

The Formation of Community-engaged Scholars:
A Collaborative Approach to Doctoral Training in Education Research

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Abstract

Community-engaged scholars working in the field of education collaborate with families, teachers, and communities to support their efforts to address educational inequities, marking an important way that researchers can promote social justice in public education. Yet these collaborations require particular skills and orientations of researchers, which traditional models of doctoral education are not designed to develop. Additionally, much less attention has been paid to the process of training and equipping emerging community-engaged researchers. This article presents the findings of a self-study of a research project that was designed to build among doctoral students the skills, dispositions, and commitments of community-engaged scholarship. The authors argue that, by fostering collaborative learning and creating a community that embraced project members' whole selves, students learned to tell their stories, build "horizontal" research relationships, question their researcher positionalities, and develop identities as community-engaged scholars. One of the few in-depth investigations of doctoral practices that support community-engaged scholarship, this study offers critical lessons for those who care about the development of a new generation of education researchers committed to working with communities to transform schools and society.

¹ We would like to acknowledge that the order of authorship does not reflect a ranking of contributions among the three authors. While the first author took on a leading role, the second and third authors played co-equal roles and their names are listed in alphabetical order.

The demand for education research that promotes social and educational justice has grown louder and more urgent (Coburn & Stein, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). In his 2013 AERA Presidential Address, William Tierney argued that simply producing high quality research will not remedy poverty and educational inequality; instead, scholars must move “beyond the ivory tower” and engage those we study. Indeed, advances in educational equity and justice will require the collective resources and dedicated collaboration of researchers, educators, parents, youth, and community members (Oakes & Rogers, 2005).

Community-engaged scholars working in the field of education address this challenge by partnering with community and education activists to conduct research in support of change efforts in schools and communities. This approach is based upon principles of reciprocity, recognition of and respect for mutual expertise and knowledge, and the need for research to serve the public good (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2013). Drawing upon a range of participatory, action-oriented research paradigms (Hale, 2008) and brought to a wide audience by former Carnegie Foundation president Ernest Boyer’s appeal for a “scholarship of engagement” (Boyer, 1996), community-engaged scholarship (CES) represents an alternative to the dominant academic paradigm, in which scholars define research agendas and produce research without directly engaging practitioners (Peters, 2010; Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011). Instead, with CES researchers work with school and community partners to design and conduct the research, from identifying questions to disseminating results, in order to produce findings directly relevant to advancing social change agendas (Strand, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Marullo, 2003). While CES can include a variety of research practices and address an array of public issues, we align ourselves with a new generation of education scholarship in which researchers and community partners collaborate to promote equity and social justice in public education (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Newman & Glass, 2014; Renee, Oakes, Rogers, & Blasi, 2007).

While scholars have extensively treated the theory, methodology, epistemology, and ethics of CES (e.g. Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Hale, 2008; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011; Strand, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Marullo, 2003), much less attention has been paid to the process of developing scholars capable of and committed to conducting this form of research. This issue is critical, as most education doctoral students receive training in more traditional methods of research and thus may not develop the particular skill set needed for CES (O’Meara, 2008a). Furthermore, institutional incentives tend to work against early career scholars conducting CES; hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions typically reward scholarship that is published in peer-reviewed journals and university press books (O’Meara, 2011; Sturm, Eatman, Saltmarsh, & Bush, 2011; Tierney & Perkins, 2015), venues that often overlook CES because editors may be unfamiliar with this approach and uncertain about its evaluation. Additionally, the academic publications that CES does produce take longer to reach publication, due to the time required to build relationships and sustain capacities for collaboration. Therefore, community-engaged scholars need more than skills; they also need a high level of commitment and a community of support to sustain this work—neither of which is a priority of traditional doctoral programs.

This article reports the findings from a self-study of a research project conducted at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE)—called the Community Organizing and School Reform Project, hereafter “the Project”—that was designed to build among graduate students the skills, dispositions and commitments needed for CES. We identify the skills and dispositions learned in

the Project, describe the processes by which students developed these skills and discuss how students applied newly acquired skills of CES in their own work. The Project, which involved two faculty members and fifteen doctoral students, was a community-engaged research project designed to advance the field of study of community organizing and education reform while also developing a new generation of community-engaged scholars. Funded by grants of nearly \$700,000 from multiple sources, it involved a qualitative, multi-case study of six community organizing groups working primarily in low-income communities of color. The Project focused on understanding how these groups organized to improve quality and advance equity in public education in low-income communities. Although Project members decided on this research focus and the case study approach, they collaborated with each of the community organizing groups in a variety of ways: consulting with the groups about research design, working together to identify participants to interview and events to observe, sharing research findings and chapter drafts with participants, and receiving feedback throughout the process. As organizations actively engaging in reform work, the groups were invested in using the findings to improve upon and bring attention to their work, and students and group representatives presented together at academic conferences and public venues. In 2011, the Project published *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform* (Warren, Mapp, & Community Organizing and School Reform Project, 2011), followed by three teaching cases (Hong, Warren, & Mapp, 2011; Mira, Nikundiwe, Warren, & Mapp, 2011; Tieken, Russell, Warren, & Mapp, 2012).

In this article, three project participants—one faculty member and two former doctoral students (now assistant professors)—examine the training in CES that this Project offered its doctoral participants, addressing the following questions:

- What skills and dispositions of CES did students learn?
- How did the students learn these skills and dispositions in the Project?
- How did learning these skills and dispositions contribute to the students' ongoing practice of CES in their work beyond the Project?

We first provide the theoretical context for community-engaged scholarship, focusing on the ways in which it is countercultural to more traditional research paradigms and, therefore, requires a particular kind of training to build specific capacities and commitments. After describing our method of self-study, we present our findings, identifying the skills and dispositions related to CES that students learned in the Project, illuminating key processes of the Project that facilitated students' learning and acquisition of these skills and dispositions, and highlighting how students continued to apply them beyond this training. We end with a discussion of the broader relevance of the study for cultivating and supporting scholarly orientations and skills that are critical to advancing educational equity and justice in partnership with communities.

Developing Community Engaged Scholars

What unites the diverse field of education-focused CES as we define it²—and distinguishes it from some forms of action research or other attempts to link research to practice (Coburn &

² Scholars use different methods and names for community-engaged research, including action research (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Stringer, 2008), participatory action research (Brydon-Miller, 2001; Torre, Fine, Stoudt, & Fox, 2012), youth participatory action research (Cammarota & Fine, 2008), community-based research (Strand et al.,

Stein, 2010)—is its explicit attention to working with community, youth, and educators promoting equity and justice in education (Oakes & Rogers, 2005; Renee et al., 2007). Specifically, these community-engaged scholars collaborate with individuals and groups challenging racial and socioeconomic inequalities that result in unequal educational opportunities and schooling experiences for students from historically disenfranchised and non-dominant communities. The structure of these collaborations varies. In some CES projects, scholars and community partners work together and jointly decide and conduct all aspects of the research: identifying research questions from multiple stakeholders’ perspectives, designing appropriate research methodology, collecting and analyzing data through collaborative inquiry, and co-producing research reports and relevant educational interventions (Newman & Glass, 2014). In other cases, like the Project under investigation here, scholars conduct the research but consult with partners throughout the process, listening carefully to their feedback and incorporating their perspectives into research plans, analysis, and writing.

The collaborative nature of CES means that the knowledge generated is more likely directly relevant to educational practice, which allows for rapid translation into educational strategies and programmatic efforts—directly advancing equity-oriented policy and practice. Moreover, this collaborative approach also contributes to theory and academic understanding. For example CES research projects about “funds of knowledge” have created culturally-relevant curriculum and pedagogy based upon the normally “hidden” resources of Latino families and communities, while also advancing researchers’ understandings of knowledge production by demonstrating the contributions of indigenous community knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). The growing field of collaborative approaches in education research has led to a wide variety of education and youth initiatives, including restorative justice educational policies at local and state levels (Advancement Project, 2010), youth arts and media programs that incubate new nonprofit organizations (Fine, Roberts, & Torre, 2004), and culturally-relevant curriculum and pedagogy developments in Native American communities (Bang, Marin, Faber, & Suzukovich, 2013; Silliman, 2008), to name only a few.

The collaborations involved in CES place unique demands on scholars that require some distinctive skills and value-orientations. For example, collaboration with community partners is dependent upon respectful and mutually beneficial relationships between partners and scholars. Creating these relationships requires addressing the historical divide between the academy and communities, valuing forms of knowledge based on lived experiences or stories passed down over generations, and understanding and accommodating differences in cultures (Hale, 2008). In order to intentionally build relationships across lines of difference, foster trust, and equalize power differentials (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011), scholars need to be aware of and attend to their own positionality in relation to other researchers and community actors, including issues of race, class, gender, and other relevant social categories (Collins, 2000; Milner, 2007). If scholars are going to collaborate as equals with community partners, this suggests the need for them to collaborate with each other as well, valuing the diverse voices, traditions, disciplinary training, and professional experiences different researchers bring. This type of collaboration requires a method of making research decisions that reflects the principles of CES, like consensus decision-

2003), and other forms of engaged scholarship (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011) like community-based participatory research (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011) and design-based implementation research (Fishman et al., 2013).

making (Margerum, 2011), which helps to ensure that every voice is valued, power differentials are addressed, and all participants are authentically engaged (Hartnett, 2011).

However, doctoral education programs, the institutions primarily responsible for training and socializing new scholars (Austin & McDaniels, 2006a, 2006b), do not typically teach these kinds of values, epistemological orientations, and relational skills. Traditionally, scholars conduct research separated from practitioners (and/or those whom they study), and doctoral students are advised to isolate their values and passions from their research in the name of “objectivity” (Burawoy, 2005). Moreover, rather than learning to collaborate across power differentials, students tend to experience relationships with faculty that reinforce hierarchies (Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2009). Finally, while students might sometimes participate in large-scale studies, in the end, they work in isolation to fulfill the primary requirement of a doctorate: a sole-authored dissertation (Spencer Task Force, 2009; Walker, 2006). While individual students may engage actively in one line of inquiry embedded within a larger faculty-sponsored research project, students rarely, if ever, participate in consensus decision-making processes as co-investigators.

An emerging body of work has begun to examine the processes that support the development of doctoral students as community-engaged scholars and identify critical elements for fostering CES in doctoral training. These key elements include apprenticeship training (Golde, 2008) and opportunities to develop an identity as a community-engaged scholar (Colbeck, 2008), without which graduate students will not develop the knowledge, skills, and professional orientation necessary for community-engaged research (O’Meera 2011; see also Matthews et al., 2015). In her review Kerry Ann O’Meara (2011, p. 186) concludes, “What is needed are specific opportunities or ‘critical experiences’ in masters and doctoral programs for graduate students to develop the knowledge, skills, and orientations most relevant to their future engaged work.”

Some faculty members are experimenting with ways to offer these kinds of opportunities, that is, to develop community-engaged skills and collaborative orientations among doctoral students. A few individual faculty members offer courses in CES, provide opportunities to participate in faculty-sponsored community-engaged research, or mentor students to conduct a community-engaged dissertation (O’Meara, 2008a). Some universities have gone further, establishing certificate programs for graduate students in community engagement that involve coursework to develop skills and experience in community-engaged research (Doberneck, Brown, & Allen, 2010; Matthews, Carls, Doberneck, & Springer., 2015). Yet, in many—if not most—of these efforts, students continue to operate in isolation from the full scope of the study, experiencing only one part of a research project rather than contributing from start to finish (O’Meara, 2008a), or they work alone on their dissertation (Herr & Anderson, 2014). Indeed, the picture that emerges from the literature about these efforts is one of individual student development. In other words, students learn skills and dispositions through opportunities and relationships they undertake as individuals in research projects or in relationships to faculty. So, while Doberneck et al (2010) suggest that, in order to develop an identity as a community-engaged scholar, students need to seek out spaces to nurture that identity, cultivate their skills, and reflect on their practice and values, most existing programs typically involve one graduate student being guided or mentored by a faculty member to work with a community partner (Matthews et al, 2015), and the values of CES “are often learned [by the student] through faculty role-modeling,

conversations with students, and conversations with community partners” (O’Meara, 2008a, p. 39).

We contend that, although students can learn important CES skills this way, a more powerful way to develop a full range of CES skills *and* to solidify a commitment to CES may come through full participation in the entirety of a research project as part of a community. Students develop professional skills and identities not just as individuals in classes and research projects, but also as members of collectivities and communities (Walker et al, 2009), and communities are vital to the development of new or countercultural identities (Polletta, 1999), such as an identity as a community engaged scholar. Moreover, as students learn to collaborate with each other and with faculty members in these communities, they can acquire the skills and dispositions necessary for fostering collaboration with community partners. Very few empirical studies, however, have been conducted that deeply examine these kinds of *collective* critical experiences, as we set out to do in this study.

Methods

For this self-study, we draw upon two sources of data: documents created during the course of the research and interviews conducted with team members after the Project’s completion. We reviewed meeting notes from 56 Project-wide meetings; these notes transcribed key discussions that led to decisions about data collection and analysis and emerging dilemmas, thus providing a running record of how students developed various skills and dispositions relevant to CES at different phases of the Project. We also analyzed each case study team’s field notes, which detailed team observations, analytic notes and reflections, and site visit reports,³ where teams summarized key insights and connections to Project-wide themes and emerging findings after each field research trip—a total of 36 site visit reports and associated field notes. Finally, we reviewed the identity memos that all members of the Project wrote during the first year, articulating the personal experiences, theoretical frameworks, assumptions, values, and feelings each member brought to the research project and how these perspectives might shape his or her interpretive lens and positionality.

We also conducted 60-90 minute interviews with all 17 Project members. In these in-depth, semi-structured interviews, team members discussed salient processes of the Project and the impact, if any, the Project had on their development as scholars and practitioners. We also asked respondents to identify moments of tension and unmet challenges in implementing practices of community-engaged scholarship. We coded and analyzed these data for key practices and their impacts, using etic codes like “researcher identity” and “relationship-building” derived from our literature review and emic codes that emerged from the data, such as “community-building” and “consensus decision-making.” Following Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), we then constructed themes from our codes that addressed our research questions—specifically, the skills and dispositions participants learned in the Project and the processes and practices by which they acquired them.

³ While field notes were mainly comprised of observational data and immediate impressionistic notes and questions, the site visit reports were heavily analytical, presenting collective understanding and accumulated knowledge of each team that engaged project-wide discussions around key findings and overarching themes.

Self-study involves the study *of* the self and study *by* the self (Samaras & Freese, 2009). Self-study or autoethnography (Coia & Taylor, 2009) incorporates multiple methods of qualitative research (Tidwell, Heston, & Fitzgerald, 2009), and it was a fitting methodology because the central focus of our study was the processes of a research project in which the authors were participants, as well as our experiences as community-engaged researchers (Feldman, Paugh, & Mills, 2004). As inquiry-driven research, self-study allowed for both a critical examination of our involvement in “the phenomenon under study” (Hamilton, Pinnegar, Russell, Loughran, & LaBoskey (1998) and a collective reflection into personal processes and professional struggles in teaching and learning skills related to community-engaged scholarship.

Because this case study is a self-study (Feldman, 2003), it is particularly subject to researcher bias. In some ways, this insider, participant status gave us deeper insight and a more complex understanding of the complexities of the Project than would be possible for an “outside” researcher. In conducting self-study, maintaining a critical stance towards one’s practice can sometimes make even familiar and comfortable practices become suspect (Tidwell, Heston, & Fitzgerald, 2009). At the same time, when examining one’s own work, it may be difficult to question certain practices and identify failures. Mitigating this bias required us to explicitly interrogate our own assumptions about the “success” of the Project (Maxwell, 2005), intentionally looking for failures or unmet goals, implementation challenges, and unexamined biases. We therefore asked members to identify and reflect upon challenging moments during interviews and triangulated data from the field notes to examine tensions that arose within the Project or with community partners. While no account is free from the effects of researcher subjectivity, in the end, we believe we were able to produce a fair and balanced account of the Project.

Below, we first present some background about the origins of the Project and then we describe our findings—the skills and dispositions of CES that the Project developed within students. We then discuss the role of community building in supporting this development and conclude with some implications for doctoral practice and further research.

The Project’s Origins: Contextualizing the Findings

In the spring of 2006, faculty members Mark Warren and Karen Mapp gathered together a group of doctoral students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) to discuss the possibility of working together on a research project to study community organizing efforts at education reform. Students were attracted to the opportunity to work with Warren and Mapp and develop their emerging research skills, but, as many later remembered, they were also looking for something more. Many students had entered doctoral education hoping to learn how to do research that mattered to practice, especially to advancing racial equity and social justice, and that valued community knowledge and participation. Yet upon entering the doctoral program, they felt that the dominant model of doctoral training taught research isolated from practice, and they were told that attaining “objectivity” in scholarly endeavor meant divorcing it from personal experiences and social justice values. Students, therefore, were looking for a space where they could bring “their whole selves,” where they could integrate all aspects of their identity and prior experiences to engage in research that empowers the voices and priorities of schools and communities. According to student Amanda Taylor, “At HGSE, the personal was anti-intellectual. . . . But [The Project] was a place where each informed the other and it all mattered. That’s how I felt about the world, and it felt good.”

Warren and Mapp, for their part, had multiple reasons for starting the Project and designing it as collaboration, both with organizing groups and with doctoral students. First, they wanted to help build the field of research on community organizing and school reform; they believed the Project could yield a foundational study and introduce emerging scholars to the new field of education organizing. Moreover, Warren and Mapp were frustrated that so much of education research, designed to develop expert-driven policies to be implemented in a top-down manner onto schools and communities, failed to create (or sustain) much needed change in education. They believed that stakeholders on the ground needed a meaningful say in educational policy and practice to create lasting transformation in deep-seated systems of injustice and that research should model this kind of collaboration. So they set out to collaborate with the community organizing groups included in the study throughout the entire process, giving students the opportunity to learn not only research skills and content knowledge but also a community-engaged approach to scholarship. The response to Warren and Mapp's call for the March 2006 meeting far exceeded their expectations. In all, fifteen students signed up to participate; Mapp remembers, "Other faculty members told us we were crazy for building such a big collaborative project with so many students." But Warren and Mapp were excited by the extent and depth of student interest in the Project and believed in the potential of their experiment to offer an important new model for doctoral education.

Findings: Becoming Community Engaged Scholars

While involvement in the Project cultivated the more typical academic skills of research design, interviewing, observation, and data analysis, we found that it also promoted four skills and dispositions particular to CES. Through participating in the project, students learned to:

- 1) Articulate their values and tell their stories of self;
- 2) Build "horizontal" and collaborative relationships;
- 3) Interrogate researcher positionality by embracing diversity; and
- 4) Identify as a community-engaged scholar.

For each skill or disposition, we detail key practices and processes that participants identified as central to its cultivation, though most examples support the development of multiple skills and dispositions.

Articulating Values and Sharing Stories

From the onset, Warren, Mapp, and the students questioned the conventional wisdom that personal experience and values should be kept out of the research process; they believed that bringing one's whole self to the research endeavor and making explicit the influence of their personal standpoints and values would make the analysis *more*, not less, rigorous. By making these influences explicit, they could be interrogated in relationship to interpretations of the data. Doing so, however, requires researchers to clearly identify and reflect upon their values. To begin that process, the group decided to write personal identity memos; in these memos, they recounted important life experiences and decisions that led them to the field of education, to the doctoral program, and to the Project. The memo assignment asked students to go beyond the abstract and consider how their values emerged through the interplay of specific life experiences and conscious choices. As Project members shared their personal background, professional experiences, and academic journeys, and the deeply-held values that guided these paths,

relationships deepened and a community began to form around the Project. As Warren wrote in his memo:

I am interested in helping students learn to build a community here, a place where people support each other so we can each grow and develop, where we share values of social justice and can discuss the personal and political issues involved in our work, where we can feel part of something larger than our individual selves, and where we can even have some fun!

Students remembered that writing and discussing the memos helped them connect their values to their current work and contributed to a sense of belonging. These memos were also first steps in learning to tell their “stories of self” (Ganz, 2010)—an important organizing skill—to community partners. Warren knew from past experiences that community organizers and leaders want to know *why* outside researchers are there—not in the abstract language of caring about children or about social justice, but in the concrete stories of their lives. Students’ opportunity to share their stories came on their first site visit to the organizing groups, a visit intentionally designed to build relationships. The Project had divided up into small teams of two or three students, each assigned to study one community organizing group and each overseen by either Warren or Mapp. During the first visit, teams began learning about their group’s strategy and practice, but would not conduct any formal interviews, so as to promote authentic sharing and connection and build the trust needed for collaboration.

But the challenge of balancing listening with sharing was difficult, and the team working with One LA in Los Angeles may have felt this tension the most acutely. Warren was unable to accompany the One LA student team on the trip, and so the students traveled to Los Angeles on their own. The team, believing they were there to learn, focused on listening attentively to all of the One LA leaders and educator allies, sharing a bit about themselves along the way. But that turned out not to be enough—and the group’s organizers pushed back. Connie Chung recalled:

Carlota Garcia, one of the organizers, thought we were too quiet during our meetings with the school administrators in Pomona and Harmony, and the very next day, having heard from Carlota, Sister Maribeth Larkin, One LA’s lead organizer, “reprimanded” us for not telling our stories. She asked us for our stories about why we were doing what we were doing in a meeting with other organizers. . .

The team finally shared their stories, and they had an effect; Chung recounts that Carlota “was moved to tears while listening.” Oh, for example, shared why issues of educational equity mattered to her personally and professionally. She talked about racial microaggressions and internal struggles she experienced growing up in an Asian American immigrant family, followed by the consequences of being tracked with the label “English as a Second Language” (ESL) in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and as a result, being denied enrollment in advanced math courses. During her teaching in an inner-city school, Oh encountered her own story in the lives of her students as she constructed systemic explanations for the unequal educational opportunities and institutionalized disadvantages affecting their daily realities. In hearing this, the organizers understood how these experiences became the *why* behind her work. The incident with One LA also had a powerful effect on the students, as Keith Catone explained:

I remember feeling confused because I felt like we did share about ourselves, but apparently we didn't share in a way that came across well or was appreciated... it

almost felt like we were being tested (or at least vetted). It seemed that the organizers were intent on agitating us for our stories, to get us to be more vulnerable, perhaps because that's what we'd be expecting from them as we conducted our research . . . These were new ways of being for me.

Even after writing the memos, students had not been prepared to share these values and identities deeply with their community partners. The organizers wanted a clear understanding of the students as people, not just outside researchers; according to Chung, “they weren't looking for any old sharing of stories about ourselves, or even friendly chatter, but stories of self—stories that articulated the values behind why we were doing what we were doing.” When finally shared, the students’ stories allowed One LA organizers—as well as the organizers and leaders across the six groups in the study—and students to begin to forge genuine relationships, laying the foundation to build the trust necessary to gather rich data, complete a complex and rigorous analysis, and establish authentic collaborations across the academy/community divide.

Building “Horizontal” and Collaborative Relationships

Learning to conduct research *with* rather than *on* communities requires a different approach to research relationships than is typically taught in doctoral programs; rather than seeing community members as the subject of research with no meaningful say in its conduct, students would have to create relationships of greater equality and mutual respect. Learning how to build these sorts of “horizontal” relationships, it turns out, would start at home—that is, by collaborating as a team within the Project, students found that they gained many of the skills that equipped them to collaborate with community partners. From the beginning, the Project decided to organize itself into student teams to design the research and to conduct the case studies, believing that this kind of teamwork creates a supportive structure to promote peer-learning, develops a sense of collective ownership, and allows students to acquire the skills required by each phase of the study. The teams created intense learning experiences for their members as they grappled together with understanding what they were seeing in their local research sites. The intimacy of the small groups fostered deep professional and personal connections, but the diversity of perspectives within teams often meant heated discussions of various interpretations of the field work. Participants described learning as just as likely to happen in the rental car after a parent interview as back at school while sharing with the larger Project.

In order to fully engage all members and mitigate faculty-student hierarchies, Project members also decided to try to reach decisions by consensus of all participants. Consensus decision-making was seen as critical to collaboration within the Project because it helped to ensure that all voices would be heard and valued and that every member would take ownership of the project. It would, therefore, also offer important skills—like listening for and understanding divergent or unpopular viewpoints—that students could use in their work with community partners.

While the norm of consensus decision-making was established early in the design phase of the Project, the challenges of practicing it quickly emerged. Faculty and students had different levels of knowledge and experience, played different roles in the Project, and had different positions in the academy and in the field of community organizing. The decision about which sites to study—always a critical moment in case study research—illustrated these challenges. The six cases were supposed to represent different regions of the country and different organizing philosophies and work in communities of diverse racial composition. But no single grouping of six sites could

perfectly match all of these criteria, and so discussions about which of these criteria was most important and what constituted the “best” mix of cases ensued.

In keeping with the Project’s philosophy, the case selection team decided that personal interest in sites was legitimate as another consideration for selection—after all, students would be spending at least two years intensely studying these groups—so students began to express their rationales, sometimes very strongly, for including particular organizing groups. Warren, though, knew that he would have to defend the decisions to the broader field of stakeholders, that is, to other organizing groups who wanted to know why they were not included, as well as to funders and researchers. These decisions, therefore, would have consequences for his career and standing in the field, possibly affecting him in ways they would not affect students. Tensions rose—achieving consensus, it turned out, was more difficult than simply valuing it. After several spirited and difficult discussions about the issue, Warren suggested a “middle ground”: decisions would be made by consensus, but Warren and Mapp, who had the strongest professional stake in the outcome, had to agree with the consensus. This arrangement effectively provided them with veto power. As it turned out, Warren and Mapp rarely used their veto and, if Warren cared very strongly about an issue, students often went along with his position—a trend that, though it helped the group reach consensus more quickly, had its own, possibly detrimental consequences, such as preventing some ideas from getting surfaced.

In the end, consensus was reached on the selection of cases, but consensus-building continued to be a challenge. As notes from one meeting documented:

Discussion last week . . . may have been “sharper” than we hoped. . . .Mark and Karen feel like they’re more collegial with us, though [their] faculty role complicates this. Neither one of them has ever led a group this large, nor that attempts to be this collaborative—we don’t have all the answers. We want to be sure we can critique each other and ask each other tough questions, but in a supportive way.

Building a collaborative space took continuous work over the course of the Project, and participants reported growing increasingly adept at using their voices, listening attentively, examining underlying assumptions, and finding common ground.

These skills learned in building consensus and collaborating within the project were also useful in working with community organizers, as they helped students seek out, listen to, and value multiplicity of voices. Working to overcome the faculty-student hierarchy attuned students to hierarchy in the academic-community relationship and made them more mindful of respecting the views of community partners. Collaboration with community partners, however, was different than collaboration among participants in the Project as there was no requirement to make decisions by consensus. The Project had committed to deeply respect the views of community organizers and to try to reach agreement on issues of analysis and presentation. At the same time, students understood the importance of maintaining a certain degree of autonomy and taking responsibility for their eventual findings. In agreeing to participate, community partners said they valued the opportunity for an independent, yet sympathetic, treatment of their organizing work, but in practice, students grappled to create and maintain this balance.

Many students remembered the first trips as particularly intoxicating. They returned tremendously impressed by the organizing groups; they had, they joked, “drunk the Kool-Aid,” wholeheartedly buying into their groups’ philosophies and goals. In some ways, this initial response was understandable. The Project team had chosen strong groups with rich traditions and impressive leaders, and one of the fundamental purposes of the research was to understand organizing from the organizers’ perspectives. But, to produce independent analyses, students needed to grow more autonomous in their views; as they spent extended time in the field and shared their findings across the Project, they began to see the complexities of the organizing work and learned to contextualize their group in relation to others.

Negotiating this autonomy was difficult, as the group studying Denver’s *Padres y Jovenes Unidos* (PJU) discovered. Latino students in PJU had been organizing to improve education at North High School for several years; the school had historically served the city’s Latino community, but its 38% dropout rate had made it a potent symbol of educational failure. PJU youth leaders had conducted a survey that revealed that many Latino students felt that teachers did not respect them, reflecting, PJU believed, a long history of racism that had kept the city’s Latino population poor and disempowered. The group organized a campaign to push for change, which led to the creation of a reform committee consisting of youth, teachers, administrators, and PJU organizers. After some initial improvement, however, PJU felt that progress had slowed to a halt and that the teachers and school administrators were stalling. They called for a formal district-level reform process that required all teachers to reapply for their jobs; the district’s superintendent agreed and issued the ruling. PJU was excited, believing the reform would promote a more equitable education for Latino students. But when the Project team interviewed the head of the teachers union, she was trenchant in her criticism of PJU on this issue.

What was the Denver team to make of these opposing perspectives? How would they represent these events in their case? And how should their relationship with PJU matter to the telling of this story? Team members sympathized with the students but also had different perspectives among themselves on the issue. Anita Wadhwa had been a teacher prior to her doctoral studies and worried that the school had not been given enough time to change. Thomas Nikundiwe had been a teacher but also a youth organizer and identified with the frustrations of the young Latinos. When the team reported back to the Project, heated discussion continued across all members. Some were concerned about a growing movement to undermine teachers unions; others spoke about the racism and low expectations of teachers they had witnessed or experienced. In the end, the Project agreed that the team was telling the story from the perspective of PJU, explaining the group’s organizing processes. However, to be fair and to fully tell the story, they had an obligation to report the teachers union’s opposing point of view, and they did so. Through this experience, Project members began to wrestle with the challenges and responsibilities of fostering trusting, collaborative relationships with participants while also maintaining an autonomous voice in their analysis and writing.

These same questions of representation and independence would surface again several months later as the team shared a draft of its case with PJU members and then visited Denver to hear feedback. In interviews, PJU organizers had said that political education sessions constituted the primary strategy in their organizing approach. The team pointed out, though, that, during their six visits that year, they had never seen the organization hold a single political education session.

PJU organizers were angry about the draft, feeling it misrepresented their work. The students were stunned by the reaction and, in their hotel room that night, decided they needed to listen and discuss the issue. They returned the next day and facilitated conversation with PJU organizers and leaders. By the end of the day, agreement had been reached that, indeed, the group had not emphasized political education that year, but this de-emphasis was due to a transition in organizing staff; newer organizers had prioritized other aspects of the organizing work. In the end, the team revised the case to give this context, though the critique remained.

From these experiences, students learned that collaboration does not mean only seeking out or representing the perspective of their organizing group; CES is not “drinking the Kool-aid.” Students could—and should—pursue and reflect multiple views on the organizing work; this approach provides a more nuanced and holistic perspective of the experience of organizing against deep-seated systems of injustice, while maintaining respect for organizers and their work. This kind of independent analysis within the context of more “horizontal” relationships shared by site and Project participants created a research product that community partners described as genuine and authentic—and a learning process that taught students how to engage deeply with community partners.

Interrogating Research Positionality by Embracing Diversity

From the beginning, Warren and Mapp had intentionally sought to create as diverse a research group as possible, believing that diversity—across dimensions of race, gender, professional background, academic and experiential knowledge, and theoretical perspective—strengthens rather than undermines scholarly rigor. Moreover, given that organizing groups work primarily in low-income communities of color addressing issues of racial inequity and injustice, racial diversity among Project members was an important consideration. In the end, the student participants included 11 women and 4 men, of whom 2 were black, 7 were Asian American, and 6 were white, and the project was led by a white man (Warren) and an African American woman (Mapp). The group also represented various professional and personal backgrounds—parents, teachers, organizers, nonprofit staff, governmental workers, union members—from a variety of states and countries. This explicit attention to diversity helped students become mindful of seeking out diverse perspectives and different views when talking with community members.

Embracing multiple forms of diversity—and developing meaningful collaborations with community partners across lines of difference—also raised profound questions of identity and positionality, especially when studying efforts to transform deeply entrenched systems of inequality. These questions became particularly salient for the students working with Southern Echo, a black-based, black-led organization that works to empower Delta communities and further racial equity within Mississippi’s educational and political system. The Echo team included two students: Kenneth Russell, a black male from Jamaica, and Mara Tieken, a white female raised in the South. Echo leaders were explicit in their critique of the profound racism practiced by Mississippi’s white power structure: maintaining a racially segregated education system, funding public education at woefully inadequate levels, practicing harsh and discriminatory discipline policies, and failing to be responsive to the concerns of black communities. Russell and Tieken spent many hours talking about the racial inequalities produced by a plantation legacy, and, as Tieken later said, she thought she “got it,” that she understood how race and racism shaped educational opportunity in the South.

But it wasn't until their third visit to Mississippi—in the middle of an interview with the black executive director of an Echo affiliate—that she “got” something entirely different. As this director was critiquing the public/private system that emerged to replicate pre-*Brown* segregation, Tieken finally realized that, as a child, she had attended a private school in the South. She had joined in that segregated system, and her participation perpetuated it. She was, therefore, a part of the white power structure, a beneficiary of the same inequities that Echo was fighting. Ashamed by this realization—and how long it took to arrive—she began to question her research skills, her relationship with Echo, and her own understanding of racial inequality.

The relationship she built with Russell, though, gave her some space to make sense of this shift in perspective and the feelings it provoked. During long car rides across the Delta, they talked about their racial identities and backgrounds, including Russell's years studying at historically-black Howard University and Tieken's teaching in a nearly all-white community in rural Tennessee, and how these identities shaped what they were seeing, hearing, and experiencing in the Delta and, ultimately, their “research lens.” Tieken reported that she came to see research as an ongoing process of self-learning that occurs in relationship to others, noting, “I became much more attuned to issues of voice, representation, and power. . . It made me differently aware of some of the power dynamics in research and how I want to change it.”

Not only did the diversity within the Project and across the partnerships with organizing groups shape students' learning about themselves and the research process, it also shaped the research product—the analysis, findings, and the writing. As participants sought to forge shared understanding, there came to be an expectation of disagreement and a recognition that “pushback” enhances, rather than undermines, ideas and dialogue. For example, as the project members gathered to compare and discuss emergent findings from different sites, several groups' understanding of the coding theme “leadership” focused solely on adults: parents, institutional leaders, and community members. However, Project members studying PJU and the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition quickly challenged this definition of “leadership” by explaining the critical role of political education and youth empowerment in building leadership and sustaining intergenerational cycles of organizing. Not only did the discussion help refine the coding schemes that the Project used to analyze data, it also expanded participants' notion about the growing importance of youth in education organizing. As Soojin Oh explained, “The Project shaped my understanding that rigor really comes when divergent views come together in a respectful way to foster collective learning and arrive at a new place in a way that can never happen when you're in your own world and thinking about it in your own way.” Helen Westmoreland pointed out that students learned about

. . . honoring the experiences of others. There is so much value in research that's done with a group of people . . . [I]t has more objectivity. The analysis is so much deeper when you have a group of folks that can do it with you, push you, ask critical questions, and put new ideas on the table.

As students reflected upon their own identities in relationship to others, diversity became an intellectual strength—a necessity, even—that allowed participants to better understand the perspectives of organizing leaders and members and to carry out a richer, more rigorous analysis.

Identifying as a Community-engaged Scholar

Students learned the skills of community-engaged research by doing collaborative research in a team-based setting. In addition to gaining skills, though, participants reported that experiences in the Project fostered the commitments and dispositions needed to conduct community-engaged scholarship in their professional lives. Students came to graduate school with a deep faith in what families and communities could offer in addressing racial inequalities in public education. Yet many reported that they struggled to maintain and nurture these values, because their training often adopted a deficit-oriented stance toward low-income communities and admonished them to keep their scholarly distance. Taylor described, “What I struggled with when I started the [doctoral] program [was that] we said we wanted to make changes in education, but we remove ourselves so much from education that we get lost in our purpose.”

However, through the Project, participants began to see how their values might be connected to research—and learned lessons they’d take forward into their post-graduate work. And, for many students, learning that one could do equity-oriented work with communities within academia was an affirming, if surprising, lesson. Students began to understand research as a means of mobilizing educational change in partnership with organized communities.

Entering and responding to a community was loaded with ethical challenges and possibilities. As students learned how to build and navigate collaborative relationships, these more respectful and reciprocal dynamics impacted their orientation toward research. Ann Ishimaru noted:

[The Project] played a fundamental role in shaping my whole way of approaching research... [especially] thinking through, what does it mean to develop a relationship with your site? What is our responsibility as researchers to communities we are working with or studying and learning from? I developed a real sense of how to navigate some of these questions and a real priority in building those relationships.

Through the Project, students nurtured a commitment to CES, as well as an identity that many had not considered prior to starting doctoral studies—that is, as researchers committed to engaging with communities to advance equity and social justice.

The Project provided a new way to see their roles as researchers and reimagine how they might engage in systemic transformation of schools and communities as scholars, leading many students who were hesitant to enter academia to pursue university or professional research positions. According to Ishimaru:

I didn’t know if I wanted to really be a full-on researcher because in my mind, being a researcher meant being disconnected from what was really going on. I had the conception that research was something that was disconnected from what was actually happening in schools and communities... Being involved in the [Project] fundamentally changed my orientation to the possibilities, the ways that research could really speak to helping to improve what is going on in schools and communities.

Thus, the Project’s vision and purpose deepened specific values—for collaboration, educational equity, and racial and social justice—and equipped students to see themselves as transformative agents taking part in the broader efforts to bring about social change.

This new identity, participants noted, was largely a product of the community created by the Project. The Project was both *a community of practice* (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), in which participants struggled together to learn how to conduct community-engaged research, and *a community of purpose*, one that supported explicit discussions about values and identities, exploring personal, intellectual, and political commitments to social justice. Participants learned to live out these values through research, developing an understanding of themselves as active members of a larger community, inclusive of academics, practitioners, and the broader public, all working toward a more just and equitable educational system.

Students' commitment to conducting CES proved lasting. Most developed community-engaged projects for their dissertations: Soo Hong produced a dissertation and later a book (Hong, 2011) on the parent organizing work of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association using an approach similar to the collaborative and engaged style of the Project; Anita Wadhwa used engaged methods to document and analyze restorative justice alternatives to school discipline in her dissertation, also later developed into a book (Wadhwa, 2015); and Paul Kuttner developed a youth participatory action research project as part of his dissertation on cultural organizing in the Boston-based group, Project Hip Hop, to name a few. After graduation, many continued to take a community-engaged approach to their work in academia or elsewhere, such as Catone, who works for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and conducts research to support the efforts of local education organizing groups, and Ishimaru, now an assistant professor at the University of Washington, who directly engages parents to promote equitable parent-school collaborations.

Discussion: Building Community in Community Engaged Scholarship

We have a pressing need for education researchers capable of producing research that is not only rigorous, but also relevant to growing economic inequality and persistent and deep-seated racial inequities. Over half of all public school students now come from low-income families, and nearly half are students of color (Suits, 2010; 2015). These are the children our school systems consistently fail, often trapping them in intergenerational cycles of poverty and incarceration. Research that informs “top-down” models of educational reform has proven inadequate to fundamentally tackle these growing inequities. Indeed, addressing these profound inequities will require a broad movement that includes researchers as well as practitioners, community organizers, parents, youth, and others who can collectively create powerful, contextually-grounded solutions that advance equity in public education and our broader society (Warren, 2014). Though doctoral programs need to build research skills among students, they also need to foster the development of a new generation of scholars with the ability and commitment to engage with educators and families in the work of transforming schools and communities.

Unfortunately, however, doctoral programs in education, like sibling programs in other schools across the university, largely fail to develop these skills and dispositions, let alone encourage such value orientations, in emerging scholars. Although there has been much discussion and debate around the public purposes of higher education, limited attention has been paid to how to prepare and socialize graduate students for a role as public scholars in education or across the disciplines (O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006). As a result, Barry Checkoway (2001, p. 135) notes:

Most faculty are trained in graduate schools whose required courses ignore civic content, and they enter academic careers whose gatekeepers dissuade them from spending much time in the community. They are socialized into a culture—

beginning with their first days in graduate school and continuing into their academic careers—whose institutional structures shape their beliefs and cause behaviors that are consistent with their conditioning. They perceive that public engagement is not central to their role, that there are few rewards for this work, and that it may even jeopardize their careers in the university.

Consequently, most graduate students do not learn to “see” community engagement as a way of being a scholar (O’Meara, 2008a)—even though graduate students across the social sciences express the desire to do work that connects their intellectual passions with the needs of society (Austin & McDaniels, 2006a).

We believe our study is one of the very few in-depth studies that examine “critical experiences” (O’Meara, 2011) that cultivate community-engaged orientations, skills, and identity among graduate students. Moreover, our study demonstrates the value of moving beyond the individual process of development to grasp the power of a collective approach to cultivating a new generation of community-engaged scholars. Our findings add key understandings to our current knowledge of the mechanisms through which students can develop the skills and commitments of CES. As students embraced collaborative learning and built a community, they deepened their capacity to practice CES and strengthened their identities as community-engaged scholars.

Community-engaged scholarship is countercultural work. In this context, we found that the kind of community built through the Project provides the vehicle for students to develop new, countercultural identities and commitments in the face of mainstream academic pressures. Though some scholars have noted the importance of networks of support for students to sustain commitments (Doberneck et al, 2010), we found that communities are more than networks of support. They are collective vehicles in which to forge new identities and commitments to CES. In the Project, students found an alternative space, outside the dominant norms and practices of the academy, where, as Carolyn Leung noted, they could “figure out who they wanted to become.” This community became important to nurturing and sustaining countercultural values and research practice.

The Project emphasized community-building from the beginning. In fact, students learned to build community as they learned all of the skills we identified—that is, as they learned to articulate their values and share stories, as they built horizontal relationships with one another, and as they questioned and appreciated researcher positionality of oneself and others. Many community-engaged scholars recognize that one of the key motivations for faculty to practice CES is autobiographic—personal or professional experiences with injustice or the influences of family or others on deeply-held values (O’Meara 2008b)—and that students need the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and values as they conduct community-engaged research. What is largely missing, however, is an appreciation for the fundamentally collective nature of this process. In the Project, importantly, student researchers learned not just to construct a story of self, but to share those stories with each other and with community partners. Learning to narrate the stories of self—stories that articulate the deeply embedded values that shape our identities and purpose as researchers—is no easy feat. Students had to get beyond the abstract declaration “I care about social injustice” to narrate the specifics of their personal journeys and the influences that shaped them. This meant being willing to be vulnerable to each other and to

community partners in a way that is seldom taught. However, with intentional efforts and thoughtful craft, narrating the stories of self builds the trust necessary for forging collaborative partnership and helps break down walls that divide academia and community, theory and practice, faculty and students, research and advocacy. Moreover, it is in the sharing of stories that community is built, a community in which students can find a safe space to thrive and identify themselves with others as community-engaged scholars.

Creating and maintaining this community was not without its challenges; in particular, the Project required years of work and intensive time commitments from all involved. Yet faculty navigated institutional structures with creativity to offer students course credits and stipends that helped carve out the space for this community to grow and thrive. And, in this diverse community, students learned to build new relationships with one another and with community partners as a critical process of research. Students also witnessed how sustaining authentic partnership with educators, families, and communities strengthened research and can serve as a powerful means to address the social disparities and racial inequalities they had witnessed firsthand in their roles before graduate school as teachers, organizers, practitioners, and nonprofit leaders; they began to see doctoral education as a tool for learning relevant research skills and strengthening that commitment.

This study also suggests both the benefits—and challenges—of fostering collaboration among students and across faculty and student roles. Though community-engaged scholars value reciprocal and mutual partnerships with community members and often admonish researchers to disrupt the typically hierarchical relationship between the academy and community (Strand, et al, 2003; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011), little attention is paid to developing skills of collaboration or to addressing faculty-student hierarchies, even among faculty practicing CES. Time and again, we heard from Project participants about the power of working in a team environment—for learning the skills of CES, for appreciating diverse standpoints and perspectives, and for creating a more rigorous analysis. Moreover, we found that working to create collaborative and more horizontal relationships within a research team proved excellent training to help build these kinds of relationships in the field. .

Consensus decision-making constituted a key aspect of the team’s collaborative approach and, as it turned out, was also one of its most challenging. It demanded that Project participants were acutely aware of power dynamics—whether created by student/faculty status, years of research experience or fluency with a particular idea or understanding—and actively find ways to equalize those power differentials in order to ensure all parties have an authentic voice in decisions, from choices about research design to making meaning out of data.⁴ In building consensus, participants were committed to seek out voices less heard or perspectives they had not considered, ensuring, in the words of Hong, “we left no stones unturned.”

Breaking down hierarchies is not easy, especially when undertaken within a mainstream institution of higher education where the roles and responsibilities of students and faculty differ. Students may be focused on acquiring new skills and knowledge and earning a degree; faculty

⁴ Scholars of organizational behavior (Margerum, 2011; Hartnett, 2011) have examined consensus decision-making and shown its benefits for engaging and equalizing the voice of participants, but this discussion is largely missing in the scholarship on CES.

are often faced with promotion and tenure reviews and pressures to secure grants, publish, and manage institutional responsibilities for teaching, advising, and service, as well as commitments to the broader field. Being transparent about power differentials, maintaining consistent communication, and considering all viewpoints eased these tensions, though they were never fully resolved. The Project's greatest moments of tension arose around consensus decision-making—and, indeed, the Project was not able to sustain a fully consensus-based model. However, we would argue that consensus is a practice and not just a product, and the Project did succeed in practicing consensus, if imperfectly, on most issues on a daily basis. We found that collaboration and community should not be understood to require completely equal power and no role differentiation among participants. In the context of larger institutional structures, like graduation requirements and tenure and promotion demands, and the greater research experience and knowledge that faculty members possess, complete equality is not realistic and may not even be desirable. It was the powerful community built around shared values and trust that allowed the Project to weather these tensions, tolerate these inequalities, and continue to move forward. But intensive faculty-student collaboration requires faculty who are willing to invest the time and take some risks in a process without certain outcomes. They must also trust in the capabilities of students and in the collaborative process with community partners. More broadly, faculty need to see the value of this process beyond the advancement of their careers narrowly conceived. Warren and Mapp were both committed to building a field of research on education organizing and believed that the field needed new scholars who took a CES approach if it was to make a difference in transforming public education. They felt themselves part of a larger movement that included researchers, organizers, youth and parent leaders, and educators and approached doctoral training from that perspective. And, as both Warren and Mapp discovered, building the Project created a more meaningful professional role and life for them as faculty members.

Implications

Our findings suggest that those who care about the development of a new generation of community-engaged scholars have to move beyond using short-term doctoral training approaches that are based upon one-on-one relationships between faculty members and students. Instead, they must work to build sustained, collective spaces where students can cultivate the skills and dispositions of engaged researchers. Faculty members might begin by adopting and adapting practices developed in the Project—such as offering opportunities for students to learn in teams, to construct and share their story, to engage with community partners through all parts of the research process, and, perhaps most importantly, to be a part of a robust community that works collaboratively, breaks down hierarchies, and shares common values. Exactly how these principles will be applied will depend on institutional and community setting. The questions that communities and researchers identify will certainly vary in topic and may require different methods of data collection or analysis. In each case, faculty and students will need to navigate their own institutional contexts and external environments, which will vary in the resources available and in the opportunities and challenges presented.

A number of Project participants themselves have been able to adapt this model and apply these principles to other educational settings and for other research purposes since they left Harvard. Warren, for example, teaches a year-long doctoral course in a public university on community engaged research in which students work together and with a community partner to create and implement a collaborative research project. Ishimaru engages graduate students at a large public

university to examine school leadership and family engagement through building community partnerships. Ticken uses key practices of the model with undergraduates at a small liberal arts college where she teaches a qualitative research course that features a research project developed in partnership with local community partners. In all of these cases, Project members teach students the skills and dispositions of community-engaged scholarship through a collaborative group research experience in which students share their values and “whole selves” and build community. Future research on the development of community-engaged scholars can continue to identify “critical experiences” that foster skills and commitments to CES. Conducting these studies in various contexts will help us refine our understanding of the processes that are effective for student development and the opportunities and constraints for CES faced in different institutional environments. There may well be a wider variety of critical experiences than we currently know, and a new, emerging field of study requires careful case studies to begin to build theory and knowledge (George & Bennett, 2005).

The findings of this research study also suggest that early career scholars must be supported beyond graduate school as they enter faculty positions: community matters not just to graduate students, but to all faculty members who conduct community-engaged research. This support certainly includes advocating for tenure and promotion review policies that appreciate community-engaged scholarship (Ellison & Eatman, 2008). However, in the face of powerful academic norms that work against new faculty conducting community-engaged research, this study also underscores the need for communities of support where scholars can continue to strengthen their identity as community-engaged scholars, lest their commitments wane in the face of mainstream pressures. Though these academic “homes” (Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & O'Meara, 2008) can be located within a university, others may have to be cross-institutional. Indeed, there appears to be a growing recognition of the need to connect early career and more senior faculty, as well as graduate students, in supportive CES networks. The newly created Urban Research Based Action Network, for example, joins a growing number of networks established over the past fifteen years, including Imagining America, Democracy Collaborative, Campus-Community Partnerships for Health, and the international Talloires Network.

While CES has a long history in education research and in other fields, it may be entering a new moment. In addition to the rise of networks, mainstream institutions within academia are showing new interest in connecting university research to public issues. In just the last five years, 83 colleges and universities have achieved the Carnegie Foundation for Teaching and Learning's classification as community engaged campuses, joining the 121 institutions that received the classification in 2010. Cornell University, for just one example, launched the “Engaged Cornell” initiative to connect university research and K-12 classroom learning with community needs and knowledge, and, in the past decade, Syracuse University, University of Colorado, University of Maryland, and University of Minnesota have all launched campus-wide initiatives to be “engaged” universities⁵

Growing economic inequality, the persistence of entrenched racial inequities, and the increasingly undemocratic nature of our political system are pressing more and more scholars to

⁵ For an extensive treatment of the development of engaged universities in the recent period, see Hoy and Johnson (2013). The list of Carnegie classified campuses can be found on the website of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at www.nerche.org.

conduct research that promises to directly address profound systems of injustice. The rise of new networks and the growing interest of mainstream academic institutions indicate new openings to advance the field of community-engaged scholarship. But, if this new movement is to be fruitful, we need to cultivate and support a new generation of community-engaged scholars who can lead the field into this new era. Many graduate students are ready to take on this challenge—to work alongside faculty, educators, and families in the urgent movement to advance equity and justice in our schools and communities.

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