

Meeting the Needs of Learners in the 21st Century

Six things universities must do differently in the next five years



Colorado State University

Oregon State
UNIVERSITY | Outreach and
Engagement



Some themes: Engagement continues to be an essential university mission

- ✓ Today's engagement is scholarly. It can be a feature of both learning and discovery, and it can transform higher education and the society served.
- ✓ By recommitting to their social contract, public and land-grant universities can fulfill their promise to create and disseminate knowledge that benefits society **and** that prepares *learners* throughout their lives for productive citizenship in a democratic society.
- ✓ A more comprehensive level of engagement between the university and its many communities will foster stronger support for higher education.



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- ✓ Engagement with *learners* and others will create new non-campus partnerships which enhance campus discovery and learning expertise.
- ✓ Renewing engagement by public universities is part of a broader higher education social movement. This social movement in many ways is a legacy of Cooperative Extension -- we practiced the principles of engagement before the current social movement made engagement cool once again.



The 'learning enterprise' is a primary goal for higher education.

- University engagement and outreach must be fully integrated with *learners* and the university's strategic plans for *learners*.
- University units, such as Extension, that are perceived as disarticulated with the learning enterprise are in harms way.
- Extension is the *people's university's* initial expression for connecting the *learning enterprise* with the populations served.
- To be relevant in the coming decades, western Extension services need to be articulated with their university's learning enterprises.



This conference is bracketed by presentations with similar messages: *Dave King and Michael Boehlje*

My message boiled down to two statements:

Land Grant Universities are focused on the ***knowledge enterprise*** with a historic commitment to engagement and outreach.

Extension needs to move closer to the entire academy while intensifying its engagement with society.



This presentation is focused on *learners* touched by Land Grant Universities, *and* . . .

. . . on the ways current online/blended delivery, fiscal, and pedagogical challenges for public universities nationally can become *opportunities*.

Extension's outreach mission *engages learners*. Extension is not independent of the university's primary educational mission, it is an integral expression of this mission.

Extension's *scholarship of engagement* is assumed but often not articulated.



Meeting the needs of degree seeking and non-credit learners:

- ✓ We need to break the code on fully integrating Extension with our university's distance degree and non-credit learners.
- ✓ Extension should stay consistent with its heritage of engaging learners, open source access, and non-credit curricula, which will include MOOCs, workforce training, and broad partnerships with civil society.

Framing questions for discussion:

How can we think about the purpose and practical application of our engagement/outreach missions for the coming decades?

What might be some useful guides for enhancing the missions of *learning* and *discovery* that enrich our commitment to scholarship and to our uniquely American value for ***civic engagement***?



Co-creation of this presentation:

This discussion is a collaborative product of between my OSU colleagues, particularly Debbie Maddy, Dave King, and Scott Reed as part of their campus wide Engagement symposium.

Together, we have identified for this symposium six things universities must do to meet the needs of 21st Century learners.

These points directly deal with Extension.

‘Must’ is a strong declarative statement. We give this emphasis to stir the pot for discussion.



Quick terminology check:

✓ What differentiates **outreach** from **engagement**?

‘Outreach begins with an answer and engagement ends with one’
Roger Rennekamp – OSU

Universities do both, and, both are valuable contributions to civic engagement and can be fuel for economic and social development.

When engagement informs research and teaching priorities through collaboration and co-creation of knowledge, *engagement can lead to outreach that adds value to end users -- learners.*



Six things public research universities must do to meet the needs of 21st century learners (not prioritized)

- ✓ Internalize the *scholarship of engagement*
- ✓ Reach into campus faculty
- ✓ Embrace demand-driven engagement
- ✓ Enhance-integrate partnerships
- ✓ Provide impactful learning experiences
- ✓ Expand open source learning



Scholarship of Engagement: reframing a Land Grant University's 'knowledge enterprise' legacy

Engagement is essential to most effectively achieving the overall purpose of the university, which is focused on the knowledge enterprise.

Presently, the knowledge enterprise at research universities is predominantly **supply-driven**:

- faculty are the principal knowledge creators: their talent often is difficult to access for internal engagement/outreach units and for external stakeholder's.

- Extension provides systematic programing, often driven by the 20th Century assumptions of the 'expert model.'



For LGUs reengaging demand-driven engagement and outreach requires internal organizational and cultural commitment to listening and connecting university capacity and talent with their publics.

This begs the question of how priorities are determined.

LGUs can capitalize on their Cooperative Extension heritages as they expand degree and non-degree programs externally.

For example:

- ✓ Historic relationships with local and regional civil society
- ✓ Engage workforce training for both public and private sector



Understanding current institutional priorities:

- ✓ *If* scholarship is the currency/criteria for faculty tenure and promotion, *then* engagement must meet institutional requirements for scholarship.
- ✓ What does it mean for research universities to prioritize demand-driven programs for *learners*? Why is it important?
- ✓ How can LGUs embrace the demands of *learners* for just-in-time, nimble and high quality higher education throughout their lives?
- ✓ What might be indicators of impactful engagement for Cooperative Extension?



The scholarship of engagement is not an academic oxymoron, nor is it relegated only to the university's engagement and outreach agencies (*ghettoization of scholarly engagement*).

University BOG's and Presidents are pretty good at embracing mission statements.



Reaching into the entire university

If research universities are primarily *supply-driven*, what are institutional options for engaging this core university talent pool?

- ✓ This is especially important for Extension engaging non-specialist faculty.



Reaching into the entire university

- ✓ Embrace the assumption that 1) engagement can be scholarly and 2) is an aspect of ***learning and discovery*** that can enhance society and higher education.
- ✓ Scholarship of engagement must be valued by faculty as a legitimate professional opportunity.
- ✓ Scholarship of engagement must be explicitly identified as criteria for merit and for tenure and promotion decisions.



Options for LGUs to enhance the scholarship of engagement.

- ✓ Engagement should be statutorily included as a faculty workload category similar to teaching and research.
 - Engagement blended with research and teaching (CSU)
 - Engagement and Outreach as an independent workload category (Michigan State)
- ✓ Deconstruct mission silos and work across units/departments
 - Interdisciplinary and inter-mission engaged scholarship.
- ✓ Avoid the cultural 'ghettoization' of university engagement.



Demand-driven engagement: adopting disruptive innovations

Successful engagement and outreach tends to be ***demand-driven***.

Disruptive innovations are restructuring higher education – the interface of engagement and learner standards/expectations are framing opportunities and crises for public higher education.

Engagement tends to be ‘nimble’ when focused on multifaceted standards/aspirations held by learners and not just those held by academic faculty or Cooperative Extension faculty/agents.

***What are learners trying to get done in their lives?
Which learners are you not focusing on?***



Clayton Christensen's work provides a valuable lens for understanding the threats and opportunities created by new market disruptions.

✓ Current **'non-consumers'** of higher education are finding it easier and cheaper to enter higher education thereby creating new markets *and demands for more affordable higher education.*

'A new-market disruption is an innovation that enables a larger population of people, who previously lacked the money or skill, now to begin buying and using a product and doing the job for themselves' *Clayton Christensen*

For example: Swirling Learner



LGUs, and Extension, has opportunities to participate in pedagogical and information technologies transforming higher education.

A few opportunities for online learning for distant learners as well as for resident instruction: rethinking pedagogical assumptions.

- ✓ Online 'mastery learning'
- ✓ Unbundling curricula: Badging 
- ✓ Lifetime transcripts (example: Mozilla Open Badges Repository)
- ✓ Flipped on-campus classrooms and extension off-campus education



Enhancing partnerships inside and outside of colleges and divisions: interdisciplinary engagement

Internal and external partnerships frame the potential impact of engagement on- and off-campus.

- ✓ Internal partnerships: Colleges and VP divisions not in a direct reporting line for Extension.
 - This may be a challenge for Extension located in a college
- ✓ External partnerships: Corporate, communities, decision makers, opinion leaders, civil society (NGOs – social economies)



Provide experiential, community learning experiences for students and graduate faculty

The creation of knowledge is not the exclusive domain of higher education.

As *Extension* fully appreciates, successful engagement will require mutual trust and mutual interaction (engagement).

For-credit experiential and community enrichment opportunities for learners

- ✓ Service Learning
- ✓ Community-based internships/capstone experiences
- ✓ Incorporating private and public sector expertise



Non-credit opportunities for learners:

*The demands: What will enhance my job opportunities?
Higher education needs to fit into my life.*

- ✓ Professional and continuing education, but in 24/7 asynchronous formats
 - Provide choice in curricula delivery – ***unbundling curricula***

- ✓ Private and public sector partnerships: built on their workforce training and curricula needs.



Expand open source information and learning: continuing the legacy of open source information

Extension can be a campus leader in each of the following:

Fully embrace the potential of web and social media in providing *open source information*.

Offer more free and low fee non-credit courses and curricula

- ✓ Unbundling learning modals
- ✓ MOOCs
- ✓ Badging Extension and continuing education curricula



- ✓ Provide public sites for data that can be used for research
 - Undergraduate and graduate research opportunities
 - Public access to data

Engagement through enhancing open sources will bring more people to higher education as they use our resources to enhance their knowledge and quality of life.

Extension, the Agricultural Experiment Station and Continuing Education offer proven platforms for public and university enrichment



Summary - again



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