language and cultural barriers. The engineering students learned the language as an added value to their experience as they applied engineering knowledge to create the machine. One university leader explained the scenario:

> *The problem was that ladies were creating [a culturally specific food] by hand, they were burning their fingers trying to make these products. There was a high demand for the product. Students created an actual [culturally specific food] maker patented design for their use. The university owns the patent, but the women have full rights to that so they were able to use the actual machine as theirs, which gave them the opportunity to create a business. The next piece of this is now the College of Business is involved in helping them create a business plan and an actual business development structure. It's pretty cool to see non-traditionally engagement-focused colleges now focused on helping students become involved with the engagement agenda. That includes faculty development.*

This example illustrates the mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationship between community members, faculty, students, and the university as a whole. All parties have benefited from the relationship.

The council on community engagement and outreach provided opportunities for key internal stakeholders to share buy-in regarding initiatives to institutionalize and sustain community engagement and outreach throughout BU. These groups also provided a variety of perspectives in policy and initiative development to institutionalize engagement across all colleges and units both on and off campus. Evidence of this can be found in the visibility and identity of engagement on physical campuses and in online environments. Banners on the main campus promote the intended culture of engagement; for example, one banner read “Engaging Students at Boyer University" with an image of students. The BU website includes extension and outreach as one of the main headings on the homepage, at the same level as research, history of BU, academics, and athletics.

Numerous engaged activities, initiatives, and projects have taken place within and outside the Division of Outreach and Engagement. The examples described in this chapter emerged through data collection. The Makers Fair is another example of community engagement at BU identified by university leaders. Since 2014, BU has hosted a free Makers Fair as a way for people from around the state to connect with BU. The BU website describes “the ‘Maker’ culture [as] a popular movement honoring craftsmanship and technology and the sharing of knowledge, skills, and resources.” This event provides an opportunity for campus-community partners to collaborate, innovate, and create. The Maker’s Fair also provides a forum for research and teaching through experiential learning for all ages. According to the website, the event is based on the belief that “hands-on, creative exploration helps encourage risk taking,

cement learning, boost self-confidence, connect individuals and communities, and serve as a guide for understanding our individual and collective place in the world." A variety of media, including digital, technological, industrial, domestic, analog, and artistic, are represented at the fair. In addition to diversity of media, inclusion and the empowerment of a diversity of participants and audiences are priorities.

In summary, the narrative of the university's self-identification as an institution infused with outreach and engagement was a thread connecting many of the university leaders' stories in this study. Several leaders referred to the same examples of events and programs as testaments to how the university met challenges brought to them by the community. The interviewees displayed pride in the university's development of the centers, divisions, and councils focusing on engagement, the Bridge Campuses, the Cooperative Extension Service, pre-college programs, and the professional and continuing education opportunities offered by Boyer University.

# CHAPTER 5

# FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings from the qualitative, single-case-study inquiry into university leaders' perceptions of boundary-spanning activities and the complexity of operationalizing the institutionalization of community engagement. Data were collected from a Carnegie community-engaged university identified as working toward the institutionalization of community engagement. The following research questions guided this study:

(1) What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement?

(2) According to university leaders, what qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess?

(3) In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge?

Data from this study emerged from interviews with 22 university leaders whom Boyer University had sent to the Engagement Academy for University Leaders annually between 2008 (the year of the academy's inception) and 2014. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires completed prior to each individual or team attending the EAUL and as alumni in focus groups, as well as individual interviews. Artifacts from the BU website were also used as data sources. The findings are organized by research question, framework components, and themes that emerged during the data analysis. Table 7 provides an overview of the findings for each research question.

Table 7

*Research Findings*

| Research Question | Themes | | Framework Components | Sub-themes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement? (Organizational level) | Incubator for Innovation in Community Engagement | Action over rhetoric | Mission | Infusing engagement language into a new strategic plan |
| | | | Leadership | Access to university president<br>Actions upholding rhetoric |
| | | | Organizational structure & funding | Restructuring and building centralized networks |
| | | | Student involvement & curriculum | Expanded opportunities<br>Official recognition of service-learning |
| | | Institutionalization evolves from lessons learned | Organizational structure & funding | Continual revision through lessons learned |
| | | | Promotion, tenure, & hiring | Strategic placement of engagement leaders on decision-making bodies |
| | Building a Coalition of the Willing | | Mission | Philosophy of concern |
| | | | Leadership | Building a coalition of the willing |
| | | | Faculty involvement | Strategic onboarding |
| | | | Community involvement | Embedded conveners |
| | | | External communication & fundraising | Community testimonials |
| According to university leaders, what qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess? (Individual level) | Action over Rhetoric | | Community-based problem solver | Active conveners use deep listening and solution focused actions |
| | | | Engagement champion | Big-picture thinking<br>Active over symbolic role |
| | | | Internal engagement advocate | Leadership breakdown of hierarchy |
| | Building a Coalition of the Willing | | Internal engagement advocate | Active conveners<br>Utilize external expertise to motivate |
| | | | Technical expert | Embedding technical experts in community as public service faculty |
| In what ways do university leaders address institutionalizing community engagement as an adaptive challenge? | Empowering Others to Stretch Beyond Routines and Question Norms<br>Shaping Institutional Norms<br>Role Complexity and leadership | | | |

## Organizational- and Individual-Level Findings

The findings from this study revealed overlapping themes relative to research questions one and two. Specifically, the themes "building a coalition of the willing" and "action over rhetoric" were found at the organizational level in research question one and at the individual level in research question two. The following descriptions of findings are organized by theme rather than by research question.

To address research question one, the institutionalization of community engagement at a selected university was examined using Holland's (2006) assessment matrix of levels of commitment to community engagement. The matrix considers levels of relevancy from low to full integration across key organizational factors including mission; leadership; promotion, tenure, and hiring; organizational structure and funding; student involvement and curriculum; faculty involvement; community involvement; and external communication and fundraising. Findings from this study indicated that providing an incubator for innovations in community engagement and building a coalition of the willing were central characteristics of making progress toward the institutionalization of community engagement at Boyer University.

Data indicated that all four boundary-spanning roles (i.e., community-based problem solver, engagement champion, internal engagement advocate, and technical expert) were present and active at Boyer University; however, findings were most robust in relation to the engagement champion and internal engagement advocate roles. Study participants indicated that their formal job responsibilities at BU aligned with socioemotional leadership tasks in the boundary-spanning framework and that the boundary-spanning roles they most often took on were related to their formal position. Participants recognized the importance of all four roles, observed boundary spanners at BU enacting those roles, and had personally enacted each of the

four at different points in their careers. Additionally, university leaders described overlapping boundary-spanning roles and activities. Examples of the institutionalization of community engagement often included multiple roles. Findings indicated that roles and activities of boundary spanners comprised two main themes: "action over rhetoric" and "building a coalition of the willing." These themes were operationalized in a variety of ways based on the specific boundary-spanning role.

The main themes found in this research study centered on providing an incubator for innovation in community engagement and building a coalition of the willing, both of which were related to research questions one and two. In addition, the theme of providing an incubator for innovation in community engagement was supported by sub-themes. The sub-theme of action over rhetoric emerged at the organizational and individual levels, while the sub-theme of institutionalization evolving from lessons learned was evident at the organizational level. The main theme of building a coalition of the willing was found at the organizational and individual levels.

**Incubator for Innovation in Community Engagement**

The theme of providing an incubator for innovation in community engagement helped to advance efforts to institutionalize community engagement by creating a space faculty and staff felt safe to take risks and by offering support for exploring engagement. Findings around research question 1 pertained to the organizational level, while research question 2 findings pertained to the individual level. The two main sub-themes of this characteristic included actions having greater meaning than rhetoric and the evolution of institutionalization based on lessons learned. The first of these components related to people within the university observing actions that matched or exceeded rhetorical messages from university leaders. Participants reported that

they felt this demonstrated the value and prioritization of community engagement as the institutionalization process advanced. The second component—the evolution of institutionalization through lessons learned—derived from participants explaining the importance of the flexibility of acceptable outcomes, which ranged from experimenting with engaged work to implementing new approaches based on lessons learned from previous attempts. The evolution of institutionalization gained momentum as more people observed and experienced conditions for engaged work that could be experimented with and took what they learned from their experiences to apply to further trials.

The theme of providing an incubator for innovation in community engagement included sub-themes connected to five of the seven components of Holland's (2006) matrix (see Table 7).

**Action over rhetoric**. Action over rhetoric refers to the idea that actions hold more value than words alone. This theme includes tangible actions and gestures towards action. University leaders in this study identified rhetoric as important, especially when employed at the highest levels of leadership; however, it was not perceived as meaningful if it lacked actions to support the words (spoken and written). Findings indicated that people within the university recognized that community engagement was valued and was becoming institutionalized when actions were observable along with rhetoric. In this study, actions supportive of the institutionalization of community engagement were found at the organizational and individual levels. Organizational factors pertained to mission, leadership, organizational structure and funding, and student involvement and curriculum. At the individual level, actions were related to boundary-spanning roles of community-based problem solvers, engagement champions, and internal engagement advocates.

Table 8

*Findings Related to Action over Rhetoric*

| Research Question | Themes | | Framework Components | Sub-themes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement? (Organizational level) | Incubator for Innovation in Community Engagement | Action over rhetoric | Mission | Infusing engagement language into a new strategic plan |
| | | | Leadership | Access to university president<br>Actions upholding rhetoric |
| | | | Organizational structure & funding | Restructuring and building centralized networks |
| | | | Student involvement & curriculum | Expanded opportunities<br>Official recognition of service-learning |
| According to university leaders, what qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess? (Individual level) | Action over Rhetoric | | Community-based problem solver | Active conveners use deep listening and solution focused actions |
| | | | Engagement champion | Big-picture thinking<br>Active over symbolic role |
| | | | Internal engagement advocate | Leadership breakdown of hierarchy |

***Mission.*** Engagement language was infused into the university's mission statement by first updating the university's new strategic plan, which exemplified the fully integrated commitment to community engagement related to mission found in the data. According to university leaders, the active participation of engagement advocates in the plan's development led to the inclusion of specific language in BU's revised mission statement. A working group for a university council on community engagement comprising EAUL alumni and other university leaders—all of whom served as equal members at the planning table—developed the new strategic plan. One university leader explained:

> *In the most recent strategic plan, it's very clear … that engaged activity is a value of the institution. Not only if you just did a word count … but the way that it's built in, in a whole variety of different levels, in terms of the metrics, in terms of the ideals, in terms of the commitments. If one were to go to the first strategic plan and the second, and then to just look at the growth—it's certainly evident to me.*

Another university leader explained:

> *Then if you read our latest [strategic plan], the word of* engagement *and some [of that type of] language is now there where it had never been in any of our strategic plans at the university.... to raise the profile of our community focus ... [that] we're really here to support [the state]'s economy ... to solve problems for society.*

Several university leaders credited this "*seat at the table*" as critical to achieving the engagement-inclusive language used in the new strategic plan. Many university leaders also agreed that BU had advanced in its level of commitment to the institutionalization of community engagement because of the current version of the mission statement which grew out of the new strategic plan. Specifically, the replacement of the word "*student*" with "*learner*" evidenced a cultural shift that broadened the definition of people served to include not only students in degree programs but also other audiences such as community members. In the plan's introduction, the president of BU discussed the intentional use of engaged language and also emphasized the university's role in providing experiences that foster positive impacts on all learners. One of BU's goals was to be an authentic community that nurtures healthy relationships and builds networks of concern.

Study participants indicated that the action of adopting language shared by other university leaders reinforced the new language used in official structures and documents. Several university leaders indicated that the actions of BU's president were especially important to the institutionalization process when such actions reinforced rhetoric. The engagement movement and the shift in culture were perceived as more legitimate when internal and external audiences could observe the rhetoric actually being implemented. Administrators also took

responsibility for not only communicating but enacting the engagement message. One administrator explained:

> *We're the ones who are often put in the limelight to give an elevator speech on what is engagement. We're the ones who put researchers on the table to get some things done. So I think those are the kinds of things that [we] do [as administrators in the Division of Outreach and Engagement]. What I have done individually.*

External communication by university leaders was evident but was not as consistent or predominant as many engaged leaders would have preferred. One university leader described external communication as an area in need of growth:

> *Often we send people out from the university to talk; even university leaders will say we are [the state's] research university and maybe as it moves across the topic of research they might talk about our brilliant and bright students and how we attract the very best, and the conversation ends there. We need more engagement champions who speak to the outside about not only research and teaching, but also that we are making a difference now not only through research that may someday trickle down, students that may take leadership roles in the state, but our impact through outreach and engagement is immediate, is happening now, and is important.*

In the same conversation, the participant then expanded on the positive message of engaged leadership:

> *Leadership is very important. Earlier I mentioned that some of our external ambassadors not mentioning things about outreach and engagement, but I think that is one of the pieces that is important here at the president level here, at the provost level, and many of the deans do in fact speak about how outreach and engagement is part of what we do; those that have been to the [EAUL] anyway. A lot of people do know about the work we do in outreach and engagement, but we get into patterns about what we talk about and sometimes patterns are hard to break. The objective is to build in the mention of outreach and engagement to become part of the pattern as we talk with communities.*

Study findings were mixed regarding the level of external communication from leaders, but the data showed that leaders at every administrative level demonstrated support for engagement through their actions and rhetoric, though there was still capacity to increase engagement in both areas.

***Leadership***. From the findings, a leadership-centered theme related to the institutionalization of community engagement did emerge: a sense of access to the university president. Specifically, access to the university president was enhanced through the creation of the Division of Outreach and Engagement led by the Vice Provost of Outreach and Engagement. BU's organizational structure provided vice provosts with more direct and constant access to the president and provost compared to other leadership roles. As the Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement explained, "*I find that I can influence the president … by bringing people to him, and then giving him an opportunity to reciprocate, to reflect back what he has learned and heard.*" Another university leader shared, "*The BU story for me … I attribute it to us having a dedicated leader who prioritizes the work of engagement and thinking differently and being comfortable with ambiguity.*" The organizational characteristic of providing access to the university president represented a breakdown of hierarchy at the individual level, discussed in the findings for research question two.

The interest and support that the leadership showed regarding BU's elective Carnegie classification as an engaged university was another indicator of action consistent with the rhetoric used by university leaders to demonstrate commitment to institutionalizing community engagement. According to university leaders, rhetoric had been put into action at the individual and organizational levels in a variety of ways to work toward the full integration of community engagement within the university. More data were collected around the area of leadership than any other component measured for institutionalization. This is not surprising, however, due to the positionality, perspective, and personal experiences of study participants, all identified as university leaders.

***Organizational structure and funding***. University leaders indicated that restructuring traditional service models and building new units and networks in order to foster engagement were major facilitators of institutionalization. The continual revision of organizational structures, including programs and initiatives, was also a recurrent theme among study participants. Within all datasets, changes in organizational structure and funding were found to positively impact institutionalization, and university leaders readily offered many examples. Some of the changes described by participants included the establishment of a division of outreach and engagement, councils focused on engagement, a centralized university relations and marketing office, a center for cultural studies and engagement, and a service-learning initiative for curricular engagement. The university relations and marketing unit helped to insure consistent messaging within and outside the university. Additionally, a center focusing on a specific cultural group incorporated the word "engagement" in its official title to be explicit about its mission. The director of this center explained:

> *This is the only center of its kind in the [region] where you combine engaged research and community engagement and ... civic engagement and ... students involved in leadership development…. [T]he fact that we have a center like that at [BU] ... [that] really promotes that type of engagement is amazing, and that engages communities that are under-represented on top of everything else.*

Another example of the power of centralized units in advancing institutionalization efforts was the service-learning initiative for curricular engagement, which provided support for service-learning efforts including engaged service-learning. University leaders described the Division of Outreach and Engagement as the centralized unit that had the largest impact on institutionalizing community engagement.

The Division of Outreach and Engagement included several projects, programs, and services, namely the Cooperative Extension Service, Bridge Campus, and online degree

programs. The division was a centralized structure within BU able to disseminate shared language related to the definition of engagement throughout BU:

> *Shared language helps people understand what community engagement means. I think the division has worked on this for years to weave that language in and help people understand what community engagement looks like and what it means, and it's starting to resonate more.*

As a result of the creation of the division, information and concepts were shared systematically, thereby helping to align outreach and engagement. According to several university leaders, moving the Cooperative Extension Service under the Division of Outreach and Engagement was a specific restructuring effort that advanced institutionalization. Extension was formally housed in the College of Agricultural Sciences. An associate dean highlighted the importance of the new structure: "*It really goes back to the structure of Extension here in [the state] … I think that is one of the things that really made it possible and easy to do the work that we do here.*" An extension program coordinator also emphasized the importance of the restructuring: "*We have to be a whole lot more radical in our thinking and moving and doing our work differently. I don't think we're going to survive without it.*"

Study participants also identified the change in organizational structure and the "blurred lines" between the traditional extension service and new models of outreach and engagement as facilitators of institutionalization. One university leader emphasized the importance of the transition: "*What I am about to say will make some people nervous and other people will celebrate, and that is the fact that I think there is becoming less distinction between Extension and the university*." The structure of the extension service within the Division of Outreach and Engagement is one tangible example of how the university organizational structure strategically implemented its work toward fully integrating community engagement at BU.

***Student involvement and curriculum***. Some university leaders perceived student involvement and curriculum as one of the strongest areas of institutionalization at BU. Relevant themes from data analysis included expanded opportunities for students and official recognition of service-learning for students. Official recognition related specifically to increasing the visibility of service-learning courses on official transcripts. One university leader described BU's commitment to student engagement:

> *One of our major circles of commitment is to student engagement in service. It's been a cornerstone to the way that we think about all of our work in student leadership, student involvement, and student engagement through our department, and it's translated into our broader organization, and it's moved into the Division of Student Affairs. I think it just took a few folks connecting to it, and then to be able to engage with the state-level people to be able to then see the transition in academic departments.*

As experienced by university leaders, student engagement at BU encompassed a variety of opportunities and needs. One university leader described the types of—and increase in—involvement:

> *I think a number of students are doing field placements, experiential learning, directed research, internships, and undergraduate research projects. The number of students that are doing this work with Extension, outreach, and engagement faculty is incredible. Just talking with two of our faculty the other day, this one has four students this summer and one has three students this summer…. So, I think there is an uptick in recognition in the relationship between our instructional programs and our outreach and engagement programs.*

The associate dean for outreach and engagement attributed the increase to students' desire to have less "*seat time*" in exchange for more opportunities to understand the real-world applications of what they were learning in the classroom. The same university leader said:

> *And the other thing that we are hearing from students—and this might not be new, but we are hearing from students—"Wow, this is great." They want more of this engaged type of thing. I'm tired of sitting in row 17 of a lecture hall and not having any, not understanding how this applies. I'm seeing a definite uptick in this area.*

One example of student involvement and curriculum mentioned frequently in the data was the Baker Project. "*So it's pretty cool to see non-traditionally engagement-focused colleges now focused on helping students become involved with the engagement agenda*," explained one university leader.

Study participants indicated that student involvement and curriculum experienced much growth toward institutionalization during the timespan of this study. One university leader acknowledged that in earlier years, during the application process for the Carnegie CEC, student involvement was a weak area of community engagement:

> *Out of the Carnegie classification student engagement side, it was catalyzed in amazing ways. It was really an amazing transformation that I doubt anyone has talked about. In the Carnegie classification … when we had to do part two, where we had to talk about curricular engagement, we were dismally poor. When I got here, we had one half-time person dedicated to curricular engagement service-learning. That was it, and then they eliminated it. So, here we were trying to go after the Carnegie classification with no university leadership for curricular engagement or service-learning. It was a pretty weak part of our application because we could not identify service-learning in our curriculum, they were not transcript-visible, we had no idea who was incorporating service-learning in any of those pieces. It was a really sad time.*

The same individual went on to explain the positive outcome of identifying this weakness:

> *As a result, shortly after that, the provost commissioned our service-learning initiative group for curricular engagement. We had a team of about 15 people from across the university that made some recommendations for how we [could] do more in the area of service-learning and curricular engagement. We were about to hire an assistant vice provost for that area, and now it really continues to grow at the university. That is probably the best thing that came out of our Carnegie classification, where we realized how bad we were in an area and then had high-level commitment from the provost and the president, saying this is unacceptable and we have to do better. Now we have a new center for student success, service-learning, and community engagement office. We have made a lot of strides that were really offshoots of the Carnegie classification and our work on outreach and engagement.*

At the time, the weakness was described as the lack of a systematic way to identify what was being done with students. Once this limitation was identified, however, it was addressed and improved.

***Community-based problem solvers***. At the individual level, community-based problem solvers in this study acted as conveners in communities. These boundary spanners used deep listening and solution-focused approaches to demonstrate action over rhetoric. Community-based problem solvers were situated at the intersection of the boundary-spanning roles of technical-practical tasks and the community-oriented activities side of the continua. University leaders characterized community involvement as partnerships with local community organizations, K-12 education, community colleges, and other higher education institutions. This type of boundary spanner focused on "site-based problem support, resource acquisition, and partnership development" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Study participants described boundary spanners in this role as active conveners who utilized deep listening to take solution-focused actions to operationalize community engagement, which in turn expanded the boundaries of the university into the community.

Marshak (2012) defined deep listening as first listening for information and then listening for explicit themes to provide insight into mindsets. As one university leader explained:

> *I think deep listening is the bedrock ... in the communities where we have made that true engaged process work. It is not always about what we wanted. It's more about what they need and so I think that deep listening … makes all the rest possible.*

Participants indicated that deep listening demonstrated to partners that BU genuinely cared about their needs and validated their community-focused mentality.

University leaders credited solution-focused actions with convening community involvement and partnerships. Findings from this study suggested that instead of leading problem-solving efforts, this type of boundary spanner brings people together to co-create solutions. One university leader explained the importance of reaching out to new partners for stronger collaboration:

> *There is a diversification of the portfolios here. Rather than trying to figure out new ways to work with the same people, do that but also be looking for new people to work with on different things that we have not worked on yet. I think [United Families] and [the Bridge Campus program] are great examples.*

Another university leader described solution-focused actions as building capacity in communities in order to co-create solutions:

> *Building capacity inside of communities is much more empowering than a top-down approach, where we're the expert and we're going to come in and tell you how to do things. It's building capacity inside of communities in ways that is not rocket science. This is not hard stuff, but it takes helping communities see that they could do this by themselves. I always say a leader is best when you don't really know they exist. People get done and say, "We did this."*

The example most commonly cited by participants related to the boundary-spanning role of community-based problem solver was that of the Bridge Campus coordinators' involvement in the community council to convene the group. A university leader shared:

> *I think the Bridge Campus effort to create [a community] education council opened the opportunity and opened the door for that conversation much more than we had in the past; the opportunity to also listen to them. That is when they really think there is no better way to get somebody to think you are cool than to tell them what they just told you. I mean, that is pretty much the axiom out there and we start listening and actually reacting to what they say; learning as much as we teach and things start shifting. A form for that, the best form, probably are the [community] education councils.*

In this example, the solution-focused action of convening a group to solve community problems intersected with deep listening.

***Engagement champion*s**. At the individual level, engagement champions used big-picture thinking and active over symbolic roles. Engagement champions situate themselves at the intersection of socioemotional leadership tasks and the community continua of the boundary-spanning framework. This type of boundary spanner focuses on "building external, political, intra-organizational support; roles may be symbolic" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p. 651).

One boundary-spanning strategy used by engagement champions came in the form of connecting and clarifying through big-picture thinking. As one university leader explained:

> *People seemed to recognize that there's only so much that can be done, and that the idea that people were excited about and also a little leery about when it was grand and amorphous, they were more relaxed about and more interested in once it had sort of narrowed and become specific and then they could think of, "Oh, this is what I can do to help there," and they saw the ways in which our ideas were related to art and the high school, and the community could come together in very concrete ways. And so I think that was a victory. Kind of going from the big to the smaller and then using the specificity of what we had arrived at as a way to address some of the potential pitfalls in the community relationship.*

Generally, this strategy requires awareness of the comfort of others at the table and effective communication.

While the definition of an engagement champion includes symbolic championing through formal roles (e.g., president), the findings of this study indicated that engagement champions at Boyer University are more hands-on and directly involved in active, as opposed to symbolic, community boundary spanning. Many participants talked about not only the university president's symbolic role but also his role as an engagement champion and internal engagement advocate, the lines of which were blurred due to specific actions he took. For example, several participants mentioned his approval of language in the new strategic plan related to community engagement and speeches that highlighted the importance of community engagement—which represented a turning point in the minds of many university personnel. In addition, the president's interest in and prioritization of engagement was a source of pride that seemed to set a tone or a context in which the growth of outreach and engagement was perceived as possible. One university leader said, "*I think it was a point of pride when the former president of this university chaired a [foundation] funded effort that wrote a series of reports of the future of*

*land-grants. One of them focused on engagement.*" According to university leaders, the actions the president took, more than words alone, demonstrated commitment to engagement.

***Internal engagement advocates.*** Through their actions, internal engagement advocates broke down the leadership hierarchy at the individual level. Internal engagement advocates are situated at the intersection of socioemotional tasks, leadership tasks, and the institutional continua of the boundary-spanning framework. This type of boundary spanner builds "campus capacity for engagement (rewards, promotion, tenure, budget, hiring)" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p.651). A university leader explained his or her role as an internal engagement advocate:

> *I'm the voice saying, "Let's not forget this lens [of community engagement]. Let's not forget this framework," and I'm institutionally focused right now because I think that we need to have a strong institutional focus that understands what engagement is really about before we ever truly immerse ourselves in communities. Even though we are a land-grant and community is our sort of bread and butter, the fact is that there's still a lot of institutional barriers that I think we need to overcome ... What changes need to happen so that we are ready to engage communities even in a better way than we do now?*

Data analysis revealed themes of leadership-initiated breakdown of hierarchies and utilizing external expertise (i.e., EAUL).

University leaders credited the openness of hierarchical boundaries with allowing typical channels of communication to be modified. Some participants used phrases like *no walls* or *no class system* to describe the institutional culture of accessibility and approachability of university leaders. For example, one university leader said:

> *We had a private dinner with [our commencement speaker] the night before [commencement] … and we had a chance just to have 6 or 8 of us talk with him. He said, "You all refer to each other by their first names, not dean or provost." It is like we are friends, like we like each other. … [He] understood there was probably some rank and protocol. He asked, "Does everybody do it like that here?" We said, "Yeah, pretty much."*

Several university leaders mentioned that they were on a first-name basis with many top administrators and that this created a feeling of connection and access to the process of leadership at the university. For example, one participant said, "*Even if you are in a formal setting with President [Last Name], if you introduce him as President [Last Name] he says '[First Name].*" Another university leader stated:

> *We have role-based stuff but there is the ability of people to interact at different levels. I mean, I can walk into [the Vice Provost of Outreach and Engagement]'s office and talk to him. I'm a nobody, but even being part of this group, there is no class system here.*

The breaking down of the leadership hierarchy at the individual level by many university leaders connected to the approachability of leadership at the organizational level.

**Continual revision through lessons learned.** According to the findings, another indicator of institutionalization was the continual revision of programs and initiatives. Leaders described BU as possessing a collective mindset that "*everything is a work in progress*" and that nothing was considered a failure because there were always lessons learned from each experience. Several university leaders felt that diversity of ideas was valued. One university leader gave an example of the continual revision of programs and initiatives:

> *I'm looking forward to this year's bus tour to see this model. We have never done it the same. Four years and each year it has been a very different, very unique experience. But we have seen and we have learned to appreciate the value of each experience for what it was. And at a minimum, we have raised the awareness of engagement.*

By piloting projects, engagement leaders could better meet goals and objectives using insight from lessons learned. In a variety of data sources, several university leaders cited the benefits of having the freedom and support to pilot an idea and then modify it in a variety of ways. As one leader reflected, "*Things always work at some level because whether it works or not isn't a dichotomous question because we always learn and make progress from what we are doing.*" Flexibility in definitions of success, ways to implement projects, and ways to support diversity of

thought at the university emphasized a certain kind of adaptability that created space for innovation.

Study participants indicated that piloting ideas on a small scale was a first step in successfully scaling up projects. A university leader described this ability to scale as a strategy for advancing the institutionalization of community engagement:

> *I would have put close to the top … our ability to scale, meaning that we did not try to do everything at once. Yeah, we piloted things on a scale that allowed us to test and try things and then adjust, redirect, whatever we needed to do in order to make it successful.*

Additionally, university leaders discussed the institutionalization of organizational structure and funding as an indicator of advancement in the overall institutionalization of community engagement; however, findings suggested that results in this area have not yet met expectations.

Though study participants gave examples of progress relative to organizational structure and funding, they identified a greater number of challenges to reaching goals in this category than any other. The university is made up of many units and divisions, and not all parts of the university are at the same level of institutionalization. As a university leader explained:

> *I don't think that all of the colleges are on the same continuum of understanding of what ... community engagement is. There are some obvious ones that are quite far along, and then there are others ... we are helping to inform what true community engagement is.*

Another leader described the state of institutionalization in the following way:

> *Not that our system isn't flexible enough to allow this work to be recognized. But it's different to have a system where you have to make the pieces fit, as opposed to having a system that invites the pieces in and makes space for that. So I think that's an area where we have a ways to go.*

An interviewee described the need for flexibility for addressing community needs, including decreasing bureaucracy within the university:

> *We have specific processes, [human resources] and contracts that get in the way of engagement and really frustrate our community partners, and so we've got to figure out a*

> *way to be more systematic, and at the same time be less systematic with how we do engagement.*

Another challenge centered on encouraging university fundraisers to seek funds for community engagement. As one university leader said, "*Definitely the fundraising—I would put that as our biggest challenge. I don't think that the folks in our foundation and fundraising are close to understanding this work yet.*" Though there were several areas at BU in which the institutionalization of community engagement had made great strides toward full integration, a consistent message from university leaders was that there was still more work to be done (and that there would always be more work to be done) to fully integrate community engagement.

***Promotion, tenure, and hiring***. When asked about Boyer's promotion, tenure, and hiring process, university leaders shared the fewest examples of community engagement indicators compared to all other components of Holland's (2006) assessment matrix. As one university leader explained, the area of tenure and promotion required more growth: "*We have a lot of work to do on building promotion and tenure guidelines based around engagement. We have a lot of work to do around budget and hiring.*" Another said:

> *We have an opportunity now to really look at policy, which would be ... a next step that we haven't really touched yet, to look at promotion and tenure guidelines and what that might look like. I think that that's the foundation that needs to begin to change as well.*

University leaders did attach considerable importance to incentives for increasing (and ultimately institutionalizing) engagement, especially promotion and tenure. However, interviewees also identified overworked and stressed faculty as a major inhibitor to successful engagement.

One strategy for institutionalization was to place engaged leaders on decision-making bodies in order to influence change. University leaders reserved time and energy for opportunities that offered the greatest potential to gain traction for the community engagement movement on campus. The university council on community engagement considered changing

promotion and tenure guidelines and curriculum vita requirements but ultimately chose not to pursue implementing any changes at that time because opportunities in other areas were perceived as more likely to succeed. For instance, the ability to influence the university mission became a priority because of the timing of the opportunity for engaged leaders to participate in writing the new strategic plan.

At the time of data collection, there was no clear place in promotion dossiers to include outreach and engagement. In fact, there was a mismatch between guidelines for promotion and tenure, and job descriptions that included engagement. University leaders explained that in order for others to see engagement as part of someone's job instead of as an extra side project, guidelines for tenure and promotion must be updated. As one university leader explained:

> *We reorganized Extension about four years ago and one of the things I felt was really important in our reorganization was that every one of our senior-level administrators had an outreach and engagement component to their jobs. So all of our regional administrators and our county leaders all have that built into their [professional development] ([promotion and tenure]). Now if I had to evaluate folks on just that component, not very many of them would get an extraordinary rating because we're still moving. It takes a while. And so we have this 100-year-old model of Extension that has been living a certain way and to get them to move a little tiny piece they have room for this.*

Several university leaders indicated that they hoped such engagement guidelines would become institutionalized in the future as opportunities allow. At the time of this study, the Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement served on the committee for university promotion and tenure, which was identified as a possible step toward enhancing the value of engagement within the tenure and promotion process.

The only aspect of tenure and promotion that had been allowed to change was the definition of scholarship. In the mid-1990s, according to one university leader, this definition was diversified to include more than just refereed journals. This changed the promotion process

for field, or community-based, faculty, who also transitioned from a separate entity into academic departments. Originally, they went through a separate process for promotion but were later integrated into the process established for each of their local departments and ultimately held to the same performance criteria. Faculty with extension appointments were promoted faster than other faculty on campus; at the time of the study, the promotion rate was 100% in the previous ten years.

Regarding other incentives for participation in community engagement, BU has created awards to recognize faculty for such activities. One university leader said, *"Those awards are showing up in promotion and tenure dossiers with great pride by those that write a narrative and by those that are writing an evaluation letter.*" Another leader explained that when the awards were first created, university leaders had to nominate people for them because nobody else was submitting nominations, but over time that has changed, and now there are enough nominees from other sources.

Data analysis identified examples of hiring related to institutionalizing community engagement. According to one university leader, the hiring process directly changed the course of community engagement due to the failed search that led eventually to the creation of the Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement position. One university leader described the connection between the hiring process and the philosophy of concern at BU:

> *Very bright people, but very bright people who aren't necessarily into stuff [apply for jobs at BU]. They're more into the quality of life. So when people get hired here, they have a lot of those attributes and they're very service-oriented.... I don't know if it's intentional, but I think there's a bias in the hiring process toward hiring nice people. Actually [name]'s on the record saying, "Don't hire assholes." Hire not only talented people but nice people. People who exude a desire to serve. This institution has a feeling from the beginning that service is important and for me, if I was to do anything over, I would make that one of the highest priorities in an interviewing process, is if this person thinks about others as much as they're thinking about themselves. I think the pendulum has swung where they realize institutions need to hire individuals who like to serve, and*

> *promotion and tenure wasn't based on that.... So I think this university's done a good job; it just has this ethos. Again it can be improved, there's always room for improvement.*

Findings exposed mixed feelings about the amount of progress that has taken place in this area. One university leader explained, "*As an administrator … as I reward individuals, as I move folks through the promotion and tenure process, as I hire individuals, I'm looking for evidence of or potential for effective outreach and engagement work.*" University leaders indicated that, while some strides had been made, there was a desire and capacity to improve.

**Building a Coalition of the Willing**

Building a coalition of the willing was a theme related not only to leadership, but also to mission, faculty involvement, community involvement, and external communication and fundraising. Sub-themes of building a coalition of the willing included a philosophy of concern, onboarding of faculty around strategic engagement initiatives, embedding conveners in communities, and community member testimonials.

Table 9

*Findings Related to Building a Coalition of the Willing*

| Research Question | Framework Components | Sub-themes |
|---|---|---|
| What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement?<br><br>(Organizational level) | Mission | Philosophy of concern |
| | Leadership | Building a coalition of the willing |
| | Faculty involvement | Strategic onboarding |
| | Community involvement | Embedded conveners |
| | External communication & fundraising | Community testimonials |
| According to university leaders, what qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess?<br><br>(Individual level) | Internal engagement advocate | Active conveners<br>Utilize external expertise to motivate |
| | Technical expert | Embedding of technical experts in community as public service faculty |

The leadership-centered themes related to the institutionalization of community engagement emerged from the findings. University leaders were seen as catalysts for change as they strategically increased the ranks of the "*coalition of the willing*" to influence progress for institutionalizing community engagement. Generally, such a coalition comprises a group whose formal and informal actions actively support implementing a change (Clark, 2007). One university leader shared:

> *I will say probably every one of us [EAUL alumni] on one level or another keeps our eyes open for people ... you could call a "coalition of the willing," and this is a Malcolm Gladwell [2002] "tipping point" thing. If we get enough people who are starting to think this way, we will tip; in the meantime we just have to look around this room, and whatever room, and find those that we can bring together as part of the coalition of the willing.*

Gladwell (2002) described a "tipping point" as the culmination of small acts that accumulate to the point of tipping the scales in particular direction. Another university leader also described the intention of building the coalition of the willing:

> *The team of us from [BU] that went to the [EAUL] and [when we] came back we had a tag line. We said we're going to go. We're going to spread the gospel of community engagement and what we've learned at the Engagement Academy and we will create a "coalition of the willing." That was our tag line, and we will empower that group. And that group will create the momentum.*

Sending participants to the EAUL from across campus and the state was one strategy employed to build a coalition of the willing. This also provided another access point to the president since an EAUL requirement for university leaders was to meet with the president in order to complete their pre-work questionnaire. Conducting an annual meeting with the president provided an opportunity for BU leaders to engage in ongoing conversations about community engagement.

Another strategy for building a coalition was to create and implement a university council on community engagement in 2007. Examples of the outputs of the council included choosing engagement champions to join the new strategic planning committee and organizing a bus tour to expose new faculty hires to possible connections with communities. University leaders indicated that both of these activities facilitated the institutionalization of community engagement.

A significant outcome of building a coalition of the willing was increasing awareness of community engagement. People traditionally unfamiliar with the concept were now connected to community engagement opportunities or were including community engagement in their work plans. This was an important aspect of building a group of people who were truly engaged. One university leader said:

> *Among some of the faculty there was an increased level of collaboration and information sharing, and people [who] were doing a certain project ... started thinking ... "How can I*

> *shift this project to fit something else, and who can I talk to, to include them." Then we had groups that clustered around certain interests, certain themes or research areas.... In terms of some of our professional faculty, some of our administrators are thinking more in collaboration now: different ways of thinking about collaboration; different ways of thinking of stakeholders; different ways of thinking that now when we do work; [and] we have a different readership in mind.*

This new level of collaboration and awareness demonstrated the power of the coalition of the willing. Faculty collaborated to sustain community engagement as their personal perspectives continued to shift in response to this new way of thinking. One university leader explained:

> *I see a lot of faculty going through classes through our Center ... before they even think about engaging a community with predominately [cultural group] residents. So there's ... a self-awareness that there is additional knowledge or training that they need to have before moving to engagement ... that's a pause that we've been able to insert in people's thinking that wasn't there before.*

This example signals a transition in thinking and processes that intentionally prepares and considers the perspectives of specific populations and contexts prior to engaging with the community. The coalition of the willing collaborated and acted to create sustained change.

Those within the coalition held a shared definition of engagement and used language to strategically promote community engagement. University leaders were intentional in using consistent language that supported community engagement. One leader explained, "*Leadership manifests in lots of locations, but the institution moves because of the movement in conversations and behaviors.*" One example of a relevant action was the approval from the highest level of leadership to include engagement language in the new strategic plan. In another instance, after the director of a new cultural center attended the EAUL, the center's official name was revised to include the word *engagement* in it, reflecting a transition and commitment to infusing engagement at the organizational level. One university leader explained the process of strategically building a coalition of the willing:

> *We started sending teams to the [EAUL]. We thought it would be a great way to get some early adopters in place in important roles in the university to reach into communities. So we started sending teams. Then we formed our own Engagement Academy, and ours is a lot different. Ours is about products, delivery, less about professional development. We started a colloquium where we had conversations about what's here. We have an Outreach and Engagement week.... where we have a number of different activities that happen during it. So, we just started thinking about ways that we could promote and spread the word about what engagement is. We also, as an institution, got more involved with the [national] Engagement Scholarship Consortium.*

Coalition building assumed a variety of actions at BU, including activities internal and external to the university for multiple audiences.

**A philosophy of concern.** Some study participants compared the level of mission institutionalization at BU to other higher education institutions they had been associated with previously and concluded that the most significant differences related to institutions' philosophy of concern. They described an attitude of concern for others embedded in the BU culture, which they identified as a critical foundation for advancing the relevant level of commitment needed to institutionalize community engagement. One university leader explained, "*We respect partners, and we sort of have this Western weird sense of 'we all are in it together.*" Another university leader reinforced this point:

> *I really think the institution attracts people who have that ethos in mind already. I'm not sure we're a fair comparison to a lot of other people because it just seems to be the nature of the place. We're just putting words to it now. I have felt [BU] has it—I get tired of this phrase—but it's more in its DNA than other land-grant universities. We're here for the community. Really not just saying it.*

Likewise, an associate dean in one college explained:

> *I think it's actually been in our DNA a long time, we just never called it that.... We reach out and we talk, it's just who we are and, fundamentally, it's who I am in many ways, even though I didn't until two or three years ago have the language of engagement to talk about it.*

Findings suggest that the mission at BU moved from high relevance to full integration on Holland's (2006) assessment matrix during the years of this study.

**Engaged onboarding for faculty.** Many study participants noted that strategic faculty onboarding was a significant catalyst for advancing the institutionalization of community engagement at BU. The most commonly cited example of an onboarding practice was the bus tour. One university leader explained:

> *The challenge we have, the goal in many cases, but really a challenge is to move some of these things from an abstract concept to a tangible concept. That is what the bus tour is all about. I mean, the same explosion [as experienced at EAUL] happens on the bus tour. They get to the end and go "Wow, I get it." Or at least, "I get it more than when I got on the bus." Our whole ability to learn from others, to talk about things, listen more than we talk. This puts a very tangible opportunity and outcome from that [bus tour].*

Since the annual bus tour began, 45 faculty members have been exposed to engaged ways of thinking and doing. As one university leader explained, "*I think that we've done a really great job again of creating a cadre of faculty who really understand the work of engagement. They go and they engage with and know how to involve the communities.*" A specific example shared by many university leaders as a success story of the bus tour was the engineering faculty member who initiated the Baker Project with his students because he met a group of women on the tour and connected their needs with his and his students' expertise.

Participants did, however, highlight a disconnect in communication and common language between field faculty and faculty on the main campus. One field faculty member explained:

> *The connection to campus is sometimes kind of a barrier. Not feeling as connected being out in the counties, but it varies.... sometimes we feel like a separate entity out in the county. The Engagement Academy team, two of us were from out in the county and the rest were on campus and I think that has been a little difficult to get the project going between what's happening on campus and what's happening here in our little community ... I think being based off campus is sometimes really good with the location piece, but it can be a barrier sometimes bringing those resources out.*

Another university leader acknowledged a communication challenge field faculty faced in trying to work with campus faculty community members, "*especially when you are in a community and*

*you are communicating with a college that doesn't have an Extension program*." Other university leaders attributed this challenge to some academic faculty never leaving campus to interact with communities: "*The notion of traveling was not new to me because I've been doing it my entire career. We know there are other faculty on campus that have probably never left campus for a business-related purpose.*" While particular lack of faculty involvement did reveal a potential hindrance to community engagement, it did not negate the positive movement toward full integration.

**Conveners.** At the organizational and individual levels, it was evident in this study that community members had been convened around common goals. At the organizational level, the building a coalition of the willing revolved around strategies for embedding conveners in communities. At the individual level, the concept was related to the actual conveners working and living in the communities.

Findings revealed that embedding conveners in communities through the Bridge Campus program was perceived by participants as an example of institutionalizing community engagement. Extension had interacted with the community for decades. The Bridge Campus program was a new way for the entire university to become involved with communities, designed specifically around the philosophy of community engagement. Extension included engaged interaction with communities and one-way delivery of information to communities. With BU's paradigm shift toward conveying greater learner centeredness, the Bridge Campus was a way to interact with a variety of learners and work with existing extension offices. However, the size of the state and the number of communities that were isolated by distance or a geographical boundary posed challenges that limited access to higher education. As one university leader explained:

> *Our [Bridge] Campus concept was to take the university in a new way to communities. It was the communities that said ... "We have that Extension connection, but we need a different kind of connection. We need a way in order to educate our population to prepare for those niche economic opportunities to help prepare our kids to be ready to believe this isolation to be more integrated." They had several things in mind that they wanted to talk about and so that's how [Bridge] Campus got started. It was an Ed Council that we organized. We were the conveners. We were not the directors, and listened and bounced ideas.*

Another university leader shared the following:

> *I think again [Bridge] Campus is doing a lot of work with community involvement, engaging with community partners at all different levels. I think that's just a really great example of how our university is looking to evolve the ways we work across the state. I think we've had our Extension service working in [the state] for over 100 years [and] we realize that some things need to be done a little bit differently for the university to be able to engage with the communities and sort of the way they need to these days. So that was an expansion of our statewide network that I think has been really successful and can be used to sort of evolve.*

Participants attributed success in community involvement to different tools and strategies; however, most participants cited the same examples of success.

According to some university leaders, community education councils were important facilitators for creating Bridge Campuses and served as indicators of community involvement. As one interviewee said, "*The community education council has been the key [to launching Bridge Campus] with buy-in [from] communities.*" Programs that grew out of these councils included the welders' project and United Families, both of which were held up as examples of successful community engagement. A university leader described the impact of the United Families program:

> *We have [a] 100% high school graduation rate. We have 100% of those students going to some sort of higher education, and those students have all been successful in their first year of college. At the time, we were targeting 10$^{th}$ graders; now year four just finished, and all of them are successful in college. We've trained 270 people. We're now in 10 communities mostly [run] by volunteers; two FTE [have come] out of this campus to support over 500 people in the [United Families] program in just four years.*

Another university leader said:

> *So the community led this. The community found the resources, the community found the places; it was an immediate community need and it saved a couple of businesses. This could not have happened under the old way that extension operated because this was the whole community working with our [Bridge Campus] coordinator. Welding is not at [BU], that's not a degree program. But it's what the community needed and we helped be the convener to bring folks together. It's a great story because everybody wins on this one, and it was showing the community that they had the capacity to do this on their own.*

Community stakeholders observed the impact of this program and showed support through financial gifts:

> *If I were going to hold our institution up as a model, it would be around student involvement, faculty involvement, and community involvement. Interestingly enough, when I founded the Center for [Culture] Studies and Engagement, I thought the most difficult piece would be to get community involvement. And it was amazing. Our community partnerships through that center are through the ceiling. They are standing at the door, lining up with projects and everything else. If anything, our challenge was in finding faculty and matching their projects with the community needs. So I think that the communities that we serve here are ready to engage with us, much more than we are ready to engage with them. So that has been a really interesting insight for me.*

The Bridge Campus model was an example of community engagement that demonstrated the co-creation and mutual benefit of solutions to community problems which were fully integrated into the structure of the university. In their role as Bridge Campus coordinators, the field faculty served as conveners, bringing multiple stakeholders and resources together in fulfillment of a common goal. Bridge Campus conveners differed from extension faculty because of their focus on partnerships to co-create knowledge, rather than acting as knowledge brokers to address community problems. Collective problem solving and co-developed problem-based programs exemplified specific engagement activities of conveners.

**Community testimonials.** Regarding external communications in the institutionalizing process, a theme emerged around the establishment of informal networks through community testimonials. Engagement materials available on BU's website included information about the

variety of ways community engagement is intertwined throughout the university. For example, internal and external audiences can hear directly from the university's president (in recordings of speeches) about the importance and value of community engagement. In interviews and focus groups, study participants identified both formal and informal external communications.

University leaders talked about how testimonials from people in the community and support from the community for the Bridge Campus were important indications that their programs were being conducted in a true spirit of engagement. One university leader said:

> *Another indicator [of institutionalizing community engagement] is clients themselves. When they are promoting us on their own accord, that's awesome. "Hey, Extension is great." "Master Gardener is awesome." You can't pay people enough to do that. It's free advertising.*

Powerful testimonials signaled positive impacts and served as catalysts for building community resources. Other leaders mentioned in-kind donations as indicators of community engagement: "*We've got local nonprofits, and the school district again is providing buses for us and letting us use some of their school rooms.*" Testimonials also helped to alert new community members to engagement initiatives and motivated them to get involved. One Bridge Campus coordinator shared an example of a fundraising success:

> *We wrote a grant and I was the lead grant writer for Bridge Campus, and it's held at the community college. The grant is through [an association]; our local [Bridge community] branch is super involved. We've got local nonprofits and the school district again is providing buses for us and letting us use some of their school rooms. I feel like a lot of the ideas and programs we have and want to do and get involved with, you have people that just come together and they're like, "Yep, excited about it."*

Study participants indicated that they gained perspective on reaching financial and other goals related to community engagement by seeking external information from several sources such as attending EAUL and earning national accreditations, including the Carnegie CEC. One university leader who assisted with the 2010 CEC application explained:

> *What I found with working on other accreditations and processes (like in the southeast for SACS), sometimes accreditations jumpstart conversations ... We recognized that we had not talked about or done things in some areas. That was an intervention, as we really try to build outreach and engagement.... It jump-starts conversations and drives some change in institutions.*

Understanding perspectives and criteria from sources external to the university prompted self-reflection that enriched the strategic planning around institutionalizing engagement.

**Internal engagement advocate.** At the individual level, boundary spanners acting as internal engagement advocates utilized external expertise to motivate others within the organization and implemented activities to promote the convening of groups to advance the institutionalization of community engagement.

***Utilizing external expertise to motivate***. At the individual level, internal engagement advocates employed external expertise to encourage individuals to understand and use community engagement practices. University leaders identified attendance at the Engagement Academy for University Leaders as another catalyst or tone-setter for change. People who had taken part in the EAUL had already been aware of the idea of engagement, but as a result of their participation, they expanded their understanding of and commitment to engagement. After returning to the university, they reported that their outlook had changed, that it had become infused with those of various units of the university:

> *Tracking the teams that we have sent over time I don't think I run into a member of a team, any of those teams, or the team as a whole who haven't come back saying, "Wow, it's so different now," "I get it," "It changes how I look at things." Our goal here, especially with this local [university engagement council] was, we can only send four people a year to [the EAUL], so how do we figure out how to share some of that beyond. I think that is probably what drove us to continue to support this at that level.*

Another university leader described the importance and challenge of sharing what he or she experienced at BU with those who had not had the opportunity to go to the EAUL themselves:

> *We want the promising champions that have caught the fire but don't know how to really operationalize it. Those are the people that will be our future. The ones that will never catch the fire, they will move out of the organization or they will fade away at some particular place or time. The emerging champions that we could really support—I really think are the key.*

The director of the Center for Culture and Engagement referred to her experience at the EAUL as influential in establishing the center: "*As a result of my experience, I was able to create a research and engagement center with the framework of community engagement, with the framework that I had got.*" Another university leader described taking action upon returning from the EAUL:

> *I had a conversation with my vice provost about moving forward some other community engagement initiatives, but I think that the first thing I did, of course, was a Google search. The second thing I did was help the institution move forward with a service-learning and center for civic engagement which resulted in the creation of that here at [BU]. Of course, I used everything in the [EAUL] to really inform the total and complete actual reorganization of our diversity units here on campus.*

One structural reorganization highlighted as an action taken by internal engagement advocates was the movement of cooperative extension faculty into individual departments. By doing so, public service faculty became more embedded across the university, once again bridging traditional structures of research and service. This reflected an investment in colleges whereby the public service faculty brought additional applied skills and community connections to each department.

***Activities to promote convening***. Many university leaders mentioned several activities that were instrumental in bringing people together from diverse settings. One was the bus tour, described earlier, in which new university personnel, over a period of several days, were taken to various communities to help them understand how they could incorporate the concepts of engagement into their work. This was an instrumental vehicle for encouraging conversations and connections across university divisions. One university leader explained:

> *I think the bus tour has been a great way to start that relationship and bring people in, and then the grants program is a hook to get people in. I think it is a great initiative. It's then keeping the connection with them, which is sometimes where we fall off a little bit. Everybody gets busy and kind of go off. So it's just keeping that connection.*

Others indicated that the size of the university was advantageous for convening internal groups. The smaller size in particular was seen as an advantage for bridging units:

> *We are a medium-size land-grant. Unlike a Big 10 university I came from, where you are kind of insulated inside a huge institute, here it is easy to work across the campus or across the university, across the disciplines, across the colleges, and I think that allows us to advance any number of things easier than it might be otherwise.*

Compared to larger campuses, the physical size of the main campus seemed to help the process of active convening; however, data also indicated that the large geographical area of the state posed a challenge because field-based faculty did not always feel connected to the main campus or have opportunities to connect with shared language building on campus. Also, shared language within the university did not automatically mean that the same definitions were shared in the community. This required an extra step of having intentional conversations with community members and community groups to help them acquire shared language as well.

Study participants also identified the Division of Outreach and Engagement as a place to convene internally due to its centralized structure and mission. The division brought together engagement advocates with those within BU leading community engagement initiatives: "*There is a [Division of Outreach and Engagement] and it's not just extension.... There is a place to go to have those conversations so [advocates] are not just trying to figure that out internally.*" Another university leader described convening in the division as a vehicle for exposing people to new ideas:

> *By definition ... the division was created to try to broaden the definition of [community engagement].... getting an opportunity to redefine in people's minds whether it is a community of interest or a community of place or a community of practice, and if your tent is that large then you can bring in a lot of different large diverse people into the*

> *discussion. If you are just talking about how we on the ground are experientially learning in this community, that is a relatively narrow approach, but if we talk about communities in the broadest sense possible then you can have people at the table from multiple points of view.*

At this university, boundary spanners in communities convened groups to co-create solutions to community-based problems. These boundary spanners were embedded in communities through organizational strategic planning.

**Technical expert.** Technical experts are situated at the intersection of technical practical tasks and the institutional continua of the Weerts and Sandmann (2010) boundary-spanning framework. This type of boundary spanner maintains an "emphasis on knowledge creation for applied purposes (disciplinary or multidisciplinary)" (p. 651). In this study, embedding such technical experts as public service faculty led to a further expansion of the language and influence of the philosophy of concern and engagement.

Though participants indicated that all four boundary-spanning roles were present in the university, there were not many examples of specific roles and activities associated with technical experts. Participants explained that their current jobs did not fall within the technical-expert arena; therefore, they did not have as many examples of specific ways community engagement was operationalized. One specific example (discussed earlier) was the faculty member who met the community members on the bus tour and ended up using his technical skills and the assistance of his students to create the machine for community members in the Baker Project.

**Funding as an Area for Future Efforts**

University leaders indicated that fundraising around engagement efforts had not reached capacity, and many saw areas for growth in this area, especially in the context of the development office. For example, one participant reflected:

> *Opportunities around philanthropy, around outreach and engagement, are just very nascent at this point. We have not taken advantage of that. There was a capital campaign that raised 1.2 billion dollars. We tend to think that when we ask for major gifts and that type of stuff, we are going to build a building, we are going to endow a faculty position, or we are going to endow scholarships. That is what major gifts are for. Really, building that culture of philanthropy can extend to outreach and engagement. We can endow these positions at [Bridge] Campus. We can endow these Extension positions. We can put buildings in communities. Endow whole programs from philanthropy. It's a lot of soundbites here. I'm sorry. As I've said many times, we have talked about this three-legged stool for too many years. County, state, and federal dollars and, well, I would feel better on a four-legged stool ... So, I love that philanthropy is one of our bedrocks for how we in fact do fund the work we are doing and looking at gifts and endowments and philanthropy. We have a long way to go, I think, in terms of some people over in the foundation understanding that. We just have to stay at them. You are missing a gold mine of donors who would never give to BU except because of the touch that they have in that community.*

Findings indicated evidence of external fundraising, but this is the component of Holland's (2006) assessment matrix that has the most capacity for growth. Tradition and inertia affect certain areas of the institution, but coupled with competition for resources, they oftentimes create a situation in which prioritization and value become subjective measures for some. One participant's response highlighted the current mindset of the foundation:

> *One gap is in fundraising, where we have a traditional BU foundation that funds traditional colleges. We're not traditional. I think that it's hard for our foundation to understand where we fit, and so most of the fundraising is done by people on the ground, [me] included. This will change a little bit and we will come around to some ideas. We did a crowdfunding campaign through them last year through the United Families program, and it was successful. It'll be interesting to see where fundraising hits. I know there are businesses out there that would like to fund this. I just need help with communications and fundraising from people who know how to do that, and that's their job.*

Another university leader countered this perspective by saying:

> *We've got the foundation mindset there. I'd say that our biggest limiting factor is time and people. It's just, if we had more people we could do more stuff. That's the usual "we want more" line. But with external communications and fundraising, the important thing there to mention is ... we've got several different funding sources that are created, endowments in this department, and all across the university—there's a lot of them. The College of Agricultural Sciences [is] going strong in that area and it's been growing in the past say 10 years, kind of shifted our focus to embrace that more. It's been good.*

But leaders also saw improvements in funding sources due to changes in local tax districts:

> *So, in the theme of new partnerships over the past years, we have gotten new tax service districts, which are communities to fund local Extension outreach activities. I think that is another indicator.*

This was seen as an indicator of local-level investment in engagement:

> *Passing the service districts ... and maybe it is not necessarily because they want to, counties are assuming a bigger share of the load having an Extension office in their county because our federal funds have been flat, and the state funds until this year have become a smaller part.... Anyway, people are standing up ... Probably the biggest indicator is people at the local level investing in this work, whether it is Extension or [Bridge] Campus, or whatever. People are seeing they are willing to pay for it and they are accepting an ever increasing part of the financial load of making sure it happens.*

A similar response was offered in reference to fund matching by communities involved in the Bridge Campus program:

> *In our [Bridge] Campus communities, typically there's a $30,000 to $50,000 investment into a [BU] program per [Bridge] Campus community. And so what that means is, we have shared [BU] faculty with communities now, and we have a systematic way of developing partnerships that when we go into a community we expect it's not just [BU] asking how we can help, it's really this person being seen as a community liaison and them being funded by the community as well.*

Another university leader explained:

> *[The special initiatives leader] has a meeting next week [with a specific donor] where they want to expand what Bridge Campus is doing in [one community] with a community college. This has happened because it's been a [true] engagement model, the money is coming, is just flowing in.... I am thrilled at how fast this kind of thinking has taken off and [is] being supported financially across the state with hardly having to even ask.... I'm not at all surprised that we are getting community involvement, and initially we had a lot of community support by having the community colleges give us space to be in and to have local dollars support things at the beginning. But now, it is really exceeding all expectations.*

The level of institutionalization of fundraising for community engagement depended on how fundraising was defined and measured. If the only measures are dollars deposited in the university or university foundation or the level of support from the BU fundraising office, then

BU still has significant capacity for growth. There is evidence, however, that this area has been building momentum. For example, one university leader shared:

> *[We are] looking for a partnership with BU that will include grant money. So we are already in the phase of having a proposal. We have one that is a federal proposal for about $7 million. This one I'm not sure, and I actually have a meeting coming up with the [state] [ethnic community] and [Boyer] University. It's about grants. It's about a partnership to create educational pipelines from the communities into [BU] and [BU] students going out to the community again to do participatory action-based research. We've also talked about what it would look like to have hybrid courses that go out in the field based on community needs, so there's a lot more dialogue.*

If cash and in-kind resources are considered, then BU has several examples of evidence in those areas. For example, a welder did not lose his business, the women of the Baker Project were able to grow their business exponentially, and community stakeholders have supplied meeting space and instructors as in-kind gifts to help address community needs. Nevertheless, the data suggest that limited resources are a perceived barrier to institutionalizing community engagement.

University leaders in this study recognized that resources are necessary for sustaining the institutionalization of community engagement. This was reflected in the sixth goal of the University Outreach and Engagement Strategic Plan, which acknowledged that resource expansion is needed for financial and human resources to support success in outreach and engagement across the university. Data analysis revealed that internal funding and funding structures were areas requiring growth in order to reach full institutionalization. Funding was internally prioritized for community engagement through the creation of the Division of Outreach and Engagement. According to a special initiatives leader, external funding sources included traditional state and federal monies in addition to entrepreneurial, community-based funds whereby others invested in ideas and other communities. Several university leaders

indicated that the structure and funding implications resulting from the creation of the division were signs of advancement toward institutionalization goals.

## Summary of Findings

### Research Question One

Research question one examined key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement. This study found that, at Boyer University, characteristics included providing an incubator for innovation in community engagement and building a coalition of the willing. Predominate sub-themes around providing an incubator for innovation included the consensus that organizational actions were more important to advancing institutionalization than rhetoric alone and that institutionalization evolved through applying lessons learned from successes, challenges, and failures. The following section summarizes the findings by each component of institutionalization.

Regarding mission, two characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement emerged: (1) infusing engagement language into a new strategic plan, and (2) embodying a philosophy of concern. Several university leaders indicated that a baseline of shared language was foundational to legitimizing the movement but that such a baseline took time and strategic planning to advance. Engagement-inclusive language included in key organizational documents, such as the strategic plan and mission for the university, sent a strong message to internal and external audiences about the importance of community engagement at BU. University leaders described BU as a place that formally and informally expressed a philosophy of concern through thought and action across the organization. This philosophy of concern was identified as an integral trait of BU aligned with the foundations of community engagement, encouraging buy-in from both the organizational and individual levels.

In the area of leadership, three characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement emerged: (1) access to the university president, (2) building a coalition of the willing, and (3) actions upholding rhetoric. University leaders found access to be critical to helping decision makers understand the importance of and fit with mission in influencing their buy-in and support of community engagement. Leaders in strategic positions of influence were identified as important to increasing the number of individuals and groups supportive of and doing community engagement. A critical mass of support was needed, however, to advance levels of institutionalization. Moreover, once supporters of engagement shared their message, it was crucial for their rhetoric to be followed by action, especially at the highest levels of leadership. For community engagement to be deemed important to the university, individuals needed to perceive actions consistent with earlier communications from leaders in order to validate claims. Findings suggest that the institutionalization of community engagement was enhanced through access to leaders—leaders building the breadth and depth of support, and leaders showing support through actions.

In the area of promotion, tenure, and hiring, strategic placement of engagement leaders on decision-making bodies was a characteristic linked to the institutionalization of community engagement. University leaders cited the fewest examples and evidence of this component of institutionalization compared to the other components in the matrix. Timing of opportunities to increase integration of community engagement and not having buy-in from a critical mass to affect change were offered as primary reasons institutionalization had not advanced to desired levels. Strategically placing advocates of engagement on committees, councils, and other decision-making bodies represented a first step in influencing change at BU in this area.

Regarding organizational structure and funding, two characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement emerged: (1) restructuring and building centralized networks, and (2) continual revision through lessons learned. Boyer University was restructured to include units, divisions, and centers that incorporated community engagement into their missions as a way to build centralized mechanisms and to operationalize engagement. For many university leaders, this characteristic legitimized the movement by reinforcing shared language around the concept of community engagement and university-level support of it.

In the area of student involvement and curriculum, two characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement emerged: (1) expanded opportunities, and (2) official recognition of service-learning. The process of completing applications for accreditations and certifications revealed capacity to grow student involvement and the curriculum. New, diverse community-engagement opportunities for students increased the university's level of institutionalization. Community engagement-accredited courses were given official recognition on students' transcripts. Both characteristics were described as advancing the institutionalization of engagement.

In the area of faculty involvement, strategic onboarding was identified as another characteristic of the institutionalization of community engagement, with the bus tour being the most common example of how this was operationalized. Faculty were able to learn about community engagement, see it in action, and understand how it might be incorporated into their plan of work. Positive outcomes from the bus tour helped to validate the importance and continued support of strategic onboarding of faculty in regard to community engagement.

In relation to community involvement, embedding conveners in communities was identified as important to institutionalizing community engagement. The main example cited by

study participants was that of Bridge Campus coordinators living and working in communities, helping to bring stakeholders together for co-created solutions to community problems. Bridge Campus as a whole and specific projects within it, such as United Families and the Welding Project, were described as evidence of community involvement. In the areas of external communication and fundraising two characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement emerged: (1) community testimonials, and (2) university marketing materials.

The data analysis for this research question was complex and further supported the need for research question three, in which the organizational perspective of research question one and the individual perspective of question two were examined together to explore the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge. Often, a single example of institutionalization described by a university leader in this study intertwined more than one component within the matrix. For example, the organizational structure component of the matrix was usually linked to the leadership component. The faculty involvement component was often comingled with the student involvement and community involvement components of the matrix. The process of sustainable institutionalization of community engagement was found to be complex, with significant interplay between and among components.

It is also important to note that while institutionalization of community engagement has advanced in many areas at BU, it has not reached full integration, and was often described by study participants as a work in progress. Leaders shared varying perspectives on the university atmosphere in regard to the exact level of integration of engagement:

> *One of the values we are still working through, and may never get all the way through ... is the general university atmosphere. The elitist attitude of what is knowledge and you can find it inside some of our own people who want to be sure that everything we do is research based. It's a conversation of what constitutes legitimate knowing. When we are in the partnership of engagement world, you are co-developing and co-branding, and the*

> *origin of what we know hasn't gone through the proper channels you grew up with. That is definitely a work in progress.*

Another area for growth identified by university leaders related to how to measure change. For example, one university leader said that students had been reporting anecdotally that they prefer engagement courses but that he was not certain how the university could quantify or measure that as an indicator of successful engagement.

More than one university leader said that community engagement was in the "*institution's DNA*," but there remained a disconnect between experiences and support for those off campus compared to those on the main campus. Onboarding faculty to join the "*coalition of the willing*" did meet expectations, and examples of positive outcomes do exist, such as the bus tour, but exposing faculty and staff to the concept of and opportunities for community engagement was only the first step. More must be done to advance the support and motivation of people to implement engaged practices *after* the tour.

Many university leaders shared the same examples of institutionalization regarding each of the components of the matrix—a type of triangulation that strengthened this study. In summary, each of the primary characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement at BU emerged from the data, providing insight into how theoretical components of community engagement were operationalized and led to advances in institutionalizing community engagement.

**Research Question Two**

Research question two examined the qualities of boundary spanners within this case. This study found that action over rhetoric and building a coalition of the willing were key qualities of boundary spanners. The following section summarizes findings by each boundary spanning role.

All of the university leaders in this study valued the roles and components of social, task, community, and institutional focus. The internal engagement advocate role was identified most frequently and described in the greatest amount of detail. Throughout their careers and in their current capacities, all boundary-spanning roles were utilized, contributing to advancements in institutionalizing community engagement. Boundary spanners are active conveners, described by one study participant in the following way:

> *I can think of a couple, and the most powerful people that work in a number of ways is to be a convener, to bring people together to talk about things that matter. That takes any number of forms. It also works at different scales. It works around this table in my office that we're sitting at now. It also works in a university-wide level when we convene a conversation around something that is of value statewide that has stakeholders statewide that we have the ability to bring together on a village green. The university is a great village green that few other institutions can manage as successfully. And so my role and activities are frequently associated with initiating conversations around provocative topics. A great example might be we have for the last two years held a daylong event that we're calling Extension Reconsidered, and it asks the question about opportunities in heretofore uncharted territory around the way the university embraces outreach and engagement mission.*

Another university leader discussed the capacity to convene more at BU:

> *There is an area of opportunity to ... network on campus and off campus just building the network of people who are doing this boundary spanning and bringing more people into the conversation. There are people who go to the [EAUL] and that is sort of a small group really, but there is a lot of people that don't work for extension, that might work for [a specific] institute or they might work for different pre-colleges or programs. Anything where they might feel like their voice might be really valuable. We just haven't connected with them. We talked about doing some work to bring those folks more into the conversation.*

All four boundary-spanning roles were described as conveners; however, findings suggest that convening in relation to community-based problem solvers and internal engagement advocates was more critical than in the other two roles.

The technical expert was the least represented role overall, which is not surprising based on the official and informal roles of the participants of this study resulting from the selection

criteria BU used to send participants to attend EAUL. Participants indicated that technical experts and community-based problem solvers were present at BU; however, those boundary-spanning roles were underrepresented in this study. One university leader said that community-based problem solvers were increasing in number and that internal engagement advocates were strong:

> *We are doing reasonably well in internal engagement advocacy as well as having a number of champions on campus. I think we do pretty well on this side. I do see people more and more in the community-based problem-solving [roles at BU].*

Engagement champion was the second least represented role. There were several descriptions in the data in which it was difficult to distinguish between the roles of engagement champion and internal engagement advocate. At BU, it was perceived that the same person assumed both roles. Overall, development or career shifts seem to have occurred for the university leaders when they started their careers as technical experts or community-based problem solvers and transitioned to internal engagement advocates and engagement champions over time.

> *It does depend on the nature of their job whether they work in one quadrant or another. Yes, among the community of people who are boundary spanners and working in the outreach and engagement community, yes, I see a lot of that work [four boundary-spanning roles], but it's still too small of a subset of people who "get it".... Even though there has been strong extension presence in the college, sometimes that work was segregated from the work done on campus.*

Those boundary spanners described by participants aligned with the Weerts and Sandmann (2010) boundary-spanning framework. University leaders felt that the framework was inclusive of the types of roles they had experienced and observed. Boundary spanners in this study expanded boundaries in communities and expanded boundaries within their university. They brought people into the coalition of the willing to build the critical mass needed to

institutionalize community engagement both within the institution and across the community and institutional boundaries.

**Research Question Three**

Research question three examined the institutionalization process as an adaptive challenge unable to be overcome by technical solutions. Institutionalizing community engagement was considered an adaptive challenge by the participants in this study, and they addressed the challenge by (1) empowering others, (2) helping themselves and others stretch beyond routines by questioning norms, (3) shaping institutional norms, (4) honoring work in progress, and (5) acknowledging that all roles are important, complex, and overlapping (see Table 10). Data offered insight into the interplay among individual and organizational perspectives, activities, and roles. Much of the data collected around research questions one and two focused on compartmentalizing and identifying how activities fit into specific "boxes" (i.e., categories or roles of a matrix or framework), but the findings suggest that the nature of community engagement and boundary spanning intrinsically has to do with expansion of roles, overlapping roles, and integration within or across components of institutionalization.

Table 10

*Findings Related to Institutionalization as an Adaptive Challenge*

| Research Question | Findings |
|---|---|
| In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge? | • Empowering others to stretch beyond routines by questioning norms<br>• Shaping institutional norms<br>• Honoring work in progress<br>• Valuing role complexity and leadership |

**Empowering others to stretch beyond routines and norms.** University leaders in the study explained that one strategy for addressing the adaptive challenge of institutionalizing community engagement was by encouraging people to gain exposure to alternative ways of thinking about and doing their work. This was accomplished literally during the bus tour, which brought faculty and staff into community settings where partnerships could be built, and it was also a part of several other programs developed to encourage faculty to rethink how they could succeed in their jobs while participating in engagement activities. It can be uncomfortable for people to step outside of their routines and to rethink norms guiding their behavior. Nevertheless, university leaders discussed strategies for encouraging people to rethink their relationship to engagement. One university leader offered an example:

> *It seemed like, to me, we should systematically approach a coaching process in which we can have those kinds of conversations with faculty members. The fact that you want to do your job in a new way—how do you have that conversation with clientele? How do you have that conversation with county commissioners? How do you help them see the big picture? I think we have the capacity for doing that if we would just make it a priority of people at this table.*

University leaders stressed the importance of striking a balance between challenging people's personal norms and doing so in a way that makes them feel safe. They cited the importance of anticipating pushback and being patient during this process. As one study participant reflected:

> *I think that we were able to create a safe space. Identify which pieces needed to be owned by whom. Respect faculty governance. Respect the political structure, the social structure that needed to be honored. We knew when to provide guidance and support and when to let go. We were able to identify the pieces that really mattered and needed to happen a certain way and were able to accept the pieces that came to us in a different shape than what we had hoped but were still acceptable.*

This latter sentiment reflects White's (2009) notion that feeling safe or creating a safe space is often defined in terms of a psychological state in relation to one's level of anxiety.

One outcome of creating a safe space which university leaders mentioned was empowering others. One participant described the impact of fostering an environment for trying new activities: "*The environment that we create and provide to make it easy for people to try things … that's an empowering sort of environment for them to work in.*" The same university leader cited the Bridge Campus program as one example: *"I really think it's [about] celebrating and encouraging people to try something new.*" Empowering the Bridge Campus program coordinators to meet the unique needs of the community, such as the United Families program, serves as a clear example of how empowerment led to expanded engagement at BU. The positive impact of the first Bridge Campus led to interest in and funding for Bridge Campuses in other communities. Another university leader explained an additional way in which leaders supported people to build confidence:

> *I think that's one of the things I would describe that I do by building someone's accomplishments and polishing their skillsets and getting them ready. If that empowers people, then yes. If empowerment's more about senior leadership saying we believe in you, go forth and do good work. I think we do that, too.*

Leaders described their work as empowering because in creating a safe environment they also supported others in addressing this adaptive challenge.

**Shaping institutional norms**. In managing adaptive challenges, university leaders indicated that nimbleness and strategic thinking were important components for shaping norms. Nimble leaders, according to the data, engaged in listening and learning, valuing knowledge from multiple sources, and futuristic thinking. For instance, nimble leaders focused on asking the right questions while listening and learning instead of providing the correct answers. A university leader described this concept in the following way:

> *Ask big questions and do not try to always have smart answers. My style in providing direction is that I realize I need to have a team of people who are willing to collaborate, and I need to sit back and do some deep listening. But I also know in the back of my head*

> *that I have a direction. I know where we need to be going, and so the best way, especially given the culture and climate of our campus and of course this shifting and changing landscape of higher education under our feet, is really to provide a loose framework that is presented to a team of transdisciplinary people.*

In shaping norms, university leaders valued knowledge from a variety of sources instead of relying solely on traditional voices within the academy. In this way, their actions mirrored the shift of the institution's perspective on extension from unidirectional information sharing to collaborative engagement. The leaders themselves reported becoming more engaged with the faculty and valuing knowledge from community members, community leaders, organizations, and other educational entities.

**Honoring work in progress.** University leaders indicated that they addressed the adaptive challenge of institutionalizing community engagement by reshaping norms in order to interpret imperfect progress as a point of pride, as an iterative process of reflection, and as constant, saying that the work would never be done because there were always revisions and improvements to be made on all projects. In many of their descriptions of projects, it seemed that constantly revising and learning from past projects was a strong institutional value at BU, evidenced by the support and encouragement to try new ideas through pilots. Definitions of success included desired outcomes of pilots—and not just successful projects—as well as lessons learned. Moreover, reaching the intended goals was not the only measure of success. Learning from pilots and using the knowledge gained to inform future initiatives was considered a positive outcome. One university leader referred to the Division of Outreach and Engagement as a place for thinking about how to infuse engagement into university work: "*We have started some of the pieces.... We still have a lot to do to really get it institutionalized.*" University leaders celebrated when initial outcomes of projects or processes were achieved, while continually reflecting on how to modify concepts to improve outcomes. Another university leader said:

> *It is a real spectrum of work of where we are. The whole thing is a work in progress. When the division was formed, one of the things we sat down and had a very intentional conversation about ... was that we should be very focused on a version of the Hippocratic oath about do no harm.... If there are programs out there already doing well, we don't want to take them over. We don't want to negatively isolate them because they are not part of [something]. The big umbrella should mean that everybody [is included], whether we are funding it or not ... our goal has been to be as inclusive and supportive as possible, but not necessarily control everything.*

University leaders expressed the importance of being flexible throughout the process and recognized that while innovations were evolving they were also shaping institutional norms.

**Role complexity and leadership.** The adaptive nature of institutionalizing community engagement is complex. University leaders recognized that all of the roles in Weerts and Sandman's (2010) framework associated with institutionalization are important and necessary in order to achieve goals but also that interactions between these roles supports change. Although they reported that roles were often defined by their official job descriptions, there were people in the institution who assumed roles outside of those official duties because of their connection with engagement or their ability to stretch their ideas and reshape norms.

The examples of institutionalizing community engagement that university leaders provided were almost always related to more than one component of Holland's (2006) matrix, and when asked about their boundary-spanning roles, leaders said that many of the roles intertwined and spanned more than one organizational unit. The component of community involvement, for instance, did not take place in a silo but instead occurred across units that traditionally may not have had fluid boundaries. Research question three emerged as a way to think about how the organizational and individual levels of analysis could be used together to add insight that could not be gained by only considering one of the levels.

Leaders at BU appeared to attach significance and value to outlining an institutional vision. Study participants identified shaping institutional norms as a process that involved questioning norms and simultaneously advocating for a paradigm shift:

> *I have spent more of my time on this side [internal engagement advocate], I think, both convincing the university that in a contemporary setting we need to learn as much as we teach and listen as much as we talk, and ... [emphasizing] the concept of engagement as a way of evolving the university to a higher level of work.*

Another leader said:

> *I think that the most successful administrators and most successful leaders, regardless of position, are going to be those that are constantly juggling all of these variables. They can look at a context, can look at an institutional culture and say, "Okay, we really would love to move the work of engagement forward." Maybe it would be across these levels that you shared with me: Barbara's levels [i.e., the Holland matrix]. Where is it most appropriate to do this right now with what we have? So the questions become really contextualized.*

Moving the traditional extension model to a more comprehensive model of engagement in order to address relevant and contemporary concerns in a new way exemplified the university's desire for a paradigm shift: "*We cannot be the extension service that our grandparents enjoyed. I want to be the extension service that our great-grandchildren will enjoy.*"

Some participants expressed a counter-response in their descriptions of community engagement. For example, some began talking about community engagement but then subconsciously broadened their discussion to include outreach. Comments such as "*we have been doing engagement before engagement was cool*" or "*it is in our DNA*" implied a historical two-way engagement model when, in fact, the organization had used a one-way model of delivery.

## Chapter Summary

The analysis of data collected during this study offered insight into how the process of institutionalization was operationalized at Boyer University. Individual roles and activities identified by university leaders in this study aligned with those comprising Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) boundary-spanning framework. The findings also revealed the complexity of institutionalizing community engagement at BU.

Many aspects of the organizational (research question one) and individual (research question two) levels of institutionalizing community engagement were intertwined in this study, as evidenced by the theme agreement between research questions one and two. How each theme was operationalized was distinct in relation to each level. Considering findings from both levels together provided more insight than analyzing them separately.

Three research questions guided this qualitative single-case study. Key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement at Boyer University (research question one) were found to provide an incubator for innovation in community engagement and to help build a coalition of the willing. Qualities of boundary spanners within this case (research question two) were found to include the use of actions, more than rhetoric, to communicate their knowledge and the importance of engagement, and their active building of a coalition of the willing. Finally, this study found that university leaders addressed institutionalizing community engagement as an adaptive challenge (research question three) by empowering others to stretch beyond routines through questioning and reshaping institutional norms, and valuing role complexity in leadership.

# CHAPTER 6

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents an overview of summary of the findings, conclusions, and implications from a qualitative, single-case-study inquiry into university leaders' perceptions of boundary-spanning activities and the complexity of operationalizing the institutionalization of community engagement. Data were collected from a Carnegie community-engaged public land-grant university identified as working toward the institutionalization of community engagement. The following research questions guided this study:

(1) What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement?

(2) According to university leaders, what specific qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess?

(3) In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge?

The chapter first summarizes an overview of the findings related to the research questions and then outlines key conclusions drawn from the study's data analysis. Finally, implications for practice, policy, and future research are discussed.

## Overview of Findings

This study found that university leaders addressed the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge by empowering and encouraging employees to stretch personal norms, shaping institutional norms, honoring the fluidity of work, and acknowledging role complexity. Boyer University worked toward the institutionalization of community

engagement by trying different strategies and adopting a flexible approach of learning from process (i.e., pilot program support) rather than from outcomes alone. New nontraditional internal partnerships were forged through the university council on community engagement and by sending teams to the Engagement Academy for University Leaders. Study participants believed that the institution utilized boundary-spanning roles and that those roles were essential to advancing the institutionalization of community engagement at BU.

Prior to the study, Boyer University had earned the Carnegie Foundation's elective Community Engagement Classification and had sent participants to the EAUL every year of the academy's existence, from 2008 to 2014. Study participants included then-current BU employees who had also attended the EAUL. Data sources included EAUL pre-work (in the form of an open-ended questionnaire completed individually or in teams), two focus groups, individual interviews, and selected artifacts.

The EAUL served as a baseline for understanding and operationalizing ideas and theories of engagement. Resident scholars helped participants develop a deeper understanding of the complexity of community engagement in higher education. Study participants indicated that exposure to how other universities operationalized engagement aided their efforts at BU. An expanded understanding of engaged concepts and pathways to achievement contributed to the progress of institutionalizing community engagement at BU.

**Summary of Research Question One Findings**

Holland's (2006) assessment matrix of levels of commitment to community engagement informed the analysis of data in answering research question one. Characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement were described for every category of the matrix (i.e., mission; leadership; promotion, tenure, and hiring; organizational structure and funding;

student involvement and curriculum; faculty involvement; community involvement; and external communication and fundraising), though advancement of institutionalization toward desired goals varied by category. Several rich descriptions of the characteristics of institutionalization emerged within the following categories: mission, leadership, organizational structure and funding, and community involvement. Findings indicated evidence of leadership component of the matrix was the most robust. Considering that the primary perspective in this study was of those who filled a variety of leadership positions, this is not surprising. The focus of this research question was not the quantity of characteristics identified; rather, it was to describe organizational characteristics the university leaders believed assisted in advancing institutionalization. The categories of promotion and tenure, and external communication and funding demonstrated the least advancement toward desired engagement goals.

The characteristics of institutionalizing community engagement found in this study infused, centralized, and provided access to community engagement within BU. For instance, infusing engagement language into the strategic plan—and ultimately into BU's revised mission statement—and the prevalence of an institutional philosophy of concern were two characteristics of mission. Institutionalization was also evident in the university's branding and public communication.

Access to top administrators, building a coalition of the willing, and turning rhetoric into action by leaders were found to be characteristics of engagement-centered leadership. Evidence of institutionalization included BU's creation of a Division of Outreach and Engagement and building groups that worked on engagement (i.e., Outreach and Engagement Council, Internal Engagement Academy, and the Bridge Campus). The newly created position of Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement elevated access to and symbolized the importance of engagement at

the university. The BU president's messages supporting community engagement were consistence with the actions of his office.

Study participants indicated the continual revision of programs and projects by utilizing lessons learned from pilots and earlier attempts to implement community engagement advanced the progress towards institutionalization. BU expanded opportunities for student involvement through service-learning opportunities (e.g., engaged internships with extension professionals and support from centers designed to foster engagement) and officially recognizing service-learning on transcripts. Faculty involvement at BU included strategic engaged onboarding opportunities (i.e., community bus tour for new faculty and incentives for engaged work).

The data also revealed that embedding conveners in communities contributed to the advancement of institutionalization through community involvement. Community councils were established and community-based programs were implemented to support the needs of communities while enhancing their connection to BU for mutual benefit. Examples of community involvement included the Bridge Campus and United Families programs. External communications were characterized by community testimonials and centralized marketing, such as through presidential speeches, by maintaining an engagement presence on BU's website, and by locating Bridge Campus offices on community college campuses. Study findings confirmed BU had advanced the level of institutionalization of community engagement over time, though participants agreed that engagement could still be more fully integrated.

**Summary of Research Question Two Findings**

Analysis of data related to research question two revealed that university leaders at BU valued all community engagement boundary-spanning roles identified in Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) boundary-spanning framework for university-community engagement roles

at public research universities. Study participants aligned most closely with the internal engagement advocate role, but they also had experienced the three other roles throughout their careers. According to findings, the leaders' official roles were tied to their boundary-spanning identity. Community-based problem solvers utilized deep listening and solutions-focused actions to institutionalize community engagement. They worked with communities, clarified expectations, and communicated impacts with communities to BU leadership. Engagement champions exhibited big-picture thinking and exercised active over symbolic roles in working toward the institutionalization of engagement. Internal engagement advocates supported the compression of hierarchical leadership and utilized external expertise to motivate individuals to embrace community-engaged work. Finally, technical experts were found to advance the institutionalization of community engagement most notably when they were embedded in communities. University leaders in this study identified boundary-spanning roles that aligned with the framework across BU, but the type of role, position of boundary spanners, and number of boundary spanners varied among segments of the university. A critical mass of community engagement boundary spanners generated momentum towards goals for institutionalization.

**Summary of Research Question Three Findings**

In relation to research question three, university leaders described four ways in which the institutionalization of community engagement was addressed as an adaptive challenge at BU. Engaged leaders empowered and encouraged others to stretch beyond routines and to question the purpose and relevance of norms that conflicted with the inclusion of community engagement. Shaping institutional norms aided in the institutionalization process. University leaders indicated that honoring community engagement as a continual work in progress was important. University

leaders also acknowledged the complexity of institutionalization required creating strategies that encompass a multitude of individual and organizational factors to be taken into account.

## Conclusions and Discussion

Three conclusions were drawn from the study findings. First, BU created conditions that allowed personnel to experiment with community engagement. Second, the university engaged in strategic thinking and planning around the sustainability of community engagement. Third, in its institutionalization efforts, BU fostered a model of a complex "braid" of adaptive actions and motivations.

Thematic coding and constant comparison data-analysis strategies were employed in this study, producing findings that provided insight into all three research questions. Though interview and focus group data were relied on most heavily in the analysis, all data sources informed findings and conclusions. This study found that building a strategic and critical mass of boundary spanners affected change in the complex system. Due to its complexity, institutionalization required a multilayered approach; thus, a variety of strategies were employed at the organizational and individual levels to address it.

### Conclusion 1: Creating Conditions for Experimenting with Engagement Fostered Its Institutionalization

Boyer University created a sense of place whereby possibilities of participating in community engagement could be safely explored and supported. Welch (2016) explains, "Implementing institutionalization requires infrastructural platforms from which to provide the necessary support for community engagement. Institutionalization is a dynamic and complex interplay of cultural and systematic factors" (p.109). Conditions at this university allowed individuals and teams to experiment with applying community engagement principles to

projects, programs, and initiatives. Community engagement centers are prevalent in Carnegie community-engaged classified institutions (Welch, 2016). This study described how one university created conditions within such dedicated centers and at the university in its entirety. Specific conditions identified in this study for fostering engagement work included: (1) creating centralized centers, units, and divisions associated with engagement; (2) creating and nurturing internal support networks for the coalition of the willing; (3) learning from external experts to build foundations for the coalition of the willing; (4) valuing lessons learned as outcomes of earlier attempts to institutionalize community engagement.

Centralized centers, units, and divisions associated with engagement provided unity in operationalizing engagement at BU. Specifically, the creation of the Division of Outreach and Engagement generated a centralized unit for community engagement activities that connected people and groups to engagement throughout the university. The division was an incubator for innovation, empowering individuals and teams to experience and be rewarded for their engagement work. The division also created space for innovations around community engagement. Moreover, the head of the division was positioned as a vice provost, thus increasing the level of protection for those willing to assume certain risks in taking on community engagement work because they had a powerful and influential advocate within the university administration.

The coalition of the willing supported community engagement both formally and informally. The engagement council provided formal networks for strategically planning and implementing programs, projects, and initiatives. Advisory councils are a common component of institutional infrastructure (Welch, 2016). Informally, engaged employees interacted with non-engaged counterparts. The concept of networks connects with AASCU's (2002) position

that leadership needs to include a network of leaders at various lower levels in order to effect change. The coalition of the willing also strategically recruited engaged leaders across the university as advocates for community engagement, thereby broadening the safe environment at BU for experimenting with engagement. This concept aligns with Purcell's (2013) findings that boundary-spanning behaviors utilizing distributed leadership advanced community engagement.

Boyer University created conditions for experimenting with engagement by utilizing external expertise to scaffold understanding of community engagement. Involving university leaders in the EAUL was one way key leaders were recruited to the coalition in an effort to expand conditions for employees to safely try new activities and adopt new ways of thinking outside of institutional norms. This was accomplished namely by investing strategically in sending groups and teams over time to the EAUL. As a critical mass grew in understanding the definition and benefit of community engagement, they aided in creating conditions for others to learn and grow in utilizing the innovation. This concept aligns with the concept that opinion leaders have influence on the diffusion of innovation into the organization (Coleman, Katz, & Menzel, 1966; Rogers, 2003). Additionally, through the EAUL, external networks of peers at other higher education institutions were also formed to serve as support systems for experimentation. A shared language was also developed and adopted by EAUL participants, and a coalition of the willing emerged at BU. Abstract concepts were transformed into tangible experiences in the form of action plans first engendered at the EAUL. Similarly, university leaders who were alumni of the EAUL were instrumental in creating a safe space for others at BU to learn what community engagement was, understand how it could fit into their individual work plans, and try to implement it.

Flexibility and positive energy were instrumental in readjusting goals if intended outcomes were not met, allowing leaders to pivot to new goals using lessons learned from earlier institutionalization efforts. In other words, university leaders continually adjusted and modified projects and perspectives to enhance community engagement. BU faculty and staff did not seem to get mired in negativity when attempting to institutionalize community engagement. Experimenting with engagement or with strategies to institutionalize engagement was supported by university leaders, and pilots and trials of engaged work were encouraged. Strategies that advanced engagement were frequently revised and often scaled-up. If the intended goals were not met, individuals, groups, and teams from the top administration down attempted to find silver linings within lessons learned. In other words, they valued equally original intended outcomes and lessons learned to inform the design and implementation of future attempts.

Study findings related to creating conditions to safely experiment with engagement confirmed concepts in the existing literature. In relation to Heifetz and Laurie's (2001) description of direction, findings from this study correlated with identification of the adaptive challenge and framing discussions around the issue, such as when the council aided the Division of Outreach and Engagement by giving direction on the dynamics of addressing institutionalization challenges and working to provide the conditions for others to wrestle with the issues (instead of simply offering solutions). The concept of protection in adaptive work postulated by Heifetz and Laurie centered on letting people feel external pressure within a manageable range. This was demonstrated at BU through the creation of conditions to make individuals feel safe enough to take risks in experimenting with implementing community engagement and piloting programs to advance institutionalization without the fear of termination as a result of negative outcomes. Also, in line with this literature, norms that were unproductive

to the goals of institutionalization were challenged, such as changing the language in the mission statement to be inclusive of engagement.

**Conclusion 2: Strategic Thinking and Planning for Sustainability Grounded Engagement's Institutionalization**

In this study, university leaders often prioritized institutional sustainability of community engagement at BU; accordingly, they initiated and implemented strategic thinking and planning in several ways. Infrastructure provided a strong foundation on which to build sustainable engagement. This concept aligns with the interdisciplinary approach of an integrated network combining centralized and decentralized networks including a centralized hub to account for the complex systems of large public research institutions (Welch, 2016). A critical mass of support for community engagement grew and advocated for stability of infrastructure. In addition, the critical mass grew due to the infrastructure. A multi-layered approach employed strategies on the organizational and individual levels. Leaders subscribed to formal and informal mindsets (and practices) of a no-class system that broke down hierarchal barriers so that personnel had greater access to leaders. This concept aligns with the systems theory of orienting organizations as open structures constantly interacting within and outside of the organization embodying interconnected (Walonick, 1993). Likewise, the president and other university leaders modeled social obligations (i.e., moral expectations and professionalism) and cultural-cognitive elements (i.e., a shared social reality) such as approachability and embodying a philosophy of concern. The philosophy of concern aligns with Boyer's (1996) call for higher education institutions to organizational resources to vital social needs. This philosophy provides interest for the wellbeing of others including social, civic, and ethical unrest.

The stability of institutionalization efforts was enhanced through BU's infrastructure. For instance, the size of BU was ideal according to university leaders. That is, the university was large enough to encompass a diversity of people and ideas, divisions, and organizations to gain buy-in for the concept of community engagement, yet small enough to influence changes, and the ability to scale change initiatives was valued and encouraged. No less important, divisions and centers related to community engagement were key components of the infrastructure's stability.

University leaders were able to assess BU's level of institutionalization and strategized critical factors to move from pre-institutionalization to full integration of community engagement. Sustainability strategies included building a critical mass of the coalition of the willing, investing in professional development, and embedding engagement in official institutional documents. Investing in professional development, such as sending teams to the EAUL or funding the bus tour for new faculty, in turn led to increasing the critical mass of the coalition of the willing. After this critical mass was reached, advocates established themselves throughout the university, which assisted in shifting institutional norms. Boundary spanners were significant players in creating momentum to advance these efforts. Embedding engaged language in institutional documents also aided in establishing new norms within BU. The overarching thinking among engagement leaders was that the more layers of sustainability that were present within BU, the harder it would be disrupt stability.

Findings also confirmed existing literature related to leadership of adaptive work. The multilayered approach implemented at BU is evidence of Corazzini and Anderson's (2014) position that connecting people across levels and units aides in facilitating adaptive change. Leadership in boundary expansion was dispersed among people within BU at a variety of levels

of authority and instilled throughout the institution. Consistent with James (2011), leadership at BU included multiple actors who took up formal and informal leadership roles to advance the institutionalization of community engagement.

**Conclusion 3: Engagement Institutionalization Represents a Complex "Braid" of Adaptive Actions and Motivations**

The study's third conclusion comprises a model that depicts the institutionalization of community enagagement as a complex "braid" of intertwining factors and components that respond to loose coupling and decoupling (Weick, 1969) and the diffusion of innovation (Levine, 1980) within the change environment. In this model—which the researcher refers to as the adaptive braid of the institutionalization of community engagement—actions and "energies" create momentum for individual strands of the braid to move toward or away from other strands to create a weave of varying "tightness." Energies refer to intangible motivations that create movement through the application of internal or external pressure. The university leaders interviewed for this study recognized that institionalizing community engagment was complex adaptive work, acknowledging repeatedly that there was no single technical solution that accomplished the goal of full integration (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Rather, engagement institutionalization required change agents to consider muliple layers of factors and components. According to the model, such factors and components represent the individual strands of the braid that influence the process. Factors include both organzational- and individual-level perspectives, while components refer, for example, to types of boundary spanners or catagories of instiutionalzation. The complexity of engagement institutionalization cannot be understood by examining indvidual and organziational perspectives separately. For this reason, the adaptive braid model demonstrates the interplay of multiple factors and actions in motion across multiple

levels. In the context of Boyer University, the strands of the braid came together in a variety of ways due to the influence of internal and external actions and energies upon individual- and organziational-level factors. As a result, institutional norms changed over time, and the sustainability of instiutionalization strengthened as factors and components became more closely interwoven. The structure and "mechanics" of the adaptive braid of engagement instiutionalization are illustrated in Figure 4.

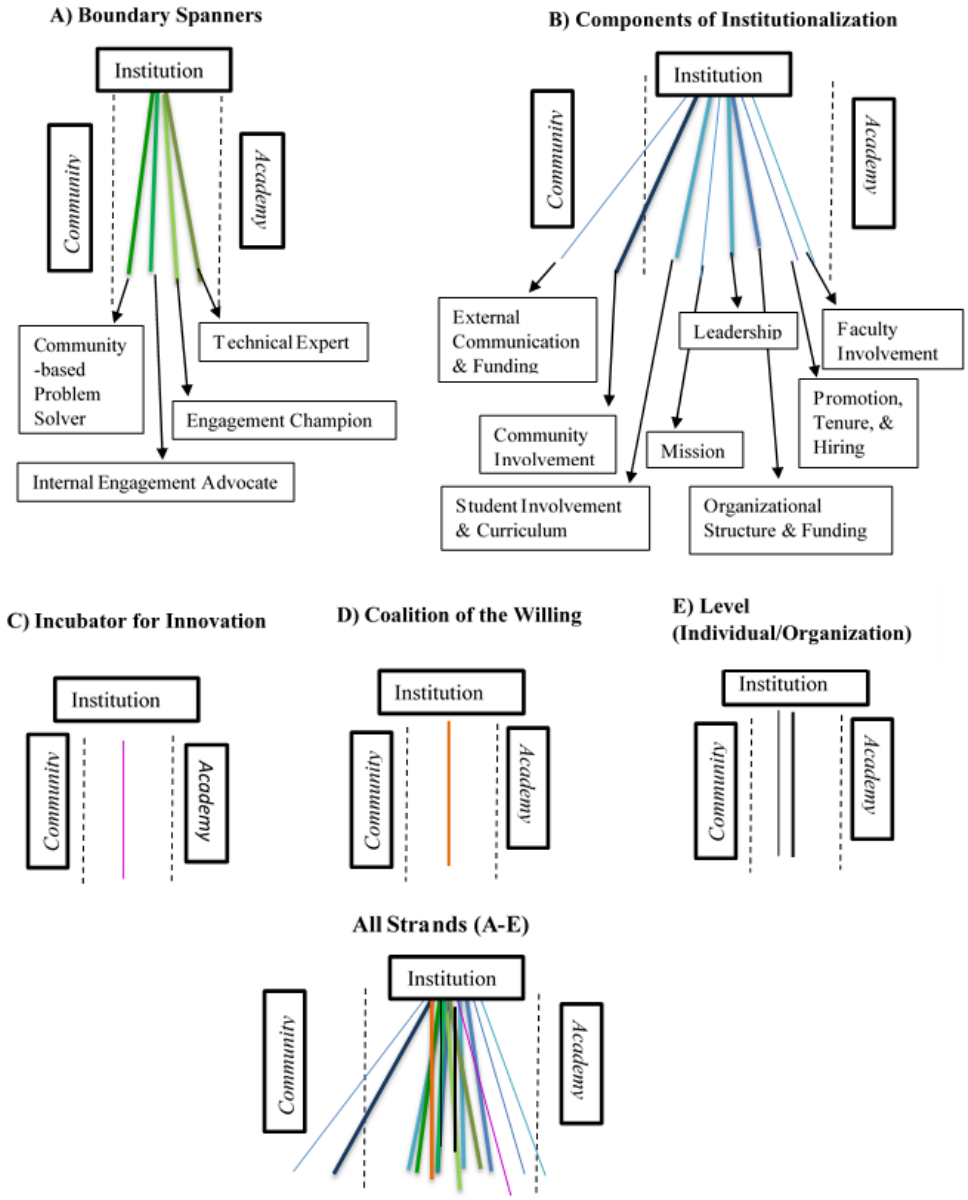


*Figure 4.* Strands of the adaptive braid of engagement institutionalization.

In this study, factors included boundary-spanning roles, components of institutionalization, an incubator(s) for innovation, a coalition(s) of the willing, and individual- or organizational-level perspectives. Part A of Figure 4 depicts the types of boundary-spanning roles serving as strands in the model. At BU, boundary spanners were placed strategically within the institution to convene individuals and groups in an effort to expand the boundaries of the university into the community. As described earlier, they were identified by four primary roles: technical expert, community-based problem solver, engagement champion, and internal engagement advocate (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Collaboration also occurred among other boundary spanners, the community, and stakeholder within the university.

Part B of Figure 4 illustrates the components of institutionalization based on Holland's (2006) matrix: mission; leadership; organizational structure; promotion, tenure, hiring; student involvement and curriculum; faculty involvement; community involvement; and external communication and fundraising. At BU, these components often overlapped; for instance, leadership connected with other factors such as internal engagement advocate boundary spanners and the coalition of the willing. In fact, several components of institutionalization (e.g., student involvement, faculty involvement, and community involvement) were connected to other factors (e.g., types of boundary spanners and incubator for innovation) which in turn occurred in conjunction with other factors and components—thus highlighting the highly complex nature of institutionalization.

Part C of Figure 4 depicts another important strand in BU's adaptive braid: an incubator for innovation. As the study results revealed, in this incubator for innovative ideas, (1) norms and boundaries were questioned, (2) outcome measures were flexible enough to include lessons learned in addition to intended outcomes, (3) individuals and groups internal and external to the

university were educated about the concept and shared language of engagement, and (4) others were encouraged to experience community engagement. One university leader explained the importance of tangible experiences for understanding and buying in to engagement:

> *The idea of abstract and tangible—there are a whole lot of people we could share this abstract idea to and won't show up at the table. But we start talking about tangible opportunities or tangible experiences, that's when we actually do start getting people involved. It is up to us then to be the "promoters," for lack of a better term, of that effort. I think of [the engineering faculty member] who came in to this effort on the bus tour as an engineer with no idea what's going on and now he is doing really cool community engaged efforts.*

Likewise, as evidenced throughout the study findings, a coalition of the willing—part D of Figure 4—which supported the institutionalization of community engagement was built through internal and external continuing-education opportunities and through the formation of new groups and teams. For example, one university leader explained:

> *When you have a growing group of people who have had a common experience you can get some things done because you know who to team with. The other thing that might not be as obvious is called "managing up." As a result of sending teams, we get a conversation with the president and provost typically every year. That has had a way of pushing awareness and knowledge into an area that it wouldn't have by itself.*

Due to their constant interaction, both individual- and organizational-level perspectives comprised strands in the adaptive braid model, as shown in part E of Figure 4. Though this study concentrated on factors within the institution, individual strands in general could start from either within or outside the institution. As Figure 4 suggests, the more strands that are available across factors, the more opportunities for weaving the adaptive braid of institutionalization are possible.

As mentioned earlier in this section, actions and energies moved the strands toward or away from each other. Specifically, in the context of this study, actions and energies stemmed from empowerment (internal and external, individual and organizational), lessons learned, critical mass, goal attainment, pressure, and resources. For example, university leaders were

motivated and took action to spread the word and help others appreciate the empowerment they gained by attending the EAUL:

> *Well, the first thing we did when we got back that was really helpful was that we decided that, as a group, we needed to continue meeting. And I think that was probably the most powerful thing we could have done because we could have each returned and gone back to our offices and never seen each other again. But we didn't do that. We started meeting regularly, and we were so excited [about getting] other people excited about this. How do we not leave the experience there, but bring it back with us? So as a result of the group that continued to meet, we then invited other delegates that had gone before us and the ones of course in the future joined us as well. So we were able to create a, not tiny but a small enough, group to do something, but large enough to have an influence. We had the right people—that was the other key thing. Having the right people around that table. So it wasn't just faculty, but it was administrators at different levels that had different types of resources that could then support the work. And so as a result, that's when we started a couple things. First of all, we started the Road Scholar bus tour, which we're now in our fourth year this fall. About engaging faculty in the work of engagement. Literally getting them on the bus and touring the state and helping them to understand where opportunities are for them to engage. And also trying to give them definitions in the common language tools from the beginning to do some of the work that they do.*

Lessons learned reoriented leaders to the definition of institutionalization and to intended outcomes, and provided insight into future projects (Marques-Quintero & Currall, 2012). Data from this study revealed that when critical mass was achieved in a specific boundary-spanning role or combination of roles, supports were built to provide a safe space for personnel to experience, explore, and experiment with the concept of community engagement. Additionally, the momentum of institutionalization efforts was sustained through the recognition and communication of examples of goal attainment. Findings indicated that if an individual felt that he or she had achieved a goal related to institutionalizing engagement or if others' goal attainments were communicated to that individual, the perceived achievement provided momentum for institutionalization. Pressure was as an energy from within or outside the organization that influenced movement. As previously explained, higher education institutions have felt external pressure to meet societal needs, and internally people and the organization as a

whole have applied pressure through power and incentives. Study participants indicated that resources represented a force that moved factors towards institutionalization. The actions and energies drew the factors closer to other components—or moved them apart—in ways that wove the strands like a braid.

The factors and components were able to join with and separate from each other due to the diffusion of innovation (Levine, 1980), a loosely coupled framework (Weick, 1969), and institutional shared governance. Much like a wind, the actions and energies created movement among the strands, but the strands first needed to be flexible in order to move, as discussed earlier. As strands came together around an innovative idea or concept, they would stay together if the idea was adopted or disconnect if not. Generally, loose coupling facilitates flexibility between faculty and the institution, allowing for a balance of interdependence whereby the individual and the organization maintain distinct identities while working together (Weick, 1976). At Boyer University, faculty and units maintained loose coupling that allowed them to join and exit affiliations through shared governance of collective decision making (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). The loosely coupled framework (Weick, 1969) of faculty within this land-grant university benefited from teams of transdisciplinary representatives who acted as early adopters of innovations to influence change. This approach to adaptive challenges, however, was complex, involving interconnections and continual movement among individual and organizational levels, perspectives, and dynamics. Figure 5 illustrates the proposed adaptive braid model for the institutionalization of community engagement.

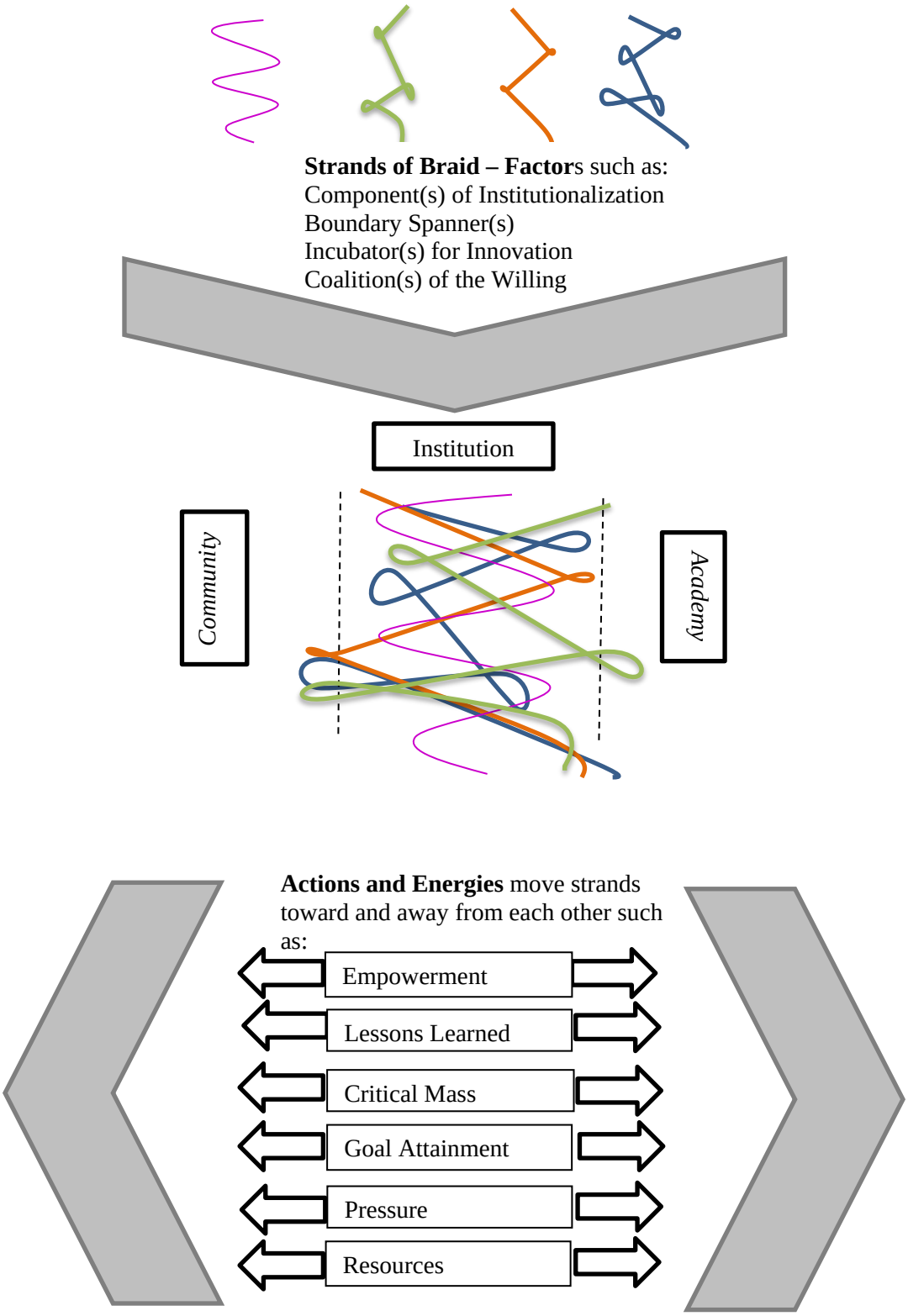


*Figure 5.* Adaptive braid model for the institutionalization of community engagement.

This proposed model is transferable to other higher education institution because the strands of the braid can be loosely or tightly woven, and can be woven in a variety of designs. An institution can customize the strands and actions/energies moving the strands to reflect its unique context. This flexibility allows the institution to adapt, expand, or constrict its institutionalization efforts as conditions change. The braid becomes stronger as more strands woven together.

The adaptive braid model helps to illustrate the complexity of findings that emerged from this study. For example, the leadership (component of institutionalization) of BU (organization), using university resources (component of institutionalization and energy for movement), sent (action) university leaders (individuals) to the EAUL (outside of BU). In turn, the BU participants in the EAUL (individuals) returned to BU (inside BU) as a coalition of the willing and as boundary spanners. An internal EAUL was created (action) by past participants of the EAUL (individuals and boundary spanners) who formed the critical mass for a coalition of the willing (internal group supported by organization), implementing initiatives (actions) to advance institutionalization. These initiatives then helped to connect individuals within and outside the institution (e.g., the faculty bus tour of the local community, resulting in additional actions connecting and continually weaving other strands (e.g., a participant on the faculty bus tour later working with students and community members to create a machine that BU patented). Figure 6 highlights an example of the adaptive braid of the institutionalization of community.

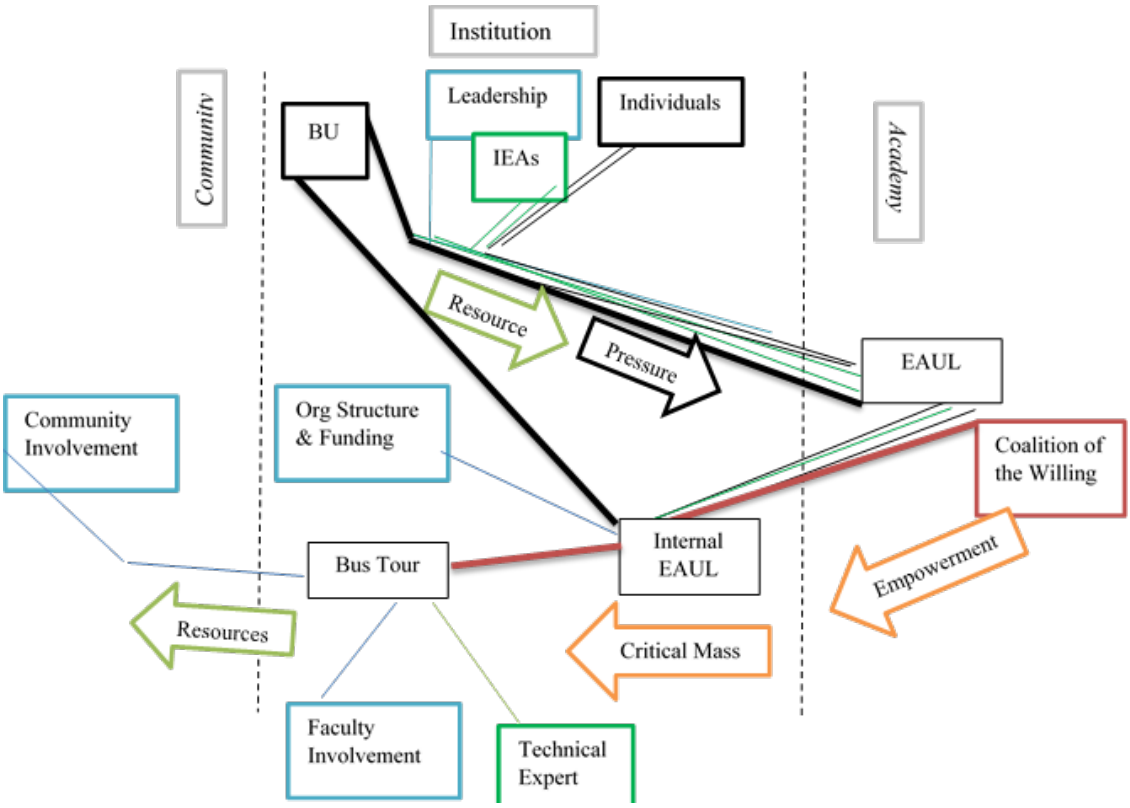


*Figure 6.* Example of the adaptive braid of the institutionalization of community engagement.

As institutionalization became more fully integrated, more individuals bought in to the concept of community engagement, becoming boundary spanners themselves. This conclusion extended the literature by connecting—in ways that have not been done previously—concepts of factors of the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education (i.e., boundary spanners and components of institutionalization) with the notion of complex layers of factors moving towards and away from other factors through actions and energy weaving the multiple layers together of a critical mass of boundary spanners who comprised a coalition of the willing. The combinations of individual- and organizational-levels were needed to conceptualize the adaptive braid of institutionalization. This aligned with Walsh and Saltmarsh's (2013) view that

complex organizational structures have sophisticated programming and serve a multi-layers for stakeholders, audiences, and communities.

This study confirmed that the areas of institutionalization in Holland's (2006) matrix were helpful in advancing BU's efforts to fully institutionalize community engagement and that boundary-spanning roles were integral to institutionalization. Examining institutionalization as an adaptive challenge provided new perspectives on advancing the institutionalization of community engagement. This model extended the literature on the complexity and adaptive challenges of institutionalizing community engagement by connecting concepts of boundary spanning with concepts of institutionalization.

## Implications for Practice and Policy

Conclusions from this study have implications for both practice and policy. Practical implications relate to curriculum development and recruitment and hiring. Policy implications include reflections on the conclusions of this study in ways that inform decisions for policy change at other institutions as well as at Boyer University. Specifically, mission language and organizational structure are areas in which policy revisions should be considered in the context of institutionalized community engagement.

### Practice: Curriculum Development

This study could help to inform curriculum design for leadership development and training programs by prioritizing conditions in which participants feel safe to experience and experiment with engagement in their work. Considering what elements are needed in a specific context to create an incubator for innovation could be considered in the curriculum development process. Specifically, strategically piloting curriculum and then redesigning it based on lessons learned would likely inform the evolution of engaged work.

Conclusions from this study suggest that a critical mass of boundary spanners to influence the areas of institutionalization can be built into organizational development and strategic planning processes using a multilayered approach. New ideas, projects, and programs included in such a multilayered approach provide ways to pilot ideas and gain momentum from individual attempts and the collective power of planting seeds of community engagement within and across units of a higher education institution.

Regarding leadership and professional development, other higher education institutions could consider providing internal (i.e., onboarding trainings such as Boyer's bus tour) and external (i.e., EAUL and conferences focused on engagement) opportunities for university leaders across and within units to learn about, value, and understand how they can be used to meet individual and organizational goals. Special consideration should be given to sending groups and teams (rather than individuals) to learn about and experience community engagement in order to optimize creating a critical mass of the coalition of the willing. The study results could also serve as a foundation for a formative evaluation of the EAUL, highlighting the benefits and challenges a university might experience in participating in the program.

**Practice: Recruitment and Hiring**

The study results could inform university recruitment and hiring by providing direction in seeking candidates and writing job descriptions with clear boundary-spanning roles and activities in mind. Specifically, the findings suggest that job descriptions should include information about engagement, and job candidates should be evaluated according to the extent to which their professional agendas align—or have the potential to align—with an institution's engagement philosophy.

Community engagement could be included formally in recruitment and hiring efforts, and, according to findings in this study, the institutionalization of community engagement could attract engagement-minded candidates as well. Institutions should consider how recruitment efforts are implemented to strategically recruit from engaged pools of potential applicants. University leaders at BU acknowledged a philosophy of concern for others as being a part of the university culture and suggested that perhaps others who shared this philosophy might be drawn to positions consciously or subconsciously. Employers could create environments that foster a philosophy of care and share testimonials from current employees that describe and highlight the benefits of working in such an environment.

**Policy Implications: Change**

Findings from this study could be used to engender new perspectives for leaders of other organizations on addressing adaptive challenges in the process of institutionalizing community engagement. Other institutions may find strategies used at BU helpful in their own efforts to build value around higher education engagement. Recommendations for policy change include implementing policies to allow infrastructures of community engagement to be established and enhanced. Policies should also be considered to provide rewards and incentives for implementing community engagement in teaching, research, and outreach. Policy implications should be consider for Boyer University through self-reflection based on findings and conclusions of this study. Additionally, other organizations should consider language and structural changes that require revising or creating policies.

**Policy Implications: Self-Reflection**

Boyer University itself should consider using this study as a catalyst for reflection and future strategic planning or as evidence to help leverage the advancement of institutionalization

as a result of external parties highlighting the need for growth in certain areas. For example, findings indicated room for growth in BU's strategic planning around sustaining momentum after the community bus tour. Mentoring programs, alumni events, and online environments could be created to extend the relationships and support initiated as a result of the bus tours. Another example of a growth opportunity at BU centered on integrating community engagement into promotion, tenure, and hiring policies, and building buy-in from university personnel who felt threatened by or were unaware of this concept. In addition, testimonials, workshops, and trainings could assist in helping individuals learn how they can work within existing promotion and tenure systems. Listening sessions and trainings could be designed to better understand the challenges to recruiting engaged employees. The scholarship of engagement could be enhanced at BU by creating positions or appointments that capture how BU operationalizes community engagement through research and scholarly outputs.

**Policy Implications: Language and Structure**

Like BU, policy makers could consider strategically placing boundary spanners in decision-making bodies to infuse engaged language into strategic plans and the institution's mission statement. Particularly since most policies are derived from the organizational mission. In this study, many university leaders indicated that such language provided internal and external audiences an articulation of the university's progress toward the institutionalization of community engagement.

Policy implications could influence organizational restructuring to include centralized bodies that advocate for, organize, and support engagement efforts. Understanding the organizational structure at BU may help others to consider what type of centralized units may be helpful in advancing the institutionalization of engagement at their college or university.

## Implications for Future Research

This qualitative single-case study focused on a specific group of university leaders. Examining how the findings from this study refute, confirm, or extend those from previous studies provides insight into implications for future research. Future studies could build on the results from this study in theoretical, methodological, and contextual ways. Broadening populations of interest, expanding the scale of the research, and exploring the theoretical underpinnings presented in this study provide areas for future focus and contributions to the field.

Study findings confirmed or extended findings from the existing literature. Table 11 includes findings from the literature in relation to earlier research and compares this study's conclusions with previous studies discussed in Chapter 2.

### Theoretical Considerations

From a theoretical perspective, the proposed adaptive braid model for the institutionalization of community engagement could be confirmed, extended, or refuted by future research. At the organizational level, future studies could explore how other higher education institutions create (or have created) conditions for institutionalizing community engagement. For instance, research could explore how institutions that did not send individuals or teams to EAUL created conditions for the institutionalization of community engagement. Future research could also explore which combinations of strands are most common, what other types of activities and energies move strands together (or apart), how much of a critical mass is needed at different "power levels" (e.g., the student level compared with the highest levels of the administration), or how the strands for different external entities come into play.

Table 11

*Comparisons of Recommendations Related to the Institutionalization of Community Engagement*

| Resource | Findings from Literature | Study Findings |
|---|---|---|
| Adams (2013) | Found that community boundary-spanner characteristics include communication skills, multiple perspectives, and broad vision. Boundary-spanning capacities of community partners were derived from motivations over roles. Community boundary spanners entered partnership with boundary-spanning abilities and actively contributed. | Concurs and extends: Supports Adams' (2013) findings about the characteristics of multiple perspectives, broad vision, and active role. Extends findings by emphasizing the characteristics of convening. |
| David (2013) | Found that community-based problem-solver boundary spanners demonstrated behaviors of assessing, engaging, reformulating, and advocating. They used knowledge collected to build relationships, initiatives, and programs. | Concurs: Supports David's (2013) finding about behaviors of engaging and assessing as community-based problem-solver boundary spanners build relationships. |
| Friedman & Podolny (1992) | Found that functions of boundary spanning included persuasive communication to mediate and represent both sides of the boundary in order to work toward mutual objectives. | Concurs and extends: Supports Friedman & Podolny's (1992) findings about representing both sides of a boundary. Extends the finding by acknowledging adaptive nature of the duality. |
| Miller (2008) | Found that important boundary-spanning attributes include the desire to sustainably connect people across boundaries and encourage teamwork for shared goals. Research confirmed contextual knowledge, interpersonal skills, trust, and connectedness, and extended previous research by suggesting that community loyalty and social consciousness are the foundation of successful boundary spanners. | Concurs: Supports Miller's (2008) finding that sustainability of relationships is fostered through interpersonal skills and social consciousness or a philosophy of concern for others. |
| Mull (2014) | Found that work/organizational characteristics were significant predictors of boundary-spanning behaviors, while personal characteristics were not as influential as predicted. Boundary-spanning behaviors were encouraged by the organization in a variety of ways. Communication remained an important influence. | Concurs: Supports Mull's (2014) findings about organizational encouragement of boundary-spanning behaviors. |

| Resource | Findings from Literature | Study Findings |
|---|---|---|
| Purcell (2013) | Found that boundary-spanning behaviors utilizing distributed leadership advanced community engagement and that effective and frequent communication was critical. Context mattered in regards to institutionalization; however, authentic engagement is possible at any step. Organizational learning associated with community engagement enhanced the institutionalization of engagement. | Concurs and extends: Supports Purcell's (2013) findings that distributive leadership advanced community engagement. Extends the findings by specifically identifying a breakdown of leadership hierarchy to encourage distributive leadership. |
| Skolaski (2012) | Found that, at the institutional level, campus leaders can better understand the roles and potential conflicts for boundary-spanning staff by actively helping them to feel recognized (supportive communication, rewards), valued (initiative, individual boundary spanners), and supported (financially, emotionally), and by providing flexibility to accomplish goals within the system. | Concurs and extends: Supports Skolaski's (2012) findings about understanding boundary spanners by supporting (financially, emotionally) and providing flexibility to accomplish goals within the system. Extends findings by describing an incubator for innovation for community engagement and valuing lessons learned through trial to inform next steps. |
| Weerts & Sandmann (2010) | Identified specific qualities of boundary spanning in community engagement categorized within four clear yet flexible roles: community-based problem solver, technical expert, internal engagement advocate, and engagement champion. | Concurs and extends: Supports Weerts & Sandmann's (2010) identification of four boundary-spanning roles. Extends findings by considering the collective power of boundary spanners within one role or across roles as a critical mass is achieved. |

**Methodological Considerations**

Future studies could extend the findings of this single-case study by broadening the sample population and scale of the research. At the individual level, there are several avenues for future research. For instance, the experiences of students, community members, faculty, staff, and other university leaders represent important voices in the institutionalization process. How have employees been exposed to concepts of community engagement at other institutions? How have people transitioned to become boundary spanners? Future studies could examine boundary-spanning roles among faculty, university presidents, university provosts, students, and community partners concentrating on the institutionalization process from their perspectives. Although the perceptions of the university president were examined in this study, the president was not an actual participant. In addition, community-based problem solvers and technical experts were underrepresented in this study, and therefore their roles and activities should be explored further.

Future studies could conduct focus groups comparing university leaders who had attended the EAUL with those who had not to examine the impact of attending the EAUL on other university leaders at the same institution. Another consideration for future research would be to expand the study to compare the two groups across institutions and institutional types.

**Contextual Considerations**

More research is needed examining boundary spanners who engage in adaptive challenges. The connection between adaptive challenges and institutionalization could be explored in many ways, such as examining who the players are and how specific types of dilemmas during the institutionalization process are addressed. Findings from this study could also be applied to other types of higher education institutions, such as community colleges,

private universities, and non-land-grant universities, to explore their institutionalization processes. In addition, quantitative studies of multiple colleges and universities—of varying sizes and types—could examine best practices and generalize findings for a larger group of institutions. International higher education institutions should also be explored.

## Excuse the Mess: We Live Here

As evidenced by this case, the process of institutionalization is complex and messy. Leaders at Boyer University described the reality of implementing change at any level as messy and as not fitting into clearly defined boundaries, thus requiring them to be flexible. In other words, they were able to acknowledge the messiness of the reality they lived in and determine strategies for advancing engagement within those conditions. The study's findings suggest that the main component to their institution's engagement efforts was creating a safe environment for internal change so that engagement advocates could feel protected while learning how to navigate the complexity/messiness of integrating community engagement into their work. Attempts to experiment with and explore community engagement were encouraged, and learning from experiences to influence future efforts was valued as an acceptable outcome.

The messiness is an expression of the complexity, blurred lines, ambiguity, and multitude of voices and perspectives and players within the effort to institutionalize community engagement. If stakeholders acknowledge that such messiness is the norm, then they can focus on how to thrive within the complexity. Adaptive strategies aid in creating connections between institutional mission and enhancing the public value of higher education in ways that could not have come to fruition through previous iterations of teaching, research, and outreach. In closing, Darwin concluded, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent

that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change" (as cited in Dinwoodie et al., 2014, p.1).

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APPENDIX A

EXAMPLE OF ENGAGEMENT ACADEMY PRE-WORK DATA TEMPLATE

**Engagement Academy 20XX**
**Case Study Statement for Pre-Work**
(To be approximately 2-3 pages)

This case statement will be used throughout the Academy in a number of ways:

- You will present this case early in the Academy
- You will work in a team with similar issues
- You will consult with an "engaged president" as a mentor-in-residence to address specific strategies that you can incorporate
- You present an action plan related to your case issue that you develop during the Academy to other participants during and on the last day of the Academy

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name of Institution** | |
| **Name of Participant** | |
| **1. Context**<br>• Institution mission, setting<br>• What are key strategic priorities and targets? | |
| **2. Engagement Agenda**<br>• What is the agenda?<br>• What is the assessment of its progress to date?<br>• What is a critical issue/challenge to be addressed? | |
| **3. Issue/Challenge Description**<br>• Why is this issue important?<br>• Why is addressing this issue/initiative necessary? (Is this part of a strategic development strategy or continuation of another initiative?)<br>• Who were the beneficiaries?<br>• What are the facilitators?<br>• What are the barriers?<br>• What resources are required? What resources can be committed? | |
| **4. Change Driver(s)**<br>• Who is involved?<br>• Who is prompting the decision to try this innovation/change - organizational decision, individual/group led change?<br>• What is your role? | |
| **5. Key Outcomes** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| • What would success look like? | |
| **6. Sustainability / Transferability**<br>• What needs to be considered for any action to be sustainable considering resources/success etc.?<br>• Could this work be transferred to other contexts? | |
| **7. Leadership**<br>• What knowledge, skills, capacities benefit you in your role? | |

## APPENDIX B

## FOCUS GROUP II GUIDE: UNIVERSITY LEADERS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Why is community engagement important at Boyer University?
2. What was the catalyst that got this movement going?
3. Most people around this table have gone to the national EA.
4. Did the shared experience of going to the academy influence or impact the institutionalization process here. If so, how?
5. Please provide me feedback on the key indicators of progress of institutionalization that individuals have shared in interviews this week. The questions asked in the interviews included "What are some of the great accomplishments?" and "What are indicators that the needle is ticking?" [share list of findings]
    a. Is there anything missing that should be on the list?
    b. Are there any items on this list you disagree with?
    c. Are some items listed more important than other items?
6. The strategy to increase the level of institutionalization of community engagement include [share findings].
    a. Please share feedback on this summary of findings.
    b. Is there anything missing from this list?
    c. Are there any items on this list you disagree with?
7. The values that I heard mentioned in the first set of interviews include [share list of findings].
    a. Please share feedback on this summary of findings.
    b. Is there anything missing from this list?
    c. Are there any items on this list you disagree with?
8. Is there anything else as a group that someone would like to discuss?
    a. Roles,
    b. Activities
    c. Leaders
    d. BU's institutionalization process
    e. Other topics
9. Has there been conversations around how to share the ideas of community engagement and try to get buy-in without alienating the people who are doing things in the traditional way?
10. As leaders in this movement, how do you have guardrails to not alienate people as you try to be change agents?
11. How do you help others feel like you are valuing these traditional ways of xyz and we are just trying to open up opportunities to also value this?
12. In the spirit of community engagement or in engagement, you are my community that I am working with.

    a. How can we work together to make sure this study that I'm doing is mutually beneficial or within the lines
13. Are there innovated ways we can make sure this, that everyone is feeling, that mutual benefit?

# APPENDIX C

## INTERVIEW GUIDE: UNIVERSITY LEADERS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Walk me through what you remember most about your experience as a participant at the Engagement Academy for University Leaders.
    - Describe aspect of your learning at EA has had the most palpable impact on you as you continue to lead community engagement at this institution.

2. Tell me about your experience after returning from the Engagement Academy.
    - Describe the roles and activities that you undertook.
    - Walk me through how the roles and/or activities in your job back at home after EA facilitated institutionalization of community engagement.
    - Walk me through how the roles and/or activities did not enhance institutionalization of community engagement efforts in the ways you had anticipated.

3. [Provide Boundary Spanning Theory handout] According to Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) 4 roles of boundary spanners have been identified as
        i. **Engagement Champions** focus on building *external*, political, intra-organizational support
        ii. **Internal Engagement Advocates** build campus capacity for engagement (rewards promotion, tenure, budget, hiring)
        iii. **Technical Experts** emphasize knowledge creation for applied purposes (disciplinary or multidisciplinary)
        iv. **Community-based Problem Solvers** focus on site-based problem support, resource acquisition, partnership development.
    - If you identify personally with any of the roles that were just described, tell me about how you identify with them.
    - Tell me about the ways you embodied each role you identify with.
        i. Describe effects on institutionalization.
            1. Describe how it helped, hindered, or produced no change.
            2. Walk me through the evidence that leads you conclude this outcome.
    - Map where you see yourself on the framework, and explain why.
    - If you were on an EA team, tell me about the roles do you identify with team members?
    - Walk me through the roles you identify with others who work at your institution but were not part of your EA team.
    - Describe any roles and/or activities you described that you do not think fit into one of the four boundary spanning roles according to Weerts & Sandmann (2010).
        i. Tell me about how you would categorize it.

4. Walk me through the greatest progress to date (since your EA experience) regarding the institutionalization of community engagement here at OSU (and/or your unit)?
    - Tell me about key leaders or role you attribute that progress to?
    - Walk me through specific examples of "successful" institutionalization of community engagement related to (Holland Matrix, 2006):

i. Mission
ii. Leadership (Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans, Chairs)
iii. Promotion, Tenure, Hiring
iv. Organization Structure and Funding
v. Student Involvement & Curriculum
vi. Faculty Involvement
vii. Community Involvement
viii. External Communications and Fundraising

5. Describe the top two critical challenges or barriers to enhance institutionalization of community engagement today at your institution?
   - Tell me about the type of leader/role do you think is needed to address these critical challenges or barriers.

6. Tell me about a time when challenges or barriers related to (Holland Matrix, 2006):
   i. Mission
   ii. Leadership (Presidents, Vice Presidents, Deans, Chairs)
   iii. Promotion, Tenure, Hiring
   iv. Organization Structure and Funding
   v. Student Involvement & Curriculum
   vi. Faculty Involvement
   vii. Community Involvement
   viii. External Communications and Fundraising

7. "Adaptive work is required when our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values that made us successful become less relevant, and when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001, p.6)." Further describing this definition is Heifetz and Laurie's (2001) description of the leader's responsibilities in adaptive work to be direction, protection, orientation, managing conflict, and shaping norms. To what extent do you feel like institutionalizing community engagement at this university fits this definition?
   - Walk me through aspects of the adaptive challenge that are related to the institutional level.
     i. Think about the organization as a whole.
     ii. Think about beliefs and values at the organizational level.
     iii. How have they changed or resisted change?
   - Tell me about aspects of the adaptive challenge related to the individual level.
     i. Think about individuals within the organization.
     ii. Think about individual roles and individual activities.
     iii. Describe how beliefs and values have been challenged.
     iv. How have they changed or resisted change related to institutionalizing community engagement.

8. Heifetz and Laurie (2001) describe conflict as a symptom of an adaptive challenge. Walk me through a specific conflict that could be examples of symptoms of institutionalizing community engagement being an adaptive challenge.

9. Tell me about a time when the conditions were created for people to realize the need for change to support institutionalizing community engagement.
   - For example, to accept or endorse engagement, to work in engaged ways, to really promote reciprocal partnerships, to change policies, …

10. Walk me through an example of people being safely pushed out of their comfort zone to recognize the need for change.
    - As an exemplar institution, tell me about a time when maintaining disciplined attention to the goal of institutionalizing community engagement occurred
        i. At the individual level
        ii. At the organizational levels

11. Tell me about a time when people been empowered to take on work related to institutionalizing community engagement.
    - Walk me through the activities they took on.
    - Describe the outcome:
        i. Tell me about how others reacted to them.
        ii. Walk me through how you concluded that this helped, hindered, or made no difference to the efforts of institutionalization of community engagement.

12. Is there something else you would like to add related to the Engagement Academy, institutionalizing community engagement, or boundary spanning as a strategy for institutionalization?