New Directions in Community-Based Research

Edited by Jennifer M. Pigza & Mary Beckman

National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative
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Preface

Jennifer M. Pigza & Mary Beckman

The National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative is an active network of students, faculty, staff and community partners who are committed to deepening the role of community-based research (CBR) in higher education. This grant-funded initiative has aimed to move CBR from the margins to the center of college and university agendas by providing seed grants for faculty development and CBR initiatives, strengthening best practices of CBR, supporting the dissemination of knowledge related to CBR and its teaching, and creating models that incorporate CBR into campus organizational structures and reward systems. This multi-year project (September 2006 through June 2010), funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, engaged over 30 campuses, involved over 5,000 students in CBR, and generated multiple conference presentations and publications, including *Student Learning for Social Change: Interdisciplinary Community-Based Research* (in preparation).

This white paper project, "New Directions for Community-Based Research," provides another outlet for network participants to share their best practices for CBR and their hopes for its future. The authors' starting point is the definition of CBR as presented in the famous "purple book":

- CBR is a collaborative enterprise between academic researchers (professors and students) and community members.
- CBR validates multiple sources of knowledge and promotes the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination of the knowledge produced.
- CBR has as its goal social action and social change for the purpose of achieving social justice. (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker & Donohue, 2003, p. 8)

In the following papers, the contributors describe avenues through which they (and in some cases, their campuses) employ CBR. Moreover, they self-interrogate the relative successes of their efforts and suggest ways in which to deepen the CBR experience for different stakeholders: students, faculty, staff, community organizations, and communities at-large. Each of these papers presents readers with at least one question that could help them strengthen their practice of CBR.

This series begins with a paper that engages the reader in several aspects of CBR in undergraduate education. English faculty member Amy Persichetti and community partner Beth Sturman collaborate on a course titled "Engaging the Common Good" at Cabrini College. In addition to presenting the learning outcomes and assessment strategies for the course, the authors share how their long-term partnership and CBR efforts can benefit both local and state-wide practices about domestic violence education. What makes this essay particularly valuable in this series is that the course is situated in Cabrini's new core curriculum. The institutional mission of Cabrini and its core curriculum goals explicitly promote social justice outcomes; this resonates perfectly with the mission of Beth's organization. How might CBR efforts link with the general education aims of your institution?

CBR fosters use of multiple methods. The next essay focuses on the work of political sociologist Paul Lachelier, who asserts that deliberative polling can be a viable method in the community-based researcher's toolkit. Paul describes the origins and purpose of deliberative polling and his experience of actualizing this format in his course, "Community Organizing for Social Change." As a stepping stone to facilitating deliberative polling in the local region, Paul and his students planned, conducted, and evaluated a deliberative poll at Stetson University. His reflections link this method to community-based research, suggesting in particular deliberative polling's value in identifying community goals and strengthening community relationships. How might you use this method in your CBR efforts?

The third paper is a joint effort between faculty and students Don Dailey, Melissa Caron, Caroline Head, and Harlan Beckley of Washington and Lee University and community partner David Dax. It describes an ongoing anti-poverty initiative that is explicitly designed to take CBR from research only to a community action agenda. After almost two years of this initiative, the authors suggest four areas of deep learning: defining the community goals and research questions, strengthening student skills and development, creating a reflective process that engages all the stakeholders, and solidifying the role of faculty mentoring. What would it take to develop a university-community project such as this in your geographic area?

The final contribution to this series is from Mary Beckman and Naomi Penney of the University of Notre Dame. In this paper, Mary and Naomi take the foundational definition of CBR and shift the point of reference to a developmental trajectory from outputs (short term ends such as research reports) to outcomes (medium term programmatic changes) toward impact (long term community development goals). Rather than present models of perfect adherence to the framework they put forward, Mary and Naomi apply the lens of community impact to their own work in a CBR mini-grant program and two local coalitions. They explain how this analysis led to changes in practices, and they suggest how campus centers for community service-learning and civic engagement can take actions which support a more community-impact focused model of CBR. How would you evaluate your potential to advance community development through CBR?

The title "New Directions" is intentionally plural. There is no one new direction in community-based research. There are rather multiple trajectories that begin with a basic understanding of community-based research and emerge through particularities such as campus climate, community goals, and faculty demands. These papers offer four lines of flight within the CBR movement; they are new directions, but not the only directions. Where is CBR leading you?

Reference

Strand, K., Marullo, S., Cutforth, N., Stoecker, R., & Donohue, P. (2003). *Community-based research in higher education: Principles and practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

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About the Contributors

Jennifer M. Pigza is the associate director of the Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA) at Saint Mary's College of California. Her professional experience spans community service-learning, college teaching, faculty development, higher education administration, and non-profit social service agencies. She has published in the areas of student learning and critical reflection, teaching for social justice, and institutionalizing service-learning. Jennifer holds degrees from Loyola University Maryland (B.A., English literature), the University of Vermont (M.Ed., higher education and student affairs administration), and the University of Maryland (Ph.D., social foundations of education).

Mary Beckman is associate director of academic affairs and research at the University of Notre Dame's Center for Social Concerns. Among other roles at the Center, she directs community-based research initiatives. An economist on the faculty, she co-developed and co-directs a poverty studies minor program. Prior to her current position, she was a member of the faculty at Lafayette College in Easton, PA. Her publications can be found in *Journal of Excellence in College Teaching, Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, *Academic Exchange Quarterly, Radical Teacher, Review of Radical Political Economics, Women's Studies Quarterly*, and elsewhere*.

Harlan Beckley, founder and director of the Shepherd Poverty Program at Washington and Lee University, has taught in the religion department since 1974. In 1999, he was named the Fletcher Otey Thomas Professor of Religion, and in 2002 he received the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's Outstanding Faculty Award. Harlan also served as vice president and president of the Society of Christian Ethics from 1999-2001, and as acting president of Washington and Lee University in 2005. He received a doctorate in Christian Theological Ethics from Vanderbilt University.

Melissa Caron is the coordinator for service leadership in the Shepherd Program at Washington and Lee University. She graduated from W&L summa cum laude in 2009, with a bachelor's degree in business journalism and a concentration in the Shepherd Program. During her senior year she co-authored a report documenting poverty in Rockbridge County which eventually grew into what is now called the Poverty Initiative. Melissa was also the Campus Kitchens student intern and a member of the Shepherd Program Advisory Committee.

Don Dailey is a visiting associate professor of education and community-based Learning at Washington and Lee University. He has approximately 15 years experience in community research and capacity building in non-profit organizations in Washington, DC, and San Francisco. These efforts have addressed a variety of social problems, with education in high poverty urban school settings as the prominent focus. He designed and helped launch two federally funded centers, the National High School Center and the Access Center for Students with Disabilities. Don earned his doctorate in Education and Human Development from Vanderbilt University.

David Dax is the executive director of the United Way of Lexington-Rockbridge County, Virginia. He co-leads the Commission on Poverty in Rockbridge County, and co-facilitated the Rockbridge Community Forum on Poverty. David has 40 years experience in state government, regional planning, and non-profit

work, most of which has been focused on poverty and affordable housing locally and internationally. He has a bachelor's degree in sociology from the College of Wooster, Ohio, and a master's degree in Urban Planning from New York University.

Caroline Head graduated from Washington and Lee University in 2010, where she majored in economics and concentrated in poverty studies. She served as an R.E. Lee Research Scholar assisting Harlan Beckley in gathering and analyzing data on how the U.S. government has funded social programs to combat poverty over the past 50 years. In her senior year, Caroline served as the senior student intern for community-based research and provided research assistance to community groups developed through the Poverty Initiative.

Paul Lachelier is a political sociologist in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida. As former candidate for state representative in Massachusetts, and a community organizer around student, labor, environmental, and electoral issues, Paul has long kept one foot in politics, and one foot in academia. His current research and writing focuses on the political culture of American citizens, and the political engagement of college students. Courses Paul teaches include Community Organizing for Social Change, How Americans Think, Power & Evil, and Sociological Theories.

Naomi Penney is a community-based research associate for the Center for Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame and Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for Latino Studies also at Notre Dame. She received her doctorate in program planning and evaluation from Cornell University and her master's degree in public health in health behavior and health education from the University of Michigan. Prior to earning her doctorate, she worked as a health education specialist for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. She also has served as an administrator at a large, urban community hospital.

Amy Lee Persichetti is a full time instructor in the English department of Cabrini College. In 2005, she piloted community-based research in Cabrini's core curriculum. For the past five years, she has been instrumental in the development of Cabrini's signature curriculum, Engagement with the Common Good. Her partnership with Laurel House has served as a campus-wide model for sustainable community engagement.

Beth Sturman has been executive director of Laurel House since October, 2005. She holds a masters degree in public administration from California State University at Hayward. All of her human service work has been with vulnerable populations, and much of this work has been with homeless women and children. Beth's first human service job was with a battered women's counseling program in San Francisco, California in 1980. Beth currently serves as the chair of the Montgomery County Victim Witness Policy Board, and is a board member with the Kristin Mitchell Foundation, a dating violence prevention organization.

Engaging the Common Good at Cabrini College:
Community-Based Research in the Core Curriculum
Amy Lee Persichetti & Beth Sturman

Abstract: In 2009, Cabrini College implemented a four-year social justice undergraduate core curriculum. In their junior year, students engage in a community-based research (CBR) class, working with a community partner to effect long-term sustainable change. Students in the course "Engagement with the Common Good 300" partner with Laurel House, a domestic violence shelter serving a local county. Over the course of the semester, students become provisionally certified in domestic violence crisis counseling while learning about domestic violence and conducting research relevant to Laurel House's educational mission. This paper provides an overview of how CBR came to be in the core curriculum, presents the learning outcomes, goals, and CBR components of the course, and offers a framework for course assessment.

Cabrini's Justice Matters Curriculum: The Context

In 1989, Cabrini College became one of the first institutions nationally to integrate community service-learning into the core curriculum (DeBlasis, 2006). As an early adopter, Cabrini College has had significant time to develop strong community partnerships and to centralize community engagement support through a campus engagement center. With the support of administrators and presidents, the College promotes and encourages faculty participation in community service-learning through a lived College mission statement and a promotion and tenure process that recognizes civic engagement as an important element of both service and scholarship. These are trademarks of a program fully engaged in best practices (Furco, 2002). However, as service-learning began to take root as early as elementary education, Cabrini recognized that it was time to reevaluate the curriculum to incorporate emergent best practices such as community-based research and advocacy—practices that could lead to sustainable, policy level change. Because of its early commitment to service-learning, Cabrini had a strong foundation in mission, community relationships, and faculty expertise upon which to build a more ambitious program (DeBlasis, 2006). In 2009, after three years of intensive faculty discussion, committee work, course pilots, and consultation with outside experts, Cabrini College rolled out its newly approved curriculum, branded "Justice Matters."

The four-year Engagement with the Common Good (ECG) curriculum, required of all students, asks students to investigate their personal beliefs and backgrounds in the first year, complete service with a community partner in the second year, and work toward sustainable, structural change in the third and fourth years through community-based research and advocacy projects. Throughout the courses, students simultaneously study the philosophical and academic issues underlying societal problems and seek change through partnership with community leaders.

At the time of this writing, the first three years of the series have been piloted successfully, but since the rollout of this curriculum began in 2009, only the first year (ECG 100) has been fully implemented.

Because Cabrini has a strong tradition in community engagement, much of the curricular reform could be done using existing administrative structures and practices. However, as the program is being implemented, it is becoming clearer that a programmatic assessment of the ECG core curriculum is necessary, and that important decisions must be made about resource allocations across the board to support such a central and important part of the Cabrinian experience (Hollowell, Middaugh, & Sibolski, 2006). Also, since the ECG curriculum is a multidisciplinary effort, taught by full time faculty across the campus, the responsibility of assessment does not fall under the auspices of any department.

In mid-September 2009, the role of dean of academic affairs was redefined to incorporate oversight of the ECG curriculum, and currently an overarching four year assessment plan is being developed. Currently, Cabrini is considering a model where each level of ECG (100, 200, and 300) will be administered by a "chair," whose duties will include staffing and overseeing the implementation of the course. There is also talk of creating an administrative position to oversee the entire core curriculum.

All of these issues serve to frame the discussion of ECG 300. Also worth noting as background is the fact that a great deal of social justice education is provided in the 100- and 200-level courses; therefore, at the 300-level, both students and faculty can focus on community-based research. After reviewing the learning outcomes of ECG 300, the bulk of this paper explores its CBR component and course-based assessment through the specific example of one section of ECG 300 that focuses on domestic violence education. In closing, we offer reflections and ideas for future development.

Learning Outcomes of Engagement with the Common Good 300

The student learning outcomes for this junior-level core course are intentionally written broadly enough for instructors to select the topic and community partnership that most naturally fits their interests, relationships, and personal or professional expertise. This is also a way of encouraging participation in the core from a wide array of disciplines. Likewise, it enables students to select courses based on their own social justice interests, creating the opportunity for personal investment in an otherwise mandatory course. The ECG 300 description and outcomes are listed in the undergraduate catalog as follows:

> ECG 300 is an interdisciplinary, writing intensive course that helps students utilize their assets and the assets of community partners (local or global) in the pursuit of social justice. Students will work with community partners, contributing to research that will be used to expand the capacity and quality of the partner organizations while providing students with life-long tools for civic engagement. This research may also be used to advocate for systemic changes that will affect greater solidarity with local and global communities. Students will develop skills and strategies to advocate for policies with U.S. and international public and private decision-makers. [The learning outcomes for this course are:]
>
> 1. Students will **reflect** on the tensions among their individual beliefs and personal interests, political realities, and the common good in local and global communities.
> 2. Students will **demonstrate** a sustained commitment to the practice of social justice through community-driven projects designed to create social change.
> 3. Students will **demonstrate** in practice (by developing their research and advocacy skills) and in reflection the difference between seeking justice through charity and through social change.

4. Students will **critique** their personal philosophy of social justice grounded in dignity, equality, and solidarity through:
    o their community involvement,
    o their growing solidarity with diverse communities, and
    o their intellectual understanding of philosophical, historical, and contemporary movements that sought to create social justice (through the lens of oral and written reflection). (Cabrini College Undergraduate Catalog, 2009, p. 67)

The ECG 300 course discussed in this chapter focuses on domestic violence education and is one of the sections Cabrini students can choose to meet their junior-level core requirement. The course was first introduced in 2006 as part of the former social justice seminar series created in 1989. Since that time, over ten sections of the class have been offered with consistently successful results for the students and community partner, suggesting it is an attractive model.

Community-Based Research in ECG 300: Dating & Domestic Violence

"Dating and Domestic Violence" is one section of ECG 300, described generally above. It reflects a partnership between Cabrini College and Laurel House, a local domestic violence shelter. Over the course of the semester, students become provisionally certified in domestic violence crisis counseling according to Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) standards. The PCADV is the organization that provides oversight of all training programs in Pennsylvania domestic violence shelters. To attain full certification, which would certify students to work or volunteer at any Pennsylvania domestic violence shelter, students must complete an additional eight hours of on-site training at Laurel House. (This step is optional, and is one benchmark we are using to gauge students' commitment to domestic violence education beyond the semester.)

In addition to completing the domestic violence training modules, students are required to design and conduct research about dating and domestic violence among college and high school students. The purpose of this community-based research is twofold: to inform the educational efforts of Laurel House and to reinforce course-based knowledge with real-time statistics. One of Laurel House's sustainable long term goals in its work with colleges is to create lifelong ambassadors: people who are aware of the warning signs of domestic abuse, understand the available resources, and possess the skills and tools to help a friend, family member, neighbor or colleague. Regardless of what field these young adults enter upon graduation, knowledge about dating and domestic violence is something that will serve them, and their communities, well throughout the course of their lives. From Laurel House's perspective, having the opportunity to work closely with students from Cabrini in a variety of capacities helps to ensure that many students leave college well-prepared to help further Laurel House's mission which states in part ".....to raise public awareness about domestic violence and to advocate for social change against domestic violence" (Laurel House, n.d.).

The commitment to Laurel House is sustainable, since ECG 300 is affiliated with Laurel House each semester; however, each semester brings a new set of students whose knowledge and skills must first be developed and then put to work with Laurel House. Just as one research project often leads to future research, the work from one semester builds upon the findings of the previous semester, and students are prepared for this next step in the research process. For example, the first semester of the course asked college students about their experiences with dating violence. The next semester asked similar questions to high school students. The third semester replicated these studies, and expanded the

research to identify critical junctures in student development where dating violence rates increase. In the fourth semester, students polled high school and college students to learn if they saw dating violence as a problem and to identify the most effective ways to design intervention programs. This year's study focuses on how much pre-service and in-service teachers know about domestic violence and how equipped they are to handle domestic violence issues that may arise in class. As the partnership progresses, both Laurel House and Cabrini College are committed to improving and strengthening the research to address the more overarching, systemic issues that enable domestic violence to proliferate.

This course follows best practices of community-based research (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003), in part, because the teaching is shared by the professor in the class, Amy Persichetti, and Tommie Wilkins, the director of community education at Laurel House. Over the course of the semester, Ms. Wilkins teaches several of the modules required by the PCADV training. The curriculum of the training (and therefore, the course) is written by the PCADV and the modules are standardized, creating a natural division of labor between the professor and the community partner. It was decided very early on that the modules that required the most applied knowledge would go to Ms. Wilkins, who has worked on the front lines of domestic violence for ten years. More broadly themed modules such as cultural competency and historical perspectives on domestic violence were delegated to Professor Persichetti. Similarly, Professor Persichetti assumes responsibility for all course-based assessment, while Tommie Wilkins ensures that students are being taught in accordance with PCADV standards.

Using Research for Informed Action
At the end of each semester, students present research results to the executive director of Laurel House in a student-led professional-grade presentation. A power point containing all of the research findings is provided to Laurel House to use as needed and is available to subsequent students in the course. While the research informs day-to-day domestic violence educational programming, the research done in these classes also assists in informing educational programming at the state level. The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) is undertaking the development of a new three-year strategic plan. Pennsylvania is on the cusp of joining several other states that have already enacted legislation requiring that dating violence prevention be part of the high school curriculum. PCADV has worked hard to ensure that this new legislation will require that certified domestic violence agencies be included in the development and delivery of the curriculum.

Partnering with college students to learn more about the most effective ways to provide this information to high schools students, and to ensure that college students are also educated about dating violence, is a natural extension of PCADV's community education efforts. Laurel House's executive director is a member of PCADV's Strategic Planning Committee which has been actively meeting for the past six months. In this capacity, she has been (and will be) able to use the lessons learned, and the model developed in partnership with Cabrini, to help inform PCADV's new strategic plan with regard to community education of young adults. These may be the nascent phases of effecting more long-range social change as described in the literature (DeBlasis, 2006; Strand et al., 2003).

Why the CBR Partnership Works
It may seem improbable that such a partnership could be replicated at other institutions. However, there are several important components that may suggest a strong match between a community partner and a college or university. Most importantly, both Laurel House and Cabrini College share a social justice mission that is explicitly articulated in organizational mission statements. In addition to this

alignment in the big picture, both Cabrini and Laurel House share an educational mission (Strand et al., 2003). At Laurel House, Tommie Wilkins, as director of community education, is exclusively devoted to bringing information about dating and domestic violence to schools in the region. Not only does her relationship with Cabrini help Cabrini students learn, it also helps Ms. Wilkins meet the expectations of her own role in her agency. This confluence of mission facilitates the team teaching model, allowing Ms. Wilkins to make a time commitment to team teaching the course without overextending her own position or adding extra responsibilities to her job.

In addition to the operational aspects of this partnership, there is a high level of communication and genuine appreciation between the community partner and professor. A large part of this is simply a natural affinity, but it is strengthened by a common commitment to ending domestic violence and a clear understanding that each party brings her own set of strengths to the table. The domestic violence movement, itself, is rooted in feminist pedagogy, which strongly values both academic and experiential knowledge and seeks to "subvert the tendency to focus on only the thoughts, attitudes, and experiences of those who are materially privileged" (Hooks, 1994, p. 185). This philosophy is embraced by both professor and community partner, who are able to view each other's contributions as complimentary and equally valuable, an essential piece of successful CBR collaboration (Strand et al., 2003).

Building a Course-Based Assessment for CBR: A Guide

Drawing from pertinent literature in assessment and community engagement best practices, we have developed several questions to guide community-based research practitioners and their partners in the assessment process. The first part of each question provides a general understanding of its importance followed by how this step was accomplished in the Cabrini/Laurel House partnership. As is the case with all assessment, this is simply a guide. It is essential that assessment is specifically tailored to meet the needs and culture of a given institution and community-based research partnership.

Who are the stakeholders in the course? (Hollowell, Middaugh, & Sibolski, 2006; Walvoord, 2004) Before beginning an assessment process, it is important to establish a list of stakeholders in the process (Holland, 2001b). The data each stakeholder seeks may differ significantly, and can be a source of tension when creating assessments. In the case of our course, a list of stakeholders may include Cabrini College students in the course, the course instructor, Laurel House, PCADV, the Dean for Academic Affairs, the Academic Planning Committee, and other governance bodies charged with overseeing the core curriculum. In creating assessment tools, it is essential to design an assessment procedure that addresses the needs of all stakeholders. This will be further clarified and explained as the process continues.

What are the questions we need our assessment to answer?
To begin the assessment process, it is essential to know what questions this assessment seeks to answer (Stassen, Doherty, & Poe, 2001), a process that is particularly difficult when dealing with the abstractions of social justice (Langworthy, n.d.). In our case, the assessment must also contribute to the overall progress of the core curriculum, answering to stakeholders in the governance and administrative structures of the College. Finally, assessments should also answer questions essential to the operations and funding of the community partner, who may be concerned with issues unrelated to the academic endeavor. It is clear that this could rapidly become a Sisyphean task without a clear focus. Therefore, focusing the assessment to address the concerns of all stakeholders is essential.

In evaluating ECG 300, we decided on three main questions, driven largely by the stakeholders: Are students meeting the learning outcomes of the ECG 300 class? How does community-based research advance or contribute to the mission of Laurel House? Does the class help meet the learning outcomes of the core ECG curriculum?

What are you already doing in your course that can answer these questions?
Given the time constraints of all of the stakeholders, it is important to make assessment convenient above all else (Stassen et al., 2001; Walvoord, 2004). During the creation of the outcomes, faculty generated a list of possible indicators for student learning. Here is an example of one of the learning outcomes for the course:

> Students will **demonstrate** in practice (by developing their research and advocacy skills) and in reflection the difference between seeking justice through charity and through social change. (Cabrini College Undergraduate Catalog, 2009, p. 67)

While this is an interesting learning outcome, it is admittedly challenging to assess and even more difficult to monitor across disparate sections of the course. To prevent drift across sections, faculty designing the core provided a list of how students might achieve this outcome. They could:

- Participate in a community-based research or advocacy project throughout the semester that has direct applications or benefits for a community partner(s).
- Formally present research findings, in an oral presentation and written document, to the community partner(s).
- Discuss progress and implications of the project weekly/bi-weekly.
- Collaborate (preferably with community partner) to complete a critical assessment of their research, the impact on the community partner, the partner's impact on the students, and the potential for social change.

This list serves to create continuity across sections while allowing instructors to work to their own pedagogical strengths and the needs of community partners. To ensure quality across sections, each new section of the class is evaluated by the ECG Taskforce, a body charged with, among other duties, approving the creation of new sections.

Is the assessment plan realistic and sustainable?
Even the best assessment plan will fail if it is not sustainable. In higher education, balancing the increasing demands of faculty workload becomes trickier by the year (Sorcinelli, 2007). Budgetary concerns are also of great concern in our current economy. Social service providers are similarly stressed. Therefore, it is important that the assessment process does not place an unreasonable or unsustainable burden on workload or budgets.

Currently, the responsibility for gathering and presenting assessment data is shared by an ECG assessment taskforce comprised of four full-time faculty. Ultimately, the dean of academic affairs oversees this process. However, as the curriculum expands and other levels of ECG are implemented, it is essential to create a stronger administrative infrastructure to handle these tasks, or assessment, no matter how well-designed, will not be sustainable.

What benchmarks can be used to define success?
Just as colleges and universities must answer to stakeholders, community partners must also satisfy the expectations of funders, grants, and other governing bodies. For this reason, it is essential to come to a complete understanding of how all parties are defining success. In the beginning of the process, Cabrini faculty asked Laurel House staff to articulate their needs, define the research they would like conducted, and assess the applicability of research to day to day operational work. However, it is also important to ask community partners how they assess their own programming so that, when possible, both the college and the partner can benefit from assessment. To this end, Cabrini asked Laurel House what information they tracked for reporting to funders. Based on Laurel House's response to this question, we designed the following course benchmarks:

- Number of presentations to middle and high school and college students
- Number of middle, high school and college students presented to
- Number of students from Cabrini who complete the state approved domestic violence training
- Number of other contacts initiated by Cabrini students outside of the classroom for other projects (news articles, awareness events, etc.)

By agreeing on a common set of benchmarks, Cabrini and Laurel House share a vision for the course and focus on those elements important to both the College and the community partner.

Have we effectively integrated results so a complete picture of the course emerges?
The possible assignments described in the faculty-generated list do meet a great number of criteria set forth in best practices for assessment. Used in tandem with the benchmarks set by Laurel House, these assignments and measures are descriptive and diagnostic (Holland, 2001a). They also rely on direct measurements that demonstrate skills (such as writing and critical thinking) as well as more indirect measurements that are more reflective (Holland, 2001b.; Stassen et al., 2001; Walvoord, 2004). Given the nature of the social justice curriculum, the assessment is understandably heavy in subjective self-assessment, but an attempt has been made to be objective where possible.

No singular assignment or benchmark is completely perfect. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. The idea is not to find the perfect measure; instead it is to find measures and assignments that are strong and that, when used in complement with other measures and assignments, provide a fair and accurate picture of what is happening both in the course and with the community partner.

Also, if budget permits, an outside evaluator is an excellent investment. In part, because according to Furco (2009), internal evaluations are more positive than external evaluations more than 75% of the time. Both course-based and programmatic assessments can be strengthened by meeting with an external evaluator who can review your assessment plan; conduct focus groups with students, faculty, and community partners; and provide feedback to improve both assessment practice as well as instruction.

How can we revise or improve the course and partnership based on this information?
Through this process, it is important to keep in mind that "flexibility, experimentation, and openness to innovation are essential during exploratory phases of change" (Holland, 2001a, p. 24). While these primary assessment processes are important, they are by no means permanent. As the curriculum and CBR components progress and data is collected, a clearer view will emerge as to what questions need to

be asked and what instruments need to be revised. However, this does not discount the importance of following best practices in assessment.

Reflections & Future Direction

Cabrini College, like an increasing number of colleges and universities, recognizes the importance of using community engagement to enhance the educational experience of students. However, designing programs that mutually benefit the College and the community partner is a continuous challenge (Strand et al., 2003). This course is only one of many possible models for community-based research, but it illustrates how a shared vision can genuinely benefit all parties. However, it is important to note that this course is the product of several revisions. In the same vein, there are farther-reaching systemic goals that we are also struggling to address (Furco, 2002).

Over the course of the past four years, this course has undergone a tremendous amount of refinement. In the research component, we now use QuestionPro, software that captures and collates data through an online survey link. Previously, students administered surveys manually and created databases for results. This was extraordinarily time consuming and limited the academic course learning as well as the pool of possible respondents. The time we saved by refining the data collection process is now used to complete a literature review assignment. Students are now asked to compare their findings with those of peer-reviewed articles, a step that has both enhanced the educational experience of students and legitimated student research findings.

Additionally, using a language that is valuable to both the college and the community partner is important. Currently, we are in the process of revising the syllabus to include a strict accounting of how and when PCADV hourly training standards are being met by the course. This is important to Laurel House, whose training program is regularly audited by the PCADV. Earlier versions of the course met PCADV standards, but the syllabus was not written in a way that would be clear to PCADV auditors. This revision will produce a document that is relevant for academic purposes with the added benefit of streamlining Laurel House's compliance process.

The Cabrini/Laurel House partnership will continue to strengthen through a three-year Department of Justice grant awarded to Cabrini for domestic violence education. The purpose of the grant is to improve domestic violence training for pre-service and in-service teachers. For the duration of the grant, Laurel House will be paid as consultants throughout the course of Cabrini's work with Norristown School District. In this way, the knowledge and expertise of Laurel House staff will remain an essential part of the project, and Laurel House will be compensated for that knowledge and expertise, as well as for the accompanying staff time. This will also help us to further strengthen our program according to best practice, and is our first foray into joint efforts to seek funding (Strand et al., 2003).

As the body of research completed by Cabrini students grows, both Laurel House and Cabrini agree that a large-scale synthesis of all of the research completed to date would be an asset to Laurel House's educational approach. Since the inception of the program, thousands of surveys have been completed.

Looking through research from the past four years could create a comprehensive list of recommendations that could be presented to the board of Laurel House as a data-driven action plan to inform Laurel House's educational programming for teens. Similarly, both Laurel House and Cabrini are interested in following up with students who have already participated in the course to find out how, if

at all, they believe that the experience of taking the course is informing their work and/or personal lives. To this end, Laurel House interns could follow up with previous Cabrini students each year to find out after students have moved on into adult life what impact this course has had on them.

While much lies ahead in this partnership, both Cabrini and Laurel House are reaping benefits from the CBR work being done by students. Now that the program is established, both Cabrini and Laurel House look forward to using the completed research to inform larger, policy-level changes. Additionally, we will more diligently measure and track the effects of this partnership on a consistent basis. The past four years have afforded our partnership the collaborative problem-solving skills that will serve as a strong foundation as Cabrini and Laurel House work together to prevent domestic violence.

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Deliberative Polling: Deepening Community Participation

Paul Lachelier

Abstract: At the heart of modern life lies this great democratic question: can ordinary people have meaningful say in the decisions that shape their lives? Recent innovations in democracy and communication technology have raised new possibilities for meaningful citizen participation. Among the most intriguing recent democratic innovations is the "deliberative poll"—a new form of public opinion polling that holds promise as a tool for community-based researchers interested in widening and deepening community participation. This paper discusses deliberative polling's origins, logic and process, then shares one experience putting deliberative polling into practice, and concludes with thoughts on the promise and challenge of this method for CBR.

Participation Problems in American Democracy

Four concerns are often raised in public and academic discourse concerning citizen engagement in the contemporary United States. The first is alienation: Americans' trust in government and politicians has remained generally quite low since the 1970s, following the Vietnam War and Watergate (Gallup Organization, 2008). In addition, many Americans report feeling that they have little meaningful say in government decisions (American National Election Studies, 2005). Second, ignorance: if Americans feel alienated from politics, it is perhaps not surprising that many are also poorly informed about politics, with young and less educated Americans demonstrating the most ignorance (Pew Research Center, 2007). Third, inequality: poorer and less educated Americans are substantially less likely to be involved in civic and political life than more educated and higher income Americans. Accordingly, public decision-making is dominated by richer, more educated elites. Fourth, polarization: a number of observers have remarked that Americans appear to be withdrawing from public life with others, and into "lifestyle enclaves" of the like-minded over the last several decades (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Bishop, 2008; Putnam, 2000). The advent of extensive home entertainment, online news and opinion, gated communities, and other signs of Americans' substantial relative wealth, mobility, and choice seem to pull Americans out of public life with diverse others even as these developments enrich a privatized consumer life.

While there is some debate as to the scope and seriousness of these problems, those who take these issues seriously worry that alienated, poorly informed and polarized citizens are more prone to manipulation by enterprising elites, and to cynical disengagement and/or angry reaction with little in between.

Traditional Polling & Deliberative Polling

Gallup (1939) argued that public opinion polls could substantially empower citizens, providing political elites with the opinions of statistically representative samples of ordinary Americans on the issues of the day. The polling Gallup developed allows political elites to get cheaper, quicker, more accurate and

ongoing measures of public opinion by randomly selecting as few as several hundred citizens using statistical techniques. Though statistically random polls are now commonplace, critics point to two serious problems with them. First, they do not really measure "public" opinion, but rather private opinion. Conventional pollsters typically ask people questions in isolation from other citizens, then aggregate their individual or private opinions and call it "public" opinion. Second, conventional pollsters usually expect their subjects to produce their opinions immediately with little or no preparation or discussion. This generates relatively superficial opinions based on whatever information and ideas happen to come to the interviewee's mind at the time. To these two criticisms I would add a third most relevant to community-based researchers: in opting to poll isolated individuals, conventional polling misses the opportunity to create a public or community with shared interests and goals.

These three critiques help explain why conventional polls do not counter the quadruple threat of alienation, ignorance, inequality, and polarization that plague American citizenship. Conventional polls do not generally inform or meaningfully connect citizens to each other or their government. To overcome the limitations of conventional polling, political scientist James Fishkin devised "deliberative opinion polling" (Fishkin, 1991, 1997, 2009; Fishkin & Ackerman, 2004; Fishkin & Laslett, 2003; Fishkin, Luskin, & Jowell, 2002). Deliberative polls in essence involve ten steps (see Table 1).

Table 1: Ten Steps in Deliberative Polling	
Deliberative Poll Steps	**Description**
Poll Planning	Community groups and/or governments approach James Fishkin's Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University with an issue about which they would like to conduct a deliberative poll. The community group and the Center plan the poll. The Center then advises the group through the poll process, and the group funds the poll.
Sample Drawn and Surveyed	As with conventional polling, a statistically random sample is drawn from the community population of interest, local to global, and that sample of people is surveyed, often by phone.
Sample Invited to Deliberative	In sharp contrast with conventional polls, the random sample is then invited to gather face-to-face, or online, to deliberate on the chosen public issue.
Sample Mobilized	Through phone calls, door-to-door canvassing, media announcements and/or other means, organizers seek to maximize the number of sample members who agree to, and actually attend the poll.
Sample Mailed Information	Those in the sample who agree to participate in the poll are mailed balanced information on the community issue (i.e., background facts plus competing perspectives on how to address the issue, compiled by a panel of academic and/or community experts) in advance.
Sample Meets	The sample members who do show up to the deliberative poll then meet for a few hours to a couple of days.
Sample Breaks into Small Groups	After checking in, the participants are randomly assigned to small groups led by trained moderators. The small groups meet, discuss the issue, develop questions, then get together to select a few questions to raise to a panel of experts and policymakers when the small groups convene as a larger group.
Sample Convenes as Large Group	The small groups convene as a large group to listen to each other's questions and the experts and policy-makers' responses. This small-group-to-large-group process may be repeated two or more times, depending on the length of the deliberative poll.
Sample Surveyed Again	At the conclusion of the small and large group meetings, participants fill out the same survey they answered prior to the deliberation.
Results Analyzed and Released	Immediately following the deliberative poll, organizers analyze the results, comparing the pre- and post-deliberation survey data, and report the results to relevant media, leaders, and community groups.

Like conventional town meetings, deliberative poll participants often deliberate face-to-face. But unlike conventional town meetings, deliberative poll participants at least theoretically constitute a diverse and statistically random sample of citizens rather than the "usual suspects" of motivated and often dogmatic citizens who are more likely to respond to open town meeting announcements. That greater diversity is due to the special efforts deliberative pollsters take to select a statistically random sample of citizens, and to get that often diverse sample to talk to each other in the respectful, informed, and thoughtful context of a deliberative poll.

Deliberative polls resonate in principle with the model of community-based research (CBR) that Stoecker and Beckman (2010), and to some extent Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker and Donohue (2003), lay out for impact-oriented community-based research. First, deliberative polling brings community members together to talk about shared issues. This is a critical task of CBR in Stoecker and Beckman's framework. Second, deliberative pollsters do not advocate for communities so much as help communities determine the considered opinions of their members. This is consistent with Stoecker and Beckman (2010) as well as Strand et al.'s (2003) insistence that university faculty, staff, and students are foremost community collaborators rather than experts or Good Samaritans. Third, deliberative polling shifts the focus of attention from elites (e.g., government officials, business leaders, academic experts) to ordinary community members. Although deliberative polling thus does not exclusively engage the "oppressed, powerless, economically deprived, or disenfranchised" (Strand et al., 2003, p. 3), it can bring forth the voices of the marginalized who ordinarily do not participate in community meetings. Experts and political professionals are aides rather than leaders, and only to the extent that they can empower citizens to form a more informed opinion. Fourth, deliberative polling can help create community (more on this later).

Deliberative polling can help address the quadruple threat of alienation, ignorance, inequality and polarization. The central premise of such polling is that citizens who come together to learn and consider each other's views before they form their own opinions are in so doing more informed and connected to their government and their communities. That is the promise of deliberative polls.

Since Fishkin's (1991) publication of his original work about deliberative polling, deliberative polls have been implemented in over fifteen countries and the European Union. Issues discussed have ranged from energy to law enforcement to health care to monarchy in the United Kingdom and the place of aboriginals in Australia. In the United States, deliberative polls have been conducted at local to national levels, from Texas utility districts to National Issue Conventions co-sponsored by the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) during presidential elections. (For more details, visit Fishkin's Center for Deliberative Democracy at http://cdd.stanford.edu/ and the American Democracy Project at http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/about.htm.) Stetson University, where I teach, hosted its first deliberative poll on April 13, 2009. The next section discusses some course background that helps make sense of Stetson's experiment in deliberative democracy, and describes the organizing that made the poll possible.

Imagining the Deliberative Poll & My Course

I designed my course, "Community Organizing and Social Change" (COSC), to teach students resume-building community organizing skills (e.g., volunteer recruitment, leadership development, media outreach, fundraising, organizational planning) through reading, discussion and community action. Their

course grade was determined by their class attendance (10%), participation (10%), written reading responses and exercises (30%), and their individual contribution and effort in achieving our community organizing goals (50%). Course readings included some introductory readings in political history and theory, portions of Leighninger's *The Next Form of Democracy* (2006)*,* Bobo, Kendall and Max's respected community organizing textbook, *Organizing for Social Change* (2001; a fourth edition was released this year), and Fishkin's *The Voice of the People* (1997).

I first read James Fishkin's book, *Democracy and Deliberation* (1991), in graduate school, but had not picked up the book since then. After discussing the concepts of deliberative polling with colleagues at Stetson, I decided to make COSC the launching pad for a long-term, potentially career-defining project to build deliberative democracy in Florida. My course students and I would begin organizing in the spring semester 2009 for a city or county-wide deliberative poll to be held in fall 2010, before the mid-term elections, on an issue of community significance. This, I thought, would lead to more deliberative polls in cities and counties throughout Florida, and the establishment of an organizational coalition with the ultimate goal of institutionalizing deliberative democracy in one of, if not the most politically significant state in the nation.

That was the plan. Then came reality.

Making the Poll a Reality

Rather than begin organizing far in advance for the fall 2010 city or county-wide poll I had envisioned, about six weeks into the spring semester 2009, the twelve undergraduates enrolled in my course decided to test-try a deliberative poll with Stetson students, on an issue of interest to Stetson students. My students then organized into three teams—publicity, fundraising, and mobilization—and each student worked on two of the three teams. For the following six weeks (until the April 13 event), my students and I energetically pursued answers as follows to a series of questions central to organizing a deliberative poll.

What issue will the deliberative poll address?
Although, community groups and/or governments often decide the deliberative poll issue, the students and I decided to survey Stetson students to determine what issues were most important to them. The online survey was sent to approximately 2,100 Stetson students, and we received over one hundred responses. The affordability of a Stetson education proved to be the most frequent concern. Thus, the guiding question for the poll became, "How can we make a Stetson education more affordable?"

Assessing community opinion through traditional surveys is not easy. Online surveys such as "Survey Monkey" (www.surveymonkey.com) can make community surveys easier and cheaper, but depend on internet access. More often, governments and community groups rely on volunteers or survey professionals to call residents randomly selected from a city phone or residents list. This, however, is frequently more costly in time and money, and more difficult with the proliferation of unlisted cell phones and the decline of "landline" phones. Nonetheless, deliberative polls require a conventional survey of community opinion against which the subsequent deliberative poll's opinion can be compared. Given the very low survey response rate, we used the survey only to ascertain the issue to be discussed, not to survey Stetson students on the same issue questions we posed to those students who showed up to the deliberation.

How will the poll be funded, and what will be its costs?
Deliberative polls can be cheap or costly. Some of the costliest polls that have been organized are national, televised events that pay for participants' flights, hotel, food, plus a stipend of up to several hundred dollars per participant. Local polls are typically far less costly as long as they take place within reasonable driving distance of the participants' homes. Most deliberative polls offer some sort of material incentive to participants, such as a stipend, food, transportation or mileage reimbursement, etc. My students and I raised several hundred dollars from University sources and individual faculty to pay for pizza, sandwiches, drinks and raffle prizes, including two $50 cash prizes, and local restaurant and store coupons (which were announced at appointed times throughout the event to encourage students to stay).

Additional costs can include a rental fee for the poll venue, phone calls to participants, as well as postage and printing (e.g., promotional posters and handouts, informational packets sent to participants, and the event program). Possible financial and in-kind donors include local governments, businesses, foundations, media companies, and schools. Deliberative poll organizers can ask local universities and colleges to host the event and cover some, most or all costs because deliberative polls give schools an educational, engaging, and promotable way to connect with their surrounding communities.

Where and when will the poll take place?
Time and place are vital issues for deliberative polls given their nature. The place should be easily recognizable and conveniently located, have enough small rooms or quiet places for small groups to meet, and have a larger room properly equipped to allow all participants to speak and be heard clearly from different locations or with a microphone. The time needs to be long enough to allow for sufficient deliberation, but not so long as to deter participation or lose participants during the event. Community deliberative polls tend to happen on weekends to accommodate conventional Monday-Friday work schedules. Given the particular demands of student life, my students and I scheduled the poll to happen on a Monday, 6pm-9pm.

What will be the precise structure and schedule of the poll?
How many times and for how long should the small and large groups meet? What should take place in the small and large group sessions? Should participants be allowed to do more than ask questions of experts and policy-makers in the large group, such as ask each other questions? Should there be a panel of experts and policy-makers, or should they be incorporated into the small groups? Deliberative polls will be more or less democratic depending on how much participants are allowed to participate equally. In any case, deliberative polls are a particular form of democracy that prioritizes learning facts and perspectives through civil deliberation, so whatever structure is chosen should advance these goals.

How large should the poll sample be, and who should be included?
Following Fishkin's ten-step process, an initial random sample is drawn from the population of interest, using a more or less comprehensive list. Respondents to that survey are then invited to participate in the deliberative poll. Statisticians generally recommend drawing a sample of four hundred or so individuals, at minimum, to be able to generalize with some confidence regarding the beliefs and/or behaviors of the larger population from which the sample is drawn. Keeping in mind the multiple causes of attrition (e.g., invalid telephone numbers or addresses in the original list, people who do not answer, or answer and refuse to participate in the original survey) pollsters are advised to select an original survey sample about three to four times larger than the sample desired to participate in the poll. The

sampling method depends in part on the heterogeneity of the population. Community deliberative poll organizers should consult with a statistician or survey expert to determine the proper sample size and sampling method.

In our case, given the limited time and resources my students and I had, we did not follow Fishkin's selection process. Instead, we conducted the online survey of all Stetson students to determine the issue of their greatest concern. Then, we drew a random sample of two hundred Stetson undergraduates that we sought to mobilize to participate in the deliberative poll. The major flaw in this alternative process is that we consequently lacked the larger sample survey data to compare with the smaller deliberative sample survey data. However, we surveyed the deliberation participants twice, once upon their arrival, the second time at the end of the deliberation. These pre- and post-deliberation surveys revealed some significant changes in opinion, as I will soon discuss.

How will the poll sample be mobilized to ensure decent turnout?
Actual deliberative poll participation rates are often disappointing, as are participation rates in many voluntary political and civic activities. However, grassroots mobilization methods can substantially help raise participation rates. Half of community organizing in democracies is about getting people simply to show up, whether to meetings, elections, demonstrations, debates, fundraisers, park clean-ups, etc. One of my core goals in the course was to impart this basic insight to my students by getting them to practice grassroots organizing.

Thus, we treated the poll mobilization like a grassroots election campaign. Five students focused on this effort. Each took on 40 of the 200 randomly selected Stetson students. Their job was then to get as many as possible of their 40 students to show up at the event. As in many grassroots election campaigns, the five mobilizers ranked the 200 potential participants for their likelihood of attending (1 meaning definitely attending, to 5 meaning definitely not attending). As we approached the poll date, we sought to turn 3's and 4's (undecided, or leaning against attending) into 1's and 2's (definitely, or leaning toward attending). We used varied tactics, such as door-to-door canvassing, phone calls, postering, leafleting, email appeals, and a facebook group to inform the selected students of the event, and persuade them to attend. We also created an incentive package to encourage participation, including food, raffle prizes, and a certificate of participation students could use to request extra credit from their professors.

To help ensure that participants more or less mirror the larger population, only those in the survey sample can be allowed to participate in the deliberation. Thus, while some students heard about the poll and wanted to attend it, they could not if they were not in the sample randomly selected. This may seem unnatural or unfair, but it is key to distinguishing deliberative polls from a conventional town hall meeting, at which typically only those most interested show up.

How will the poll be publicized beyond the participants?
We were somewhat successful in getting news media to report the poll, with articles in the *Daytona Beach News-Journal* (circulation around 100,000) and the University's *Stetson Reporter.* My students created and managed a website (http://stetsonsdp.pbworks.com/) which drew news media and campus attention to the event. Because deliberative polls are an innovative and more democratic form of community gathering, they are more likely to attract local news media's attention. Getting news organizations themselves involved in the organizing and/or hosting of such an event is one way to

increase publicity. Co-hosting or co-organizing a deliberative poll can be a very visible way to demonstrate an organization's or business' good citizenship.

Who makes the decisions?
Who decides what issue will be addressed, what survey questions will be posed and how, what the structure and schedule of the poll will be, who the small-group moderators will be and how they will be trained, etc.? I allowed my students to have input on the length and structure of the deliberative poll, and one student drafted the online survey to determine the issue about which Stetson students are most concerned. But I seized the reins in drafting the poll survey, selecting the small-group moderators, and identifying the two large-group experts who would speak to students about Stetson tuition and budgeting to inform the poll's guiding question "how can we make a Stetson education more affordable?" I did so in consultation with Stetson faculty and administrators, but this was hardly democratic decision-making.

University-community partnerships, however, cannot operate this way. An organizing committee composed of community stakeholders in the deliberative poll's issues is a preferred arrangement. University faculty, students, and administrators can either serve as voting representatives or non-voting research advisors to the committee, depending on the collective will of the community stakeholders. Throughout this process, university representatives should recall that they often possess substantial cultural capital (e.g., verbal command, specialized knowledge, educational certification) that may afford them disproportionate influence in decision-making, especially on initiatives that require specialized knowledge.[1] Poll moderators and small group facilitators should be trained to ensure wide participation and prevent anyone from dominating the deliberation. This bears more on the actual deliberation than organizational decision-making, but it is vital to making deliberative polls more participatory.

Stetson's Deliberative Poll Outcomes

In the end, 48 of the 200 Stetson students randomly selected appeared for the actual event on April 13, 2009. All but a few of the students stayed for the full three-hour event. The results of the pre- and post-deliberation surveys showed substantial change in the participants' opinions and knowledge on some issues surrounding the guiding question "How can we make a Stetson education more affordable?" (see Table 2).

These findings confirm that deliberation can and does change public knowledge and opinion, whether due to the social interaction and/or the knowledge gained during the poll. In evaluating the event, 40% of the participants gave the event an "A" grade overall, and another 40% gave it a "B" grade. Seventy-nine percent said they would participate in a future deliberative poll on campus or elsewhere. These results echo the results of other deliberative polls: participants tend to respond favorably to the deliberation and express willingness to participate in future polls.

The event was generally very well received by Stetson faculty, staff, students, and wider community members who observed or heard of it. Two of my course students summarized the poll's survey results, and I wrote a report of the poll which was posted at the poll's website and emailed to interested community members and Stetson staff and faculty. No further action resulted from the poll. Exhausted

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[1] For more on the concept of cultural capital, and related concepts of social, symbolic, and economic capital, see Bourdieu (1984), and Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992).

from our modest campus effort, I shelved my original plan to organize a city or county-wide deliberative poll, but remain hopeful about deliberative polling. Community-based researchers interested in deliberative polling though must consider some key challenges to this noble democratic method.

Table 2: Key Opinion & Knowledge Changes in the Stetson Deliberative Poll		
Question/Topic	Pre-Deliberation Survey	Post-Deliberation Survey
Percentage of students correctly naming employee wages as Stetson's largest expense	28%	48%
Percentage of students who ranked how informed they felt about Stetson's financial situation as 7 or 8 out of 10 (10 being most informed)	6%	38%
Percentage of students strongly opposed to raising Stetson's student-to-faculty ratio from the current 11-to-1 to 14-to-1 in order to cut tuition	33%	56%
Percentage of students strongly opposed to eliminating Stetson's Division I athletic teams to cut tuition	66%	44%
Percentage of students strongly supportive of recruiting more students from higher-income households, and fewer from lower-income households to reduce tuition for middle to lower-income students	6%	39%

The Promise & Challenge of Deliberative Polling

Despite my exhaustion and shelved plans, I still believe in deliberative polling as a means for overcoming the quadruple threat of citizen alienation, ignorance, inequality and polarization. I also believe deliberative polls should become part of the community-based researcher's toolkit. If, like Stoecker and Beckman (2010), community-based researchers take seriously the imperative to give meaningful voice to community residents, to ascertain community needs and concerns, then deliberative polling can become an important instrument. Unlike conventional surveys, deliberative polls bring diverse community residents face-to-face in serious and civil dialogue rather than shouting matches.

Communities are not monoliths, yet too often public decision-making is dominated by a privileged or participatory few, the "usual suspects" who normally participate in community meetings. Deliberative polling challenges this problematic status quo by shifting the process from the community's elites, to ordinary residents deliberating about issues that affect them all. Universities can play an important role in community deliberative polling by starting a dialogue with community partners about deliberative polling, and by opening their doors, offering meeting rooms, student interns and volunteers, faculty expertise, staff assistance, food, funds, phones, copies, and more. That is the promise of community-based deliberative polling with university assistance. Yet there are two significant challenges.

The Participation Challenge
Perhaps my deepest disappointment was that only 48 of the 200 selected students (24%) participated in the Stetson poll. Some campus-based deliberative polls have fared better, others worse. The percentage of those surveyed who actually show up and deliberated in Fishkin's polls varies widely, from a high of 96%, to a low of 4% (see http://cdd.stanford.edu/). Interestingly, turnout is often greater in national deliberative polls than in local ones, despite the distance participants have to travel to get to the deliberation. This may be because national and international (e.g., European Union) events typically offer to pay all expenses plus a stipend, and the prospect of being on national television. Local universities, community groups and governments may not have these resources. Further, and paradoxically, some citizens are less interested in local issues than they are in national politics.

Incentives and energetic grassroots mobilization improve turnout, but these measures are not thus far capable of bringing even half of those surveyed (let alone all those in the original sample) to the table in most deliberative polls. Fishkin responds that what matters is whether the deliberation participants demographically mirror those surveyed (personal communication, 2010). This is to some extent a fair point *if* demographics include measures of socio-economic status (e.g., income, home ownership, education, command of English) since those with higher socio-economic status are disproportionately represented in politics and community life. But even so, if people with higher socio-economic status are more likely to answer surveys, those individuals who show up to the deliberation would be compared demographically with survey respondents, who may already be unrepresentative of the larger population.

These turnout issues do not discredit deliberative polling, but they urge local community-based researchers to take special measures to include those of lower socio-economic status, including additional personal, door-to-door and phone contact. In addition, since paying expenses and stipends can boost participation, it behooves local organizers to bring governments, foundations, businesses and others with deeper pockets to the organizing table. Even if these measures do not push deliberative poll participation above fifty percent of those surveyed, they should make for a more representative poll.

The Challenge of the Post-Deliberation Vacuum
What is to be done once all the exhausting organizing work is done, and the poll has taken place? Can deliberative polling actually inform public discourse, and public policy?

Stetson's first deliberative poll had no influence on university policy regarding tuition. My students and I focused almost exclusively on organizing the poll, giving little thought to its influence beyond the press coverage we received, and the report we disseminated online and via email. That is the fate of most deliberative polls thus far. Fishkin's own growing list of polls, as impressive and commendable as it is, shows little evidence of policy impact, or of more than fleeting influence on public discourse. Even among those most likely to be enduringly influenced—the poll participants themselves—there is some evidence that they tend to return to their opinions prior to the deliberation months after the event.[2]

As Stoecker and Beckman (2010) argue, university-community partnerships are better constructed as long-term rather than single-semester or single-day endeavors. Long-term partnerships help deepen university-community relations, offer students more meaningful and potentially career-defining projects, and provide communities with the sustained resources needed to effectively tackle stubborn social problems. More universities, like Stetson, desire to educate students for long-term citizenship, and are looking to build targeted yet sustained partnerships with communities, local to global. As of this writing, a group of Stetson colleagues and I are planning a campus institute for democracy that would, among other things, work with local governments and community groups long-term to organize more deliberative polls and other democratic events in our town, county, and the central Florida region.

Building Communities through Deliberative Polling
As noted earlier, deliberative polls have thus far not been utilized enough to help create communities (Stetson's poll included). Nonetheless, community-based researchers looking for innovative ways not

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[2] Participants in the 1994 British national deliberative poll on crime were surveyed again 10 months after the deliberation on four questions posed before and immediately after the deliberation. On all four questions, the percentages moved back to their pre-deliberation opinions (Fishkin, 1997; p. 221).

only to ascertain community opinion, but to mobilize community members around an issue can use deliberative polling to get diverse, ordinary residents meaningfully involved. Using deliberative polls not only to ascertain community opinion, but to set community goals and establish working groups can spur wider participation. Deliberative polls need not be passing events; they can constitute a participatory beginning to a long-term community project.

Can ordinary people have meaningful say in the decisions that shape their lives? There are, I believe, few more fundamental questions. And the answer is "yes," but as our Stetson experience with deliberative polling indicates, it takes work—community organizing work.

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The Poverty Initiative: Student Research & Community Organizing Toward Grass Roots Change

Don Dailey, David Dax, Melissa Caron, Caroline Head & Harlan Beckley

Abstract: Over a two-year period Washington and Lee University has conducted a sustained project, the Poverty Initiative, focused on local poverty that began with student community-based research and evolved into community forums and grass roots organizing. The Poverty Initiative has led to changes in local policy and practices related to different dimensions of poverty. This paper describes the Poverty Initiative as a case study of a campus-community partnership supported by the National CBR Networking Initiative that is making a difference for both students and community members. The case study is followed by reflections on lessons learned.

Community-based research (CBR) at Washington and Lee University is housed in the Shepherd Program for Poverty and Human Capability Studies. CBR involves student-faculty- community collaborative research and civic engagement focused on issues related to poverty, building community capacity to address poverty, and fostering collective efforts to revitalize the community. This work is primarily focused on Rockbridge County, Virginia, a community steeped in civil war history and legend, and a cross-section of the rural "Old South" and Appalachian mountain culture.

This cross-section includes wide disparities of wealth and poverty. Within the County there exist three distinct communities: Lexington, Buena Vista, and greater Rockbridge County. Lexington is a small college town with pockets of poverty; Buena Vista is a sleepy industrial town with widespread poverty throughout the community; and, greater Rockbridge County consists of horse ranches, farms, and extreme disparities of wealth and poverty. A number of individuals and families have never traveled outside of the county, and live with large extended families in shelters with dirt floors, no indoor plumbing, and limited space in very poor conditions. Others in the community live in plantation style properties, Victorian houses, and suburban homes. Three colleges draw an educated professional population from across the country, and a number of wealthy retires have located in Lexington and other parts of the County.

The Poverty Initiative

As part of its work, the Shepherd Program develops CBR projects and initiatives focused on problems identified in these communities. Larger initiatives are designed to consist of three processes:

- community research: student-community collaborative research focused primarily on poverty related problems identified by the community;
- community engagement: community forums for engaging community members, faculty, and students in a conversation about research findings, and for empowering community voice in setting an action agenda; and,

- community action: launching of an action agenda that involves community organizing, service projects, and targeted change in local policy.

These processes provide students opportunities for rich experiential learning as researchers, consultants, facilitators and leaders. Research is used as a focal point for engaging community leaders and residents in community-wide collaborative inquiry. During the action phase, CBR students and staff work with the community to take action through grass roots community organizing and service projects, providing continued access to options for change in local policy. This model came to life through the "Poverty Initiative."

This paper describes the Poverty Initiative as an example of a CBR oriented enterprise that has affected local communities and fostered student learning. It uses the principles and practices for CBR developed by Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue (2003) to reflect on the initiative, and proposes lessons learned.

The Poverty Initiative has consisted of three interrelated projects: 1) a needs assessment and study of poverty in the Rockbridge community leading to a report on findings (April 2008-January 2009); 2) the Rockbridge County Community Forum on Poverty (April 2009); and 3) creation of the Rockbridge Commission on Poverty and a number of grass roots community groups (Summer 2009 - present). Each will be discussed in turn.

Poverty Study

During the spring of 2008, the City Manager of Lexington asked the CBR staff at the Shepherd Program to undertake a study of poverty in Rockbridge County, primarily because of reports about rising poverty in the community and the demands this was placing on social services in the region. He requested a study that would shed more light on the prevalence of poverty, different dimensions of poverty in the community, and potential gaps in service for the low-wealth people. Design for the project was developed at a meeting convened with the City Manager, a handful of local service agency directors, CBR staff, and faculty and students from Washington & Lee. This group discussed definitions of poverty, plans for the study, local needs and perceptions of poverty, as well as potential problems existing with local service delivery.

Based on this discussion, a research design was developed that included surveying agency leaders, conducting focus groups with local service providers, and analyzing data from extant sources and records. The study was conducted by two students, Melissa Caron and Christopher Martin. Students were guided by Don Dailey and Harlan Beckley as faculty mentors. They were further assisted by staff member Linda Cummings in organizing meetings and survey collection. Shepherd CBR staff worked with Caron and Martin to implement a "Learning Circle" with community agencies created to bring the community into the study as research partners. By January 2009 they completed their analysis of data and the final report.

The report identified several priorities for policymakers in the Rockbridge community to consider in their effort to mitigate the effects and reduce the incidence of poverty. The report concluded that Lexington, Buena Vista, and Rockbridge County should 1) create a community blueprint to fight poverty; 2) revitalize the Rockbridge area's public transportation network; 3) reaffirm the community's commitment to quality, affordable housing; 4) Prepare workers for the twenty-first century economy;

and 5) reconfigure our framework for addressing poverty issues. The study findings and recommendations were presented at a Community Forum on Poverty, the second project in the Poverty Initiative (Caron & Martin, 2009).

Community Forum on Poverty

The Rockbridge County Community Forum on Poverty was held in April 2009. It had four major aims. The first was to use the community-based research that resulted from the poverty study and additional community voices to increase local awareness and knowledge of poverty related needs, services available, and areas where improvement is needed. Second, the forum was to provide an opportunity for identification of an agenda for future action focused on building local capacity to address issues identified in the study. Third, the forum would bring together community leaders from the multiple communities that make up Rockbridge County to discuss issues, problems and possible interventions and policies related to local poverty. And finally, it was intended to provide a platform for developing an ongoing community think tank to bring together community leaders, community voices, research and electronic products, tools, and other resources to address ongoing local concerns related to poverty.

Past efforts in the county to facilitate community-wide collaboration had failed. The three communities that make up Rockbridge County are autonomous communities with a long history of feuds, sense of territory, and limited collaboration. The lack of communication and collaboration across health, social and education agencies is also a well-documented problem. The Forum, hosted by the university and United Way, chartered new territory in local collaboration by bringing together over 80 participants from across the three communities, including local health and social service agency directors; the city and county managers, mayor, and elected local officials; the Mayors Concerned Citizen Group; school superintendents and principals; Washington & Lee faculty, staff, and students; business leaders; local religious institutions; other local citizens; and representatives of the Governor's office and other state offices.

In the first session, students and faculty provided an overview of the key issues identified in the Poverty Report. This session was followed by questions and important points raised by community participants, after which the plenary session broke out into small groups focused on transportation, health, housing and water systems, hunger and food security, education, legal issues, and employment and economic growth.

These sessions identified a number of key problems to be addressed and recommendations for a future action agenda. The need for developing community-wide capacity to address poverty stood out as a major issue for future action.

Taking Action: Community-Wide Capacity Building

A major conclusion of the forum was that an important key in addressing the very complex and interlocking set of problems that make up poverty was community-wide capacity to collectively identify problems related to poverty, formulate effective community-wide strategy, design and implement systems that address interrelated problems, and empower the human and financial capital existing in the community to reframe problems and pursue collective action. In light of this conclusion, Shepherd CBR staff and local community leaders joined forces to propose the formation of a Commission on Poverty that would serve as a community think tank on poverty and focus on building community-wide

capacity. Don Dailey, students, and David Dax of United Way were asked to work with community leaders in launching the Commission. Approximately 10 students are supporting this work through internships, independent studies, and in fulfillment of their selection as a Bonner Leader or Scholar.

Mission and Goals
The overarching mission of the Commission on Poverty is to strengthen the community-wide capacity of Rockbridge County to address the needs of the poor in the local community and develop strategies for economic development. In fulfilling this mission, the Commission is seeking to achieve the following goals:

1. Awareness of Problems: To increase awareness of the needs of the poor, and the different types of services available to them.
2. Collaboration: To strengthen the collaboration of agencies and community leaders as they work with low-income individuals in the community.
3. Knowledge and Action: To strengthen the local knowledge base of effective strategies that can support collaboration, services for the poor, and economic development.
4. Building Financial Base: To strengthen the capacity of the community to work together in seeking and pursuing grants and other resources from external funding agencies, or resources from the local community.

Approximately 40 leaders from local agencies, education systems, businesses, and the local governing councils participate in the Commission. The first meeting was held in September 2009. Meetings are being held monthly.

Grass Roots Community Groups
Smaller grass roots community groups have naturally formed around access to health services, homelessness, affordable housing, literacy, public transportation, and local information systems. All groups are being supported by student researchers who work with community leaders to identify policy options and formulate short and long term strategies. This work is directly impacting local policy related to public transportation, access to health care for women and children, housing and homelessness, and literacy. This serves as a basis for grass roots transformation.

What Have We Learned: Guiding Principles

What can Washington & Lee and other campuses learn from this experience? Our Shepherd CBR staff have wrestled with this question. Based on this experience and several months of reflection, discussions, and meetings with colleagues from other Bonner institutions, we learned, and in some cases affirmed, the importance of focusing the project on a significant community-based issue with well defined research questions; employing deliberate strategies to enhance integration of student knowledge; using Learning Circles to support student reflection; and, leveraging diverse faculty through the research process. As a coherent framework, these lessons learned move from the importance of the initial research question to the knowledge that students bring to respond to this question, to the role of a community of learners to support student learning , all supported by multiple faculty members. The following narrative describes each lesson learned, and the guidance we can share associated with this lesson.

Focusing on a Significant Community-Based Issue with Well Defined Research Questions
While poverty is an ongoing issue for the Shepherd CBR program, during the period of this initiative the economic down turn locally and nationally created heightened community attention to this issue. Local service agencies began to report striking increases in their caseloads. They were also seeing the new faces of poverty, professionals facing housing problems, looking for work, and reaching out for food to make ends meet. These issues prompted the City Manager of Lexington to request the study. The prominence of this issue very likely helped create the community buzz that emerged around the project, the unprecedented turn out for the community forum, and the follow-up to these events with new structures and policy change.

Nonetheless, we learned very strikingly from this experience that focusing on a problem perceived as significant by the community—a fundamental recommendation in the CBR literature (Strand et al., 2003)—is critical for the success of the venture. Doing so built on the buzz in the community, fostered healthy collaboration, and provided a basis for follow through after the study was completed.

The students also learned the critical research lesson that measurable research questions that capture the essence of a problem will lead to a focused research design. An initial set of questions emerged from the gathering of community leaders, faculty and students. These were later refined by the students and faculty, and then further refined through community involvement. Multiple iterations of group learning and sharing led to clearly defined research questions that guided the study. This process, resulting in a clear focus, helped the students move easily from data collection to analysis, and from data analysis to drafting a report on study findings.

What we learned here, and what we offer as advice to others, is to create relationships and structures that put the CBR unit into the thick of community issues. Ideally this will lead to requests from the community on critical issues. Relationships and involvement with community members help you evaluate and connect ideas and potential partners. The community perspective collaborating with students and faculty expertise can translate general notions about an urgent issue into a key set of research questions that guide the study, the study report, and follow-up in policy settings.

Employing Deliberate Strategies to Enhance Integration of Student Knowledge
An aim in CBR is that students will be able to link previous knowledge with what they are learning in the field. Clearly the two students who conducted the poverty study are very smart in their own right, and that was important for making such connections. More important, perhaps, was that they both were intensely aware of poverty and local problems as a result of previous coursework and community service projects.

Both students saw the poverty study as an important project that could have significant impact on the community and the CBR program. The emergence of this project through the city manager's office heightened their sense of the importance of the project. Thus, they were motivated; they appeared to make ever stronger connections between previous learning and new knowledge as they interacted with community members. Their motivation also seemed to be enhanced through their own interaction as a research team. You could see the lights come on, critical "aha moments," during their group exchanges.

Student research is enriched as students make connections between what they are learning in the field with what they have learned from coursework and other community experiences. Based on experience

with this and other projects, however, it is apparent that these connections do not necessarily occur easily or naturally. Faculty guidance is critical in furthering this process.

Ongoing meetings with the students in this project helped faculty observe where students were starting to make connections, and where they were not. This provided a basis for providing relevant guidance. Faculty can work with students at varying levels of intensity, provided sufficient time is available. For some students, especially first year students, faculty can model what needs to occur and provide regular explicit guidance in individual meetings with students. Other students may only need limited guidance or simply exposure to structures and processes that trigger what they know and spark their motivation. Faculty and CBR staff can deliberately structure these activities. Of course, students learn by doing, and once students take charge of their project it is often best for faculty to move out of the way.

Faculty and staff also learned to trust the power of student knowledge and past experiences to influence students' future work in the field. At the same time, however, we need to recognize that, even though community interactions do motivate students, such connections will not necessarily happen naturally. Deliberate structures, such as regular meetings with individual students and student research teams, should be established to focus and support students in their authentic participation with community members.

Using Learning Circles to Support Student Reflection

A Learning Circle is an opportunity for students, faculty, community partners, and funding agencies (if appropriate) to work together as a team through all facets of the research process: defining the research questions, developing the research design, designing instruments for collecting data, interpreting the data, identifying policy options, and presenting findings and recommendations through forums that involve authentic policy deliberation. Learning Circles involve iterative processes that provide opportunities for each participant to contribute his or her unique perspective and understanding, and to learn from each other in ways that strengthen student reflection.

As participants in the Learning Circle make observations, offer interpretations, constructively argue, and share, both the group and individual members may be exposed to different perspectives representing cultures different from their own. Varying perspectives stemming from differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, or community versus academic orientation can be incorporated in ways that enrich the sharing and learning that occurs during the research process, and challenge participants to think in new ways.

As Poverty Initiative students participated in a Learning Circle in which community members made observations and shared stories and reflections, they were exposed to thoughts and information which they made sense of through their existing knowledge, experience, beliefs, assumptions and world view. What they were hearing and learning challenged previous assumptions. They were making connections, finding patterns, and abstracting principles (Garner, 2007). As students began to see patterns and articulate them to their student research partner(s), their faculty mentor, and within the Learning Circle, they engaged in an exchange that involved critical feedback, adaptation and reformulation of their thoughts. They took part in an ongoing processing and reshaping of their reflections. The Learning Circle

gave students opportunities for deep reflection, while it strengthened the richness of data and relevance of insight brought to data analysis.[3]

The Learning Circle has been used with success by Shepherd CBR staff in other projects where multiple perspectives and collaboration were highly valued. In part it draws from research on qualitative methods and action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Yorks & Nicolaides, 2007).

When considering implementation of a Learning Circle, it is important to bring together the members of the community and campus that have a stake in the issue. If possible, establish a structure for collective sharing and learning focused on key milestones that occur through the project, beginning with initial design. Reflection and feedback on data is critical, as is planning for follow-up activities. CBR staff or faculty can facilitate gatherings, and faculty should help students reflect on what they are learning.

Faculty and CBR staff can consider a variety of strategies to ensure that a Learning Circle achieves desirable ends. For example:

- Provide students with a set of questions that will challenge and stimulate them to think and make connections, compare and contrast, draw out larger principles.
- Spend time debriefing with students, probing to encourage connections.
- Structure events and a time table for participants to engage in structured reflections.
- Focus time on strengthening good listening skills and empathy with others.
- Emphasize the value of refraining from quick conclusions.
- Set aside time to identify and discuss differences and similarities among varying perspectives, understanding the differences.
- Emphasize the need for allocating respect to community voices and perspectives.

Leveraging Diverse Faculty Participation throughout the Research Process
While community partners do provide guidance and indeed act as teachers in the field, strong faculty guidance serves as the glue that helps students complete a project that can significantly impact their learning and their lives. It is usually essential to have a particular faculty member take major responsibility for the endeavor. This person's role includes bringing content expertise, and spending regular meaningful time with the students. For students who are more developed in their own knowledge, guidance on research methodology, creating opportunities for exchange with community members, and management of logistics may be more critical. Faculty members are often in a better position than students to see the larger picture of what is needed to unfold for events to move along. When the students in the poverty study reached a brief low point due to the stress of competing demands, initial lack of response to surveys, and pressures of the timeline, the central faculty member involved in the project was able to draw on experience to provide guidance and calm reassurance.

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[3] The Learning Circle also had benefits for community partners. It engendered a sense of ownership among community members in the initiative. It created greater community understanding of the research process and how it could be leveraged to change policy and practice. Collective understanding became more in-depth and shared across the group.

Just as having a team of students working together is critical, however, giving students the opportunity to learn from various faculty representing different areas of expertise can also enrich projects. A final lesson learned from this project is the importance of this diversity of faculty mentors.

In the Poverty Initiative, Harlan Beckley, the students' professor in poverty studies and Shepherd Program director, was the central mentor. A professor from the Spanish department and ESL program, however, helped students think through issues related to immigrants. A CBR faculty specialist working out of the Shepherd Program provided guidance on the research questions and instruments for collecting data, helped students develop a timeline with important milestones, and provided insight on how to analyze data and design the report. Though not obvious at the time, upon reflection, the value of these various forms of faculty guidance emerged as important.

As a project team is being developed, it is fundamental to CBR to match students with a faculty mentor. Beyond this mentor, our suggestion is to think about other areas of expertise that are needed given the topic and nature of the project, and existing expertise among the students and faculty mentor. While week-to-week assistance may be best provided by a single faculty member, relationships can also be fostered with other faculty who can provide guidance that does not involve a great deal of time. This can be involved in early project planning, and students can be encouraged to seek out guidance from various faculty in an entrepreneurial style.

Conclusion

The Poverty Initiative began with research but eventually developed into a larger initiative involving a community forum and grass roots organizing. Together these coherent and integrated activities are leading to real world change in local policies and structures. While the initial report serves as a continuing touchstone in focusing the community on poverty issues, each step of the way since the report was released has leveraged the steps before it to move forward, and in that process developed new unanticipated progress. The initiative evolved into a holistic process of change that continues as it is being challenged and refined. It is alive while fragile.

The overarching lesson learned from this Initiative is about the wide scope possible through CBR. This story posits CBR as a starting point for a broad ongoing process focused on continuing grass roots transformation.

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Improving the Results of CBR:
Moving Toward Community Impact
Mary Beckman & Naomi Penney

Abstract: Since joining the National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative grant in 2006, the preoccupying concern of the community-based research (CBR) work at Notre Dame's Center for Social Concerns has been to figure out how to evaluate its effects in off-campus communities, and then to better direct our efforts based on what we find. In this essay, we will explain what we have discovered, describe how we are applying it, and suggest how other centers involved with community engagement can support impact-oriented community-based research.

As members of a higher education institution, we are concerned about what our students learn through community-based research (CBR). We believe, however, along with many others, that colleges and universities give too little attention to the contributions that students, and campuses generally, make to real world improvements beyond the campus (e.g., Bailis & Granger, 2006; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Sandy, 2007; Stoecker, Beckman, & Min, in press). The Center for Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame, where we work, already gives considerable resources to understanding and improving student learning and other student outcomes (Bowman, Brandenberger, Mick, & Toms Smedley, manuscript submitted for publication; Bowman, Brandenberger, Hill, Lapsley, & Quaranto, 2010; Bowman & Brandenberger, manuscript submitted for publication). More recently, we have chosen to give greater attention to examination of our work's contributions to communities beyond campus. A central focus of our CBR efforts, then, is to contribute in measurable ways to positive social change.

While comments from those engaged in CBR in our area have suggested that CBR is indeed associated with positive effects, we have struggled to find a good way to acquire solid evidence of this. We chose to submit a proposal to become a subgrantee of the National CBR Networking Initiative, in part, because we hoped that the colleagues we would meet through this grant would help us to figure out how to evaluate the results of CBR in our area. Since that time, we have been able to explore this concern with others in positions similar to our own; we have found a good deal of interest in this line of questioning. Informal conversations have been helpful for brainstorming. Beyond these, unfortunately, though not surprisingly (Stoecker, et al., in press), we did not find much help in the related literatures.

It seemed to us, in any case, that merely documenting results was a useful start, and in 2008, our three-person CBR team—Beckman, Penney, and, at that time, Long—undertook an effort to do just that. We developed a small study in which Naomi Penney, with some assistance from Joyce Long, interviewed 11

faculty members and 11 community partners who had received CBR mini-grants from the Center over several years.

We began the CBR grant-making program in spring of 2003. At that time, we gave one $5000 grant to a team of faculty, community and student partners to do research requested by the community partner. The following year we gave two grants, and since then, we have given three each year. Several years ago, we increased the amount to $7000. A local entrepreneur and former Notre Dame sociology faculty member, Rod Ganey, provides the funding for our grants. Each year, a review committee comprised of off-campus community members and Notre Dame faculty, graduate students, undergraduates and Center for Social Concerns staff, choose the recipients of the funds.

We used part of a framework laid out by Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker & Donohue (2003) to explore ways individuals and organizations were affected through the research. For example, we wanted to know if respondents thought that the skills of staff members at partnering organizations had been enhanced, and if overall organizational capacity had been increased. Thus, Penney and Long asked those interviewed to tell them how they believed individuals working in or being served by their partnering organizations, or members of a partnering group, were affected by the research, as well as how, in their estimation, involved organizations were affected (Penney & Long, 2008).

At the same time that this somewhat informal investigation was going on, Mary Beckman and University of Wisconsin colleague Randy Stoecker were wrestling with a similar question. They were asking not only how we might document and evaluate the products of CBR, but more to the ultimate aim of our Center's CBR initiatives, how we might design projects so as to enhance the chances that substantial positive change would occur in our communities out of the research. The result of these conversations is what Stoecker and Beckman (2010) have been calling a "community impact framework."

Community Impact Framework: From Outputs to Outcomes to Impact

Much CBR work focuses on the short run, often as short as a semester. Although it aims to respond to research needs beyond campus, it is often driven by the individual faculty member, and ends when his or her agenda, course, or project ends.

The framework Stoecker and Beckman posit begins with a more collective approach; some group would be involved from the start, whose members had a stake in the research and could move results forward. That group would set a long term, large goal—such as improvement in public school education—and strategies for reaching that goal. CBR would be one of the strategies for reaching that goal over time; rather than an end in itself, it would fit into a larger vision of work within a long-term view. We can think of this goal and strategy setting as one element of the community impact framework.

The initial group would identify ways of building regular evaluation into the work over time, as well as revisions of the strategies in light of what is learned through evaluation, to assure that progress is being made toward the large goal. This evaluation and revision effort makes up a second element of the framework.

A third element of the framework is assuring that the "right" people are at the table throughout the process to insure that the best information is obtained, the results get to the people who need them, action is taken toward the large goal, and so on. Stoecker and Beckman (2010) hypothesize that CBR

contextualized in such a framework would be more likely to support community development, which is for them the ideal aim of the work, than the individually designed, short term, CBR projects that seem to dominate the terrain.[4]

At Notre Dame we have used the results of our small study of past recipients of CBR mini-grants as well as this community impact framework to rethink our work. What follows is our discussion of that reconsideration in three areas. First, we will describe how we have altered our grant-making strategies. Second, we will offer some explanation for why we think one mini-grant funded project might have been more productive if the community impact framework had been used. And third, we will indicate how a collaborative from which CBR is emerging might apply the framework as it moves into the future. In conclusion, we reflect on a few challenges and possibilities for supporting CBR toward community development.

Mini-Grant Program Revision

As a first response to what we learned in our investigation of previous mini-grant recipients, we revised our mini-grant application process. We now ask applicants, who are required to be in the form of teams of faculty, community partners, and students, to address three questions: how do they believe the proposed research will affect their organization or group, how do they think it can be tied to an improvement in the social issue about which the research is focused, and, finally, how do they think the research could be linked to improvement in the geographic community in which the research is being done.

For example, one mini-grant application proposed research to assess the factors that have led individuals in jail to commit the violent crimes for which they were sentenced. In the revised application, we would also ask how the community partners, that is, the prisoner re-entry programs that sought the research, intend to use the information to further their organizational missions. And, even further, we want to know how the researchers see this outcome—the change in their organizations' activities on the basis of the research—as leading to a reduction in crime, and even to an overall betterment in our community.

Ultimately, this "overall betterment" is the community development Stoecker and Beckman see as the ideal aim of the work developed out of the community impact framework. Ideally, this betterment would be what is meant by community impact. But to be practical, this big notion of community development should be broken into parts. These parts can be identified as outputs, outcomes and impact.

In this way of defining terms, output refers to the shortest term, immediate product of the CBR, most likely and simply the research report. The outcome is the medium term programmatic change, something that can be accomplished because of the output. In the example given above, this would be an improvement in an ex-offender re-entry program that is developed on the basis of the research findings. Finally, instead of holding out for measurable improvement in community well being as a

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[4] For more information about this framework, complete with a diagram to depict it, see Stoecker et al. (in press), and Stoecker & Beckman (2010).

whole, we will refer to impact as the effect of the research on the large issue or goal within the given discussion. So in this example, this bigger issue might be crime. Therefore, if the research leads to programmatic changes in the re-entry programs that can be tied to a reduction in crime, we would say impact has been attained.

Put another way, assuming the use of the community impact framework which starts with a large goal, if the large goal of the group that eventually engendered the CBR was a reduction in crime, and if the research report (output) did lead to programmatic changes (outcomes) that were tied to reduction of crime, we would say that community impact (reduction in crime) had been attained. We might assume that this reduction of crime would imply community development, that is, an improvement in overall well being in the local area. But we are not attempting to measure this ultimate impact, only the effect on the large goal or issue to which the research is connected.

Thus, in summary, we now ask mini-grant applicants to consider not only the output they intend to achieve through the CBR efforts they are proposing, but to give some explanation of how that output will be used to reach outcomes, and then to go a step further and discuss how those outcomes could lead to impact. In this way, applicants would connect the research to community impact.

We have used this new approach only for two years; there has not been time, therefore, to determine if this strategy has resulted in more outcomes out of the funded research that could have been expected before we made this new request of applicants. And certainly, enough time has not passed for any determination of impact. We have developed, however, a feedback form that we will use for the first time this year to revisit these issues with previous grant recipients. We will obtain information from the teams after each project's first year of research, and each year following until funded projects have reached completion in the eyes of the original partners. In this way, we hope to continue to urge recipients to think of the long run, as well as document how the projects have progressed over time.

Also, we have designed workshops for those applying for our mini-grants, in particular to address two concerns that arose from our small study: understanding the partnership and how partners should act as a team, and identifying outcomes and impact. We found in our study that in some cases the community partner did not have a meaningful role. In these cases, the faculty member of the team led the effort and the community partner went along for the ride, so to speak. In other cases, the faculty member simply signed his or her name on the application, but was not involved actively. We wanted, therefore, to discuss with applicants the collaborative nature of CBR—the valuing of multiple forms of expertise, the need to incorporate a variety of voices, and, generally, participation—in hopes that doing so would improve the applications we received in relation to the collaboration.

Second, again following the community impact framework, we discuss with workshop attendees the importance of locating the proposed CBR within a long-term trajectory. We explain the necessity that they include in their proposal comments on expected outcomes, defined by Stoecker and Beckman as the organizational or programmatic medium term changes that would result from the research. And we describe the importance also of including comments on the connection they see between the outcomes they hope for from the research and broader improvements in the big issue on which the research focuses and/or on our geographic area, that is, the impact.

The ideal for us would be that the attendees at the workshops are teams of faculty and community partners, perhaps with students, that have formed already to discuss the idea of applying for a mini-

grant. So far, however, we have had attendance mostly from community partners interested in exploring the possibility of applying for a mini-grant. A few faculty members and graduate students have also attended, and a few already developed teams. But generally, it is the community collaborators that have responded to our invitation.

Where the Community Impact Framework Might Have Improved Outcomes:
The Reducing Obesity Coalition

In our efforts to think further about the value of the community impact framework, we reflected on how one particular mini-grant funded project on reducing obesity might have better moved its work toward impact, if the community impact framework had been used from its conception. A three-person subgroup from the local Reducing Obesity Coalition (ROC) decided to investigate people's access to fresh produce on South Bend's largely Latino, relatively low income west side. The subgroup members thought that if they could show that people lacked access to produce and would buy it if they had access to it, they could use this information to pressure local officials and others to find ways of making the produce available. They applied for a mini-grant, received it, and began the project. ROC supported this endeavor and it was thought by some ROC members that ROC would be involved, after the research phase, in pushing for changes needed to get produce to the west side.

This project was successful in that, in addition to an output (the research report) the research led to outcomes. Among those, the research results provided inspiration for nutrition classes in the area, and a temporary community garden. After reviewing the team's efforts, however, we indeed came to believe the study might have taken a better direction if ROC had followed the community impact framework.

At its start, the expressed aim of ROC was to "'promote healthy lifestyles for residents … through a county-wide collaboration…" (Beckman, Cockburn, & Penney, manuscript submitted for publication). This goal is vague, and ROC had "set no measurable goal, and…no coherent set of strategies for fulfilling the vision over time" (Ibid.) While the mini-grant funded project did fit the coalition's general aim, the choice of pursuing the particular study of people's access to produce had been made arbitrarily. This CBR effort had no relationship to any "systematic, thought-out pursuit of a long-term goal" (Ibid.). This seemed to have some serious implications:

> ROC could not consider how any specific project would work with other projects….If it had a well-articulated goal, it might have been obvious that there needed to be data available on obesity locally in order to determine if obesity improved. Possibly more critical than the original food availability grant would have been a grant to collect BMI [body-mass index] data from the school system in order to establish baseline obesity data. Even prior to this, the coalition might have sought to determine how obesity would be measured, as well as other outcomes associated with obesity, such as sedentary behaviors. (Ibid)

Furthermore, after the findings were submitted, the anticipated action of finding ways to get more food to west side markets did not ensue. The main reason was that, while the research showed that indeed there was a lack of fresh produce, results did not support the hypothesis that people would buy the produce if they had access to it. Thus, there was no impetus to seek ways to get more produce into the relevant neighborhoods. We believe that if ROC had made provisions for ongoing evaluation and revision of direction toward a goal when they began the work, as the community impact framework urges, movement toward community improvement would not have stalled at this juncture. ROC

members would have regrouped and found a way to move forward with their concern about access to produce.

The Education Collaborative: Next Steps

The Education Collaborative Group (ECG) provides examples of fruitful CBR efforts, and yet its work, we believe, could be strengthened through use of the community impact framework. This collaborative is made up of local public school principals, and Notre Dame staff and faculty from diverse disciplines. Its initial function was as a support and problem-solving group around common issues of concern in the schools. But very quickly—actually, at the very first gathering—CBR opportunities began to emerge. One new CBR course has been developed as a result of the engagement within this group. Another course, which received a course development grant with funds from the CBR Networking Initiative, has been revised to incorporate CBR. Two serious research efforts have developed out of the group, one focusing on parental involvement and the other pertaining to the mobility of students from school to school.

The parental involvement study, the more developed of the two projects and the one offering a longer term look at effects, began out of a discussion during a meeting of the collaborative. One of the principals mentioned her teachers' strong sense that parents were not involved with their children's schooling, while the parents seemed to think that they were involved. Where was the disconnect? Other principals attending the gathering chimed in that difficulties with parent involvement were serious challenges at their schools. Two faculty members expressed interest in working with the first principal to investigate the situation. One then revised his course to incorporate CBR; he and a second professor continued what the students, in collaboration with the original principal, had begun, drawing additional students in each semester.

This, like the obesity effort, is a project that moved from outputs to outcomes. The research—a series of interventions designed to determine how parents might interact beneficially for their children's learning—led to workshops with parents, initially conducted in two schools. The researchers received three local grants and ultimately the support of the school system to extend the workshops to 11 schools. Their study had shown that parental involvement would improve through these workshops, leading to improvements in children's performance (Beckman & Long, in press).

The community impact framework suggests that this project has not yet gotten to impact. No large goal that could have guided the work toward a larger effect was set in motion in the early work of the ECG. There was no planned trajectory toward long term school improvement. But there has been talk among some of the members of the ECG about the possibility of taking up the framework at this point. This would entail first, most likely, reassessing the diversity of voices in the group. The group does not include parents, for example; parent voices might be key in reaching impact. Using the framework would also involve setting a larger goal, and then designing research—and even service-learning, or service, generally—to help reach the goal. It would include placing priority on revisiting the goal over time, and redirecting efforts if they were moving off-track. The ECG offers an opportunity to take what is already good CBR and good outcomes further toward impact.

Moving Forward with Impact: Challenges & Possibilities

We believe we have found an approach toward CBR that enhances the possibility that it will move research toward community impact. There are, of course, challenges to be addressed as we move in this

direction. It is easiest for faculty members interested in engaging students in CBR to start with their own interests. Professors have particular areas of expertise and want to teach courses out of that expertise. It is unlikely that faculty members will want to take the initiative to develop coalitions like the education collaborative or ROC into which they then might fit their student CBR projects. Even if they have the interest and know-how to develop coalitions, they would be unlikely to find incentives through their institutions for the allocation of time it would take them to do so.

Another challenge is the historical emphasis in engaged learning to focus on benefits to students, and not on effects in communities. Land grant schools, or religiously affiliated schools whose missions urge teaching toward social justice, indeed have some rationale for addressing off-campus needs. But even in these cases, directing higher education resources to community impact can be an uphill effort, often viewed as "mission creep."

On the more optimistic side, however, centers like the Center for Social Concerns can play a role in moving institutions toward this type of action orientation. We have described in this paper several approaches we are attempting toward this end. First, our adjustments to our mini-grant application process urge campus and community partners to think about long term community change, and gear their efforts in this direction. Because we will be tracking efforts we fund, we will be able to continue to modify our approach so as to better support this possibility. As we do this, we are raising awareness about a way that work might be coordinated between campus and communities toward social improvement. We are also educating about the value of the inclusion of multiple voices in the process.

Second, centers can take the initiative to create or otherwise help maintain coalitions. A number of years ago, the Center for Social Concerns, with two colleagues, one on and one off campus, called together about thirty organizations for a meeting that constituted the beginnings of ROC. Similarly, the Center was key in initiating the ECG, and has been a regular participant ever since, alternating with two other units (Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters and the local Robinson Community Learning Center) to select and pay a facilitator for the collaborative. Thus, it has been possible to play a role in moving the work of such groups toward longer term impact.

It is also possible for Centers like ours to direct faculty members to these kinds of broader efforts, so that the research projects they guide their students in doing will help move action toward a long term goal. Even if a faculty member's student research only lasts for one semester, the student will be contributing to a larger research agenda, and the faculty member, if involving students in subsequent semesters, can reconnect with the earlier project.

Centers like the Center for Social Concerns can likewise help support the work of existing coalitions that focus on the longer term, by directing resources from various disciplines to projects emerging from those coalition efforts. If a particular effort needs ethnographic work, for instance, and an anthropologist and his or her students have not yet been involved, our Center—and others like it—can attempt to bring those skills and students into the mix.

Among those involved in service-learning and engaged scholarship, there has been for many years now concern that there be mutuality between campus and community partners. These days, there seems to be a widespread desire to know that this work is, in fact, leading to real improvements in our communities, as well as in the development of our students. Tools for assessing the contributions of CBR to community development are being sought by practitioners generally. We believe that the community

impact framework can move this discussion forward, not through the creation and use of assessment tools for individual projects, but rather through an overarching framework into which CBR and other college and university contributions can fit. We will continue to experiment with this framework in our efforts at the Center for Social Concerns.

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