Competencies of Second Generation Community Engagement Professionals: Findings from the Campus Compact CEP Project

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Group brainstorm & reflection
- Overview of CEP study
- Findings
- Reflection & discussion
- Closing question: Campus Compact Action Statements
Community Engagement Professional

Those whose primary responsibility is to support and foster community engagement within institutions of higher education.
What professional competencies do you view as most necessary to do your job well on a day-to-day basis?

Professional Competencies:

Knowledge
Skills
Abilities
Attributes
Central Question

What are the salient knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function as a second-generation Community Engagement Professional?
Empirical approach:

1. Glean knowledge, abilities, and dispositions from the practice literature
2. Infer the knowledge, skills/abilities, dispositions necessary for CEPs to effectively support or implement those practices
3. Validate, refine, and complicate resulting list among a diverse, inclusive array of CEPs
Benefits of naming body of practice and knowledge:

- Identifying a threshold of knowledge for those coming into the practice
- Providing a roadmap for continued professional learning and development
- Devising, testing, and validating theories of effective practice
- Focusing reflective practice
- Developing curricula or professional development that is relevant to the profession
- Directing mentorship efforts
Biggest benefit of all...

Having an identified taxonomy of competencies for CEPs that promote a relational, contextualized, reflective, and change-oriented practice that professionalizes the field, moving from first generation functions to second generation civic concerns.
Method

- Weekly fellows meetings
- Shared learning around 2nd generation engagement (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013), literature review methods, and competency model development
- Scholarly literature, majority peer-reviewed, emphasis on empirical studies 1990 through present.
- Inference of CEP competencies
- Chapter development
- Reviewed 460+ sources
Literature Review Areas

- Change within Higher Education
- Institutionalization of Community Engagement
- Program Administration
- Student Civic Learning and Development
- Faculty Development
- High Quality Partnerships
- Critical Practice
- Competency Model Development
Data Collection

- Conducted focus groups at national and regional meetings
- Piloted rankings instrument with 54 respondents
- Convened small group of invested leaders to review post-pilot model
- Administered survey nationally (n=414)
Limitations

- Reduction: potential false fragmentation of knowledge and application that denies its art
- Qualities based upon extant practice literature, much of which is authored by scholars of dominant culture
- Categories of literature reviewed dictated by the interest of the research team (not empirically sourced)
Concerns

- Expectation that one person would have mastery of ALL qualities
- Use of competencies as summative evaluation of staff
- Use of competencies to limit pathways into the work, diminish opportunities for those who come from non-academic backgrounds (such as community leaders)
Survey

- 414 Respondents
- Average age of 42 years old
- Years of experiences as a CEP ranged from 0.25 (1/4 of a year) – 40 years
Comprehensive support for community engagement (e.g. Direct a Center; Direct an Office) 58%

Student Development/Support 21%

Faculty Development/Support 9%

Community Partnership Development/Support 8%

Other 4%

Other:
- Economic/Community Development
- Government/Community Relations
- Extension Work
- K-12 Programming

Primary Function
Degree Obtained

- 58% Masters
- 24% PhD
- 8% EdD/ Terminal
- 10% Bachelors
Faculty Status

- 32% of respondents are also considered faculty
- Of that 32%, a little more than one third are tenure-track or tenured
Competency Model

Personal Reflection Exercise:

1. Star competencies you do well
2. Circle competencies you would like to improve upon
3. Cross out competencies not relevant to your work
Small Group Discussion

- What did you notice in your responses to the exercise?
- Are there competencies you think are missing? Are there competencies that do not fit with your experiences?
- Are there areas that we do really well as a field? Are there areas that we neglect?
- How might this model be useful to your practice? As a CEP? As a supervisor? In other roles?
- In what ways can this model be utilized to advance the field?
We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world.

We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.

We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.

We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.

We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.
Closing Question

What competencies do you view as vital for yourself and our profession in order to act upon the Campus Compact Action Statements?
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