



Carnegie Webinar Series

Section 7: Tracking, Monitoring, and Assessment

Date: September 6, 2022

Introduction to Section 7

The September 2022 Collaboratory Carnegie webinar focused on Section 7. **Dr. Kristin Norris**, Associate Director, Office of School Partnerships, Indiana University System shared about her experiences with tracking and assessing community engagement data for the Carnegie application.

Section 7 broadly focuses on institutional tracking and recording mechanisms, which serve as an indicator of sustainability and commitment to the institutionalization of community engagement across a campus - not just within a program/office/center/etc.

QUESTION 1: Describe the mechanisms for **systematic assessment of community perceptions** of the institution's engagement with community. Who is responsible for gathering data, how is the data managed, how often is it gathered, and how is the data used?

Community partner feedback primarily occurs at 2 levels:

1. Within individual projects/courses (e.g., internships, clinical placements, capstone projects) and is highly tailored to the specific project/course, and/or
2. General feedback from a group (e.g., advisory boards, community reports, program review/accreditation)

It is important to consider who from the community is asked to share their opinion. Are you surveying community leadership (e.g., board members, Executive Directors) or those working most directly with students or faculty/staff (e.g., program staff)? Perceptions and ability to speak in depth about the partnership will likely differ based on the stakeholders you involve.

What type of information is your institution soliciting? And to what ends? The choice of *what type* of feedback and how it is being leveraged on campus to inform partnerships is imperative. Possible types of partner feedback include:

- Recommendations and advice
- Satisfaction surveys
- Impact reporting
- Gauging the quality of the partnership - reciprocity and mutual benefit

QUESTION 2: Describe how the institution maintains **systematic campus-wide tracking or documentation** to record and/or track engagement with the community. Who is responsible for gathering data, how is the data managed, how often is it gathered, and how is the data used?

It is important to note/clarify if/how your institution is able to aggregate data in specific ways:

- Addressing social issues
- Working with certain populations
- Exploring engagement from a geographical perspective (e.g., neighborhoods, zip codes)

- Demonstrating outputs, outcomes, or impacts of engagement

Further, clarifying how often such tracking or documentation is conducted and updated and how this information is leveraged to advance community engagement on your campus is important.

When considering the types of questions to ask faculty/staff when starting such a data collection process, institutions generally want to center data collection around quantifiable metrics (e.g., # of students, # of hours), but tracking data around the *activities* in which faculty and staff are engaged with the community can lead to richer, more meaningful data.

 QUESTION 3: *For your institution, what are the **standards of high-quality community engagement** that the campus aspires towards and how were those standards determined (who was involved, what was the process, and how are they implemented)?*

“High-quality” community engagement is defined as partnerships which are reciprocal and mutually beneficial for both the institution and the community partner.

Question #2 is the critical foundation upon which institutions are able to answer question #3. Without systematic campus-wide documentation and tracking of community partnerships it is nearly impossible to cohesively assess said partnerships at the campus level (as opposed to more siloed or disjointed assessment at the programmatic or unit level).

 QUESTION 4: *Describe any **campus-wide assessments or self-study** of community engagement (not including this application) that has taken place in the last five years and how it was used to advance the depth and pervasiveness of community engagement at your institution.*

Assessment of partnerships should be for *improvement* purposes and therefore be both systematic and ongoing.

Developing a long-term assessment plan is key. It should address the following:

- Student civic outcomes (student learning, not engagement)
- Curricular engagement (where engagement is embedded in the disciplines/schools)
- Community engaged faculty (demographics, rank/status, role(s), outputs for the community, outputs for the academy, satisfaction, promotion and tenure processes for evaluating faculty)
- Quality of partnerships (TRES and OCTA are good models for this)
- Community outcomes and impacts
- Topical issues, dependent on campus needs (e.g., political engagement, economic impacts, Anchor institution framework, Stewards of Place)

 QUESTION 5: *Describe how the institution **aggregates and uses** all its assessment data related to community engagement. Who is responsible for gathering data, how is the data managed, how often is it gathered, and how is the data used?*

When leveraging the data on campus, consider the following:

- Internal dialogues with campus and community stakeholders - possible focus on partnership outcomes, changes in community

- Telling a specific story that aligns with the campus' and community's identity and efforts (e.g., focus on poverty reduction, environmental work)
- Advancing partnerships via dialogues with the community - how can you co-identify goals and work together?
- Examine institutional and community impacts

Key Takeaways / Lessons Learned by Dr. Norris:

- No one will ever be able to know everything your institution is doing in the community!
- However, data collection must be persistent, consistent, and on-going - data collection every few years to suffice for Carnegie classification does not cut it
- When asking faculty and staff for data, it is generally best (in the long run) to have a dialogue about one's engagement, rather than asking them to complete a form. The act of data collection can (and should!) be an intervention in and of itself
 - Motivations for faculty differ tremendously than motivations for the institution. Framing data collection for faculty on an individual level is crucial.
- Has found that it is significantly easier to build momentum around on-going data collection when it is focused around a specific social issue, population, geographic area, etc. Faculty and staff are generally more motivated to cooperate to ensure their work is folded into the larger story of how their campus is (e.g., addressing local poverty). Framing the conversation of data collection around "I/the institution needs your data for reporting" just doesn't cut it!
- There is a great difference between program-level evaluation of engaged projects and the assessment of community engagement at the institutional level - both in terms of data collection and use. These two cannot be conflated!