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The Australian Consortium on Higher Education,
Community Engagement and Social Responsibility

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and Research Centre

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Overview

The purpose of this paper is to begin a discussion regarding some core conceptual and theoretical tools that will inform the research agenda of the Australian Consortium on Higher Education, Community Engagement, and Social Responsibility (henceforth ‘The Australian Consortium’). Although we have taken particular approaches and articulated particular assumptions regarding community engagement, this is not intended to limit discussion to one particular way of describing or practising community engagement. During this phase of the project we are interested in developing an intertextual spectrum of ideas and representations of community engagement which draws on a range of voices from a range of university, government, and community contexts. We propose that these discussions will then become a resource both for this project and in general via the Australian Consortium website and emerging Consortium publications in academic and non academic media.

This paper is in five parts. The first provides an overview of the concept of community engagement based on current activities in universities and other large organisations. The second provides an overview of current organisational and policy contexts for university-community engagement activities. The third begins a conceptual-theoretical mapping of community engagement in universities including, and in particular, an exploration of the university as being situated within a community of ‘concentric circles’, including local, state, national, and international communities; the “networked” university; higher education as social practice; and sustainability and social responsibility in engagement. The fourth section outlines a number of political challenges facing those who seek to practice community engagement, including the potential for community engagement practices to privilege certain voices over others. The fifth section invites detailed feedback on the ideas presented in this paper, including a call for contributions in the form of Australian Consortium discussion papers.

Community engagement

In Australia, and internationally, there has been a significant and growing amount of interest and activity in a range of teaching, research, and service practices commonly referred to as “community engagement”. While these practices of community engagement are, within the university context at least, closely informed by ongoing debates regarding the civic responsibilities of universities (see Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1998; Boulding, 1967; Crittenden, 1997; Meland, 1943; Sunderland and Woodley, 2003; Watson, 2003), there are some distinct flavours that emerge in community engagement discourse. Of note in particular are discourses around social capital, third way policy, participation in policy processes, sustainability, community partnerships and networks, community and economic development, and regional engagement.

The links between the community engagement “movement” and broader trends in social and economic policy cannot be ignored. Shrinking public funding of universities and increasing reliance on competitive research grant schemes over the past three decades have been combined with a renewed push for teaching, research, and service activities to be more “responsive” to the needs of industry and communities (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999, p. 18). Since the Dawkins reforms of the late 1980s in particular, the overall contribution of universities to Australian society has been increasingly measured in terms of national economic growth, economic competitiveness, education exports, and the degree to which a university education prepares skilled labour for a global “knowledge economy” (see Group of Eight, 2000; Kameoka, 1996; Marginson, 1990, p. 22; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry, 1997, p. 81).

With the community engagement “movement” we have seen a renewed interest in the role of the university as an agent of community and regional [re]development (see Garlick, 2000). Indeed, the prescription that a university should be networked not only to “industry” but also to communities at the local, state, national, and international levels appears to have already gained primacy in higher education policy over traditional conceptions of academic freedom and the university as a province in and of itself. The push for universities to engage with, and

be directly responsive to, communities at the local, state, national and international levels has had varying responses from universities and the academy to date. Community engagement has the potential to be controversial precisely because it appears to be at once more specific, prescriptive, and immediate than traditional calls for universities to practice a generic ‘civic responsibility’ (Sunderland and Woodley, 2003). Moreover, as both method and methodology, community engagement can be seen to be heavily consistent with certain social and economic policy trajectories such as increasing focus on community-government-industry “partnerships”; economic rationalism or neo-liberal economics; the downsizing of public institutions and funding in favour of increasing industry and community funding sources; the move toward community based (as opposed to state based) “grass roots” service delivery and community renewal; and the assumption that knowledge and learning must always be “applied” or “commercialised” if they are to be of “value”.

The now much discussed shift from so-called “Mode 1” (pure, disciplinary, homogenous, expert-led, supply-driven, hierarchical, peer-reviewed and almost exclusively university-based), to “Mode 2” (applied, problem-centred, transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, hybrid, demand-driven, entrepreneurial, network-embedded) models of knowledge creation in universities is also an emerging feature of higher education discourse in Australia (see Gibbons et al, 1994; Watson, 2003, p. 3). The Mode 1 and Mode 2 description provided by Gibbons et al (1994) is relevant to our discussion of community engagement because it describes a shift away from university-based scientific research models toward broader participation in, and different ways of doing, research, knowledge creation, and knowledge dissemination. In Gibbons’ (2001) words,

Mode 1 problems are set and solved in a context governed by the largely academic interests of a specific community. By contrast, Mode 2 knowledge is carried out in a context of application. Mode 1 is disciplinary while Mode 2 is transdisciplinary. Mode 1 is characterised by homogeneity, Mode 2 by heterogeneity. Organisationally, Mode 1 is hierarchical and tends to preserve its form, while Mode 2 is more heterarchical and transient. Each employs a different type of quality control. In comparison with Mode 1, Mode 2 is more socially accountable and reflexive. It includes a wider, more temporary and heterogeneous set of practitioners, collaborating on a problem defined in a specific and localized context. (Gibbons, 2001, np)

While we acknowledge the shift between Mode 1 and Mode 2 models of knowledge creation as being significant to our current focus on community engagement and higher education – and indeed as being produced and reproduced by practitioners in areas such as community based research and engaged teaching and learning – we do not see the two modes as being mutually exclusive in contemporary Australian universities. Indeed, we note that any particular researcher may, more accurately, move in and out of the two different modes quite easily and frequently within the space of his or her career or, indeed, within the space of a single working week. We do not place a particular weighting on either Mode 1 or Mode 2 styles of interaction and knowledge creation. We note, rather, that each “mode” has its own range of challenges, limitations, and potential benefits that may or may not be of benefit to universities, communities, and the broader society. We posit, further, that the two modes will each have potential significance for practices and studies of higher education, community engagement, and social responsibility in the context of this project.

Defining community engagement

Community engagement is a term that is currently both in flux and in fashion. Our initial literature and policy review has thrown up many claims on what community engagement is and involves – some old and some new. We note that, in some cases, pre-existing practices such as community participation, community consultation, community development, and public relations have simply been re-badged as community engagement. This shift in terminology may or may not have precipitated substantial change in the ways of seeing, being, and acting associated with these pre-existing practices¹, yet, the degree to which the term community engagement is being used is still significant as a measure of diffusion – and perhaps confusion – relating to our topic area.

Our first point to note in defining community engagement is that different practitioners and advocates of community engagement advance different definitions and interpretations of their contexts, processes, frameworks and strategies - many of them permissible, but none

¹ While the degree to which this has occurred is not the core focus of this research project, this is perhaps a fruitful area for ethnographic study and discussion in one of the forthcoming Australian Consortium policy and practice papers.

completely definitive. There are several predominant “visions” of the way that a university engages with community in the literature. A primary difference between the various understandings or approaches is the degree of “engagement saturation” in a university: that is, the degree to which community engagement features as a core activity across all areas of the university or institution (see The University of Queensland, 1995). There are also differences in the extent to which community engagement is seen as something that needs to be actively designed and fostered, and the extent to which it is seen as something that “just happens anyway” in all aspects of university life.

The first vision of community engagement we have identified frames community engagement as an **irreducible and unavoidable element of existing university activities**. This conceptualisation of community engagement assumes that all research and teaching ultimately involves engagement with the community, whether it be direct or indirect and whether the impact is social, economic or cultural (The University of Queensland, 1995). This category can include, for example, teaching and research activities, programs to promote more equitable access to existing university programs, an active alumni program, or student services. Scholarly publications, research reports, media coverage, and public forums are also a mode of engaging with communities that would be seen as a natural extension of the core work of universities in teaching and research. The article about Pandanus Books included over page is an example of how a longstanding university practice such as writing and publishing books can constitute university-community engagement.

Pandanus Books: reaching out to the community By Robert Hefner

Like the genus of plants from which it takes its name, Pandanus Books, a new publishing imprint based at The Australian National University, ranges broadly across the diverse cultures and nations of Asia and the Pacific, and if its early success is any indication, it may soon prove to be even more cosmopolitan than its namesake.

A natural outgrowth of the innovative publishing program in the ANU's Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, in its first year Pandanus produced a variety of books for the general market, including Keiko Tamura's *Michi's Memories: The Story of a Japanese War Bride*, and *Taim Bilong Misis Bilong Armi: Memories of Wives of Australian Servicemen in Papua New Guinea, 1951-1975*, compiled by Stephanie Lloyd, Marlana Jeffery and Jenny Hearn, *Coup: Reflections on the Political Crisis in Fiji*, edited by Brij V. Lal and Michael Pretes, *The Bird Fancier: A Journey to Peking*, the autobiography of Alastair Morrison, and Brij V. Lal's *Mr Tulsi's Store: A Fijian Journey*.

'The publishing program started off slowly,' said Dr Tryon, 'but has exceeded our hopes. Some people were suspicious of the idea when we started, but the proof is in the tasting. People have seen what can be produced, how good the publications look, and how engaging they are.'

The guiding force behind Pandanus Books is Ian Templeman, well known for his ground-breaking work at Fremantle Arts Centre Press in the 1970s, and later at the National Library of Australia in Canberra, where during the late 1980s and 1990s he instigated a broad public outreach program including exhibitions and publishing.

Templeman joined the RSPAS staff in late 1999 after having done some consulting work for the School. The idea was to revamp its entire publishing program, which was then decentralised in eight or nine smaller publishing units within the School.

'One of our biggest needs was to make ourselves known and more involved with the Canberra community,' Dr Tryon said. 'As a School we were fairly well known overseas, but even so, the response to the *Quarterly Bulletin* has been marvellous. We've had feedback from some amazing places. The Bulletin tells our story in an engaging way.'

'It's like ripples in a pond,' said Templeman. 'Little RSPAS ripples in all directions, not just one way, and we think that's the way to operate in publishing. The feedback on the *Quarterly Bulletin* has been from all kinds of places: China, Japan, America, the Pacific, PNG, New Zealand, Europe. We've heard from people who want to come here to study, people who want to come here to teach or research, and people who are simply interested in what we're doing at the School. By using the tool of the *Quarterly Bulletin*, we now reach a very diverse audience in Asian and Pacific studies. In 2002, 12,000 copies of the *Quarterly Bulletin* will be mailed out to a worldwide readership.'

'Our publishing list is not at all to be seen as an exclusively scholarly one, although we do of course publish scholarly volumes. The list is really catholic in its taste. It is taking people from inside the School and from outside the School, and stories that relate to the geographical or disciplinary interests of the School.'

'I would like to think that our publications are reaching out into the community. We're currently involved in publishing four works of fiction centred in the Asia-Pacific region. As well as John Donnelly's Indonesian-based magic-realist novel, *Magic Garage*, later in the year we'll be publishing *Forever in Paradise*, the first novel of Samoan writer Apelu Tielu, and *Geckoes and Moths*, Patricia Johnson's novel set in Papua New Guinea in the late 1960s.

In March of this year Pandanus Books received accreditation from the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, granting recognition as an editorially independent, commercially viable publisher. This is significant for Australian scholars published by Pandanus Books, as it determines their publications will be credited to their academic institutions, an important funding incentive.

This article appeared originally in the 9 June 2001 issue of Panorama, the Saturday magazine of *The Canberra Times*. See <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/qb/articles/articleFile.php?searchterm=3-1-5> for the full article.

The distinguishing feature of this first vision of engagement in universities is that it does not require or presuppose a radical shift in the core functions and activities of universities. It is assumed, rather, that universities are *always already* (Introna, 2001) engaging with communities in various ways. To the extent that education is a fundamentally social and relational practice that is embedded in communities, we agree with this view. We note, however, that although at least some form of engagement is inevitable in contemporary contexts of research, teaching, and service, the degree to which social responsibility in engagement is consciously perceived and actively nurtured will vary considerably. Although we can see some forms of engagement in this category (such as the teacher-student relationship, alumni, and equity programs) as a natural extension or element of the university's traditional engagement activities in teaching, research, and service, there are now calls for other forms of community engagement that require significant shifts in the university's traditional roles and activities.

Ongoing imperatives to pursue industry oriented "strategic basic research", "applied research", and "commercialisation" agendas, for example, have already significantly transformed the nature of academic work and, in particular, the extent and nature of internal-external relations in Australian universities. As outlined above, with so-called "Mode 2" models of knowledge creation and diffusion there is not only an increasing diversity in the location of research activities, but also 'an increasing focus on interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research; an increasing focus on problems, rather than techniques; greater emphasis on collaborative work and communication; and greater emphasis on more diverse and informal modes of communication' (Houghton, Steele, and Henty, 2003, p. x). These shifts in the nature and purposes of academic work have already substantially changed the ways that academics and other university staff members engage with external others. Current calls for academics to develop or enhance community engagement practices such as "engaged teaching and learning" (through, for example, service learning programs) and community service, increases the pressure on academics to be responsive to external needs and interests, but this time ostensibly with the aim of producing direct social and cultural (as opposed to only economic) outcomes.

The second vision of community engagement sees community engagement as **a separate and predominantly voluntary activity** for academics, in much the same way that “service” is currently viewed in Australian universities (The University of Queensland, 1995). Service, as opposed to engagement, is the traditional category of community oriented activities in universities (The University of Queensland, 1995). “Service” in this sense can include professional service, university service and civic or community service. Service, along with teaching and research, is currently a key performance indicator for selection and promotion in Australian universities. Numerous studies have indicated, though, that service – in particular the sub-category of community service – is regarded as the inferior of the three performance areas (see Burton, 1998; Menges & Exum, 1983; McAuley, 1987; Sunderland and Woodley, 2003; Wilson & Byrne, 1987). A common example of separate community service oriented activities in Australian universities is the community health, law, or dental clinic run by students and staff of a university (see for example the Bond University Law School below).

Bond University provides free legal advice for community members

‘As a part of its involvement in the local community, Bond University Law School administers a free legal advice centre for members of the public. This service is provided voluntarily by students and members of the faculty, in conjunction with members of the Gold Coast Law Association. Students conduct initial interviews with clients and then discuss the case with a qualified solicitor who gives legal advice to the client in the presence of the student. As well as providing an important community service, this enables students to gain valuable experience in dealing with clients and applying the knowledge and skills obtained during their studies at the Law School. Students are able to meet and work with experienced practitioners in a professional environment. The Law School has a strong commitment to professional and skills training of students. At the Centre, practitioners are able to contribute to the development of essential professional skills in students. All student volunteers are also required to complete basic interviewing training in the Law School before participating at the Centre’. (see <http://www.bond.edu.au/law/comact/>)

A third vision of community engagement is referred to as the “engaged university”. This approach regards **community engagement and service as a central overriding goal of higher education**, arguing that it should be embedded within all teaching, learning and research functions. This vision of community engagement requires complete saturation across all structures, policies, priorities, and so on: Community engagement is not regarded as a mere by-product or beneficial extra, and it is not relegated to a separate range of identifiable activities. Advocates of the engaged university argue that community service and engagement should be embraced and promoted as a means of improving the quality and relevance of teaching, learning and research. The quote below from the University of Western Australia exemplifies to degree to which an “engaged university” takes up community and civic engagement as part of the core business of the university.

The University's primary community service goal is "to build strong relationships with the many Australian and International communities in which it plays an active role (including academic, professional, business, graduate and cultural communities) and believes that community service is an integral component of the University's role". (University of Western Australia, nd, np)

All three visions of community engagement outlined above can fall under the ‘general rubric’ of community engagement in this paper. What stands out perhaps most clearly in each of the visions of community engagement listed above, though, is that each one involves different kinds and levels of power flows and different levels of responsibility between universities and their surrounding communities. Further, each vision of community engagement also assumes different levels of community participation in, and responsibility for, decision making in policy, service, and governance processes in universities, and vice versa. But while each of the three visions of community engagement detail different levels of university-community engagement, and different levels of what we call “engagement saturation”, we note that they are all, in fact, “university-centric” visions of community engagement: i.e. coming from the inside-out perspective. Following Barr (1963), we would like to suggest a fourth vision of **community engagement as friendship** that will potentially overcome this “university-centric” view.

Aristotle describes three types of human friendship that range from simple ‘contact’ to a ‘common understanding of the good’ (in Barr, 1963, p. 303). Barr uses these three types of

human friendship to explain the different ways that universities can engage with their communities. In his words

...there are three distinct types of friendships human beings have for each other. There is first what we Americans call a “contact”, in which you do something for me and I do something for you. Aristotle wisely points out that one catch in this is that we are both keeping score on the side and are inclined to think we are being cheated... The second kind of friendship Aristotle lists is one in which each of us, for some reason, gives the other pleasure. I may find Jones witty. He amuses me, he makes me laugh; and laughter is precious, particularly in a fat and solemn society. Then, Aristotle said, there is a third kind of friendship, and that is when two men [sic] have a common love of the good. (Barr, 1963, p. 303)

Barr argues that a community and a university first and foremost ought to be friends if the relationship is to be a fruitful one. We note that the first type of Aristotelian friendship cited above often characterises contemporary “partnership” arrangements between universities, industry organisations and community groups and organisations. We note also, in consonance with Aristotle, that these arrangements can lead to a contractual “keeping score” mentality that may contravene and subvert traditional values and understandings of community service, community development, civic responsibility, and academic service to society. Following Aristotle, Barr notes that this first kind of friendship is often the quickest to break down because ‘somebody outscores somebody, or somebody thinks this has happened’ (Barr, 1963, p. 303). The same can easily apply to partnership arrangements and collaborative efforts where the cause of antagonism might not only be who is getting the most out of the friendship/partnership, but who is putting the most work into it (and consequently who is not “pulling their weight”).

The second type of friendship can also end easily enough when the friend ceases to be entertaining or ceases to give us pleasure; those who entertained us as the age of 20 might, for example, have moved out of our lives and interests by the time we are 30. Barr gives the typically American example of the university providing pleasure and entertainment to the community by hosting regular football games at the university stadium. Macquarie University’s ‘Culture on Campus’² program which provides community access to museums,

² see <http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/culture/default.asp>

art exhibitions, book launches, concerts, and so on is an Australian example of this second kind of friendship. In contrast to the first two types of friendship, Aristotle argues that the third type of friendship, where the two friends share a common understanding of the good, is the most enduring.

In its simplest terms, the third type of friendship is based on shared values and aspirations between the university and the community. We can see this kind of friendship being actualised in a range of university-community engagement activities that are explicitly geared toward local community [re]development and social justice outcomes. But it might also be seen at a more abstract level in a shared love of learning, knowledge, art, literature, history, the natural environment, and so on. An example of this kind of relationship is detailed over the page in La Trobe University's "Small towns big picture" project. This third type of friendship articulated by Aristotle is perhaps the closest approximation of 'the engaged institution' vision of community engagement detailed above.

The difference between the friendship view and the engaged institution view is obvious in that the friendship view is based on something that both parties share in common, rather than on what one party (the university) does to purposefully try to connect with the other. It is often overlooked in community engagement literature that we can reach out to be "friends" with someone for as long as we like but unless they reach back to us in return we cannot accurately say that a state of "friendship" exists. Moreover, simply reaching out to someone does not ensure that what we find in that someone will result in our sharing value systems, priorities, goals, or histories. In the following section of the paper, we seek to outline more explicitly how community engagement can be viewed as a fundamentally relational practice in order to take into account these dynamics of friendship and the various visions of engagement explored earlier. In particular, we seek to explore the resources of basic social theory on the nature of engagement between persons, and the ethical and political nature of these engagements.

Engagement in action: Small Towns Big Pictures at La Trobe

The Small Towns Big Picture Project coordinated by The Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities at La Trobe University and The Cultural Development Network involved the communities of Dunolly, Carisbrook, Talbot, Wedderburn and Maldon in Central Victoria, Australia. The Project focused on building communities through -

- the creation of local indicators of sustainability;
- enhancement of the triple bottom line framework; and
- engaging community participation through the arts.

Twenty focus groups were held during April 2002. These comprised four different demographic groupings, i.e. young people (high school age), business people, senior members, and a group referred to as the 'volunteers' who were people involved in the community but did not hold official office. The issues raised through the focus groups were synthesized into a theatrical performance by playwright Craig Christie. He attended all 20 focus group meetings, gathering the raw material for the play called Right Where We Are. The title reflects the discovery that the older members of the communities were very happy being right where they are, others who had returned for various reasons were staying right where they are, while the young people seemed to feel that nothing was going right where they are.

The Small Towns: Big Picture project provides a valuable demonstration of how the arts can play a central role in building community capacity to respond to change. Essentially, Small Towns: Big Picture is about the development of key indicators of social, environmental and economic sustainability – which are meaningful, validated and used by community to self-evaluate performance

A sub-text to the project is the desire of La Trobe University, Bendigo, to build a genuine partnership with its regional constituents such that the research focus would ultimately be highly collaborative, and therefore directly relevant to the region. Consequently, the indicator development work had to be genuinely embedded in community if it was to achieve the mutually supportive goal of 'real' community benefit and 'genuine' community engagement with the university.

While the development of sustainability indicators is of academic interest to those working in the field of triple bottom line performance evaluation, the research would have been an insignificant blimp in the community's experience if it had not been for the involvement of artists. In contrast to the more typical research model where people are passive participators in a process which provides them with little or no opportunity to really engage, the research findings from Small Towns: Big Picture component have been transformed into a vast array of artworks and creative interpretations involving over 1500 people – an outcome not commonly achieved by social action researchers or even many community arts projects.

This text has been reproduced from information provided by the Small Towns Big Picture Project Group at La Trobe University. See <http://www.bendigo.latrobe.edu.au/smalltowns/Page%202a.htm> for more information

The nature of engagement

In practice, community engagement is a blend of science and art. The science comes from sociology, political science, cultural anthropology, organizational development, psychology, social work, and other disciplines with organizing concepts drawn from the literature on community participation, community mobilization, constituency building, community psychology, cultural influences, and other sources. The art comes from the understanding, skill, and sensitivity that is used to apply and adapt the science in ways that fit the community and the purposes of specific engagement efforts. The results of these efforts may be defined differently and encompass a broad range of possibilities (e.g., coalitions, partnerships, collaborations), but they all fall under the general rubric of community engagement... (Atlanta Center for Disease Control [CDC] Committee on Community Engagement, 1997, np)

Community engagement has been used as a catch-all phrase to describe a continuum of activities ranging from simple “public information provision” and “public relations” to “genuine partnership” and “power sharing” (Sunderland and Woodley, 2003). For the purposes of this paper we assume a particular meaning for the term “engagement”: that is, for one to actually *engage with* an-Other, one must genuinely attempt to appreciate and understand the *particularity* of that Other and respond appropriately to her or him, and vice versa. We argue, further, that those who participate in community engagement activities at the university level must seek to appreciate different ways of knowing and being and be open to multiple modes of engagement and power sharing. If this does not occur, then the process is arguably something other than “engagement” (Sunderland and Woodley, 2003). As the Kellogg Commission (1999) states:

Engagement goes well beyond extension, conventional outreach, and even most conceptions of public service. Inherited concepts [such as these] emphasize a one-way process in which the university transfers its expertise to key constituents. Embedded in the engagement ideal is a commitment to sharing and reciprocity. By engagement the Commission envisions partnerships, two way streets defined by mutual respect among the partners for what each brings to the table. (Kellogg Commission, 1999, p. vii)

Burkett’s (2001) conception of “community” as a dynamic and fundamentally relational process (rather than a thing) is particularly relevant to the view of community engagement we are seeking to establish. In her words:

Community has...been interpreted as an end in and of itself, something that can be lost which exists externally to the self, which can be ‘created’ or ‘destroyed’ by technology of social ‘progress’...[however] community is not an object which can be ‘lost’ or

‘found’, rather it is an ongoing process (or more precisely, many ongoing processes)... To engage in the building of community, then, becomes an ongoing act of extraordinary creativity in which one comes face to face with the struggle of human relationship, of engaging with an-Other. (Burkett, 2001, p. 237)

In the words of M.P. Follett (1919, p. 576) ‘community is a *creative process*’. Whether recognised or not, universities and other large institutions are an integral part of this creative process. Universities are not separated from “communities” by electric fences or moats – at least not anymore³. The benefit of Burkett and Follett’s descriptions of community as being in a constant and dynamic state of being and becoming is that they encourage us to think of ourselves (even when we are “doing” research, policy making, community engagement, community service, or teaching) as being actively involved in, and simultaneously a creator of, the relationships through which understanding, learning, and knowledge creation occurs and community is created (Sunderland and Woodley, 2003).

A key assumption of this paper is that engagement “happens” in the spaces between persons in the social medium both in the present and over time: That is, in our relationships with others. A second key assumption is that engagement can be both conscious and unconscious: overt and deliberate or unintentional and hidden. Perhaps most significantly, engagement is at once a fundamentally social and educative practice. As Dewey (1922/2001, np) observes, our primary linguistic, aesthetic, moral, and political understandings and orientations are produced, shaped, and reproduced via our engagement with others in various contexts and our embeddedness in the social and physical world. The understandings and orientations we develop by way of our engagements with others can be more and less structured, conscious, or unconscious. Moreover, our learnings from others, and our learned responses *to* others, can quite often be invisible precisely because they are part of the ‘constant give and take of relationships with others’ (Dewey, 1922/2001, np). In Dewey’s words,

While this [the] “unconscious influence of the environment” is so subtle and pervasive that it affects every fibre of character and mind, it may be worth while to specify a few directions in which its effect is most marked. First, the *habits of language*. Fundamental

³ Stringfellow Barr (1963) writes that, the relationship between “town and gown” has historically been a strained one. He cites the fact that ‘[s]ome centuries ago, at Oxford University, this strain used to lead to open warfare between town and gown, in which the two groups baited each other with bow and arrow, and there were some casualties’ (p. 301).

modes of speech, the bulk of the vocabulary, are formed in the ordinary intercourse of life, carried on not as a set means of instruction but as a social necessity. The babe acquires, as we well say, the mother tongue... We rarely recognize the extent in which our conscious estimates of what is worth while and what is not, are due to standards of which we are not conscious at all. But in general it may be said that the things which we take for granted without inquiry or reflection are just the things which determine our conscious thinking and decide our conclusions. And these habitudes which lie below the level of reflection are just those which have been formed in the constant give and take of relationship with others. (Dewey, 1922/2001, electronic source)

Urban-Walker (1998) emphasises the moral and political significance of this daily ‘give and take’ in what she calls ‘the moral medium’ of our relationships with others:

Any particular system of mutual moral accounting is a cultural practice already there that we learn from others. We arrive at any situation of moral assessment with moral concepts, maxims, deliberative strategies, and intuitive convictions shared, even if incompletely, with some others. So too we come with sensibilities, emotional responses, and sense of relevance and seriousness shaped by a history of interactions in some personal and political environment, and by our places in that. By accounting to each other through this moral medium, we acknowledge each other as responsible. At the same time we renew and refine the moral medium itself, keeping it alive as we keep our identities as moral persons afloat within it. (Urban-Walker, 1998, p. 63)

Universities serve a particular role in society to actively and deliberately guide and shape the learnings of their students as future professionals and as future citizens. When a university actively engages with its community, its responsibilities in this area become simultaneously more complex and widespread. The authors of this paper proceed from the assumption that community engagement has the distinct potential to open out university structures and processes to provide incentives and rewards for researchers and community members alike to practice non traditional ways of doing research, teaching, and service. But while we do acknowledge and foreground this potential, we emphasise that community engagement, like any practice, has the potential to cause harm, to breed cynicism, to silence voices, to privilege certain actors, and to marginalise others. We argue that university community engagement practices must be informed and rigorously critiqued not only by members of the academy, but also by practitioners in areas such as community development, social policy, social responsibility, ethics, and social justice. We invite our collaborating researchers and partners to think, write, and speak about how this level of critical responsiveness in engagement might be achieved over the next three years and beyond.

Discussion questions

1. Do universities need to do more than they already do in terms of pursuing a civic mission?
 2. *Can* universities do more for their civic missions in light of current funding arrangements?
 3. How do universities actualise their civic missions in current climes?
 4. Are current calls for community engagement being fuelled by economic policies that seek to devolve the role of the state in community service provision and community development?
 5. Are universities equipped to enter into communities in a socially critical and responsible way?
 6. How does community engagement relate to traditional calls for universities to contribute to the social, cultural, and intellectual life of a nation?
 7. What is the role, if any, for the liberal arts in fulfilling the intended goals and benefits of community and civic engagement and social responsibility?
 8. What are some of the more or less “invisible” and “everyday” ways that a university engages with its communities?
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Organisational and policy contexts for engagement

Organisational developments

In a speech delivered to The Financial Review Higher Education Summit in March 2003, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) President Professor Deryck Schreuder stated that '[w]e don't need fewer universities: we need universities which are more differentiated in missions and outcomes... We must end the "one size fits all" policy of current DEST' (Schreuder, 2003, p. 1). The AVCC's push for a "diversified" and "internationalised" system of higher education in Australia is one of the most significant policy and organisational trajectories of the current period. Australian universities are being encouraged to "specialise" in particular areas and to target their activities toward particular "audiences", "markets", or communities. While Australia's Group of Eight Universities⁴ (Go8) have defined a core mission to move into international markets of education as "world class" universities (Go8, 2000), others are calling for a diversified system that is responsive to local interests, creativity, and identity. Kemmis *et al.*, argue, for instance, that

[t]he missions of Australian universities are based on one template: the large teaching and research doctoral university. Institutions are structured by the regulated national market rather than by interactions with their clients and communities, stifling the potential for strong local identity and the determination to do it differently. (Kemmis *et al.*, 1999)

The move toward diversified corporate "missions" and structures in universities is notable in itself because it centralises and channels academic endeavour into particular areas and toward particular targets and "outcomes". Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) observe that over the past three decades Australian universities have adopted organisational management strategies and structures that are akin with governments' separation of policy making and advice from actual

⁴ The Group of Eight (Go8) describes itself as 'a coalition of leading Australian universities'. Membership comprises the Vice-Chancellors of: The University of Adelaide, The Australian National University, The University of Melbourne, Monash University, The University of New South Wales, The University of Queensland, The University of Sydney and The University of Western Australia. The coalition was formed through consensus on the principle that Australia both needs and deserves universities of world class. The Group of Eight universities receive over 70% of national competitive research grants and conduct over 60% of all Australian university research. The Group of Eight secretariat was established in Canberra in June 2000. See <http://www.go8.edu.au/> for more.

service delivery (p. 12). Following McNay (1995), Coaldrake and Stedman describe a number of configurations of universities along axes of ‘organisational control’ and ‘policy control’ (strategic direction):

McNay (1995) has characterised ... a model based on two dimensions of control: policy and organisational. These yield four quadrants: the ‘collegium’, with loose policy and loose organisational control; the ‘bureaucracy’, with tight organisational control but weak policy direction; the ‘corporation’, with tight central control and relatively intrusive policy direction; and the ‘enterprise’, where firm policy directions are set, but organisational control is loosened to allow local organisational areas and individuals freedom to respond to opportunities in line with the overall policy directions of the university. (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999, p. 12)

Coaldrake and Stedman observe that most universities ‘incorporate parts of all four styles in their operations, yet the relative importance of each changes as universities adapt to internal and external pressures’ (p. 12). They note, though, that ‘recent pressures have seen most universities around the world move from a position of loose policy control to one where institutional policy is more firmly determined’ (Davies, 1997, in Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999, p. 12). This means that universities are moving away from positions of collegium (low organisational and policy control) and bureaucracy (high organizational control low policy control) toward positions of “corporation” or “enterprise” (Coaldrake and Stedman, 1999, p. 12).

In addition to the push for increasing diversity between individual university missions, and increasing control over strategic organisational directions, we have also seen a moderate expansion in the sources and sites of revenue raising in Australian Universities and the degree of relative research focus on strategic and applied outcomes. Of the total \$2.77 billion expenditure on research and experimental development in 2000, for example, 62.9% was sourced from General University Funds⁵ with the remainder being sourced from

⁵ ““General university funds” includes grants made by the Commonwealth in accordance with provisions of the Higher Education Funding Act 1988 but excluding grants for Special Research Assistance under provisions in section 23 of that Act; income relating to students’ Higher Education Contribution Scheme liabilities; funding from Commonwealth, State or Local Government agencies but excluding funding provided specifically for research or development work; fees and charges; income from donations, bequests and foundations but excluding income from donations, bequests and foundations which were provided specifically for research purposes; investment income; reversions from provisions accounts, loans drawn down, income from the institutions commercial operations and from sale of products or assets’ (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 36).

Commonwealth Schemes (17.4%), Other Commonwealth Government sources (6.0%), Business enterprise (4.9%), State and Local Government (3.2%), and Overseas Sources (2.2%) (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 6). Of the total \$2.77 billion expenditure \$1.05 billion was expended on Applied Research, a further \$847 million on Pure Basic Research, and \$666 million on Strategic Basic Research. The remaining \$214 million was expended on Experimental Development (Commonwealth of Australia 2003: 7).

So, given the AVCC's current push for further diversification and competition in the Australian higher education system, and the Commonwealth Government's apparent support for this scheme, we can assume that the high level of policy and strategic orientation in university organisations will increase or, at the very least, continue. What this means is a shift away from traditional conditions of organic "academic freedom" toward the centralisation of academic work and purpose in Australian universities. The point to note in terms of engagement is that, if university organisational structures and individual academics' working conditions are increasingly patrolled and controlled by a centralised mission or strategic vision, then, to be successful, the philosophies and methods of community engagement and social responsibility must be ensconced not only in the strategic mission of universities, but also in their partnerships with external others.

If Australian universities do move toward a diversified system where individual universities are free – or indeed required – to pursue specialised, competitive organisational missions and strategic visions, proponents of community engagement in universities will have to rely on Vice Chancellors and policy makers seeing community engagement as either a) a core performance indicator for all universities along with teaching, research, and service; or b) a core component of the strategic vision and mission of at least one or several of Australia's universities. There has been some activity in government and universities of late to suggest that this might be more probable than it seems.

Policy developments

In the period leading up to the Dawkins higher education reforms of the late 1980s, it was generally assumed that higher education provided indirect benefits to the Australian economy

through the knowledge and skills university students acquired through higher education (Marginson, 1990, p. 22). With the Dawkins reforms this assumption was largely replaced – at least in official policy terms – by the government’s intention to “massify” and commodify higher education and make it centrally responsible to government plans for higher economic growth and the needs of the changing labour market (Marginson, 1990, p. 22; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry, 1997, p. 81). This shift in higher education policy toward economic determinism came as part of a wider restructuring of the Australian economy in line with the dominant values and goals of neo-liberalism or what is often referred to in Australia as “economic rationalism” (see Argy, 1995; Pusey 1991; Rees, Rodley, and Stilwell, 1993; Wheelwright, 1993). One of the key changes during this period was that universities and the more vocationally oriented Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) were merged under the one banner of “higher education” based on the assumption that ‘fewer and larger institutions [are a] necessary condition for educational effectiveness and financial efficiency’ (Dawkins, 1998, in Mahony, 1992, p. 226).

The imperative for higher education reform in Australia continued with the 1998 West Review on Higher Education. In their final report titled *Learning for Life*, the West review committee concluded that:

Australia’s universities must transcend local, sectional interests and the historical perception of their role as educators to become major partners in further promoting a world-class education industry that can play an even wider role in deriving the growth of our economy (Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA, 1998, p. 17).

Although the AVCC welcomed the West review as a sign of hope for the future funding of higher education at the time (AVCC, 1997), other members of the academy argued that it provided little deviation from a trend of 'narrow economic concerns' in Australian education policy and practice (Hayward, 1997; Margetson, 1994, p. 8). The West review’s “key requirement” to equip graduates ‘to play a productive role in an outwardly oriented, knowledge-based economy’ and to ‘revolutionise the management processes of universities and the education products that universities provide’ (p. 17, emphasis added) in particular created a sense of disparity between the clearly economic and outwardly oriented motives for change in higher education, and the traditional, civic role of higher education in local and

national communities. While West stated in his foreword that the goal of the review was to develop a system that will 'produce men and women who are fully, lovingly, and confidently human' (DEETYA, 1998, p. 5) there was little by way of policy initiatives to produce this end. Hayward (1997, p. 98) at the time noted the speed with which West switched from the conservative, humanist language cited directly above to that of 'genuine economic rationalism'. Stilwell (1998, p. 7) concurred with this assessment, criticising the reviewers for reproducing economic rationalist claims that 'there is a need for further freeing up of the education sector' and that 'deregulation strategies must prepare the existing institutions for a more competitive environment'.

In the 'Crossroads' discussion paper series of 2002, and the ensuing 2003 '*Backing Australia's Future*' policy document, we have seen a more subtle approach to balancing out the economic, social, and cultural aspects of higher education. The *Crossroads* paper in particular features the following summary of the purposes of higher education in Australia:

The Government sees the purpose of higher education as much greater than preparing students for jobs. It regards higher education as contributing to the fulfilment of human and societal potential, the advancement of knowledge and social and economic progress. The main purposes of Australian higher education are to:

- Inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential;
- Enable individuals to learn throughout their lives (for personal growth and fulfilment, for effective participation in the workforce and for constructive contributions to society);
- Advance knowledge and understanding;
- Aid the application of knowledge and understanding to the benefit of the economy and society;
- Enable individuals to adapt and learn, consistent with the needs of an adaptable knowledge-based economy at local, regional and national levels; and
- Contribute to a democratic, civilised society and promote the tolerance and debate that underpins it. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002, p. 1)

As the above points indicate, the *Crossroads* discussion paper series of 2002 and the ensuing policy paper '*Backing Australia's Future*' of 2003 have marked a significant shift in the presentation of higher education policy in Australia. While higher education is still being offered as a means to achieve economic growth, competitiveness in international markets, and labour market qualification for graduates, there has been a significant acknowledgement (even if the budget allocation to go with it is contingent on workplace reform) by the Commonwealth Government that universities also have local, national, and international social and cultural responsibilities.

The Government has stated that significant developments in university-community engagement and responsiveness are required to secure broader social, economic, and cultural benefits of higher education, particularly in regional areas. The authors of the *Higher Education at the Crossroads* Discussion Paper (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002) make the following claims regarding higher education and community engagement:

Higher education institutions need to be responsive to the social, economic and cultural needs of the communities in which they are located and foster a more active engagement with these communities. The obligation for community engagement is one that rests with all higher education institutions, but regional institutions and campuses clearly have a special responsibility to their communities. Their locations present particular challenges...Universities could become a mechanism for ensuring that Australia's regional communities are not bypassed by the knowledge economy by offering technology and expertise to both community members and businesses to increase competitiveness and sustainability. They can become active in raising the expectations and aspirations of the community and in the upgrading of regional skills. Engagement needs to become an integral part of what the regional university does, not an adjunct to its existing functions. It should be part of the core business, seen as being academically relevant and recognised as an important contribution to the overall role of the university ...Engagement is a two way process. Both parties need to agree on mutual objectives, which may include job generation, business and investment growth and increased participation. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002, p. 32)

The most concrete translation of the sentiments expressed above in the resulting *Backing Australia's Future* policy document is the "Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund" (see Commonwealth of Australia, 2003, p. 39). The initial priorities of the fund are 'collaboration in course provision between two or more institutions; between vocational education and training provider/s and an institution in course provision or an area related to teaching and learning; between universities and their communities, particularly, but not exclusively,

regional communities; and between universities and business / industry/ employers or professional associations' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003, p. 39). A total of \$36.6 million will be allocated to the Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund between 2005 and 2007, which combines \$16.6 million of existing Higher Education Innovation Programme (HEIP) funds with new funds of \$20 million (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003, p. 39).

The notion of “partnership” evident in the Collaboration and Structural Reform Fund is a key feature of community engagement discourse and previous higher education funding mechanisms such as the Cooperative Research Centres⁶ (CRCs), Strategic Partnerships with Industry Research and Training (SPIRT), and the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Projects⁷. As Langworthy notes, the distinctive feature of partnership – as opposed to community service or outreach – is the focus on deriving overt *mutual benefits* from engagement activities (Langworthy, 2003, p. 3). Consonant with Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2000), we note that different ways of describing the community and different modes of engaging with community members, all inscribe particular ways of viewing communities and universities' relationships with them. The partnerships and collaboration based funding scheme for community engagement proposed under the current *Backing Australia's Future* package is no exception.

⁶ 'The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Programme was established to bring together researchers and research users. The programme emphasises the importance of collaborative arrangements to maximise the benefits of research through an enhanced process of utilisation, commercialisation and technology transfer. It also has a strong education component with a focus on producing graduates with skills relevant to industry needs' (see <https://sciencegrants.dest.gov.au/CRC/>).

⁷ 'Linkage—Projects supports collaborative research projects between higher education researchers and industry and identifies an allocation to projects of benefit to regional and rural communities. Proposals must contain an industry contribution. The interaction with actual or potential users of research outcomes is a critical element in Linkage—Projects' (see http://www.arc.gov.au/grant_programs/linkage_projects.htm).

Discussion questions

1. How do formalised partnership and contractual arrangements affect university-community relationships in terms of trust, reciprocity, and friendship?
2. Are community groups and members generally partnership-ready? Are university departments and centres?
3. How many Australian universities are likely to diversify toward explicit civic and community oriented mission statements?
4. Are explicit civic and community mission statements valued by “the community”?
5. To what extent do academics and other university staff members actively pursue organisational goals, priorities, and mission statements?
6. What are the funding sources for community based research and community engagement activities in Australia and abroad?
7. How do collaborative funding schemes affect academic freedom and the pursuit of “knowledge for its own sake” and “building the stock of knowledge of the human and non-human world” in universities and beyond?
8. How does the partnership model’s focus on deriving mutual, tangible benefits for all partners affect traditional social services and academic teaching notions such as gifting, unconditional support, altruism, and an ethic of care?

Exploring the bases of engagement: Conceptual and theoretical frameworks

Much of the literature surrounding community engagement to date has been case study and “application” based with little critical or theoretical attention given to the question of whether or not community engagement is actually an indisputably good thing or how social engagement actually happens in social systems. In this paper we put forward several ways of understanding a university’s embeddedness in society and in particular communities: that is, the way that universities are *always already* (Introna, 2001) engaged in communities. Our interest is not in devoting the Australian Consortium project to one particular framework at this stage but, rather, in exploring a range of theoretical and conceptual resources that can each highlight different aspects of higher education, community engagement, and social responsibility that may not have otherwise been “visible”. We invite our collaborating researchers and partners to do the same.

We argue that if we are to “engage” in a critical and responsible way with emerging practices and philosophies of community engagement, we need to furnish our activities with conceptual, theoretical, and lived understandings of, and reflections on, the social, political, and ethical dynamics of community engagement. We posit that the range of theoretical and conceptual approaches introduced below can provide important understandings of the nature of higher education and its embeddedness toward this end. We begin with the basic observation that universities are simultaneously embedded in communities at various levels of “community” including, for example, at the local, state, national, and international levels. We note also that universities are constituted, perhaps less obviously, by various sub-communities of shared meaning and experience that may or may not be limited to a particular geographical “place”. These include race, gender, age, ethnicity, generation, sexuality, occupation, academic discipline, and so on.

Universities in a 'community of concentric circles'

In 1967 Kenneth Boulding wrote that

[a] university is already an agent and an example of that growing uniform world culture which has been called the "super culture". The super culture is the culture of airports, automobiles and throughways, television stations and newspaper offices, and very minor variations, whether in Detroit, Brussels, Bangkok, Tokyo, or even Moscow, so all universities are in a very real sense the same university... There is no such thing as American chemistry or Russian chemistry, capitalist chemistry, or Buddhist chemistry. There are ninety-two natural elements and hydrogen is the first, no matter what nation the chemistry department happens to be in or in what local culture it is imbedded. (Boulding, 1967, p.477)

Here Boulding draws attention to the university as a participant in, and perpetuator of "super cultures": forms of human knowledge that are – at least technically – constant wherever you go. To the extent that universities are the same across the globe, they are "non-places" (Auge, 1995) akin with airports, highways, or television stations⁸. Boulding cites chemistry as an example of the super culture in which universities participate. Other contemporary examples might include mapping the human genome; or the latest computer programming language; or generic studies of English literature. The point to note is that some core understandings can be "universal" and taken to constitute "truth" or "fact": They form the basis of a shared system of meaning which is produced and reproduced in certain contexts – such as universities – wherever you go.

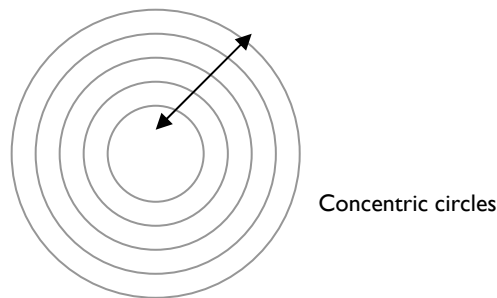
The "universal" knowledges of the super culture are, however, not the only understandings universities are responsible for or ideally responsive to. In addition to universities' involvement in the super culture, Boulding identifies a second and interrelated role for universities as participants in, and respondents to, local "folk cultures". In his words,

A university as an institution is set in a local, not a universal setting. It is supported and financed out of a local culture, not out of the universal culture. It is not surprising, therefore, that constant tension arises between the universality of the university and the

⁸ Auge refers to the airport as an example of a "non place" because of the processes and products you will find and experience in all major airports are to a large degree homogenous. This is despite differences in culture or place. Local differences may be expressed in a number of ways in these airports (through, for example, the food on offer) but other elements of the airport experience will remain constant wherever you go. Hence the idea that you are really in a "non place".

local and particular nature of the culture in which it is set... The super culture does not provide many of the essential elements necessary for the creation of human personality. The production and rearing of children, for instance, is largely in the hands of the folk-culture. What we learn from our mothers and grandmothers is of enormous importance in determining the kind of people we are and the kind of identities we will assume. *The university, therefore, can well be regarded as a focal point of that conflict between the super culture and the folk-culture which is one of the most striking phenomena of our age.* (Boulding 1967, p. 479, emphasis added)

Stringfellow Barr (1963), writing four years earlier, observes a similar relationship between the global and local nature of universities. Barr argues that universities exist in ‘a community of concentric circles’ that incorporates city, state, and country, as well as the global human community referred to as ‘the republic of letters’. Following Aristotle, Barr (1963, p. 301) defines the republic of letters as one that all people belong to because, he argues, ‘all men [sic] desire by nature to know’.



We posit that Barr’s description of the university as existing in a community of concentric circles is significant in discussions on university-community engagement for a number of reasons. First, the idea that a university exists in a community of concentric circles immediately defines the parameters of community engagement as being simultaneously local, state-wide, national, and global. Second, it emphasises that individual participants in the internal university community are also simultaneously members of local, state-wide, national, and international communities. Third, positioning the university as one “circle” that exists within, on top of, or around, other circles emphasises that all of the different levels of both geographical community and communities of meaning are overlapping. Communities at one level can influence and shape, or be shaped by, communities at another level. This

“concentric circles overlapping” view overcomes potential conceptual problems with viewing the super culture and folk cultures as being wholly distinct or separate, which is a potential trap of Boulding’s super culture-folk culture analysis. As Boulding (1967, p. 479) himself notes, ‘even though the pure science of chemistry is universal, chemists may be American chemists or Russian chemists, and this makes a great deal of difference in their behavior [sic]’. In other words, even though a university may participate actively in the super culture, the people who practice super culture disciplines such as chemistry or computer programming are also inexorably embedded in, shaped by, and more and less responsive to contexts of the local.

In observing current trends in higher education policy and public policy more generally, it is clear that both super culture and folk-cultures are significant in shaping what happens in Australian universities and why. The influence of the super culture is, however, perhaps not as clearly defined or limited to “universal knowledges” as Boulding suggests in his 1967 analysis. We argue that current institutional and government policy priorities of internationalisation⁹ and diversification will have a significant impact on which communities in “the concentric circle” university administrators and senior management and staff members focus on, which they feel most responsible to, and which they are most attracted toward participating in, depending on their individual strategic “vision” and objectives. In other words, there are particular communities, networks, and individuals that are seen to be more or less important to the life of particular universities.

Following Marginson and Considine (2000) and Burnheim (2002), we suggest that network analysis is one way to identify not only the external effects of universities, but also to identify which communities, individuals or groups universities are engaging with, in which contexts, and why. For a university that is pursuing a strong bioscience research agenda, for example, governments, pharmaceutical companies, and venture capital firms will be a key focus of

⁹ While some would say that higher education has always been international *as per* the super culture argument, deliberative attempts at “internationalisation” can be seen in, for example, growing aspirations of Australia’s Group of Eight universities to complete for “world class” in an international higher education “market” (see Group of Eight, 2000); The number of formal partnership and contractual agreements between Australian universities and international universities; The number of international full fee paying students; International and visiting staff members; and International focus in curricula.

engagement. For a university that is concerned with internationalisation, international communities or “markets” are a focus of engagement activities. For those universities that have integrated community engagement and regional development into their mission, local and regional communities are a focus of engagement. For many universities, all three levels of community engagement could easily be a priority.

The networked university

The Mode 2 model of knowledge creation outlined at the beginning of this paper emphasises that universities are no longer the primary generators of research and development output in Australia or internationally. Governments are actively encouraging university researchers to participate in research partnerships with government and industry research centres in research collaborations. In high technology areas such as biotechnology and information technology in particular, governments rely on private firms to complete the so-called “virtuous cycle” of product development and commercialisation arising from basic research (Commonwealth of Australia 1998). The concept of an “innovation network” (Oliver and Blakeborough 1998) has emerged as university research centres are being geographically and strategically co-located with industry bodies, manufacturers, and researchers from other fields in research “precincts”, “hubs”, and “technology parks”.

These precincts located in or around universities are an interesting development in that they represent a geographical merging of so-called “vertical” and “horizontal” chains of production into the one geographical space and, arguably, one organisational form. Innovation networks are, however, but one example of the increasing policy and managerial focus on how universities should “reach out” into other social contexts and practices to form collaborative partnerships and, in turn, how other social contexts and practices “reach in” and influence the university. There has been significant work in the fields of technology diffusion studies (Green, 2002; Hauben and Hauben 1997; Takacs and Freiden 1998), actor network theory (Latour, 1987), and discourse and mediation theory (Iedema 1997; Sunderland 2002, 2003) that seeks to map out complex social, political, and material movements between social institutions and their surrounding communities: beyond merely promoting product

development and innovation cycles. One of particular relevance to this paper is the “networked university”.

There are two accounts of the “networked university” that are relevant to this paper. The first is forwarded by Professor Simon Marginson and Dr Mark Considine of Monash University and Catherine Burnheim of RMIT University. Marginson and Considine have augmented previous descriptions of the “Enterprise University” (see Marginson and Considine, 2000) with the addition of internal and external networks:

The Enterprise University needs to be re-theorised as an internally/externally networked system. But here more empirical work is also needed, to inform the process of theorization ... We need to know more about distance learning and global consortia. The technologies of enterprise, such as marketing, community outreach and alumni networks, are the subject of exhortative ‘how to do it’ papers rather than critical sociological work. In fact the external operations of the Enterprise University have been little observed, aside from the labour market returns to individual graduates. Yet recent macro-level work on the relationship between education and social capital in the knowledge economy (OECD 2001) suggests that external enterprise has far-reaching and powerful effects, carried and enhanced by IT-based systems. There is also much scope for studying government/ industry/ community/ university networks at local, regional national and meta-national levels. (Marginson, nd, np)

As part of an ongoing ARC research agenda, Marginson, Considine, and Burnheim argue that examining the networks within which a university operates will provide an avenue for universities to assess their impacts in surrounding communities. A particular focus of Marginson and Burnheim’s work is to map universities’ contribution to social capital which is defined as ‘the networks, together with norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation with or among groups (Healy et al. 2001 in Burnheim, 2002, p. 1). Burnheim (2002) notes that this definition of social capital ‘leads to two strands of investigation’: that is, (i) ‘universities’ formation of and participation in networks which themselves constitute social capital; and (ii) universities’ role in the creation of the “norms, values and understandings” which enable networks to operate’. Following Castells (2000), Burnheim argues that understanding higher education’s place in flows of power through networks is critical to understanding contemporary universities (Burnheim 2002:1).

The second account of the networked university comes from Australian Member of Parliament Mark Latham. Rather than offering a framework for social research in the style of

Marginson, Considine, and Burnheim, Latham (2001) presents the networked university as a prescriptive organisational theory for universities, one that is consistent with Third Way policy. In a speech delivered at a University of Western Sydney conference, Latham asked:

How can education realise its potential for universal lifelong learning during an era of lean government and fiscal consolidation? How can the demand for integrated, multidisciplinary research be reconciled with the need for a more dynamic and portable system of research funding? How can the education system develop customised learning for each of its students while also broadening its horizons to new centres of knowledge creation? How can Australian governments rationalise their responsibilities in education while also dealing with the convergence of learning institutions? (Latham, 2001, p. 8)

According to Latham, the answers to these questions lies in ‘a better way, what some in politics now call the Third Way’: that is, a way that rejects ‘the shortcomings of both markets and hierarchies, and introduces new organisational principles to the delivery of public services’ (Latham, 2001, p. 9). The basis of this Third Way, he argues, is in ‘the organisational theory and practice of networks’ (Latham, 2001, p. 9). Latham argues that the Australian university sector will not be able to achieve its ‘many roles and goals without the benefits of networking’ (Latham, 2001, p. 9). He argues, in consonance with the AVCC, that Australia’s universities will not realise their potential as network organisations without greater freedom and diversification in the sector (Latham, 2001, p. 11).

While network analysis and the concept of the university as a networked organisational structure offer fruitful models for analysing the relationships a university engages in, and the social and material “flows” both into and away from the university to other contexts, these models in and of themselves do not provide an adequate understanding of the nature of the university itself, or the social practice and traditions of higher education more generally¹⁰. The following section is intended to provide a more detailed understanding of the “life” of the university in and of itself based on the notion of higher education as social practice.

Universities in turn are presented as particular, localised *sites* of activity within the broader social practice of higher education under this approach.

¹⁰ We note that in Marginson and Considine’s case the notion of the Enterprise University has been coupled the notion of internal and external networks. Marginson and Considine previously conducted extensive examinations of the structures and processes of universities under their description of “the enterprise university” (see Marginson 1997a, 1997b; Marginson and Considine, 2000).

Higher education as a social practice

Following original work by Isaacs (1998), Langford (1985), and Gilbert (1987), Sunderland and Graham (1998) argue that a social practice framework can provide a way of seeing higher education that emphasises the way that social institutions such as universities are produced and reproduced over time, but also the degree to which these social practices are also “embedded” in historical, social, and physical-ecological contexts. Isaacs identifies six characteristics of social practice that inform this understanding of higher education as a social practice. These are:

1. Social practices are constructed and constituted by persons: they do not just “exist” and they do not arise out of nowhere;
2. Social practices are directed toward an overall purpose;
3. Social practices are shaped by tradition i.e. of what to do within the practice and how to do it (as well as what not to do and how not to do it);
4. Social practices depend on processes of learning and socialisation to recreate themselves: existing members of social practices teach new members (in both formal and informal ways) about what to do, what not to do, what is valued and what is not valued, and so on;
5. Social practices have an institutional dimension which relates closely to the official forms of authority, power, and hierarchy in a given social practice. The aims, means, and purposes of social practices are closely patrolled by persons in positions of formal and informal authority. These persons can operate from within a social practice or from within surrounding practices, such as public policy, regulatory, or funding arenas;
6. Social practices exist as part of a broader, fluid ecology of social and other systems (Isaacs, 1998, pp. 3-9). Social practices themselves are embedded in relationships with other practices, communities, society, and the

physical world. A given social practice is both shaped by, and can shape, its surrounding practices and contexts. In this way we can say that social practices can ‘mediate, and be mediated by’ (Sunderland 2002), other practices, powerful individuals, and so on.

In consonance with Dewey, Isaacs (1998) observes that social practices are produced and reproduced over time via processes of learning and socialisation: New members enter a practice and learn from others about the way things are done and not done, what is important and what is not important, what is desirable, undesirable, and so on. Isaacs highlights in particular the extent to which social practices are created and recreated in certain ways by persons in positions of power and authority and also by informal dynamics of power within the practice itself. Indeed, human interaction in all its forms is shaped by processes of formal and informal processes of learning and socialisation in this way. In Dewey’s words:

The most notable distinction between living and inanimate things is that the former maintain themselves by renewal... Education, in its broadest sense, is the means of this social continuity of life. Every one of the constituent elements of a social group, in a modern city as in a savage tribe, is born immature, helpless, without language, beliefs, ideas, or social standards. Each individual, each unit who is the carrier of the life-experience of his group, in time passes away. Yet the life of the group goes on. Society exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive. (Dewey, 1922, 2001, np)

Dewey’s notion of the renewal of life through transmission effectively captures the dynamic nature of social practices and broader societies. In particular, it emphasises that to become a recognised member of a social practice such as higher education, a person must undergo specific forms of learning and socialisation that may be different from other forms of learning and socialisation they have experienced previously. The knowledge required to participate in a given social practice can range from very specialised and technical knowledge to unrecognised everyday and “common sense” knowledge. A person’s access to the system of meaning and evaluation that demarcates higher education and specific university sites from other areas of social life can be as “routine” as, for example, the basic administrative

knowledge required to operate on a day to day basis within the practice, such as where to park without getting a parking fine, or specialised knowledge of a particular university discipline such as genetics, medicine, engineering, philosophy, and so on.

The point we would like to emphasise here is that engaging with a university – either as a member of that university or as someone from “outside” – is not a simple matter of entering the campus. Engaging with the practice of higher education requires socialisation into – or at least awareness of – the stated and unstated norms, expectations, terminologies, and routines of a particular university site culture, and the practice of higher education more generally. In Cope and Leatherwood’s words,

Colleges and universities, like businesses and public organizations and the geographic regions of the larger society of which they are a part, have distinct and identifiable institutional cultures. A particular university culture may or may not be actively designed and cultivated, but an identifiable culture eventually emerges in any university from the values and priorities held by its faculty, administration, staff, and students. In some cases, there may be competing cultures that emerge in different parts of the university, and in most cases different nuances of cultural values evolve over time as the university changes, often leading to fundamental changes in the university’s culture. (Cope and Leatherwood, 2001, p. 80)

The significant point to note is that the sites and contexts within which we are embedded have distinct influence upon both our individual and shared ways of seeing, being and acting both in contexts of higher education, and in contexts of citizenship. In Isaacs’ words, ‘our embeddedness provides both the source and the contours of our be-ing and be-coming’ (Isaacs, 2002, p. 12). Hence, our engagement in higher education institutions, as staff members, students, or as non staff, non student community members, has implications for our understandings of ourselves, as well as others, within that context, and within other social contexts. Recognising the way that a university shapes the individuals who constitute the social practice of higher education is, hence, particularly relevant to the Australian Consortium in its relationship to the International Consortium’s broader ‘Universities as sites of Citizenship’ study.

While there are shared spaces, histories, and traditions that all or many members of higher education practice might access, such as that of, for example, academic referencing procedures or the idea of the university as a site for advancing human knowledge, each

individual university site also has its own unique history and, increasingly in a policy climate of “diversification”, purpose. Hence, it is important to recognise that each individual university will also make different claims upon its members’ sense of self in relation to the practice and in their engagements with communities near and far. The internal and external environment of a particular university site can have significant implications for practitioners. The reputation of a university’s surrounding neighbourhood or town and the internal authority and administrative structures can, for instance, shape the interpretive schemes and personal identities of the practice’s constituency. In May’s words, ‘[t]he ideas or categories from an institution pervade an individual’s conception of his or her life so that the individual conceives of his or her life in terms of the dominant categories of the institution’ (May, 1992, p. 82).

Horkheimer and Adorno (1944/98, p. 28) argue, for example, that the marketised interpretation of the university as an agency of mass production, in terms of educations, research, and qualified graduates, *impresses* its commodified culture and conventionalised modes of behaviours on the individuals who constitute the practice. The culture and modes of behaviour are, in turn, purported as the only ‘natural, respectable and rational ones’ (p. 28). The natural, respectable, and rational culture and modes of behaviour are not limited in this case to casting of the student as a student. Rather, the student remains citizen, and so carries with him/her the *impression* of his or her higher education experiences in the form of him or herself into multiple social contexts and relationships. Based on this “embedded” view of the university, we raise a number of questions regarding the current meeting point(s) between universities and society.

If we proceed from the assumption that higher education institutions – and all other institutions for that matter – are indeed embedded in a ‘community of concentric circles’, and that universities do impact upon their surrounding communities and environment through their various networks of social relationships, how can we go about *evaluating* the nature of these relationships and flows? We posit that emerging practices and concepts of social responsibility and sustainability, in addition to baseline understandings of engagement as a fundamentally relational, political, and ethical practice forwarded earlier in this paper, have much to offer in analysing and evaluating university-community engagements.

Engaging for sustainability and social responsibility: Evaluating universities' engagements with society and environment

"The success of higher education in the twenty-first century may be judged mainly by the extent to which sustainability becomes a cornerstone of academic practice" (Bekessy et al, 2003, p. 4).

We posit that the concepts and practices of sustainability and social responsibility provide one way to explore the 'ethicality' of universities' and other large organisations' engagements with their surrounding communities and environments. The concepts of sustainability and social responsibility have only recently permeated mainstream organisational thinking. However, in the 1940s in the USA, Theodore Krepes was advocating the notion of 'corporate social responsibility'. In the 1960s, George Goyder portrayed the concept of 'The Responsible Company' (Enriques, 2003). Conversely, in the 1970s, Milton Friedman, the influential neoliberal economist, famously argued that, "the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits" (Friedman, 1998, pp. 246-251). Friedman asserted that organisations need not, indeed *should* not, practise anything more than legal compliance. He argued that an organisation exceeding its legal environmental obligations was practising 'pure and unadulterated socialism'" (Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn, 2003, p. 92). Today, however, the concepts of social responsibility and sustainability are understood as having wider implications. They involve taking a 'stakeholder view' of an organisation, and understanding the organisation's responsibilities to those stakeholders.

Social responsibility and sustainability, then, are considered to be two thirds of the 'Triple Bottom Line' (Elkington, 2001; 1997) of organisational imperatives, the other being economic or financial prosperity. The concept of sustainability emerged in the early 1970s, particularly at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Later, at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, the term 'sustainable development' was popularised, and defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (in Bekessy et al, 2003, p. 3). Subsequently, this definition has been criticised, particularly for its implied anthropocentrism (*ibid.*). However, it remains widely quoted and widely used, especially by

policy makers. A more contemporary perspective is that sustainability is simply the ability to maintain something over time, and that sustainable development is a change process combining 'sustainability' with 'genuine progress', with no major trade-offs for people or nature (Sutton, 2001).

Social responsibility, then, is about *stakeholders*, while sustainability is about *issues*. Put another way, social responsibility involves asking, "Who am I responsible to?", while sustainability involves asking, "What am I responsible for?" (Enriques, 2003). These perspectives are not so much alternative models, however, as they are different ways of representing the same thing: an organisation's responsibilities. The trend for organisations to report against their social and environmental, as well as their financial, performance increased dramatically in the 1990s in Europe, North America and Japan. Elkington and Wheeler (2003) cite stimuli for this trend as including legal initiatives, shareholder pressure, competitive advantage, public relations and campaign group pressure.

Today's organisational imperative, therefore, reflecting the assertion that we have entered an era of 'new economics' (Birch, 2001), is that we must place equal value on economic, social and environmental impacts. Thus, the sustainable organisation will have as its foundation a value system embracing many forms of capital: financial capital, manufactured capital, human capital, social capital and natural capital (Elkington, 2001, pp. 56-57). Elkington (2001, pp. 151-163) argues that legal compliance is only the first step towards sustainability, and that it is insufficient alone. A sustainable organisation is one which has moved beyond compliance, through standards-setting, and onward to a position where values of sustainability are embedded in the organisational culture. Elkington (2001, p. 251) advances the following values as potentially helping to achieve sustainability: appreciation for diversity, cooperation, enthusiasm, fairness, honesty, humility, inclusiveness, initiative, inspiration, integrity, justice, open mindedness, respect and responsibility. Paul Hawken, meanwhile, proposes that, "at the very heart of sustainability is respect, the unconditional respect for other human beings even if we do not agree with them" (in Elkington, 2001, p. 252).

There have been various initiatives designed to promote sustainability in universities. These include the Talloires Declaration (1990), The Lüneburg Declaration (2001) and the Universities of Australia Sustainable Development Charter (1998). In a recent paper sponsored by the Australian Conservation Foundation and The University of Melbourne, Bekessy et al (2003) argue that Australian universities have been slow to implement sustainability policy and practice; in general, they lag behind corporations in this area. This situation is of more concern when one considers that universities have substantial purchasing and investing power, they are significant consumers and they produce enormous volumes of waste. Additionally, of course, they play a crucial role in the shaping of students' value systems and, by extension, their behaviour.

Some Australian university centres are collaborating with industry to develop the concept and practice of social responsibility and sustainability. Examples include Deakin University's Corporate Citizenship Research Unit and The University of Queensland's Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining. However, there has been little research focusing on the social responsibilities of, and sustainability within, Australian universities themselves. Since such institutions are uniquely positioned to shape social change, this potentially constitutes a significant credibility gap: "Universities will only succeed in broad social reform if they first reform themselves" (Bekessy et al, 2003, p. 6).

Engagement as a prerequisite of sustainability and social responsibility

Engagement and participation are cornerstones of effective social responsibility and sustainability practice. For example, the SEQ 2021 Sustainability Indicators Working Group¹¹ identifies a participatory process of community engagement as being critical to identifying relevant sustainability indicators. Even in the early years of sustainability reporting, effective communication with stakeholders was considered a prerequisite to good practice (Elkington and Wheeler, 2003). However, it is only recently that the definition of 'stakeholders' has included communities. Five years ago, while it was common practice to 'engage'

¹¹ The SEQ 2021 Sustainability Indicators Working Group was established in January 2003 to develop policy recommendations for South East Queensland to move towards sustainability.

organisational staff, shareholders and regulators, "engaging with communities and campaigning organisations was little more than a curious novelty, an exotic accessory" (Zadek, 2003).

Many organisations find the concept and practice of engagement to be the most challenging aspect of implementing sustainability (Zadek, 2003), preferring to focus on the more 'tangible' processes, such as identifying indicators and 'measuring' performance. To illustrate this challenge, the draft 'Triple Bottom Line Reporting in Australia' (p. 9), designed as a practitioner's guide to reporting against social indicators, considers stakeholder engagement to be outside the scope of the paper, referring the reader to other sources. In a social responsibility and sustainability context, 'engagement' implies building relationships with stakeholders. An organisation's stakeholders are those who affect, and/or are affected by, the organisation's activities. This includes communities at both local and international levels. Organisations increasingly recognise that, at least potentially, stakeholders have influence over them. This is because of three interrelated factors: the increasing availability of information on organisations' activities; stakeholder demands for organisational standards of behaviour to increase continually; and these demands becoming more widely accepted by government, regulators and civil society (Zadek, 2003).

In practice, then, how does an organisation such as a university engage its stakeholders, including its community? Elkington (2001, pp. 179-180) proposes some basic principles for successful engagement. First, include some "difficult" voices. Second, ensure that engagement is ongoing, not just one-off. Third, involve stakeholders in identifying the issues and designing processes. Fourth, ensure that the organisation's representation in the engagement process includes senior staff, to demonstrate genuine commitment. Fifth, use interactive tools to facilitate participation. Sixth, be prepared to make real changes in the light of the outcomes of the process. Another important principle is that the chosen method(s) of engagement should be those which are most appropriate to each specific stakeholder (Australian Institute of Corporate Citizenship, 2002, p. 19).

"Participatory development" has emerged as a useful process for organisations to engage with community stakeholders. Participatory development is "a multi-faceted approach that places

local people at the centre of development by building their capacity to control their future" (Kemp, 2003, p. 2). Nevertheless, organisations which have attempted to implement it have been constrained by traditional obstacles, such as the time required, the financial investment required, and organisational cultures emphasising management control (Kemp, 2003, p. 10). It would be erroneous to conclude, then, that engagement is inherently a good part of sustainability and social responsibility. As Zadek comments, '[m]ost think it is a good idea, some think that it is essential and a few think that it is the beginning of the end' (Zadek, 2003). Elkington (2001, pp. 179-180) notes that some groups feel a sense of "stakeholder fatigue", that organisations seek to engage them as a cheap form of consultancy, merely to secure public relations benefits. As a stakeholder engagement seminar participant recently commented, 'stakeholders would go nuts if they were asked by every second company to "engage"' (in Zadek, 2003). The processes and tools used for engagement, therefore, must be appropriate and relevant, and be underpinned by genuinely democratic values. Recent research found that barriers to practising sustainability in Australian universities include a lack of unified or coordinated effort, insufficient cross-institutional synergy, and a lack of committed leadership (Bekessy et al, 2003). Too often, sustainability initiatives are driven by lone individuals, meaning that the initiative leaves when that individual leaves. It is hoped that the Australian Consortium will go some way to providing greater coordination, synergy and leadership.

Discussion questions

1. What effects do internal university policies and practices have in defining the “objective” or “invisible” realities of existence in the university that shape the persons who inhabit the university?
2. How conducive are current Australian higher education policy contexts to promoting community engagement and social and civic responsibility in universities?
3. To what degree do current education practices prepare students and staff members for their engagements as citizens – as opposed to preparing them merely as potential employees?
4. Does community engagement contribute to the extent to which students are shaped as responsible and responsive citizens?
5. What are the benefits of pursuing “networked” university organisational structures? What are the potential limitations or costs?
6. To what extent is “tradition” currently seen to be a positive or negative phenomenon in the social practice of higher education? Are the “traditional” roles of universities valued in Australia? If so, by whom?
7. Are Australian Universities currently practising sustainability? Should they be?

The politics of engagement

Good intentions alone cannot ensure successful engagement or even the generation of mutual understandings. As Silverstone (in press) argues, '[c]loseness, even intimacy, does not guarantee recognition or responsibility; it can invite, conceivably either blank resistance or, alternatively incorporation' (Silverstone, in press, p. 8). So, rather than simply advocating for widespread community engagement activities in Australian universities, we would like to acknowledge that, just as community engagement can be a means by which we unite, illuminate, and open our understandings and relationships to and with others, it can also be a means by which we can silence others, breed cynicism, divide, obscure, or close off opportunities for future engagements (Sunderland and Woodley, 2003). The silencing of voices in our society, particularly those of systematically disadvantaged and marginalised communities is an inherently political and collective practice that extends far beyond the sphere of higher education. As anthropologist Robyn Sheriff identifies, silencing

... does not rely upon obvious and explicit forms of coercion or enforcement. Although there may be meaningful, even profound, psychological motivations underlying this silence, it is *socially shared*; the rules for its observance are culturally codified. Unlike the activity of speech, which does not require more than a single actor, *silence demands collaboration* and the tacit communal understandings that such collaboration presupposes. Although it is contractual in nature, a critical feature of this type of silence is that it is *both a consequence and an index of an unequal distribution of power*, if not of actual knowledge. Through it, *various forms of power may be partly, although often incompletely, concealed, denied, or naturalized*. Although the type of silence I refer to may be a more or less stable and widely shared cultural convention, *it is constituted through, and circumscribed by, the political interests of dominant groups*. While silence tends to penetrate social boundaries it is not seamless; different groups, whether constituted by class, ethnicity, racialized identities, gender, or language, have markedly *divergent interests at stake in the suppression of discourse*. Silence, like discourse, must be deconstructed in such a way that these interests are explicitly located within a range of differentiated and opposed social positions in which both linguistic and nonlinguistic form of power are distributed'. (Sheriff, 2000, pp114-15, emphasis added)

Obviously, processes of silencing are not readily identifiable, particularly to people who exist *outside of*, and hence are not witness to, the experiences and contexts of those who are silenced and marginalised. The very significance of silencing and marginalisation is that the voices of those who are silenced are not readily heard, their experiences are not shared, and

understanding is not easily developed by others outside of that sphere of experience. *It is for precisely this reason that universities and other large organisations and individuals seeking to “engage” with communities need to be cautious, critical, and responsive to particular communities and individuals in their approach.*

There is a significant literature that deals with the ways that universities – as state sanctioned sites of westernised knowledge production and dissemination – have silenced, “museumised” and colonised indigenous, marginal, and non-scientific forms of knowledge (see Gillard, Mules, Reynolds-Hutchinson, 2003; Kraak, 1999; Sheriff, 2000). In Oottupurakkal Velukkutty Usha’s words,

The University could be viewed as an institutionalization of the western learning process. It has become the global model as an offshoot of western imperialism and colonialism although these no longer exist in their stark original forms. (Usha, 1999, p. 1)

As Boulding’s super culture folk-culture analysis above describes, local and indigenous knowledges of the kind Usha describes are in a constant tension with a super culture of dominant modes of thinking and westernised learning. The “folk culture” in this instance is a heterogeneous domain that covers “unscientific” and culturally situated day to day knowledges which may or may not be consistent with the dominant ways of seeing, being, and acting associated with the super culture. For example, folk knowledge on child rearing may be both partly consistent with “scientific” studies of good parenting and partly inconsistent based on the particular traditions associated with child birth and parenting in particular cultures and sites. The core significance of the university as a site of the super culture is, arguably, that it is a medium through which “folk” cultures may be rendered as “legitimate knowledge” or recognised as “valid”, useful knowledges. This happens by way of the university investing its *authority* and *state sanctioned legitimacy* in knowledge creation and dissemination upon another culture, way of knowing, community, or person. There is a very interesting tension here in that, the super culture Boulding speaks of has been historically legitimated by its upholding of the “scientific method” and commitment to freeing human knowledge from the shackles of superstition and “irrational” religious belief (see Huxley, 1893; Toulmin, 1990). By contrast “folk” knowledge is legitimated not by the scientific

method, but by reference to purity of tradition and the perceived importance of that tradition within a particular locality and/or to a particular community of people.

Because the super culture of Modernity, and its attendant post-cursors, have come to dominate Western institutions of education, they have also, and as a direct result, come to colonise some of the most influential instruments of socialisation – and hence citizenship – within Westernised societies. This essentially means that the ways of seeing, being, and acting associated with the super culture that has prospered through universities and the productive apparatus of industrial and post-industrial capitalism have tended to slowly displace those parts of the localised folk cultures that are inconsistent with the super culture or to at least render them “aberrant” or “indigenous”. Hence, folk cultures within non- or less Westernised parts of the world tend to be “marginal” precisely because they are inconsistent with the super culture. This is an inherently political process through which some people are subsequently granted construction of the world while others’ views are suppressed and de-legitimated. Thus, in crude generalist terms, the super culture tends to silence or marginalise “voices” in society that are inconsistent with it, by denying them the authority to speak in legitimated spaces of knowledge creation and dissemination, such as universities and schools. As Gillard *et al.* observe,

[f]or all the well-intentioned efforts of Australian government and academic institutions for advancing reconciliation which charge their staff to “effectively engage indigenous communities”, the sad fact is that those organisations are so dominated by a Western reductionist science world view, whilst fundamentally ignorant of its limitations, that the real effects they are having on their “clients” – indigenous communities – is both wasteful and diminishing of the spirit of those communities and broader Australian society. (Gillard, Mules, and Reynolds-Hutchinson, 2003, p. 1)

Within this context of a university captured by the super culture, “authority” is given to those who produce “knowledge” in accordance with the standard laid down by the super culture (for example, through a “scientific” empirical method) and that is validated as “true” by “experts”. People who do not conform to these standards (for example, the purveyors of “indigenous knowledge” or even advocates of community based and feminist research) are not conferred authority and their knowledge is not conferred the status of “truth”. Thus only doctors can define what “medical” problems are and what appropriate treatments are. Only psychologists can decide who is sane, and who is insane. Only social workers can decide which parents are

fit to raise their children. Only community development experts can plan community development, and so on. Given these constraints on who has “authority” to speak, true engagement requires a fundamental reorientation of the super culture.

The strongest formulation of community engagement in universities would demand the dethroning of the super culture (Western ‘scientific’ knowledge) as the *only* source of valid knowledge. Instead it would simply become one among many ways of knowing. Rather than actively seeking to silence inconsistent voices through ‘education’: teaching them the error of their (‘unscientific’) ways of knowing the world (the traditional role of the university), this strong formulation of community engagement would require universities to embrace (and legitimate) even inconsistent “indigenous” knowledges as being equally valid. The problem with this extreme post-modern position is that if all knowledges are equally valid, how are we to choose between them? A less extreme position suggests that engagement implies listening to other knowledges (i.e. respect), without automatically conferring upon them the status of valid knowledge. This implies as a minimum, that the vehicles of the super culture (in this case the university) acknowledge there are different ways of knowing (constructing) the world. However, this does not imply uncritical acceptance of all ways of knowing the world (for example, we need not uncritically accept the propositions that men are innately superior to women and that the world is flat).

This second, more moderate model of engagement recognises that different communities may disagree (i.e. construct the world, meanings, problems and solutions etc in different ways), but suggest that dialogue around commonalities and differences can enrich all communities. This formulation might also neatly tie in with Paul Hawken’s position that, ‘at the very heart of sustainability is respect, the unconditional respect for other human beings even if we do not agree with them’ (in Elkington, 2001, p. 252). The final, and perhaps central, argument of this paper is, hence, that if “community engagement” is to not simply mean the socialisation of the “community” into the university’s “super culture”, we need to think critically about how organisational and institutional structures and working conditions of the university silence non-Western and non-scientific voices. For when we are all brought to one place – Auge’s (1995) “non-places” – what have we lost?

Discussion questions

1. Should we actively seek to value “folk cultures” in contemporary practices of community engagement? If so, how? If not, why not?
 2. How can the university - the exemplar of the “super culture” - value non-western scientific knowledge?
 3. If we dethrone the 'super culture' as the *only* source of valid knowledge, must we embrace (and legitimate) even inconsistent ‘indigenous’ knowledge as equally valid?
 4. Should engagement require us to listen to other knowledges (i.e. *respect* them), even if we do not automatically confer upon them the status of “valid” knowledge?
 5. How might alternative folk knowledges impact on dominant understandings of the meaning of “scholarship” in Australian universities?
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Summary of key understandings

The following section provides a summary of the key understandings about community engagement included in the preceding sections of the paper. The understandings can be seen as core assumptions of the authors' particular approach to community engagement in universities and beyond. While they are theoretical in nature, it is intended that these core assumptions and understandings can inform many contexts of community engagement, including contexts of practice, pure research on engagement, evaluation of engagement practices and strategies, theorising engagement, designing engagement strategies, and so on. Once again, while these assumptions reflect the authors' understandings they are not intended to represent all members of the Australian Consortium. They are intended, rather, as an evolving resource that Collaborating Researchers can variously respond to, critique, or expand.

Our core understandings or assumptions regarding community engagement are as follows:

Engagement is a fundamentally dynamic and relational process

Following Burkett, Follett, and Dewey, we argue that engagement, like community itself, is a dynamic and ongoing process: That is, engagement is not a “thing” that remains static or utterly observable and measurable over time. Indeed, much of what we could term “engagement” happens invisibly in the daily give and take of our relationships with others. A related observation is that engagement happens *between* persons – not in individual persons alone – and hence is inherently relational.

Engagement “happens” at multiple levels of human organisation and in multiple sites in and over time

We assume that community engagement can happen at multiple levels of social organisation in and over time. By this we mean that community engagement can happen between, for example, two individual people; between an individual and a social grouping such as a community group or an institution; between two or more social groupings; between

communities, nations, or continents; or any other combination of the preceding categories. We have used concepts such as Boulding's super culture and folk culture and Barr's community of concentric circles to explore the different levels of social organisation a university participates in. We have emphasised in particular that universities are both shaped by, and shape, the various levels of community within which they are embedded.

Critics of dominant community "participation" strategies in the UK (see Williams, 2003) have emphasised that policy makers, service providers, and academics have focused too much on the "community group" as a unit of community participation and engagement. This focus on community groups, they argue, fails to take into account the rich range of engagements that happen between individual persons in informal settings and how this contributes to community capacity building, community development, and social capital. Other work in applied ethics (see Isaacs 1998; Isaacs and Massey 1994; Sunderland 2003) has also emphasised that too little attention is given to macro level interactions between powerful social institutions and practices and their constituent communities, nations, societies, and ecosystems.

We posit that a comprehensive approach to mapping community engagement will need to take into account all of these levels of engagement between individuals, social groupings, and broader categories of communities, ecosystems, and societies. We propose that each individual Collaborating Researcher will not necessarily have to focus on all levels of engagement in their study of community engagement practices in their own university, but that they may prefer to focus on a particular level of engagement according to his or her area of expertise and access. The ideal result would be that our collaboration will result in a thick and rich mapping of the range of community engagement activities that are possible and actual in Australian universities.

Community engagement can be both formal and purposeful and informal and unrecognised

The previous points have noted that community engagement is a relational process that happens at multiple levels of social organisation in and over time. A related point is that community engagement in these various relationships can be both formal and purposeful or informal and unrecognised: part of the “invisibility of the everyday”. In our approach to community engagement –and in particular with the social practice framework forwarded by Isaacs (1998) –we emphasise that universities are *always already* embedded in, and engaging with, communities at various levels, whether this engagement is acknowledged or not. Hence, for the purposes of this paper we have chosen to differentiate between “informal” engagement that happens as part of the everyday functioning of universities and social relationships, and “formal” engagements that are purposefully designed and constructed as part of an overt community engagement strategy or project. We argue that both formal and informal engagements need to be identified, evaluated, and practised with equally high levels of critical social responsibility and ethical “responsiveness”, particularly where universities and other social institutions such as governments are in an obvious position of power (see May, 1992).

The contexts and sites of community engagement shape (both formally and informally) the nature of engagement that is possible and acceptable within those contexts and sites: There are contextual “codes of engagement”

Social contexts and settings are significant because they set both formal and informal standards and styles of engagement: they are “genres” or “codes” of social engagement if you like (see Bakhtin, 1986, in Eggins and Martin, 1997, p. 236; Iedema, 1997b; Weiss and Wodak, 2003, pp. 21-22). There are written (for example anti-discrimination legislation) and unwritten (for example greeting rituals or “professionalism”) codes of engagement that we are all more and less aware of when we enter into a particular social setting. These codes literally regulate the nature and the content of our engagements with others. For example, when a person is at work he or she might relate more formally with others, particularly unknown others, than if he or she were at a family BBQ or christening. He or she might also restrict the conversation to “the business at hand” rather than disclose personal details about his or her

life and experiences. These codes of engagement are specific to particular social settings and events and the people who constitute a social setting or event but they are not necessarily set in stone. A manager or informal leader can influence these codes of engagement by, for example, creating an organisational culture where members of the organisation are encouraged or expected to relate with others in particular ways. Individuals and groups can also protest against “the way things are” and pursue atypical patterns of engagement and behaviour.

The significance of this point is that universities and government departments have a range of traditional and emerging genres for the ways that they engage with communities and external others. The teacher-student relationship is one obvious and well-known example. Another example is the now popular “partnership” genre of engagement. The point to note is that each of these genres of engagement makes powerful claims upon our sense of self and our sense of, and engagement with, *others*. Moreover, each genre of engagement is loaded with assumptions about how the relationship is structured, how people relate to one another within that relationship, how power is distributed, and so on. We argue that any deep and critical appreciation of the nature of community engagement – whether it be in universities, governments, or any other sphere of social activity – needs to be cognisant of these genres of engagement and their potential influence on how engagement happens, how engagement is regulated and structured in different social settings, the expectations surrounding certain forms of engagement, and the potential to create new and alternative genres of engagement that can serve particular purposes and expectations for a variety of parties concerned.

All human relationships and engagements involve a political and an ethical dimension

A key understanding of the transformative approach to applied ethics forwarded by Isaacs and Massey (1994) is that all human relationships, at all levels of social organisation, involve a political dimension: that is, all human relationships involve flows and practices of power, whether they are explicit or not. Based on this understanding, Isaacs and Massey argue that each and every human relationship also – and as a result – entails an ethical dimension that is based on the conditions of power and vulnerability within social relationships.

Complementary work by Goffman (1961/1972) and Rogers (1974) similarly emphasises that

an individual or organisation can only be powerful *in relation to* another individual or organisation in contexts of broader social and cultural values and expectations. Following Isaacs and Massey and Rollo May (1976), we observe that power can be “used” both for positive and negative purposes in relational engagements, including human relationships with other humans, other species, and the natural environment. For example, the nature of our engagements with human and non human others can be exploitative; nurturing; competitive; manipulative; or integrative (power sharing) (May, 1976). We have suggested social responsibility and sustainability as two particular ways of framing the link between power and responsibility in university-community engagements.

Engagement is a fundamentally educative practice

Following Dewey and Urban-Walker we argue that engagement is a fundamentally educative practice, one that is central to our understandings of ourselves and of others. Dewey emphasises that our engagement in social relationships is part of our primary socialisation as human beings. Urban-Walker emphasises that our learnings through engagement with others are inherently moral in nature: we learn through our relationships and communications with others about what is good, bad, desirable, undesirable, valid, invalid, and so on. She refers to the social sphere of engagement as a “moral medium”. Recognising that engagement is a fundamentally educative and moral practice is also central in more specific practices of community engagement. This is for at least two reasons. First, there are multiple folk knowledges that exist in communities that do not make it into university curricula. When universities, as officially sanctioned sites of knowledge production, engage more with the producers and reproducers of local folk knowledges, the range of voices that inform research and teaching activities expands, as well as understandings of what can potentially constitute “knowledge” in university and broader contexts. Second, expanding the range of knowledges that are valued, or at the very least recognised, in university activities can have distinct benefits in engaging members of folk cultures – particularly indigenous or marginal cultures – who wish to engage in university education but who have found the experience to be alienating and foreign compared to the emic experiences and understandings of their folk culture.

Humans and human social systems are embedded within, and hence are engaged inevitably with, ecological systems

The approaches to social practice, sustainability, and social responsibility outlined in the previous sections of this paper emphasise that humans and human social systems are embedded in ecologies of both social and biological systems. This view of ecological embeddedness encourages us to look at the physical and “biological” realities of our existence as living beings, as well as our “social” existence in human societies and communities within and alongside these biological realities. In pursuing a research agenda on higher education, community engagement, and social responsibility, we assume that social responsibility also entails a dimension of environmental responsibility because the two spheres (social and environmental) are necessarily entwined. Following Richard Parsons’ work in particular, our use of the term ‘sustainability’ is based on the assumption that we cannot achieve social sustainability without simultaneously achieving ecological sustainability, and vice versa. That is, every human action has social and ecological, as well as economic, consequences. Therefore, to conceptualise the social dimension in isolation from ecological dynamics is to ignore the intrinsic externalities of human activity.

Community engagement can be a means to an end, an end in itself, or both

It is often implied in policy and academic discussions that community engagement is an inherently good thing: that community engagement is an end in itself. We seek to emphasise, though, that community engagement is not always inherently good in and of itself, particularly if the outcomes of the process of community engagement are not seen to be beneficial, equitable, authentic, or relevant to its community participants. We assume that community engagement as a process can be beneficial in and of itself if it enhances community wellbeing and/or social capital, purely through the process of it happening, regardless of any subsequent effect or outcome of that engagement. Community engagement can also be a means to an end, in the sense that it can be a process, a framework, or an underlying principle, for achieving a desired social outcome, which preferably is defined collectively by various participants in the engagement experience.

Discussion questions

1. What role is there, if any, for social theory in designing and reviewing community engagement strategies and projects in universities, government, and other large organisations?
2. Is community engagement in universities and government currently viewed as a means to an end, an end in itself, or both?
3. What are the proposed benefits of community engagement in universities and government?
4. What are the potential problems associated with contemporary approaches to community engagement?
5. Which pre-existing practices, discourses, and traditions are evident in contemporary discourses on community engagement? For example, how do contemporary practices of community engagement relate to community development, community capacity building, community service, participation, consultation, and so on?

Themes for ongoing research and discussion

The Australian Consortium research agenda has local, national and international significance because of innovations in its theoretical, methodological and applied aspects, as well as its linkage with the International Consortium. It will provide new approaches to understanding higher education and civic responsibility from an engaged methodological perspective.

Through our preliminary literature and policy review we have identified the following potential focus areas for further research and discussion. *We would appreciate suggestions for further research and discussion themes from collaborating researchers and partners.*

Higher Education studies: Engaged scholarship is recognised world-wide as being of great benefit to higher education institutions, and to the communities of which they are a part. This research will feed the global scholarly networks around the latest developments in higher education policy and practice.

Community Development Research: To date, little consideration has been given to the role of higher education as a vehicle for building or strengthening local communities. Nor has much attention been paid to the presence or absence of higher education being situated within a community. This research will, therefore, provide significant new understandings about the role of higher education engaging with its local communities.

Citizenship research: The Australian Consortium and the broader International Research Project provides a dialogue for understanding citizenship. Citizenship now needs to be theorised within a notion of deliberative democracy (Elster, 1998; Bohman, 1996; Guttman & Thompson, 1996) that complements and, to some extent, remediates the shortcomings of parliamentary democracy. Within this context, universities have a vital role in contributing to the public sphere, that “discursive space in which strangers discuss issues they perceive to be of consequence for them and their group” and bases these spheres on rhetorical exchanges (Hauser, 1999). The Australian Consortium research project will ideally facilitate discussion and debate over what may be termed a *more precise glossary* of terms and understandings for

talking about citizenship, democratic education, civic responsibility, universities and their processes. The research has both research and educational objectives. The research objectives in the first phase are to map what Australian universities are doing in civic education for students, the community and society at large.

Democratic Participation research: The concept is based on the conviction that people are the ‘owners’ of their society’s institutions. Universities are linked to the ownership issue in their role as one of the key socialising agents of society. Leaders in politics and business have their perspectives on democratic processes and social and civic responsibility shaped by their university experiences. Based on the *Universities as Sites of Citizenship* research to date, the Australian Consortium research project will assess whether these notions will have an impact on the environment of higher education, and on the reform of governance structures, missions of universities, and in teaching and research. By taking an engaged approach, the research will ‘fill in’ the specifics of how ‘mutual benefit’, ‘trust’, and ‘reciprocity’ are understood, expressed, built, and/or eroded within the university-communities relationships being researched, and of what sorts of strategies, policies and practices aid in the development of effective and democratic partnerships. The research is focused, therefore, on universities as strategic institutions of democratic participation.

Social Responsibility research: Most of the research on education and social responsibility is largely descriptive and rest on normative and prescriptive propositions. The Australian Consortium research project will provide a framework for posing relevant questions of the university on matters such as conditions for social responsibility and engagement, and for providing an empirical basis for higher education policy and reform. It will also provide UQ with data needed for effective development of social responsibility and civic engagement strategies. A key outcome of this research will be the development of socially responsible approaches, methodologies and networks for an intensive, multi-site, comparative international study on a range of local issues (for example, health, culture, political socialization, economic development). The Australian Consortium research project will ideally enable the development of new thinking in ways for universities to engage their local communities, as part of a philosophy of social responsibility.

Community Engagement: Existing research on higher education and community engagement has, for the most part, focused on the one-way, paternalistic and altruistic implications of the term *community service*. The Australian Consortium differentiates itself by focusing primarily on mutually active implications of the term *community engagement*. Regardless of the vast resources and expertise base of universities, effective community development cannot be 'done to' nor 'done for' a community. Effective *community development* requires mutual, deliberate, considered and mutually engaged collaborations between communities and scholars. It requires the consent and desire of communities and the substantial, considered and coordinated efforts of scholars who are engaged with the aspirations and potentials of their communities. The term *community* is meant here in a local sense as *the immediate environment, or place, in which the university is physically situated and of which it is a part as well as concomitant definitions of communities as being demarcated by shared meaning*. By this definition, the university can in no sense be conceived of as separate from its community and, seen from either direction, neither the community nor the university is seen as 'the Other'.

Engaged scholarship and knowledge generation: The University of Southern California's Senate has usefully defined *engaged universities* as those that "enter into reciprocal relationships with the communities of which they are a part...(to)...combat the problems of their local communities" (Clark et al, 2001). Engaged universities work towards, and learn by, "creating substantive transformations in community life and practices" (ibid.). They "actually transform the societies in which they find themselves and, reciprocally, find themselves significantly changed by such interaction and connection" (ibid.). Hence, the definition of *engaged scholarship* consists of all the forms of scholarly activity that comprise the engaged university—*processes of mutual engagement which are directed towards the development, improvement and enhancement of both the community and the university through applied scholarship*. According to the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the answer is unambiguous: "engagement is [now] a core value for the university." In the light of recent attempts to incorporate community engagement policies into the everyday practice of universities, and their potential impacts – both positive and negative – for communities, the

Australian Consortium research project will assess how successful these initiatives have been. Also, with the release of the *Crossroads* discussion paper series, this research will provide a timely investigation into policies, perceptions and practices among university administrations, staff and students, in relation to civic responsibility concepts and engagement with communities and regions. Further, it will provide data enabling policy makers to make informed decisions on civic and community engagement policies in the future.

International comparative research: The Australian Consortium research project is part of a cross-national study, comparing universities in four different continents. It addresses the actual activities of institutions of higher education that support civic values and practices. Broadly, it will serve as the basis for the analysis and formulation of the recommendations, and distribution of materials and approaches that can be used by institutions of higher education to discuss and decide their responsibilities for civic engagement and democracy.

Feedback on the Australian Consortium Foundation Paper

The authors of this foundation paper sought feedback from Australian Consortium Collaborating Researchers and Partners by the end of 2003. All feedback provided by collaborating researchers and partners has been attached to the foundation paper to encourage ongoing discussion and debate:

Sir Professor David Watson, Vice Chancellor, University of Brighton, United Kingdom:

I really liked your paper, and I think it moves the debate forward in some interesting ways. I won't comment on the overall shape and analysis, since I think they are logical, comprehensive and useful.

That said, there are several ideas which leapt out at me as meriting further concentrated thought. These are in no particular order:

* How can we measure (and report on) "engagement saturation" (p. 7: the ACU exercise -below - is possibly relevant to this)?

* The space "in between" (p. 16). This echoes powerfully for me because of my interest in Hannah Arendt's concept of "between past and future". Are there any "new," so far unoccupied, spaces that are created by strong university-community engagement, or is it just overlap and/or each side telling the other about itself? I rather think there are (and this is one of the things we have specifically asked CUPP to explore).

* "Super culture" vs. "folk culture" was a new theoretical frame for me, and I think it's really powerful (p. 28). It links with the discussion on p. 41 on "marginalisation" and "museumisation" in some interesting ways. For example, I don't think that the negative influences are all one way (super culture drowning out folk culture)!

* I'm not sure that any of us have really got to the bottom of the "citizenship" debate (p. 34). The temptation to reduce it to political (and "state")-based indicators and ignore what Michael Daxner calls "society-making" is just too powerful.

* Finally, you'll be aware of my worry about the potentially lazy use of the term "stake-holder" (see p, 38). To be a stakeholder you have to have something to put at risk. Here's an extract from a recent rant of mine (delivered at No 11 Downing Street):

Some aspects of the politics are, however, newish. In short, universities - despite their formal autonomy are as much a victim of "the Thatcher triangle" as any other component of what is now called the "audit society." In the good old bad old days progress in social policy was a simpler affair. Pressure on politicians led them either to invest or not in public services, for which they more or less took responsibility. Mrs Thatcher essentially replaced this uni-directional tendency with a more complex triangle, distancing the politicians from both the services and a new class of "stakeholders."

Under these conditions - unambiguously adopted by New Labour - the most common outcome is when government and the "stake-holders" (two corners) gang up on the public sector provider (as the third). The problem is that the "stakeholders" are frequently anything but. To take an example, Alison Wolf's recent Does Education Matter? ruthlessly exposes the role of the CBI in the great NVQ debacle, culminating in the attempted whitewash of the Beaumont Report:

Developed 'for' and supposedly by business, they [NVQs] were consistently neglected by vast numbers of employers both before and after Beaumont. Senior managers were happy to assure government researchers and surveys that they had not only heard of NVQs but were also making them available to their workforce. But the facts spoke otherwise [as they often do in education policy!]: by the mid 1990s only 2% of that workforce actually reported themselves to be working towards any sort of NVQ, employer supported or not (Wolf, 2003: 111-116).

To be a proper "stakeholder" you have to put some investment at risk. If you don't, it's all too easy to fulfil the public sector manager's stereotype of a stakeholder as "someone who can do you harm."

Please keep me in touch with this as it develops. I'd be interested in the sorts of answers you generate to your initial sets of questions (it might also be worth thinking about dividing these into groups: especially separating those which are aimed at developing conceptual understanding from those which are more empirically inquiring about what is going on). Best regards, David.

Professor Tony Gallagher, School of Education, Queens University, Ireland:

I found the paper very interesting and thought-provoking. There are a couple of aspects of it I could maybe comment on:

I suspect that the reason why the issue of university-community links has emerged at all is probably related to the development of mass higher education. This leads to both higher cost and higher accountability, which make it harder for the university to remain aloof from society. Of course, it is not unimportant that there are people within the academy who welcome the opportunity provided by this situation to invent, or reinvent, an explicit social purpose for the university.

* Universities always did have a community role: by virtue of their existence as a social institution embedded in a society, there is a relationship of interdependence. However, in the past the elite role of universities has been mirrored in a tendency for the community links to be with elite groups. The students and staff of the university were largely drawn from these social elites in any case, but there was a widespread assumption that the mass of society had not reasonable expectation or right to assume they had a place in the university. Some contemporary strategies for community links seem to me not to break out of that elite network. I think the sort of links we are mainly interested in concern links with hitherto marginalised or excluded groups within society, but this involves a higher level of challenge to the taken-for-granted assumptions of the university. It does, however, highlight the social justice dimension of this work, as is mentioned in the paper, perhaps best seen as part of a Rawlsian contribution to setting limits to social inequalities in society?

* Whether an argument based on a social justice criterion alone will convince remains in question - within universities the academic communities often (largely) see their primary community of interest as the international community of scholars in their discipline and, in some cases, the mundane realities of life on the other side of the university gates is of little immediate interest. On the other hand, mass higher education may lead to pressure for differentiation and the establishment of a hierarchy of institutions, with a key strategy for some universities to place themselves in the elite. In this context more pragmatic arguments might be needed to advance the case. If access becomes a priority, then university-community links of the type above might help the university re-imagine some of its core ways of working in order to hold on to new groups of students. Wenger's work on communities of learning is relevant to this.

* I note David's concern about citizenship education, as in many places this seems to be little more than training in the institutions and procedures of the status quo, with limited attempt to encourage young people to become active, critical and engaged citizens. Ironically, given the pathetic failure of our own polity in Northern Ireland, we do not face the same problem, if only because there is no assumed status quo around which consensus emerges. Thus, as we develop citizenship education it almost by definition has to be about how people engage in the construction of the architecture of a new society, rather than merely telling them about what is already there.

* The above got to sound like a bit of a tangent - sorry for that. A key point in the paper is that the university-community link has always existed, but has taken a particular form, and I think we are trying to find alternative forms, with different objectives.

The paper is great in systematising many of the issues that have been floating around, so thanks for putting it altogether and sparking off what I hope will continue as a dynamic conversation. Tony

Professor Paul Havemann, School of Law, James Cook University, Australia:

Hi and many thanks for a most stimulating wide ranging foundation paper. I am very happy to be involved with this research program.

Community engagement: university engagement OR engagement?

The paper addresses the conceptual, theoretical and practical aspects of 'engagement' fully and convincingly.

The conceptual, theoretical and practical meanings of 'community' are undefined except for the discussion on pp52-53. I think this might hinder strategic thinking about method / forms of engagement? The concept of 'community' and its uses is notoriously fraught, as we all know. I think the definition on pp 52 is helpful but needs to inform the Paper from the outset.

More often than not community is widely used, especially by government, as an aspirational term rather than a descriptive one. The terms often signals the absence of community and the goal to build one, or at least increase its 'capacity'. Do we need the word community? Its clear that a vast array of

relationships are to be engaged on the platform of processes that link the university to other spheres. Such spheres include people in places, Peoples, industries, professional groupings, government's etc. Such a variety of groupings or sites of processual interaction often don't seem to share the nexus to constitute a community as I understand it... I am happy to accept a very open textured form of inter-dependency. But I am unclear from the Paper what is meant by being 'demarcated by shared meaning'?

Assuming we retain the word 'community' we need to define the AC's conception of 'community' more fully. In terms of the AC's sustainability- CSR- citizenship agenda it seems that those with whom universities relate in different interfacing spheres call for different forms of engagement. The Paper alerts us to the tricky character of industry partnerships and the like as well as the risks of incorporation. The Paper helpfully addresses a host of forms of engagement; so if form follows function then form needs to be defined in terms of performing a conscience and critic function for promoting sustainability - CSR- citizenship. This might constitute advocacy and advocacy from the conscience and critic standpoint is not welcomed by all stakeholders in most contexts.

Sustainability: Social, economic, cultural AND ecological impact?

About half the Paper pp 4-36 subsumes ecological impact or the environment within social, economic and cultural. This doesn't advance the overarching holistic approach embedded in the AC's commitment to sustainability. The AC's CSR and citizenship agenda calls for attention to be paid to good ecological governance within the academy and global society.

The Paper rightly highlights the problems of experts and official science / knowledge, super culture and the marginalising of other ways of knowing and forms knowledge, eg vernacular science and traditional environmental knowledge not to mention post-materialist values that run contrary to the hegemonic growth centred paradigm. The paper also alerts us the dangers of a post modernist approach to knowledge that relativises all truth claims. These aspects of Ulrich Beck's description of late reflexive modern times as *The Risk Society* seems likely to challenge all the process of engagement within the 'communities' of the academy and outside it as well. The humankind-ecology –economy interface will become an increasing conflictual site of engagement between people in places and with industries and governments.... Witness the debates about nuclear, genetic modification, climate change, BSE etc. Official postures of 'organized irresponsibility' and the 'social explosiveness of hazard' amongst publics facing the risks intrinsic to industrial growth and 'progress' seem likely fill our consciousness more and more.

The AC might want to focus on how the plays its parts in the ‘relations of definition’ which manage global risk notably towards bridging the science – policy – public participation divides for good ecological governance?

Folk Culture: folk culture - super culture dichotomy- IS ‘folk’ the right word?

The Paper raises the spectre an homogenising ‘super culture’ assimilating folk cultures in its way. For me use the notion of a ‘folk culture’ as the alternative to super culture is problematic. The work ‘folk’ connotes the quaint, the cute, the marginal, the primordial – something peripheral to the mainstream, etc. So the term ‘folk’ doesn’t really capture local, the place-based, the national /regional aspects of identity that are under threat from globalisation nor does this analysis alert us to violent polarisation arising from the attempt to Westernise / globalise identity, eg terrorisms. see Benjamin Barber’s book *Jihad v McWorld* or Manuel Castells *Power and Identity*.

IT: the IT Revolution and the Academy

The Paper only makes a couple brief references to the most radical changes to our notions of community and engagement namely the IT revolution. Globalisation is conditioned and conditions the texture of this form of radical change. According to Manuel Castells (*The Network Society, Power and Identity* and *End of Millennium*) whose work I find compelling, we are experiencing the transition to a network society characterised by the dominance of informational capitalism super-imposed on top of industrial capitalism. Attendant on this transition is the re- structuring and de-structuring (e structuring) of life choices and life chances through control over knowledge and the access to power. The academy is both centrally implicated and threatened by this flow of processes.

Doesn’t the AC need to put developments like real virtuality, the digital divide, informational black holes and the vexed question of whose in charge construction of web accessed knowledges and the new virtual academies on the agenda?

AC Themes for ongoing Research and Discussion

I have suggested some areas for further research above.

My own interests are in social theory eg theorizing and conceptualizing changing character modernity; globalization and global governance; Indigeneity and identity ; Human Rights; Citizenship, corporatism and contractualism, the Third Way; the IT revolution, ;the new Biotechnology revolution and the impact new public management techniques and the Washington consensus ideology on the shape of curriculum in areas like law and the social sciences and the related practice of engaged scholarship. I'd look forward to working with others in any of these areas.

JCU has recently identified *Identity and Place* as an Area of Research Strength. This is the only AORS outside the natural sciences at JCU. Associate Professor Sue McGinty (sue.mcginity@jcu.edu.au) is the co-ordinator of the AoRS. A description of the AoRS focus can be found below. The identity and Place focus resonates a lot with those of the AC. I'd think that researching the construction and implementation of this AoRS might have significant value, eg. for studies of HE studies, community development ,citizenship and community engagement research as set out in the Paper? I am happy to liaise with Sue about this.

JCU Identity and Place Area of Research Strength

This area of research strength (AoRS) concentrates on the interconnectedness between place and identity. 'Place' here refers to more than a bounded spatial site. It refers to a constellation or articulation of social, political and economic interactions, in a particular locality. Today the relationship between identity and place has been radically affected by processes of globalization. For example, increasing mobility of people/s, the spread of information technology, the biotechnology revolution, and cultural transformations have unsettled connections between identity and place.

These local and global processes impact unevenly yet ubiquitously on all aspects of the human condition as well as the ecosystems that sustain us. The pace of change constituting new forms of interconnectedness is unprecedented in its extent, intensity and velocity. The modern and the traditional are in flux and social, economic and political relationships are increasingly subjected to homogenizing and polarizing forces, which impact on constructions of place and identity.

Identity and place is strategically placed to engage in the social, cultural, economic and intellectual issues of North Queensland, a key objective of *JCU In the Third Millennium*. It brings together research in the Faculty of Arts Education and Social Sciences (FAESS), and the Faculty of Law Business and the Creative Arts (LCBA), and makes links with Tropical Environmental Studies and Geography (TESAG), and the Health Sciences and other JCU scientists.

I hope this assists and I welcome dialogue further, Paul.

Professor Dr. Michael Daxner, Universitaet Oldenburg, Oldenburg, Germany

Thanks for the document. Very good, and certainly an incentive. My remarks are short, though, because I think the document serves its purpose to be door opener and foundation.

* I would rather spend a few more lines on 'community' itself. The Anglo-Saxon connotation is different from the European community (self-governed, non-'state' habitat-basis of conviviality) on the one side, from the tension between community and society on the other side. one page, no theoretical treatise, but clarification.

* Page 9. I disagree lightly, there was always a way of universities to distance themselves in order either to gain independence or non-commitment. Give the first a chance, and condemn the latter?

* I like the idea of friendship. however, it reads too nicely. The duties and burdens from responsible, accountable friendship are numerous.

* I would like to see all questions, which are now disparate at the end of sections, repeated in a comprehensive 'questionnaire'.

Keep me posted. I will bring these things to Afghanistan. Regards to the colleagues.

Very kind regards and greetings, Michael

Dr Ian Fairnie, Community Life, Curtin University of Technology

The following brief notes are NOT on behalf of the group here at Curtin. Further feedback may occur after the newly appointed Director of the Centre for Stronger Communities, Professor Daniela Stehlik, settles in to her new position.

Concerning the themes for on-going research, there is interest here in Community Development Research, but broader so it will focus on the role of educational institutions as a vehicle for building or strengthening local communities, not just focussed on higher education. Tied to this will be research on Community Engagement.

In addition, there is interest here in an analysis of Social Capital (Putnam), how this is linked to political and economic outcomes, and community "resilience".

Hopefully we will be able to contribute more, as a group, during 2004

Fred D'Agostino, Director, Contemporary Studies Program, University of Queensland

I'd also like to pass on some first thoughts myself. I am beginning a new research project in "social epistemology" and am looking at the organisational and psychological literature to see what those people have discovered about the social conditions of and for learning and sharing knowledge. One of the most interesting experimental findings is that people tend to discuss what they already share, rather than sharing with others what isn't already common knowledge. This is a powerful impediment to benefiting from the diversity of information that individuals hold--what Hayek called "dispersed knowledge"--let alone the different "takes" on it and the topic of enquiry. Obviously, over-coming this tendency to talk only/mostly about what everyone already knows is crucial for making a community of engagement/scholarship work to do more than merely reinforce common prejudices. (This, by the way, may be one reason why "silencing" requires, in many cases, so little cultural/institutional "work"--people are already disposed to keep schtum about what (they perceive) is not already a matter of consensus.) There's a lot here to contemplate and ponder. I'd like to be part of anything you've got going in this area, provided you think I might have something to contribute. All the best--FRED

The History and Future Development of the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy

Professor Ira Harkavy, University of Pennsylvania

*Address to University Vice Chancellors and other Higher Educational Leaders
Second International Inside Out Conference, Charting Uncertainty: Capital, Community and
Citizenship, Ipswich Club, Ipswich Australia, July 3, 2003*

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you to discuss the International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy. I would like to cover five topics during our time together:

- 1 Rationale for the Consortium
- 2 Formation and Development
- 3 Summary of findings from the Consortium's major study: Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility
- 4 Overall results of the Consortium's work to date.
- 5 Next steps

Rationale for the Consortium

The rationale for the Consortium can be expressed by four propositions:

1. In spite of the increasing spread of democratic ideas and the increasing development of nominally democratic societies, a crisis exists in democratic development. Low and decreasing levels of participation in politics and in collaborative civic activities, a decline of confidence and trust in government as well as other major institutions, and a decrease in levels of student participation in school and university governance are indicators of the current crisis.
2. Education and the schooling system in general play central roles in determining the degree of democratic development of societies. The Council of Europe's Budapest Declaration for a Greater Europe without Dividing Lines, adopted on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Council (May 1999), strongly emphasized the significance of the

education system in democratic development. One of the three main sections of the Budapest Declaration, “Declaration and Program on Education for Democratic Citizenship, Based on the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens,” highlighted the fundamental role of education in promoting active participation of all individuals in democratic life at all levels and the importance of “learning democracy in school and university life, including participation in decision-making and the associated structures of pupils, students, and teachers.” It calls for “partnerships between educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and political authorities.” The document also calls on all 45 members “to make education for democratic citizenship based on all the rights and responsibilities of citizens, an essential component of all educational, training, cultural and youth policies and practices.”

3. The university is the key institution, within both the schooling system and the wider society, shaping democratic development. In July 1999, 51 college and university presidents in the United States signed a “President’s Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education.” By the end of 2002, 459 colleges had signed the Declaration, which highlights the university’s central role in educating citizens:

Colleges and universities have long embraced a mission to educate students for citizenship. But now, with over two-thirds of recent high school graduates, and ever larger number of adults, enrolling in post secondary studies, higher education has an unprecedented opportunity to influence the democratic knowledge, dispositions, and habits of the heart that graduates carry with them into the public square.

Higher education is uniquely positioned to help Americans understand the histories and contours of our present challenges as a diverse democracy. It is uniquely positioned to help both students and our communities to explore new ways of fulfilling the promise of justice and dignity for all, both our own democracy and as a part of the global community.

... We believe that the challenge of the next millennium is the renewal of our own democratic life and reassertion of social stewardship. In celebrating the birth of democracy, we can think of no nobler task than committing ourselves to helping catalyze and lead a national movement to reinvigorate the public purposes and civic mission of higher education. We believe that now and through the next century, our institutions must be vital agents and architects of a flourishing democracy. We urge all of higher education to join us.

4. A global organization dedicated to higher education's civic and democratic mission could make a significant contribution to advancing democratic citizenship in schools, universities, and societies throughout the world.

Formation and Development of the Consortium

The International Consortium for Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy developed largely as the result of a joint recognition by higher educational leaders in Europe and the United States of similar concern about problems of long-term democratic development and the role universities could play in solving those problems. Specifically, the Consortium was formed as a vehicle for the development of a trans-Atlantic research project on Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility. The concept of sites of citizenship originated with the Council of Europe project on Education for Democratic Citizenship. The project was launched in 1996 and adapted in the light of the Council of Europe Second Summit of Heads of State and Governments (1997).

As a follow-up to one of its preliminary contributions to the definition of the concept of citizenship, the Higher Education and Research Committee of the Council of Europe adopted, at its 6th plenary session on 16-18 March 1999, an outline project called "University as Site of Citizenship" and instructed its Bureau and its Secretariat to develop the project further. Academic organizations in the United States were similarly involved in a series of less ambitious projects concerning citizenship within higher educational institutions. To a significant extent, the International Consortium and its major project, Universities on Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility, reflect the concerns and policies for action expressed in the Budapest Declaration (1999) and the President's Fourth of July Declaration (1999) mentioned earlier, as well as the Wingspread Declaration on Renewing The Civic Mission of the American Research University (1998). More specifically, in the summer of 1999, the Committee on Higher Education and Research of the Council of Europe initiated a dialogue with a loose consortium of associations of higher education in the U.S.

Universities as Sites of Citizenship and Civic Responsibility was launched as a concept in the summer of 1999 and began its research under the auspices of the International Consortium for

Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy, with the participation of the Council of Europe's Committee on Higher Education and Research and a United States Consortium comprised of four leading higher education associations: American Association for Higher Education, American Association of Colleges and Universities, American Council on Education, and Campus Compact. After trans-Atlantic consultation at the Council of Europe in Strasburg in December, 1999 a pilot research program was started in the spring of 2000 to study higher education's impact on democracy on campus and in the community and the wider society. The pilot study involved mapping the state of democratic education at 15 universities in Europe and 15 universities in the United States. Research teams from each of the 30 universities were assembled and a common protocol was developed through meetings and consultations involving teams from all the participating sites. The final European and U.S. reports, which summarized and analyzed the university case study reports, were submitted to the Council of Europe's Committee on Higher Education and Research. They are available on the Consortium's website: (<http://iche.sas.upenn.edu>) and are being edited for publication.

The pilot project received support for its European research from the Council of Europe and funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation for international collaboration and U.S. research. The University of Pennsylvania supported the project's administrative operation and became the organizational center for both the project and the International Consortium. Frank Plantan, Co-Director of International Relations at Penn, was named Executive Secretary of both the International Consortium and General Rapporteur of the Universities as Sites Project. Mr. Plantan is the first non-European to be named a Rapporteur of a Council of Europe-sponsored project.

In the fall of 2000, South Africa joined the Consortium through the Community, Higher Education, Service Partnership (CHESP) of the Joint Education Trust and the Republic of Korea also joined the Consortium through its Ministry of Education. Universities in South Africa and Korea have also conducted studies as part of the pilot project.

Findings

The European study's findings include the following:

1. A perceived decline or crisis in student participation existed at all sites except Queens University, Belfast.
2. Most University administrators and many faculty viewed education for democracy to be entirely a personal matter outside their area of responsibility.
3. Most faculty and administrators considered education for democracy and democratic citizenship a distraction from the university's primary educational mission.
4. Faculty contested the idea that universities should stimulate democratic behavior.
5. "Persuasive passivity" characterized student participation in university governance.
6. The organizational structure of university governance and pedagogy significantly affected the development of democratic behavior.

The U.S. study's findings include the following:

1. Universities can and should be agents of social transformation.
2. Universities do not function as democratic organizations.
3. Even in universities with relatively high levels of democratic procedures and governance mechanisms that encourage participation, there are high levels of cynicism among both students and faculty about the actual extent of democratic decision-making and the extent of student and faculty influence.
4. University decision-making is believed to be in hands of a small elite.
5. Many sites view service-learning initiatives as the primary means providing education for democracy. Sites involved with service learning seem to have a greater number of collateral programs working with their community.
6. Leadership is crucial to institutional engagement. The president tends to play a central role in advancing civic engagement and university outreach efforts with the community.

Results

These major results have been produced since spring 1999:

1. Created and launched a global organization to advance higher education's mission to contribute democratic development.
2. Launched and completed a research project, involving 30 higher educational institutions across Europe and the United States.
3. Expanded the Consortium and Universities as Sites Project beyond Europe and the United States to South Africa and Korea, with strong interest expressed by Australia, Philippines, Mexico, as well as other countries
4. Developed and implemented an innovative approach to research in which scholars from universities in different countries across the world work on the same research problem in the locality in which their university is located. The approach is adaptable to a range of issues such as universities and community health, universities and community arts and culture, universities and schooling, etc. The approach allows for genuinely collaborative and cooperative research, involving scholars with deep knowledge of their local setting, thereby overcoming the problem of outside experts "parachuting" into setting with little tacit and nuanced knowledge derived from close experience.
5. Formation of a group of scholars from across Europe, U.S., Korea, South Africa, and Australia who are in frequent communication and interaction over the internet and at international meetings.
6. Presentation of the work of the Consortium and the results of the Universities as Sites project at meetings of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (2000), American Political Science Association (2001), American Association for Higher Education (2002), International Society for Third Sector Research (2002), and international conferences at the University of Pennsylvania (2001 and 2003) and at the University of Queensland (2001 and 2003). Nearly all of these presentations involved a panel of researchers from a number of countries (e.g., U.S., Poland, England, Italy, Northern Ireland, Australia, South Africa, Korea, Germany). Articles about the Consortium and the Universities as Sites have been published in the

Political Psychologist, Council of Europe proceedings, The Presidency, among other journals.

Next Steps

1. Expand the Consortium to include new sites from across the world.
2. Begin phase 2 of the Universities at Sites Project, which will involve approximately 320 university partners from U.S., Europe, Australia, South Africa, Korea, etc.
3. Expand Consortium's research projects to include undergraduate and graduate research seminars on the impact of a college education on democratic development. Students at the University of Pennsylvania, for example, will be participating in a Faculty-Student Collaborative Seminar in Citizenship and Democratic Development of Penn Undergraduates. Similar seminars will be offered at other universities in the United States and Europe that focus on citizenship and democratic development of students attending those universities.
4. Expand Consortium projects to include a university-assisted community school adaptation project, which will work to establish schools as centers of education, service, participation, engagement, and activity for students, their parents and other community members. Students at both the school and university will learn by solving significant school and community problems. Students from pre-school through graduate school, in effect, will learn by real-world community problem solving.
5. Develop a global forum on the Consortium's web site on best practices for higher education to advance democratic education and development.
6. Convene local, national, and global discussions and conferences on developing effective policies to increase the contribution of higher education to democracy.
7. Publish and widely distribute a monograph on Universities and Democratic Development: An Analysis of Findings with Proposals for Action from Europe, United States, South Africa, Korea and Australia.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to meet with such a distinguished group of Australian higher educational leaders. I look forward to working with you and learning from your in the future.

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