
Who has a Stake?

How stakeholder processes influence partnership sustainability

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Universities throughout the world are expanding their relevance by responding to and engaging with local and regional societal challenges in multiple ways, including developing various kinds of community partnerships (Baum 2000; Bringle & Hatcher 2002; Butterfield & Soska 2005; Farrant et al. 2001; Stephens et al. 2008). Universities have a particularly interesting potential to facilitate societal responses to current challenges because universities are ‘anchor’ organisations that are more stable and robust than many other organisations within any given community (Coalition of Urban Serving Universities 2010). Faculty, students and administrators are increasingly finding pedagogical and intellectual value, as well as other personal and professional rewards, in connecting their work in explicit ways with communities beyond the campus (Baum 2000). At the same time, communities (from the smallest non-profit organisation to state legislative bodies) are turning to universities to provide resources, knowledge and assistance in addressing perplexing social problems as public resources prove scarce and social problems persist (Harkavy 1998; Maurrasse 2001).

Community-university partnerships typically involve an array of constituencies, or stakeholders, both from within the university and from the community. Through analysis of the evolution of three community-university partnerships in the same urban context but with different characteristics, different university and community stakeholders, and at different places in their partnership history, this article explores factors contributing to the durability of community-university partnerships, paying particular attention to variation in the strength and priorities of the stakeholders involved. The three partnerships included in this analysis are: (1) UniverCity – a discontinued partnership between the Worcester City government and multiple universities that was designed to promote economic development; (2) The HOPE Coalition (Healthy Options for Prevention and Education) – a youth–adult partnership consisting of 17 public and private organisations, including two universities, created to reduce youth

violence and substance use and promote adolescent mental health in Worcester; and (3) The Institute for Energy and Sustainability (IES) – a recently initiated partnership involving two private universities in Worcester working with politicians, businesses and government leaders to stimulate the growth of a clean energy industry in the region.

This comparative review of the three partnership cases focuses on understanding variation among different university and community stakeholders. In addition to identifying ‘who has a stake’, the study explores the salience of the stake, taking into account relative power, legitimacy and urgency of each stakeholder. We assert that adapting stakeholder theory to the field of community-university partnerships will allow deeper understanding of the processes necessary for universities and communities to sustain their collaborations and bring about social change. Each of the three authors is a faculty member who has been involved in the development of or implementation of at least one of the partnerships being compared, so this comparative analysis is based on a combination of formal and informal interviews as well as participant research by the co-authors.

COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

In the United States, universities have a longstanding tradition of serving as engines of economic development for states and regions (Freeland 1992; Hahn 2003; Rosenthal & Wittrock 1993). University researchers offer technical knowledge, an analytical perspective and access to a talented, inexpensive labour pool; universities also provide an educated workforce and may offer customised training for local employers (Crespo & Dridi 2007; Koven & Lyons 2003). These two roles of knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination have become increasingly important in the transition to a knowledge economy. In addition to economic development, universities, particularly medical schools, increasingly play key roles in community health, co-creating knowledge and educating outreach workers (Minkler & Wallerstein 2003).

Beyond teaching and research, a third role for universities has emerged: that of direct involvement in community issues. Such involvement can include activities as diverse as school reform, solar panel installation and staffing community health centres. This role is conceptualised in various ways: universities as citizens (Bingle, Games & Malloy 1999); universities as partners (Maurasse 2001); universities as leaders and change agents (Clark 1998; Harkavy 1998); universities as economic anchors (Hahn 2003). The concept of community-university partnership has received significant attention in the literature, to the extent that such partnerships are considered a social movement (Harkavy 1998; Maurasse 2001); a mechanism for combating corporatisation and overspecialisation in academia (Bok 2003); and a means to educate for democracy (Astin 1996). The Federal government in the US has invested in

such partnerships: in 2000 the Department of Housing and Urban Development, through its Community Outreach Partnership Center grant program, offered funding to 'help universities rebuild America's cities'. Philanthropic foundations, too, have supported university civic engagement initiatives (Ostrander & Portney 2007).

Policy analysts, higher education researchers and urban planners have established that social change occurs as a consequence of community-university partnerships and have emphasised that universities as well as their communities will be affected by such endeavours (Dewar & Isaac 1998; Silka 1999; Wiewel & Lieber 1998). With regard to components of successful and sustainable partnerships, scholars have pointed to the importance of university mission, campus infrastructure and pedagogy (Bringle, Games & Malloy 1999), as well as university and classroom contexts (Boyle 2007). Best-practice reports focus on the partnership as an entity, suggesting that effective partnerships require features such as reciprocity, shared planning, power and resources, good communications, and clear goals and expectations (Holland 2003). A recent assessment of a 10-year partnership concludes that commitment, communication, collaboration, flexibility, trust, and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship are necessary for success (Judd & Adams 2008). One identified gap in the literature on 'what works' in community-university engagement is deeper understanding of these collaborative processes (Hart et al. 2009). This article seeks to address the gap by describing, analysing and comparing the processes of stakeholder engagement over time.

Those critical of community-university partnerships focus on the 'unheard voices' of the community (Stoecker & Tryon 2009). Even when the rhetoric is about creating a participatory process of community empowerment, the reality is often much different (Boyle & Silver 2005; Sorensen 2007). Stoecker and Tryon (2009, p. 192) suggest that new research is needed to 'shift the balance of power to a more community-involved practice of community engagement by colleges and universities'. In the three case studies to be described below, community involvement differs as does the balance of power. The lens of stakeholder salience allows these process and power issues to be analysed and then compared.

STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Stakeholder theory (Freeman 1984) has developed most robustly in the management literature, where it focuses on decisions that affect multiple constituencies, that is, those with a 'stake' in the particular action being considered by a private-sector firm. The theory tries to explain 'which groups are stakeholders deserving or requiring management attention, and which are not' (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997, p. 855). Beyond stakeholder identification, managers are urged to undertake stakeholder analysis, stakeholder dialogue and/or stakeholder management. Stakeholder theory has

been critiqued for ‘having no moral underpinnings’ since it is not always clear that a manager will assess the competing stakes in an ethical manner (Philips 2003), as well as for paternalistically suggesting that stakeholders can be ‘managed’. This is especially problematic when the stakeholders are citizens rather than consumers or employees, as has been the case when the theory has been applied to the public sector (Tennert & Schroeder 1999) and to charities (Cordery & Baskerville 2005). Nonetheless, given our concern with processes of collaboration and constituents necessary for success, and our focus on the organisation rather than the manager as the unit of analysis, these critiques are not especially relevant. Moreover, we intend to use the concept analytically rather than normatively. Most useful to us is the stakeholder typology developed by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997), based on the attributes of *power* (defined as the extent to which a party has the means to impose its will in a relationship), *legitimacy* (based on the socially established structures or behaviours) and the *urgency* (time or severity) of the stakeholder’s claims. From these attributes, stakeholder saliency can be determined in various contexts including political organisations (O’Higgins & Morgan 2006). In management, the ‘typology allows predictions to be made about managerial behaviour with respect to each class of stakeholder’ (Mitchell, Agle & Wood 1997, p. 855). When community-university partnerships are the unit of analysis, salience works differently: rather than predicting managerial behaviour, we suggest that stakeholder salience influences the power balance in the collaborative processes, which in turn appears to affect the sustainability of the partnership, as will be explored in the three case studies below.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The case study was chosen as the research method because it potentially allows understanding of stakeholder interactions in depth and over time, and because case analysis can be used to explore causation (Yin 1994) and thereby the factors that result in sustainability can be studied. Moreover, cross-case comparison strengthens the generalisability of our single case explanations (Miles & Huberman 1994).

Three community-university partnerships with different structures and history were selected for this case study. Yet all three are situated in the same urban context and were developed within the past decade. This shared context is an important element of the study because of what is known about the dynamic nature of any local environment: Ostrander (2004) asserts that there are no singular models or universal best practices for university-community engagement, largely because local factors are disparate and evolving. And Stephens et al. (2008) argue for the critical role played by local context when environmental sustainability is the goal. By comparing three partnerships within the same context rather than focusing on exogenous variables,

as occurs when partnerships in different geographic regions are studied, this case study can deepen understanding of how stakeholder processes influence partnership sustainability.

Cases were developed by integrating information from formal and informal interviews with key actors and stakeholders and personal involvement and engagement of the researchers with the partnerships, as well as review of secondary documents including formal reports, minutes of meetings and news articles. The authors have had various degrees of involvement in each of the cases, as is typical in participatory action research where university-based researchers work in partnership with communities to achieve mutually agreed upon aims (Smith et al. 2010). We mitigated bias by using graduate assistants to collect data and generate analyses, as well as by individually deriving the comparative analyses, then synthesising our conclusions.

CONTEXT: BACKGROUND ON WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

The three community-university partnerships are situated in Worcester, Massachusetts, USA, a mid-sized city with a population close to 175 000. Like other post-industrial cities, it has been facing economic decline. From 2001 to 2007, Worcester lost more than 2200 jobs, 2% of its total employment. The size of the labor force also declined, along with the labour force participation rate. Losses were primarily in manufacturing and financial services, though the manufacturing losses were not as steep as in the US as a whole. In the past several years, the weakening economy and the slowdown in the housing market have negatively affected property values, reducing city tax revenues. At the same time, city expenditures, primarily salaries and benefits, have been increasing. Nonetheless, Worcester has seen growth within the biomedical/life sciences fields, in health care and higher education (City of Worcester 2004; Research Bureau 2008). The Worcester area is home to 13 colleges and universities that serve 30 000 students and employ 11 000 people.

FINDINGS: COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES

The partnership descriptions are organised as follows: (1) purpose, history and accomplishments; (2) community stakeholder representation and salience; (3) university stakeholder representation and salience; and (4) partnership structure including leadership and staffing.

UniverCity (2004–2008)

Purpose, history and accomplishments

The UniverCity partnership was established in 2004 with a primary goal of leveraging the potential of the region's 13 universities to enhance economic development (Stephens, Hernandez & Boyle 2009). This partnership, which was sustained for only four years, focused on expanding the tax base of the City

of Worcester and creating new jobs within the city and the region. As its name suggests, the key stakeholders were the universities and the city.

This partnership emerged within the controversial context related to taxes and universities. While there was a general understanding that universities have a positive economic impact on the area, a vocal subset of the city population believed that colleges should make Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). PILOTs are a means to collect voluntary payments from non-profit organisations such as educational institutions, hospitals, churches, etc. (Non-profits do not pay property tax in the US; property tax is the city's primary source of revenue.) A number of cities have successfully persuaded universities to make PILOTs, yet Worcester's higher educational institutions have argued that their in-kind contributions through their community engagement projects and overall economic spill-over effects were more than adequate.

UniverCity was the recommendation of a 23-member task force, appointed by the mayor, which included community and business leaders, government and elected officials, and representatives from the colleges. The task force proposed to establish a structure for communication among the city, colleges and the business community; to formalise and enforce evaluation mechanisms to inventory current productive relationships, institutional strengths and student engagement in community activities; and to pursue projects in nine key economic development areas (City of Worcester 2004). A four-member Executive Board, 10-member Campus Liaison Committee, and 12-member Advisory Board were established to provide programmatic guidance to the Executive Director. The City contributed \$35 000 and the 10 participating colleges made equal contributions totalling \$35 000. The Chamber of Commerce provided \$41 000 of in-kind support.

Following a competitive national search for an Executive Director, the board hired the former director of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Outreach Partnership Center grant program. The Executive Director was solely responsible for promoting the main objective of UniverCity, that is, to encourage economic development. UniverCity was to focus on: (1) college purchasing; (2) the colleges as employers of Worcester residents; (3) real estate development; (4) college advisory capabilities; (5) business incubation; (6) workforce development; (7) downtown development and the student consumer; (8) students as volunteers, service learners and professional interns; and (9) marketing Worcester.

According to key informants, UniverCity had two significant successes over the four years of its existence: the establishment of a benchmarking system to measure the economic development impacts of colleges and universities, and an overall increase in the amount of money spent by colleges and universities locally through the local purchasing program. Its final progress report stated that the colleges and universities contributed more than \$207 million

into the Worcester economy in the previous year, and detailed the percentage increases in purchasing, fees and assessments, the number of staff living in the city and total taxes paid to Worcester.

The partnership was discontinued in 2008. Interviewees suggested that while UniverCity was a great idea on paper, the conditions to make it a successful and sustainable partnership did not come together in practice. They cited inadequate funding, structural problems and lack of clear, coherent goals as the limiting factors. Only about \$7000 was dedicated to programmatic spending annually, limiting UniverCity's ability to fund projects. Additionally, a lack of 501(c)3 non-profit organisation status limited UniverCity's capacity to secure funding beyond the allocations provided by the city and the colleges.

Community stakeholder representation and salience

With regard to the question, 'Who has a stake?', the City of Worcester and the Chamber of Commerce were the two most evident community stakeholders. Neither neighbourhood business associations nor community-based organisations working on economic development were involved. Those in 'need' of jobs were not an organised stakeholder group, though those who might eventually provide jobs were at the table in the form of the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber hosted the partnership offices, so their interests were financial as well as substantive, yet individual Chamber members had little direct involvement in the partnership.

The City had a powerful stake in the success of UniverCity, and was able to influence the partnership's agenda and outcomes. Worcester would gain tax revenues, and successful business incubation would also benefit residents and City coffers. UniverCity evaluation showed an increase in monetary contributions as detailed above. Yet, City involvement in the partnership appeared one-sided: they wanted to benefit from university connections but did not offer much in return. Though there were efforts to increase student service-learning opportunities, and it could be argued that successful marketing of Worcester would benefit the universities in the long run, this partnership appeared to lack reciprocity. The City used its power to become a salient stakeholder, but this imbalance of power did not sustain the partnership as a whole. Other community representation was minimal, reducing the legitimacy of UniverCity's efforts beyond City Hall. With regard to urgency as a stakeholder attribute, those individuals who most urgently needed economic development had no organised way to become involved in the partnership. In this case, the stakeholders with the most to gain had the least power. Although the need for economic development was seen as urgent by government leaders, this urgency was distant from those board members involved in decision-making, further diminishing the salience of the City as a stakeholder and limiting the impact of the partnership over time.

University stakeholder representation and salience

Although engaging with the local universities was the primary objective of this partnership, actual university interaction and connection were limited. University administrators were involved in the initial set-up of the partnership and had seats on the governing boards, and universities contributed money to the operating budget, but these were administrative stakeholders. Faculty, staff and student involvement was minimal. This was not for lack of trying. Internship and service-learning directors on various campuses had great hopes that UniverCity would address problems of coordination and provide centralisation of community-based activities. They hoped that UniverCity would match community and university needs, and avoid duplication among different colleges. Faculty were aware of the importance of collaboration across the city as each college increased its service activities and sent students out to internship sites, and this was an explicit but unfulfilled goal of the partnership. Given that neither faculty nor students were involved in the planning or the day-to-day operations of the UniverCity partnership, it is not surprising that this goal was subsumed by the interests of the more powerful stakeholders. UniverCity became to be seen as a top-down, downtown entity, aloof and out of touch with the needs of its multiple stakeholders.

The universities had a stake in the success of the partnership, but their stake was not powerful or urgent, in part because it did not extend beyond administrators. Also there were so many universities at the table that their interests were diluted and thus power was diffuse. And because universities already perceived themselves as engines of economic development and anchor institutions in the region, their sense of urgency was minimal. The universities were happy to contribute through local purchasing and hiring, but given the scope, pace and predictability of existing university economic activity, additional actions could not contribute greatly to solving the problems of job loss and economic decline. Thus the salience of the university stake was the result of their legitimacy as stable economic actors in the region, not the result of their role as knowledge creators and disseminators. With regard to the balance of power and the reciprocity needed for partnership success, UniverCity's fate suggests that university involvement should extend beyond the administrative level to include the faculty and students who have an urgent interest in achieving the partnership's goals.

Partnership structure and leadership

If best practice requires 'reciprocity, shared planning, power and resources, good communications, and clear goals and expectations' (Holland 2003) for partnerships between one community organisation and a single university, it can be argued that such characteristics are even more important when trying to get multiple universities and city agencies to work together. So the complexity of UniverCity posed structural hindrances from

the beginning. Though collaborative planning processes were instituted with the UniverCity partnership, it does not appear that the stakeholders with the greatest saliency were involved nor was the process premised on reciprocity among stakeholders. It is especially important to note that, as an outsider, the Executive Director of UniverCity faced numerous challenges. Though familiar with community university partnerships, he had not been involved at an operational level. Moreover, he neither knew the local government actors, nor had longstanding relationships with the university stakeholders or the business people on the board of UniverCity. He had a personal stake in the success of the partnership, but he lacked the power and legitimacy necessary to create a sustainable collaboration given the issues outlined above. Because UniverCity was discontinued, this case offers a unique set of lessons about what does not work with respect to sustainable partnerships.

HOPE Coalition (2000–present)

Purpose, history and accomplishments

The Healthy Options for Prevention and Education (HOPE) Coalition was formed in 2000 and continues today to work towards its mission to reduce youth violence and substance abuse and to promote positive mental health and youth voice through a youth–adult partnership. HOPE consists of 17 youth serving and supporting organisations in Worcester, including non-profit, community-based youth programs, public schools, city government and a community development corporation. The executive directors of these organisations form the adult board of the Coalition. UMass, the clinical partner of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, is HOPE's lead agency and fiscal sponsor.

HOPE's original funding was from the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), initially promised for five years. HOPE engaged in a youth-driven needs assessment and planning process that resulted in the development of three programs: 1) a peer leadership program consisting of high-school-aged youth that represent Coalition organisations; 2) a youth-designed mental health program; and 3) a 13-week Youth Worker Training Institute. Yet, when it came time to move into the implementation phase of the program in 2002, HOPE was notified that the implementation funds were no longer available. For many community-based coalitions, the loss of a major funding source can destabilise, or even cause the dissolution of the partnership. HOPE, however, has been able to maintain its focus on its core priorities.

The HOPE Coalition Mental Health Model has now been operating for seven years with grants from United Way and local foundations. By locating the program at two community-based youth programs where 90 per cent of the youth are low-income and over 75 per cent are Latino or African American, the HOPE model directs service to low-income youth of colour – unquestionably an

under-served population. The HOPE model has reduced stigma and transportation barriers. As a result, the involved organisations have become healthier places for all young people. Likewise, the Youth Worker Training Institute, which has been operating since 2002, has graduated hundreds of youth workers.

Community stakeholder representation and salience: The central role of youth

HOPE was built on the principle that youth must be leaders in efforts to address the issues that affect their lives (Ross 2010). Coalition adults actualised this principle by developing a peer leadership program for the Coalition. The HOPE Peer Leaders were (and continue to be) a racially and ethnically diverse group of 15–20 year olds from across Worcester. HOPE staff trained the youth in research methods, community organising, meeting facilitation, public speaking and action planning. Peer Leaders receive a modest stipend in exchange for work. Other incentives for participation included food at meetings and bus vouchers. HOPE Peer Leaders put their skills to work by conducting a needs assessment, engaging over 700 young people through surveys, interviews and youth speak-outs. The major issues they uncovered included teen pregnancy and STDs, violence, stress/depression, transportation, getting into college, drugs and alcohol, and inadequately trained youth workers. Several of the key findings of the youth's work became the basis for additional planning, including efforts to provide on-demand mental health help for youth in crisis and better trained youth workers.

In this case, those with a stake in the outcome were the youth, and their stake was salient not because of their power – youth are largely a disempowered group – but because they were seen as a legitimate group and their voices were able to convey the urgency and immediacy of the issues. The legitimacy of the Peer Leaders catalysed local agencies into creating the youth programming that was needed.

University stakeholder representation and salience

The salience of the university stake increased over time, serving to strengthen and stabilise the partnership. As described above, about two years after its founding, the Coalition was notified that the financial support from SAMHSA for implementation had been eliminated. In response to the shock of losing funding, the university stakeholders involved in the Coalition made some key decisions. UMass agreed to fund the first Youth Worker Training Institute, to fund the part-time Coalition Director permanently, and to sustain the Peer Leaders until alternative funding sources could be secured. The Coalition Director, who in the meantime had begun a full-time faculty appointment at Clark University, was able to bring new resources to the table. Undergraduate and graduate students became involved in the Coalition and provided support in Geographic Information Systems, program evaluation and Peer Leader development.

The two universities' stakes differed, and complemented each other. UMass brought the power of its financial resources to the table when needed. It had a stake in this case because the mission of HOPE aligned strongly with its strategic aims in the area of youth development. The HOPE Director, a faculty member at Clark, brought legitimacy and resources in the form of human capital, as she was able to harness established structures of the university to sustain the youth work. College students benefited from the opportunity to become involved, deepening the partnership at a stage when it was able to absorb new stakeholders. Like UMass, Clark's stake in being involved with the Coalition was also symbolic in that it promoted community engagement and making a difference as core values.

Partnership structure and leadership

Analysis of this case suggests three reasons why the HOPE Coalition has been successfully responding to community needs throughout the past decade. First, the Coalition was able to achieve and maintain a strong and engaged partnership between youth and adults. The HOPE Peer Leaders and the hundreds of youth they engaged increased the legitimacy of the Coalition's identified priorities and inspired Coalition adults to persevere even when funding was uncertain, and also to invest their own limited resources into the development of the Coalition. Second, HOPE's lead agency and fiscal sponsor, UMass, had a mission closely aligned with that of the Coalition. Enhancing youth mental health and reducing violence and substance abuse were clearly in the interest of this university-affiliated institutional partner. For this reason, UMass was willing to support Coalition operations until it could locate other funding sources as well as permanently dedicate funds to support the part-time Coalition Director. Third, the organisational structure of the Coalition facilitated sustainability and reflected the commitment of Coalition partners. Specifically, the part-time director was on the faculty of a local university and the time of the other HOPE staff was an in-kind contribution from the partners. HOPE is now in its 11th year and is widely seen as a model for youth-led community change.

The Institute for Energy and Sustainability (2008–present)

Purpose, history and accomplishments

The Institute for Energy and Sustainability (IES), a new community-university partnership focused on green and sustainable energy, began in June of 2008 when the local congressional representative approached the presidents of two of the city's private universities, Clark University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), to promote the idea. Since then, these two universities have been working with politicians, business and government leaders to develop IES. The mission of the partnership is to improve Worcester and the surrounding area by: (1) creating green jobs; (2) increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gases; (3) supporting the establishment of Worcester

as a national leader in sustainability; and (4) supporting research in the science of sustainability and sustainable technologies. Strategies to accomplish these objectives include supporting and coordinating workforce development, training and outreach to increase energy efficiency of buildings within the community, integrating support for university-based research, and the attraction, growth and retention of green business. Future plans include a green science park, a community resource centre and research incubation support.

Community stakeholder representation and salience

The public launch of the IES partnership was gradual. In April 2009 the emerging entity and initiative had not yet been formally announced to the Worcester community, yet informal networking had begun and announcements in specific venues and social circles had been made. Before officially launching the initiative, the steering committee wanted to ensure the involvement and engagement of a broad representation of stakeholders. A 2010 Corporate Conference was in some ways the official launch of the IES; this event, which was covered by the local media, attempted to engage with multiple local businesses as well as government and academic stakeholders.

In addition to facilitating networking and potential new collaborations, throughout 2010 the IES was focused on multiple fundraising efforts, including some large collaborative grant applications that involved working closely with multiple stakeholders. The IES has also been working with a group of Worcester citizens, organisations and researchers who are focused on energy efficiency retrofits.

In considering 'Who has a stake?', it appears that IES is casting a wide net. Multiple community groups have been involved thus far, and it is not yet obvious which will be most salient. IES has used the power and legitimacy of the legislative delegation to gain buy-in across sectors, is calling upon the business community for financial support, and is attempting to include neighbourhood groups that have urgent interests in energy efficiency and affordability.

University stakeholder representation and salience

Recognising the long-term stability, the human resources and the external legitimacy associated with the city's universities, the IES approached university leaders to initiate the partnership. In addition to their convening power, the universities have provided office space and logistical support. The university leaders and the IES Board of Directors have tried to engage faculty in the development of the institute; however, clear mechanisms for faculty involvement are only starting to emerge as the partnership structure, mission and priorities evolve. More explicit attempts to build the strengths of faculty research expertise into the plans for the institute have been recently articulated. Student involvement has been similarly tentative as yet, primarily consisting of projects designed to further IES's early goals.

Partnership structure and leadership

The IES organisation was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two universities that outlines the objectives, the organisational structure, the participants and the organisation's name. To facilitate its ability to receive grants and other funds, the institute has filed to be an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organisation, separate from the universities.

Following the granting of \$150 000 by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, announced in April 2009, the Steering Committee drafted and circulated an announcement for the position of Executive Director. In November 2009 a member of the Steering Committee, an environmental/energy lawyer with national-level experience as the former Assistant Secretary for the Department of Energy, became the interim Executive Director. With an Executive Director in place, the Steering Committee became a Board of Trustees and could now provide advice and feedback to the IES Executive Director and staff.

This director brings governmental and legal experience to the partnership, as well as expertise in renewable and affordable energy. He has been actively strengthening university and community connections since taking on this role. The other IES staff member has an undergraduate degree from one Worcester university and a graduate degree from another, so he may provide necessary linkages to the higher education institutions and community groups. As of now, IES seems to be spending most of its time fundraising. The economic development mission is still of paramount importance to the city and the region, and expectations are high for a green energy cluster offering jobs as well as energy efficiency/affordability. Stakeholders are many, yet stakeholder salience is still not obvious, and thus sustainability difficult to predict.

CROSS-CASE COMPARISON**Community Stakeholder Salience**

These cases show that in community-university partnerships, the reciprocal involvement and sustained salience of community stakeholders are of paramount importance. With UniverCity, although Worcester residents were the intended beneficiaries of the economic development, processes for engaging directly with the community were limited, so the power, legitimacy and urgency of involved community stakeholders were low. With the HOPE Coalition, the youth who were the target audience were intrinsically involved in identifying problems, creating programs and even staffing for the interventions. Solutions to the community problems were co-created by youth and the organisations charged with implementing them. Most importantly, the youth stakeholders were supported by the other coalition partners, resulting in a situation where stakeholder salience was significant, so much so that obstacles could be overcome and the partnership could adapt and change over time.

IES's attempt to engage with a wide array of community partners demonstrates a broad reach, but it is not clear yet which community stakeholders will become most salient. There is a sense of urgency among certain community stakeholders, particularly those working at the grass roots, so it will be important for IES to harness this urgency for continued relevance. An institutional emphasis on connecting with corporate leaders and potential new business opportunities has been negatively perceived by some within local environmental NGO communities. While tension may be healthy for the development of the partnership, it may also point to the fact that goals have not been mutually determined; rather, the ideas have come from the public sector and appear to be top-down. It may also be that the goal of economic development is too broad and diffuse to engage stakeholders effectively, as was the case with UniverCity. In contrast to youth mental health, the fact that 'everyone' is affected by economic development and energy challenges does not necessarily translate to effective action. At this point we see the IES community stakeholders as fragmented rather than aligned, a fact that diminishes their power overall and may eventually weaken the partnership.

University Stakeholder Salience

University stakeholder engagement can be at multiple levels within the same university, and salience varies accordingly. University presidents, vice-presidents and provosts were essential to the initial development of both the UniverCity and IES partnerships, using their power to convene, as well as to provide in-kind and cash resources. They also were called upon to offer the political and social legitimacy made possible by their support. The HOPE Coalition, in contrast, did not begin with high-level administrators, yet benefited from their financial and logistical support at a crucial stage in its development.

University faculty represent another cohort of stakeholders, with salience largely tied to legitimacy. While faculty involvement in UniverCity was extremely limited, a university faculty member plays a critical role in HOPE as the part-time director of the Coalition. Within IES, faculty inclusion has been broadly attempted but not yet systematically realised. Some are critical of the apparent business focus of recent work, believing that community needs are being given short shrift. The need to raise money to sustain the partnership has in some ways further hindered the cultivation of university connections for IES because specific opportunities for research and student work have not had time to coalesce, though IES is currently collaborating with the university and local community-based organisations on proposals for sustainability initiatives and research.

The administrative infrastructure of the universities in Worcester is such that they can act as an entity (i.e. the 'university' can collaborate) without necessarily involving either faculty or students. With HOPE and IES it is clear that the university partners

provided intellectual legitimacy, a level of objectivity and very important stability. However, the UniverCity case demonstrates that without the long-term intellectually based engagement of specific faculty, partnerships may lack the commitment and long-term support that only faculty involvement can bring to a community-university partnership. A partnership without strong faculty engagement might be short term, dependent on particular leaders, or focused on money (i.e. PILOT), which may lead to destabilisation over time. Given that faculty usually expect long-term tenures in their universities, especially compared to students or presidents, faculty involvement is important if the time commitment necessary for effective collaboration is to be assured.

Partnership Structure and Leadership

The leadership of these three community-university partnerships is strikingly different. The director of the UniverCity partnership was not only an outsider to Worcester but also to the university and community development worlds. The HOPE Coalition, on the other hand, is led by a faculty member who has a long history of local community development work and a strong professional and academic interest in the success of the partnership. This suggests that partnership sustainability might benefit most from embedded, well-connected leadership, with expertise in the social issue at hand. With IES, the leader of the partnership is a lawyer who has minimal experience working with universities or with community organisations, though he is knowledgeable about environmental issues and the public sector. Strong relationships between the university leaders are positive indicators for IES; yet IES staff must also strive to enhance their connectedness to stakeholders at multiple levels.

With respect to organisational structure, sustainable long-standing partnerships appear to be flexible and fluid over time. Flexibility is required in terms of who is involved from the community and the university at various key junctures, and flexibility is especially important with respect to funding. Start-up money is crucial, but the partnership must fiscally sustain itself. Community-university partnerships can usually find space and in-kind staff support, but money for programming and funds to pay the leaders needs to be in real dollars and can be difficult to obtain. It is likely that HOPE persists successfully because it only has a part-time director to support, and because the focus of its mission (on youth mental health) is one that has appeal to outside funders in the private and public sector. UniverCity was supported by donations from local universities, but there was no obvious return on their investment, and the partnership's goals were such that it was difficult to identify alternative funding sources. It is likely, too, that there were too many partners and no one salient stakeholder beyond the city government. UniverCity, like IES, took on the vexing problem of economic development, but without a focus on a cluster or particular industry. IES was able to obtain stimulus funds to start up, and may benefit from the increased

societal urgency associated with climate change, the natural environment and the need to transition energy systems. Still, IES will need a long-term financial strategy both to support its current organisational structure and to accomplish its goals.

CONCLUSIONS

Social change and its associated social learning must be grounded in particular places (Wenger 2000), so the power of situated empirical analysis of community-university partnerships should not be underestimated. A goal of this study was to facilitate social learning from past experiences and to inform currently emerging community-university partnerships. Among the three cases explored here, the termination of UniverCity provides valuable lessons, as does the strength of the HOPE Coalition. The newly emerging IES can potentially integrate the perspectives and the lessons learned from the other two cases. We recommend greater attention to faculty involvement, deeper connections with community partners beyond businesses, and careful cultivation of flexibility and leadership. The opportunities and the challenges associated with each are as follows:

When considering university stakeholders, faculty involvement provides a different kind of stakeholder power and intellectual legitimacy from engagement with other university constituencies. Faculty can bring a unique intensity and focus to a partnership, but given the current incentive structures for faculty promotion, support and encouragement for faculty engagement in community-university partnerships is limited in many universities.

With regard to community stakeholders, when the partnership authentically engages with community groups at all levels, the partnership is more likely to be effective and be sustained. The power and legitimacy of the community stakeholders are important. Those close to the problem at hand should be deeply involved. And while inclusiveness is important, the UniverCity example highlights the challenge of potentially having too many partners, and partners who have agreed to be a part of the initiative but who may have unclear roles, responsibilities and expectations. The HOPE Coalition also integrates multiple diverse stakeholders but the relatively narrow and targeted mission of this partnership has kept the complexity of the stakeholders contained.

Finally, flexibility and adaptability are necessary for persistence and success, as is leadership. The effectiveness of the partnership is integrally related to its leader's skillfulness in management, fundraising and communication. Not to be underestimated are the personal relationships that the individual should have with both university and community representatives. The partnership leader must be cognisant of the salience of each stakeholder, and should strategically use their relative amounts of power, legitimacy and urgency.

Future research should examine the issue of stakeholder salience with respect to partnership sustainability, with particular

emphasis on changes over time as well as the processes by which different stakeholders become connected and engaged. Factors beyond power, legitimacy and urgency should be explored; for example, prior experience with collaboration could be a significant factor, as could the density of pertinent stakeholders within a region, or the optimal number and size of partner organisations.

Community-university partnerships have become increasingly common approaches to vexing social problems, but scholars' understanding of these entities is still incomplete. Partnership sustainability appears to be as complex as the problems the partnerships are designed to address. Yet as universities heighten their community engagement, it will become even more necessary that we examine and reflect upon these experiences.

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