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IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

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IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
OUTCOMES

by

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ABSTRACT

Community engagement has been embedded into higher education institutions since the early 1990s, yet scholars and practitioners still debate if there is an ideal reporting structure for coordinating offices (Jacoby, 2014). This study involved a quantitative analysis of 72 institutions who submitted information to the National Inventory of Institutional Infrastructure for Community Engagement survey (NI³CE – pronounced "nice") between 2017 and 2020. Institutions were categorized by organizational structure (centralized vs. decentralized) and by reporting line (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Joint Academic Affairs/ Student Affairs, Outreach, and decentralized). Using the NI³CE inventory and scoring system, points were awarded to institutions based on variables commonly associated with the institutionalization of community engagement. The results of the study indicated no significant differences between reporting structures as related to (a) an institution's community engagement practices and support funds, (b) an institution's funding and fundraising for community engagement centers, and (c) the extent of service-learning integration into an institution's departments, faculty, and courses. Results supported the contradictory results found in literature, in which there are advantages and disadvantages to every reporting structure. However, findings did not support existing qualitative research that suggests an Academic Affairs reporting line is most beneficial for integration of service-learning. Further study is needed using available benchmarking tools to quantitatively examine how institutional characteristics impact achievement of indicators of community engagement.

Keywords: community engagement, institutionalization, reporting line, higher education

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DEDICATION

I could not have completed this project nor my doctoral degree without the support from

my parents, Jim and Kay Kayser, my sister Dr. Casey Kayser, or my wonderfully curious and

insightful daughter Clara. They are my everything.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCPH   Community-Campus Partnerships for Health

NASCE   National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement

NI³CE   National Inventory for Institutional Infrastructure on Community Engagement

SL/CE   service-learning or community-engaged

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Though it is common for universities to have administrators to support community engagement activities, reporting lines for these locations range from the Division of Student Affairs to the Provost's Office to the Office of the President (Jacoby, 2014). Community engagement professionals have debated for years if there is a preferred location for coordinating offices, but there exists little research, evidence, or authority on which consensus can be built (Jacoby, 2014; Strong et al., 2009). The assessment tools that measure how well community engagement has been institutionalized at an institution do not prioritize one location over another (Furco et al., 2009; Gelmon et al., 2005; Holland, 1997). The debate on this topic has become so prevalent that some voices have called for it to stop, encouraging colleagues to *liberate civic engagement* (Stoeker, 2016).

Yet, many community engagement professionals encounter challenges with reporting structure (Jacoby, 2014). Directors of community engagement centers have reported issues with credibility, proximity, and silos depending on the location of their office, and even community stakeholders have expressed frustration at the confusing nature of university outreach offices (Pigza & Troppe, 2003; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). One of the more prominent debates in this matter is the contrast between programs reporting to academic affairs and student affairs. Jacoby (2014) explains that programs in student affairs can struggle to establish academic buy-in and have lower institutional priority. Additionally, these programs can find it more difficult to implement academic policy that supports service-learning and reward faculty participation. Program administrators located in student affairs have less interactions with faculty and less legitimacy with senior administrators. However, there are also advantages to a location in student

affairs; for those offices that also facilitate student community engagement, a reporting line to student affairs ensures visibility to students and student life (Jacoby, 2014).

The Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education has made it possible for researchers to access datasets that allow for comparison of community-engaged universities with a variety of characteristics (n.d.-a). This development provides the long-awaited and much-needed opportunity for researchers to explore how organizational structure, and other factors, impact the achievement of community engagement indicators. With the information discovered from these new datasets, administrators will be better equipped to make informed decisions regarding developing, reorganizing, and funding community engagement at their campuses.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to compare universities with different community engagement reporting structures. Specifically, this study aimed to determine how reporting structure impacted the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions and if one reporting structure was associated with achieving more community engagement indicators.

Research Question

This study investigated the following research question: What is the relationship between community engagement office reporting structure and the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions?

Significance

Though many campuses have fully developed community engagement programs and have moved well beyond the first, second, and third iterations of how community engagement is conceptualized at their institutions, there are just as many institutions who are only at the

beginning of initializing service-learning and other community engagement initiatives. These institutions are fortunate to have evidence-based practices on which to build their offices and programs from the beginning. It is significant, however, that after more than 30 years of a growing trend toward community engagement in higher education, there is still not a solid answer regarding the best reporting line for a community engagement office (Jacoby, 2014). This phenomenon is particularly troubling given that reporting line and organizational structure is one of the first decisions that must be made when creating an office.

This study examined achievement of institutional community engagement indicators to determine if and how they are impacted by a community engagement office's reporting structure. Rather than just documenting practitioner preferences or codifying challenges, this analysis quantified institutional impact in such a way that it represented large scale effect. The resulting evidence is aimed to suggest best placement for community engagement offices that may be beneficial to universities and colleges that are beginning to institutionalize community engagement and exploring how best to structure coordinating offices. The information may also be a resource for centers who are investigating ways to reinvigorate community engagement after seeing reduced support from a current administration.

<div style="text-align:center">Definition of Terms</div>

Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement classification. The Community Engagement Classification is an elective classification and serves as a process of self-study to document evidence of quality community engagement practices on an institutional level (Carnegie Foundation, 2022). Campuses apply for the classification when confident with their institution's ability to complete the application process and demonstrate adequate level of institutional commitment to community engagement. The application requires intensive campus-

wide data collection and documentation of institutional mission, characteristics, and commitment involving community engagement. Applications are reviewed by a national committee. The classification is mentioned throughout this paper and has been instrumental for benchmarking community engagement during the past 15 years.

Community engagement. For the purposes of this paper, community engagement refers to activities in higher education such as service-learning, volunteerism, community-based research, and other community partnerships. It is a broad term that encompasses many forms of interacting with the community (Checkoway, 2013).

Institutional architecture. The term used by Welch and Saltmarsh (2013) to describe the organizational charts and reporting lines of community engagement centers (e.g., Academic Affairs, Provost's office).

National Inventory for Institutional Infrastructure on Community Engagement (NI3CE). A free assessment tool that maps the infrastructure of community engagement centers (Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education, n.d.-a). Institutions are encouraged to continue to complete the online version so that the data can be used for benchmarking and research. This study uses NI^3CE data to analyze how institutional architecture impacts the engagement indicators of universities and colleges.

Service-learning. A form of service integrated into an academic class that allows students to "participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader ... appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112). Though service-learning is not synonymous with community

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engagement, research on the functional area of service-learning is often considered in the same plane as the field of community engagement.

Assumptions

To conduct the analysis in this paper, several assumptions were made. First, it was assumed that institutions were honest in their reported data to NI^{3}CE, particularly since the purpose of the inventory is benchmarking, not accreditation or another recognition. Second, it was assumed that the institutions reporting data were disclosing quality engagement practices. NI^{3}CE's framework is built around the components of community engagement centers identified as best practices in professional literature (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). The best practices were further refined through reciprocal validation by survey respondents who were asked to identify *top ten essential practices* when submitting surveys. When institutions report the presence of an engagement indicator on the NI^{3}CE survey, however, it does not necessarily indicate the quality level of that indicator. Regardless, in order to study the connection between organizational structure and achievement, there was a necessary assumption that the indicators being reported followed best practices. Finally, this research required the assumption that an indicator's presence was directly related to the efforts of the community engagement office. There was always the possibility that an engagement indicator's presence could be attributed to an entity other than the community engagement office, but for the purpose of this research, it was assumed that the community engagement office held responsibility.

Delimitations

The current study is delimited to the 72 institutions that have submitted data to the NI^{3}CE inventory since its last revision in 2017. These institutions self-reported data between the time the online version opened and when the online tool temporarily closed in April 2020.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The first limitation stems from the dataset used in the research; there are many institutions that have community engagement initiatives but are not represented in the NI^{3}CE dataset. Both the NI^{3}CE and the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification are voluntary assessments promoted to institutions as measures of self-study. Both require a time commitment, documentation, a desire to improve, and a degree of readiness. By default, this method precludes a number of institutions from the dataset, particularly those who have not reached significant levels of institutional engagement yet. These criteria exclude a type of institution that should be of particular interest to researchers as it could provide insight into common characteristics of institutions struggling to achieve institutionalization of community engagement or common characteristics of institutions in the early stages of community engagement initiatives. The inclusion of data from those institutions would assist researchers in determining early indicators of engagement in addition to how engagement evolves as institutional factors change. For a more comprehensive study of this topic, NI^{3}CE could be adapted for institutions to submit recurring applications.

Finally, a limitation common to all quantitative research is that this study will not explain why or how why reporting structure might impact achievement of community engagement indicators. Without also incorporating qualitative analysis, it is difficult to understand the nuances of community engagement and institutional infrastructure through the presence of an engagement factor. In many cases, there are collaborative relationships such as faculty liaisons or indirect reporting lines, that are informal but highly effective. It is difficult to take these considerations into account when classifying institutions into a specific infrastructure type and attributing efforts to community engagement offices. Qualitative research would provide richer,

more substantive understanding of the relationship between reporting lines and effectiveness of community engagement office, but that is outside the scope of this study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine how institutional reporting structure impacted the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions. The obtained findings can assist higher education institutions in determining best practices for establishing or relocating coordinating centers for community engagement. The study was delimited to 72 institutions that participated in NI³CE's online self-inventory since 2017. It relied on the assumption that institutions reported accurate, quality practices that could be traced to the efforts of the institution's community engagement center. Due to the nature of the sample, only universities and colleges that had reached a certain level of institutionalization could be included, which served as a limitation for the study. The following chapters provide a review of existing literature, an overview of the NI³CE inventory, and this study's findings related to the impact of institutional architecture on the success of a community engagement center.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Community engagement in higher education is a term that has grown to encompass a broad array of activities where campus entities interact with external organizations outside of the university, particularly in a way that impacts the public good. For purposes of the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement, community engagement has been defined as "collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (GivePulse, n.d.). Common community engagement activities include service-learning, community-engaged research, campus-community partnerships, and student volunteerism (Checkoway, 2013). Importantly, mere interaction with the community does not entail community engagement – the interaction must be based on principles of partnership and mutually beneficial exchange (Driscoll, 2008). Community engagement must generate "bidirectional reciprocity," benefiting the university through student learning or faculty scholarship in addition to genuinely satisfying a need identified by the community being served (Sandmann, 2008, p. 95).

Over the past 30 years, the academy's shift toward this public service philosophy is evident. In the 1980s and 1990s, student volunteerism was the form of community engagement most visible and heralded, but the lack of introspection, critical thinking, and long-term impact of these experiences led colleges and universities to consider how service activities could be integrated with academic study, career preparation, and student development (Sandmann & Jones, 2019). As the field has continued to evolve, community engagement in higher education has become less about serving the community and more about how universities and communities can work together in partnership to solve critical community issues. Community engagement

activities now include cocurricular and curricular service, community-engaged scholarship or research (by students and faculty), extension services, civic professionalism, social justice, diversity and inclusion, advocacy, civic leadership, and more (Jacoby, 2014).

Community engagement is associated with a variety of positive student outcomes. Service-learning has been established for nearly twenty years as an effective teaching pedagogy (Astin et al., 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999). Participation with community engagement initiatives is linked with increased grade point average (Lockeman & Pelco, 2013) and persistence and degree completion (Yeh, 2010; Yob, 2014). Involvement in community engagement can improve attitudes toward institutions and learning which can lead to higher rates of graduation (Lockeman & Pelco, 2013; Reed et al., 2015). Students receive a variety of civic learning outcomes from participating in community engagement initiatives, ranging from social responsibility and connection with community (Eyler, 2011), understanding of social issues (Yorio & Ye, 2012), intercultural competence and global awareness (Hartman & Kiely, 2014), civic mindedness and civic action (Richard et al., 2016), and social skills (Celio et al., 2011).

Institutional Architecture and Leadership for Community Engagement

As the type and number of community engagement activities have increased on college campuses, so has the creation of offices to coordinate community engagement initiatives. In the early years of the professional field of community engagement, several resources provided guidance and recommendations for establishing campus community engagement centers. Bucco and Busch (1996) published a series of programmatic frameworks for college campuses to create service-learning programs. In 1990, a two-volume resource book from the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education covered how to create a campus community engagement center (Kendall, 1990). Shortly afterward, Bringle and Hatcher (1996) discussed best practices

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for service-learning infrastructure, while Zlotkowski (1998) published a resource book that included sample organizational charts.

In 2013, Welch and Saltmarsh conducted a literature review of scholarship from the early phases of the community engagement field specifically to identify the various elements of community engagement centers at institutions of higher education. They also reviewed 100 successful applications from the 2010 cycle for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. Using content analysis, Welch and Saltmarsh identified 66 different characteristics of community engagement centers and categorized them into six sections: (a) institutional architecture/policy, (b) center infrastructure, (c) center operations, (d) faculty programs, (e) student programs, and (f) community partner programs. Institutional architecture/policy referred to organizational charts, strategic plans, policy and procedures manuals/handbooks, and governance. Center infrastructure referred to administration, personnel, physical space, and operational tools. Center operations described overall center programming and day-to-day operations. Welch and Saltmarsh (2013) also surveyed community engagement directors across the United States about what they felt were the *top ten essential* components that a community engagement center must have. The top four answers were budgeted institutional funds, administrative support, programming staff, and faculty development. A reporting line to academic affairs was ranked as number nine.

Welch and Saltmarsh (2013) defined the category of "institutional architecture" as organizational charts and reporting lines and delineated it further into three broad organizational models: centralized, decentralized, and integrated network (p. 29). Centralized models were offices that focus on a specific type of community engagement, like service-learning. Universities with a decentralized model had several community engagement programs

spearheaded by separate offices spread across campus. As an example, a decentralized model could include a service-learning office, a community based-research office, and the office responsible for promoting student volunteerism. The integrated model combined the decentralized and centralized models, describing universities that provided an overarching umbrella office that served as a central hub for various community engagement offices. Integrated models were more commonly seen at large, public research universities and at institutions with separate and well-established offices that support the different types of community engagement. An overarching hub provided clearer institutional strategy, policy, and budget for community engagement.

There has been some effort to collect data regarding common practices across the country. A 2014 Campus Compact member institution survey reported that 40% of community engagement centers reported to Academic Affairs; 37% to Student Affairs; 8% had double reporting lines to both Academic and Student Affairs; and 6% reported to the President's office (Campus Compact, 2015). On the other hand, of the 147 institutions designated with the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Community Engagement Classification from 2006 to 2010, 77.6%, or 107 institutions, reported to Academic Affairs (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). These sample units differ in that membership dues provide access to Campus Compact membership, whereas an arduous application period and high bar are set for those granted Carnegie designation.

Despite an abundance of informal remarks in the literature that stem from the observations and personal experience of many practitioners, there exists little empirical data, particularly recent data, on how the centralization or decentralization of community engagement offices impacts the quality of engagement initiatives (Jacoby, 2014; Strong et al., 2009). Data has

indicated that community partners preferred partner institutions with centralized community engagement offices (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010) but that the centralized model can also be limiting for center directors who needed wide access across the institution (Pigza & Troppe, 2003). Additionally, research demonstrated that service-learning centers connected to chief academic officers resulted in faculty more likely to try service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2004) and greater institutionalization for service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000). Community engagement directors reported that it was easier to gain the respect and attention of faculty with a center that is academically located (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013).

Recent data trends are indicating that centers have moved beyond the first generation of the field, when offices were primarily coordinating co-curricular volunteer service within student affairs (Sandmann & Plater, 2013; Strong et al., 2009; Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). In 2015, Liang and Sandmann proposed another leadership typology after a study of 224 Carnegie-classified community-engaged institutions with four types of institutional models. A *centralized model* is where one entity is responsible for campus-wide coordination of community engagement. Institutions that are *quasi-centralized* have several parallel entities in large organizational entities (e.g., academic affairs or student affairs) that coordinate engagement within their division. A *diffused infrastructure* model has no central entity for coordinating community engagement; one form has a network of collaborating entities that communicate regularly while the other form has multiple centers collaborating and reporting to separate leadership. The *hybrid model* has an infrastructure combining centralized and diffused characteristics.

There is an emerging recognition from leading community engagement scholars that there may not be an ideal placement for community engagement offices; after all, many engaged

institutions are coordinating tasks, processes, and resources along lines of expertise, not

necessarily in alignment with institutional lines of command (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). Some

voices have called for a new model of leadership for community engagement in higher

education, warning that the field will soon see the need for second order change, and it will

require collective leadership to move forward (Plater, 2011). According to Plater, "collective

leadership has the potential to persist beyond any individual, so members of the infrastructure

itself can change while the collective action continues" (2011, p. 121). In the absence of a

centralized structure, they claim a university's engagement advocates must act in concert to

promote the community engagement agenda (Plater, 2011; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

The topic of service-learning office and location receives an entire chapter in the book

Future Directions for Service-Learning where Strong et al. (2009) explained the need for further

research on campuses that "fully align resources, efforts, and effectiveness" (p. 30). The

development of typologies and inventories of community engagement practices has been an

important first step of study, but as these authors suggested, there is a need for additional

research on how institutional architecture affects community engagement.

Tools for Assessing Community Engagement Institutionally

Many tools for assessing community engagement initiatives currently exist; however,

only a few measurement tools are widely used to assess quality community engagement at the

institutional level. Universities with institutionalized community engagement (1) emphasize

community engagement in their campus mission, (2) have genuine support and involvement

from faculty for service-learning and/or community engaged-research, (3) offer students various

ways to get involved with high-quality community engagement experiences, (4) provide

institutional infrastructure for community engagement, and (5) maintain reciprocal, ongoing

partnerships (Holland, 2001). Most assessment tools that measure the level of community

engagement institutionalization benchmark these five areas.

Evaluating Institutional Architecture

Various institutional assessment tools have been developed to measure

institutionalization, and each takes a different approach to measuring how institutions organize

and manage their community engagement programs. The Holland matrix (1997) was one of the

first assessment tools used to measure institutional commitment to community service and

service-learning, evaluating campuses on seven variables: mission; promotion, tenure, hiring;

organization structure; student involvement; faculty involvement; community involvement; and

campus publications. For each of these categories, the matrix provides four levels from which to

choose as best describing an institution's commitment to engagement, from low relevance to full

integration. In the *Organization Structure* category, there are four levels of integration.

Institutions at level one have no units focusing on engagement or volunteerism whereas

institutions at level two have existing units focusing on engagement or volunteerism. Institutions

at level three have various separate centers existing to support engagement, not funded through

the university; universities at level four have one center that exists to support engagement and

community partnerships, receives funds from the university, and has widespread faculty/student

participation (Holland, 1997). The Holland matrix shows a preference for an integrated model

funded by the institution.

An institution-wide self-assessment tool developed by Community-Campus Partnerships

for Health (CCPH) similarly rates campuses from 1-4 on coordinating structures for community

engagement (Gelmon et al., 2005). The highest level is afforded to institutions with one or more

coordinating structures for community engagement activities, as long as the coordinating

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structures serve multiple constituencies and are supported with substantial and long-term resources from the institution. The CCPH tool suggests no preference for a centralized, decentralized, or integrated model.

Furco's et al.'s (2009) rubric for the institutionalization of community engagement provides benchmarks by which to measure the commitment of an institution to community engagement and how ingrained it has become in institutional culture. The rubric contains three levels, with *critical mass building* at level one, *quality building* at stage 2, and *sustained institutionalization* at stage 3 (Furco et al., 2009). For the category pertaining to institution support, sustained institutionalization occurs when the institution has a group of institutional leaders "devoted primarily" to assisting the various campus constituencies in the "implementation, advancement, and institutionalization of community engagement" (Furco et al., 2009, p. 5).

Holland (2009) explains that these measurement tools have been successful at accomplishing several goals. First, they estimate a desired level of engagement activity that aligns with institutional purposes. Second, they define institutional aspects that are essential to quality engagement. Third, they allow institutions to identify where change and growth are needed. According to Holland, though the Carnegie Community Engagement application was influenced by these tools, the Carnegie application differs in that it offers a way for institutions to report extensive qualitative data.

After the 2020 cycle of the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, application reviewers published information regarding areas for improvement needed among all institutions, even those with exemplary alignment between community engagement and institutional purposes (Carnegie Foundation, 2022). One area was improved assessment practices, including tracking

and recording of institution-wide engagement data, assessment of impact, and improved feedback mechanisms for community partners. Another area where institutions needed continued improvement was in establishing and maintaining collaborative, two-way partnerships. Carnegie reviewers also cited the need for more examples of campuses that had clear faculty recognition policies for community engagement in teaching, learning, research, and creative activity. Reviewers also identified opportunities for growth in aligning community engagement with other campus priorities such as first-year programs, living-learning communities, and diversity initiatives.

Measuring Quality Community Engagement on an Institutional Level

Measurement tools such as the Holland matrix (1997) and Furco et al.'s institutionalization rubric (2009) have served as excellent guideposts for evaluating institutional commitment, but their very existence proves that it can be a slow and difficult process to attain administrative buy-in. While not ideal to operate without institutionalization, community engagement can, especially at large institutions, reach a level of quality despite a lack of significant support (fiscal or philosophical) from the university administration. It can be argued that even without significant support, institutions can still achieve quality community engagement in three of the areas Holland identifies as foundational: (1) widespread faculty involvement and support, (2) diverse and accessible opportunities for students to participate in quality community engagement, and (3) mutually beneficial partnerships (Holland, 2001). If there is an ability to still achieve quality community engagement without institutionalization, it can also be argued that there should be a tool that can evaluate quality community engagement independently of some institutionalization factors.

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Using data from Carnegie applications and professional literature, Welch and Saltmarsh (2013) defined the common roles and responsibilities of a community engagement office and developed an inventory of campus centers' operational infrastructure. The original survey used to collect the inventory data was adapted to an online version and became the National Inventory of Institutional Infrastructure of Community Engagement (NI³CE – pronounced *nice*). NI³CE is now housed with the Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education and the number of inventory items has increased from 122 to 200 (n.d.-a). Campuses are encouraged to submit their information to the database so that it is constantly growing, and institutions do not need to be designated with the Carnegie Community Engagement classification to be included. The inventory allows comparison between peer institutions as review teams assign scores to each institution in areas of center operations, center infrastructure, institutional architecture, quantitative data, and more.

Summary

Thirty years of scholarship has documented the growth of community engagement initiatives in higher education and followed the evolution of the campus community engagement center. Universities and colleges manage community engagement in various ways, with activities centralized, decentralized, integrated, and otherwise (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). Although the methods and structures of organizing community engagement vary widely, the impact of an institution's organizational infrastructure is recognized as highly significant to how well community engagement is integrated institutionally (Holland, 2001). As a result, institutional architecture is considered a foundational attribute in most assessments for measuring institutional community engagement (Furco, 2003; Furco et al., 2009; Gelmon et al., 2005; Holland, 1997).

This study will use the NI³CE inventory and corresponding institutional scores to analyze campuses by institutional architecture (centralized vs. decentralized, Academic Affairs vs. Student Affairs, e.g.) to determine if NI³CE scores are significantly different based on a centers' institutional structure. NI³CE scores will be used to quantify the institutional impact on specific campus characteristics. The information gathered will add to the research regarding how community engagement offices' reporting lines affect the achievement of benchmark indicators and demonstrate how NI³CE can be used a) as an assessment tool that isolates individual variables and b) as a measure of effect for numerous institutional variables.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

As described in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to compare universities with different community engagement reporting structures. Specifically, this study aimed to determine how reporting structure impacted the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions and if one reporting structure was associated with achieving more community engagement indicators.

The study's research question examined the relationship between community engagement office reporting structure and the achievement of community engagement indicators at four-year public higher education institutions. This research question was addressed through the analysis of data submitted by colleges and universities as part of the National Inventory of Institutional Infrastructure for Community Engagement survey. The NI³CE survey collected information regarding each institution's reporting structure in addition to the presence or absence of specific indictors of quality community engagement.

Research Design

The chosen methodology of quantitative analysis was selected for this study to obtain measurable and observable data on the relationship between organizational structure and community engagement indicators. Researchers utilizing quantitative data analysis can use statistics to compare variables and interpret the results to determine how variables interact with one another (Creswell, 2012). As described in Chapter Two, most previous comparisons of organizational structure's impact on community engagement centers have relied on observations and anecdotes (Jacoby, 2014). Through the use of quantitative analysis, this study aimed to quantify institutional impact in such a way that would represent large scale effect, rather than only documenting practitioner preferences for models or noting challenges. Information from the

NI³CE data was used to categorize institutions by reporting structure and compare institutions statistically to determine if their NI³CE scores were significantly different based on their centers' organizational structure.

Population and Sample

The NI³CE survey was open for new submissions from 2015 to May 2020. It is currently offline undergoing revisions (Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education, n.d.-a). The sample for this study contained 72 institutions that completed the survey from 2017-2020. The NI³CE survey was designed to be completed by one person familiar with the community engagement activity at their university, although it was expected that the person submitting the information would first need to collect the data from many people and departments across campus. Survey respondents were all individuals from higher education institutions submitting their data for the purposes of comparing their results with peer institutions and for strategic planning purposes. Although anyone could complete the survey, due to its length and the survey's intent, respondents were from institutions that had all reached a level of moderate to high institutionalization in the area of community engagement. The NI³CE survey was not time-limited, and individuals were allowed to save their work and return to the survey as many times as necessary.

Instrumentation

NI³CE was developed based on the publication of a study on current best practice of campus centers for community engagement (Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). The NI³CE dataset was selected for this study because it contained information about multiple institutions' organizational structure in addition to the institutions' features regarding community engagement. The NI³CE scores provided a simple method by which to compare institutions'

community engagement, but the availability of the raw data also allowed the opportunity to isolate individual questions on the survey and examine the interactions between specific institutional features. For example, researchers, hypothetically, could isolate the data from Q1.19 and Q1.52 to determine if having multiple directors of community engagement was associated with having a designation system for service-learning classes.

The NI³CE survey was revised in 2017, growing from 122 inventory items to nearly 200. Scores were awarded in eleven different categories: (a) *Recognitions & Memberships*; (b) *Practice & Funding;* (c) *History & Governance*; (d) *Center Funding and Budget*; (e) *Center Operations, Logistics, Communication*; (f) *Center Personnel: Director*; (g) *Center Personnel = Staff*; (h) *Center: Student Opportunities*; (i) *Center: Faculty Opportunities*; (j) *Center: Community Partner Opportunities*; and (k) *Assessment*.

Respondents answered questions pertaining to the eleven categories listed above. Response options varied from choices of (a) yes, (b) no, (c) maybe, multiple choice, or long lists from which respondents could indicate which practices or policies related to community engagement were currently in place on their campus. For example, a list in the *Practice and Funding* section included institutional indicators such as (a) a course designation system for service-learning classes, (b) an official definition for service-learning or community engagement, (c) community engagement recognized as part of faculty rewards, and (d) community engagement is part of the institutional strategic plan. NI³CE also collected numerical information about institutional demographics such as student enrollment, private versus public, two-year versus four-year, total annual operating budget, number of personnel, and the amount of institutional funds that support programming staff and student staff.

The remaining part of the NI³CE inventory focused on assessment, operations of the primary community engagement center and the opportunities offered to faculty, students, and community partners. Respondents answered these questions using the following four-point scale: (a) yes (b) partially/ in progress (c) plan to (d) no plan.

Data Collection Procedures

Permission to access the NI³CE dataset was obtained through an online data request form managed by Albion College, the dataset stewards at the time. This request was forwarded to the Associate Director of Community-Engaged Learning at Albion College. The approval to use the data and the dataset was received on June 17, 2021. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Southern Mississippi on July 29, 2021 (see Appendix A).

Dependent Variables

Quality community engagement, represented by the presence of indicators of community engagement best practice explored in the NI³CE survey, was the dependent variable in this study. This variable was measured by five separate variables. Two variables, *practice*, and *center*, aligned with two of the scoring categories developed by Saltmarsh and Welch (2013) for use with the NI³CE survey, *Practice and Funding*, and *Center Funding and Budget*. Variables 3-5 measured the percentages of classes (*percSLclasses*), departments (*percSldepts*), and faculty (*percSLfac*) implementing service-learning or community-engaged learning. See Table 1 for summary information on each variable.

Variable 1: Practice

The dependent variable of *practice* was closely aligned with Saltmarsh and Welch's (2013) *Practice and Funding* category. The corresponding scores for responses to questions in this category were totaled so that there was a composite score for each institution; this composite

score became the *practice* variable. This variable measured the degree to which community

engagement was integrated into an institution's strategic planning, the extent and detail of

community engagement data collection, how community-engaged work was recognized through

the tenure and promotion process, and how institutional funding supports various facets of

community-engaged work. Question 22, which was included in NI³CE's original scoring for this

category, was omitted from the scoring for this study due to redundancy. See Table 2 for the NI³CE

inventory items that comprised this variable and detailed scoring information for each question.

Table 1

Study Variables

Variable Name	Corresponding Questions from NI³CE	Variable Methodology
practice	Q1.19 through Q1.21	Q1.19 + Q.20 + Q1.21
center	Q1.37_1 through Q1.42	Q1.37 + Q1.38 + Q1.39 + Q1.40 + Q1.41 + Q1.42
perSLcourses	Q1.23_3_1 Total number of full-time faculty Q1.23_4_1 Total number of full-time faculty teaching service-learning (SL)/community engaged (CE) courses	New variable computed = Q1.23_4_1 divided by Q1.23_3_1
percSLfac	Q1.23_1_1 Total number of all undergraduate courses Q1.23_2_1 Total number of SL/ CE courses taught	New variable computed = Q1.23_2_1 divided by Q1.23_1_1
percSLdepts	Q1.23_5_1 Total number of departments Q1.23_6_1 Total number of academic departments with one SL/CE course	New variable computed = Q1.23_6_1 divided by Q1.23_5_1

reporting line	Q.15.1-Q15.6	Recoded to one variable: academic affairs = 1, student affairs = 2, joint academic affairs/student affairs = 3, outreach = 4, one or more reporting lines = 6
centralization	Q.15.1-Q15.6	Recoded to one variable: 1 = centralized (one reporting line) 6 = decentralized (two or more reporting lines)

Variable 2: Center

The dependent variable of *center* was closely aligned with Saltmarsh and Welch's (2013) *Center Funding and Budget* category. The corresponding scores for responses to questions in this category were totaled so that there was a composite score for each institution; this composite score became the *center* variable. The *center* variable measured the extent to which institutional funding supported community engagement centers' budgets and personnel. It also evaluated whether centers were supported through fundraising and/or endowments. See Table 3 for the NI³CE inventory items that comprised this variable and detailed scoring information for each question.

Variables 3-5: Service-Learning Integration

This category contained three variables: a) *percSLcourses* - the percentage of undergraduate course offerings during the last year that were service-learning/community engaged classes b) *percSLfac* - the percentage of full-time faculty that taught service-learning/community engaged courses in the last year and c) *percSLdepts* - the percentage of academic departments with one service-learning/community-engaged course in the past year. These percentages were computed from Q1.23 in which institutions reported the total number of courses, faculty, and departments

as well as the total number of courses, faculty, and departments offering service-learning

activities. The three variables in this category were analyzed independently from each other.

Table 2

Practice Variable: NI³CE Questions and Scores

Question	Possible Scores
Q19.1 There is a course designation/tagging system for identifying service learning/engaged courses?	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.2 There is a system for tracking rank and employment status of faculty who teach community engaged courses/conduct community engaged research.	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.3 There is a system for tracking gender of faculty who teach community engagement courses/conduct community engaged research?	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.4 There is a system for tracking the race and ethnicity of faculty who teach community engagement courses/conduct community-engaged research?	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.5 There is an official/operational definition and of the following: service-learning, community-based research, community engagement.	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.6 Community engagement is included in institutional strategic plans (at the university, school, or division levels).	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.7 Community engagement is included in institutional operations plans (at the college/university, school, or division levels).	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.9 Community engaged course designations are made by a review committee. No plan=0 Plan to=.25 In progress=.5 Yes=1	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.10 Community engagement is intentionally linked to the institutional priority of diversity and inclusion.	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q19.11 Community engagement is intentionally linked to the institutional priority of student success.	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes

Q19.12 Community engagement is formally recognized as part of faculty scholarly work in the faculty rewards process.

0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes

Q19.13 Community engagement is included in the institution's accreditation documentation.

0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes

Q19.14 Community engagement is included in the criterion for faculty tenure and promotion.

0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes

Q19.16 Community engagement is included in reappointment criterion for non-tenurable faculty.

0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes

Q1.20 Does your institution have dedicated funding for community engagement?

0=No 1=Yes

Q1.21 Of the federal work-study funds utilized by your institution, what % are designated for off-campus work-study?

1= <7% 2= 7%-10% 3=>10%

Note: This table demonstrates how specific responses were scored for NI³CE inventory questions. Each institutions'

practice score was calculated by totaling the scores for Q1.19 through Q1.21.

Table 3

Center Variable: NI³CE Questions and Scores

Question	Possible Scores
Q1.37_1 Center has institutional funds for entire operational budget	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q1.37_2 Center has institutional funds support programming staff	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q1.37_3 Center operational budget provides support for student staff/leaders	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q1.37_4 Center has fundraising mechanisms (ex: grants, donors)	0= No plan, .25= Plan to, .5= In progress, 1= Yes
Q1.38 What is the total annual operating budget of this center (not including salaries)?	1= $0-$1,000, 2= $1,001-$2,500 3= $2,501-$5,000 4= $5,001-$10,000

	5= $10,001-$15,000 6= $15,001-$25,000 7= $25,001-$50,000 8= $50,001-$75,000 9= $75,001-$100,000 10= $100,000+
Q1.39 Does this center have an endowment?	0= No 1= Yes
Q1.40 How many endowments does this center have?	1= 1 to 4, 2= 5 to 9, 3= More than 10
Q1.41 What is the estimated total annual amount from all endowments?	1= $0-$1,000 2= $1,001-$2,500 3= $2,501-$5,000 4=$5,001-$10,000 5= $10,001-$15,000 6= $15,001-$25,000 7= $25,001-$50,000 8= $50,001-$100,000 9= $100,000+
Q1.42 Does this center have Corporation for National & Community Service program funding?	No = 0 Yes = 1

Note: This table demonstrates how specific responses were scored for NI³CE inventory questions. Each institutions'

center score was calculated by totaling the scores for Q1.37_1 through Q1.42.

Independent Variables

The independent variable in this study was reporting structure for community

engagement, which was measured with two variables. The first variable was *reporting line*,

separating institutions into reporting lines to a) Academic Affairs, b) Student Affairs, c) joint

Academic/Student Affairs, and d) Outreach, as reported by institutions in Q.15. For data analysis

purposes, institutions with Academic Affairs reporting lines were assigned a 1, Student Affairs

reporting lines with a 2, joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs reporting lines with a 3,

Outreach reporting lines with a 4, and one or more reporting lines a 6. Universities with reporting

lines to ministry were omitted, due to their small number, as were institutions that did not

respond or answered *do not know*. The second independent variable was *centralization*, in which

institutions were divided into two categories based on whether they had one reporting line

(centralized model, assigned a 1) or two or more reporting lines (decentralized model, assigned a 6). With NI³CE only indicating an office's reporting line and not its purpose, an institution could not be classified as *integrated*, the third model of Saltmarsh and Welch's typology (2003), so the integrated model was excluded from analysis. Again, institutions that did not indicate reporting line structure or answered *do not know* were omitted.

Data Analysis

Between-groups comparisons of means and medians were used to determine the relationship between community engagement office reporting structure and the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions. Two types of reporting structure were analyzed: *reporting line* and *centralization type*. Community engagement indicators were analyzed by grouping questions into three categories: (a) *practice*, aligned with NI³CE's *Practice and Funding* Category, (b) *center*, aligned with NI³CE's *Center Funding and Budget* category, and (c) *service-learning integration* (the percentages of departments, courses, and faculty who integrated service-learning or community engagement).

Two statistical tests were chosen to analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The relationship between the dependent variables and *centralization* was tested using an independent samples t-test, because *centralized* and *decentralized* were independent and categorical, and the five dependent variables were continuous. An independent-samples t-test is used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the means between two different groups. The relationship between the dependent variables and *reporting line* was tested using a one-way ANOVA because reporting line was independent and categorical but also had more than two conditions.

Centralization

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Two variables (*percSLfac* and *percSLcourses)* did not meet necessary assumptions to run independent samples t-tests; as a result, a Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to test their relationship with *centralization*. The Mann-Whitney U test, also known as the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test, serves as an alternative to independent samples t-tests when data is non-normally distributed. It is a nonparametric test that is used to determine the differences in medians between two groups. The remaining *centralization* variables (*practice*, *center*, and *percSLdepts*) were successfully tested using an independent samples t-test.

Reporting Lines

For *reporting line*, three variables (*practice*, *percSLfac*, *percSLcourses*) did not meet the necessary assumptions to run a one-way ANOVA; as a result, Kruskal-Wallis H tests were conducted. The Kruskal-Wallis H test serves as an alternative to one-way ANOVAs when data is non-normally distributed or otherwise fails the assumptions of the one-way ANOVA test. It is a nonparametric test that is used to determine the differences in medians between two or more groups. This statistical test was chosen to analyze the impact of reporting lines on *percSLcourses* and *percSLfac*, as well as the *practice* variable, due to outliers and a non-normal distribution in these variables' data. The remaining *reporting line* variables (*center* and *percSLdepts)* were successfully tested using a one-way ANOVA.

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Summary

</div>

This chapter described the methodology used to examine how reporting structure impacted the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions and if one reporting structure was associated with achieving more community engagement indicators. The research questions, research design, sample, and instrumentation were discussed. Additionally, this chapter described the data collection process in addition to the analysis of data.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This study aimed to determine how reporting structure impacted the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions and if one reporting structure was associated with achieving more community engagement indicators. The following research questions was examined: What is the relationship between community engagement office reporting structure and the achievement of community engagement indicators at higher education institutions? This question was investigated through a quantitative analysis of the data from 72 institutions who submitted information to the National Inventory of Institutional Infrastructure for Community Engagement survey between 2017 and 2020. Institutions were categorized by organizational structure and compared statistically to determine if NI³CE scores in three different categories – *practice*, *center*, and *service-learning integration*, were significantly different. This chapter provides an overview of the institutions included in the sample and the results of the statistical tests.

Descriptive Findings: Sample

The sample contained 72 higher education institutions that completed the survey from 2017-2020. The majority were four-year universities ($n = 66$), with five community colleges and one technical trade school. See Table 4 for a more detailed breakdown. There were 21 institutions that identified as suburban, 17 as rural, and 34 as urban. Undergraduate enrollments for the sample universities ranged from under 1,000 students to 25,000+, as detailed in Table 5. Thirty-seven of the 72 responding institutions were currently designated with the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, and all had at least one center on campus with a significant focus on community engagement responsibilities. The centers varied widely in how long they had been established (see Table 6).

Table 4

Sample Institution Types

Type	Frequency	Percent
Public 2-year community college	5	6.9
Public 4-year research university	9	12.5
Public 4-year comprehensive university	11	15.3
Public 4-year liberal arts college	5	6.9
Private 4-year research university	6	8.3
Private 4-year comprehensive university	9	12.5
Private 4-year liberal arts college/university	18	25.0
Faith-based 4-year college/university	8	11.1
Technical/trade school	1	1.4
Total	72	100.0

Table 5

Undergraduate Student Enrollment in Sample Institutions

Enrollment	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1,000	1	1.4
1,000 to 3,999	25	34.7
4,000 to 5,999	8	11.1
6,000 to 9,999	15	20.8
10,000 to 25,000	20	27.8
25,000+	3	4.2
Total	72	100.0

Table 6

Number of Institutions and Years Since Center Established

Years	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3 years	8	11.1
4 to 6 years	7	9.7
7 to 10 years	16	22.2
11 to 15 years	9	12.5
16 to 20 years	12	16.7
21+ years	20	27.8
Total	72	100.0

Descriptive Findings: Variables

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable of *practice,* which was computed by adding the scores for Q1.19 through Q1.21 (see Table 1), had a mean score of 10.22 ($SD = 2.64$) with range: 3.75-15.25. The dependent variable of *center*, which was computed by adding the scores for Q1.37 through Q1.41, had a mean score of 12.84 ($SD = 5.78$) with range: 2-25.

The dependent variable of *percSLcourses* was computed with the formula Q1.23_4_1 divided by Q1.23_3_1. Sixty-three ($n= 63$) institutions provided sufficient information regarding number of service-learning courses or total institutional courses to determine this variable. The mean percentage for the 63 institutions was 6.13 ($SD = 12.34$) with range: 0-92.67.

The dependent variable of *percSLfac* was computed with the formula Q1.23_2_1 divided by Q1.23_1_1. Sixty-four ($n= 64$) institutions provided sufficient information regarding number of service-learning faculty or total institutional faculty to determine this variable. The mean percentage for the 64 institutions was 12.06 ($SD = 9.23$) with range: 0-44.91.

The dependent variable of *percSLdepts* was computed with the formula Q1.23_6_1 divided by Q1.23_5_1. Sixty-five ($n= 65$) institutions provided sufficient information regarding number of service-learning departments or total institutional departments to determine this variable. The mean percentage for the 65 institutions was 44.23 ($SD = 23.71$) with range: 0-100. One outlier was removed, a response of 36 total departments and 90 departments incorporating service-learning/community engagement (a 250%).

Independent Variables

Sixty-three institutions reported sufficient data regarding a clear *reporting line*. There were 22 institutions with reporting lines to Academic Affairs, 10 to Student Affairs, six to joint

Academic Affairs/Student Affairs, three to Outreach, and 22 decentralized (one or more

reporting lines). There was only one institution with a sole reporting line to ministry, so this

university was excluded from the analysis. Institutions were also examined in terms of

centralization; 41 institutions had centralized reporting lines and 22 were decentralized. Tables 7

and 8 summarize these findings.

Table 7

Centralization of Sample Institutions

	Frequency	Percent
Centralized	41	56.9
Decentralized	22	30.6
Total	63	87.5
System Missing	9	12.5
Total	72	100.0

Table 8

Reporting Line of Sample Institutions

Reporting Line	Frequency	Percent
Academic Affairs (AA)	22	30.6
Student Affairs (SA)	10	13.9
Joint AA/SA	6	8.3
Outreach	3	4.2
Decentralized	22	30.6
Total	63	87.5
System Missing	9	12.5
Total	72	100.0

Relationship between Centralization and Practice

There were 41 centralized institutions and 22 decentralized institutions that reported

sufficient data to calculate a *practice* score. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine

if there were differences in the *practice* scores between centralized and decentralized institutions.

There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by a box plot. Percentages for both types of institutions were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there was homogeneity of variances for centralized and decentralized institutions, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .828$). The mean score for centralized institutions ($M = 10.20$, $SD = 2.52$) was -.29, 95% CI [-1.62 to 1.04], lower than decentralized institutions ($M = 10.49$, $SD = 2.52$); however there was no statistically significant difference, $t(61)$ t=-.432, $p = .668$.

Relationship between Centralization and Center

There were 41 centralized institutions and 22 decentralized institutions that reported sufficient data to calculate a *center* score. An independent-samples t-test was run to determine if there were differences in the *center* scores between centralized and decentralized institutions. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by a box plot. Percentages for both types of institutions were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there was homogeneity of variances for centralized and decentralized institutions, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .097$). The mean score for centralized institutions ($M = 13.04$, $SD = 6.15$) was -.55, 95% CI [-4.1 to 3.0], lower than decentralized institutions ($M = 13.6$, $SD = 7.68$); however there was no statistically significant difference, $t(61)$ t=-.309, $p = .758$.

Relationship between Centralization and Service-Learning Integration

There were 36 centralized institutions and 19 decentralized institutions that reported a percentage of SL/CE courses (*percSLcourses*). There were outliers in the data and percentages for centralized institutions were not normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), so a Mann-Whitney U-Test was run. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there

were differences in *percSLcourses* score between centralized and decentralized institutions. Distributions of the *percSLcourses* scores for centralized and decentralized were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. *PercSLcourses* scores for centralized (mean rank= 27.88) and decentralized (mean rank= 28.24) universities were not statistically significantly different, $U = 346.5$, $z = .08$, $p = .937$, using an exact sampling distribution for U (Dineen & Blakesley, 1973).

There were 38 centralized institutions and 19 decentralized institutions that reported a percentage of SL/CE faculty (*percSLfac*). There were three outliers in the data and percentages for centralized institutions were not normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), so a Mann-Whitney U-Test was run. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were differences in *percSLfac* score between centralized and decentralized institutions. Distributions of the *percSLfac* scores for centralized and decentralized were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. *PercSLfac* scores for centralized (mean rank= 29.53) and decentralized (mean rank= 27.95) models were not statistically significantly different, $U = 341$, $z = -.339$, $p = .735$, using an exact sampling distribution for U (Dineen & Blakesley, 1973).

There were 39 centralized institutions and 19 decentralized institutions that reported a percentage of SL/CE departments (*percSLdepts*). There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by a box plot. Percentages for both types of institutions were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there was homogeneity of variances for centralized and decentralized institutions, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .442$). An independent samples t-test analysis was conducted and showed the mean percentage of SL departments for centralized institutions ($M = 44.12$, $SD= 25.7$) was -1.8 *SD* 1, 95% CI [-15.43 to 11.8] lower than decentralized institutions ($M = 45.94$, $SD = 21.03$); however there was no statistically significant difference, $t(56)$ $t=-.267$, $p = .791$.

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Relationship between Reporting Line and Center

There were 63 institutions that provided sufficient information to determine reporting line (see Table 8). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine differences in *center* scores between reporting lines. There were no outliers in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot for values greater than 1.5 box-lengths from the edge of the box. Center score was normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$). Data is presented as mean ± standard deviation. *Center* scores for the different reporting lines are as follows: Academic Affairs ($n = 22, 11.88 \pm 6.09$), Student Affairs ($n = 10, 14.38 \pm 6.96$), Joint Academic Affairs/ Student Affairs ($n = 6, 14.92 \pm 6.59$), Outreach ($n = 3, 13.42 \pm 2.24$), and decentralized ($n = 22, 13.59 \pm 7.68$). There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .120$). *Center* score was not statistically significantly different for different reporting lines, $F(4, 58) = .398, p = .810$. Scores for joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs reporting lines were 3.04 higher than Academic Affairs reporting lines (95% CI, -5.78 to 11.86), but this was not statistically significant ($p = .8671$). Scores for Student Affairs reporting lines were 2.5 higher than Academic Affairs reporting lines (95% CI, -4.8 to 9.8), but this was not statistically significant ($p = .870$).

Relationship between Reporting Line and Practice

An analysis of *practice* scores across reporting lines revealed one outlier in the data, a score of 4.5, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot for values greater than 1.5 box-lengths from the edge of the box. *Practice* score was not normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$). Distributions of *practice* scores were similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot, so a Kruskal-Wallis H test was run to determine if there were differences in practice median scores between reporting lines in Academic Affairs (10.25), Student Affairs

(7.63), Joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs (11.5), Outreach (11.75), and decentralized

(10.5). Median *practice* scores were not statistically significantly different between groups, $H(4)$

$= 8.013$, $p = .091$.

Relationship between Reporting Line and Service-Learning Integration

There were numerous outliers in the percentages of SL/CE courses (*percSLcourses*)

across reporting lines, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot for values greater than 1.5 box-

lengths from the edge of the box. *PercSLcourses* scores were not normally distributed, as

assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$). Distributions of the *percSLcourses* scores were similar

for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot, so a Kruskal-Wallis H test was run

to determine if there were differences in median scores between reporting lines in Academic

Affairs (2.9), Student Affairs (1.6), Joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs (6.8), Outreach

(2.58), and decentralized (2.96). Median *percSLcourses* scores were not statistically significantly

different between groups, $H(4) = 7.538$, $p = .110$.

There were numerous outliers in the percentages of SL/CE faculty (*percSLfac*), as

assessed by inspection of a boxplot H for values greater than 1.5 box-lengths from the edge of

the box. *PercSLfac* score was not normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p >$

.05). A Kruskal-Wallis H test was run to determine if there were differences in *percSLfac* median

scores between reporting lines in Academic Affairs (12.73), Student Affairs (10.17), Joint

Academic Affairs/Student Affairs (14.42), Outreach (5.39), and decentralized (45.94). However,

distributions of *percSLfac* scores were not similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection

of a boxplot. Distributions of *percSLfac* scores were not statistically significantly different

between groups, $\chi^2(4) = 5.56$, $p = .235$.

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There was one outlier in the percentages of SL/CE departments (*percSLdepts*), a 78.6%, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot for values greater than 1.5 box-lengths from the edge of the box. *PercSLdepts* score was normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test (p > .05). *PercSLdepts* for the different reporting lines are as follows (data is presented as mean ± standard deviation): Academic Affairs (*n* =20, 46.50 ± 6.32), Student Affairs (*n* = 10, 27.46 ± 5.03), Joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs (*n* = 6, 59.8 ± 9.61), Outreach (*n* = 3, 52.47 ± 7.14), and decentralized (*n* = 22, 45.94 ± 4.82). There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances (*p* = .216). A one-way ANOVA determined that *percSLdepts* scores were not statistically significantly different for different reporting lines, $F(4, 53) = .2.15$, $p = .088$. The mean joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs score was 3.04 higher than Academic Affairs (95% CI, -5.78 to 11.86) but this was not statistically significant (*p* = .8671). The mean joint Academic Affairs/Student Affairs score was also 32.34 higher than Student Affairs (95% CI, -1.46 to 66.15) but this was not statistically significant (*p* = .067).

Summary

There were no statistically significant differences found in dependent variables based on reporting structure. Institutions with different reporting lines did not have significantly different percentages of service-learning departments (one-way ANOVA, $F(4, 53) = .2.15$, $p = .088$); percentages of service-learning faculty (Kruskal-Wallis H Test, $\chi^2(4) = 5.56$, $p = .235$); or percentages of service-learning courses (Kruskal-Wallis H Test, $H(4) = 7.538$, $p = .110$). Additionally, institutions with different reporting lines did not have significantly different scores in the *practice* category (Kruskal-Wallis H Test, $H(4) = 8.013$, $p = .091$) or *center* category (one-way ANOVA, $F(4, 58) = .398$, $p = .810$).

Similarly, institutions with centralized reporting structures did not differ from decentralized institutions in *practice* scores (independent-samples t-test, $t(61)$ $t=-.432, p = .668$); *center* scores (independent-samples t-test, $t(61)$ $t=-.309, p = .758$); percentages of service-learning faculty (Mann-Whitney U Test, $U = 341, z = -.339, p = .735$); percentages of service-learning departments (independent samples t-test, $t(56)$ $t=-.267, p = .791$); or percentages of service-learning courses (Mann-Whitney U Test, $U = 346.5, z = .08, p = .937$).

This chapter outlined the descriptive findings and statistical results for this study. Chapter Five presents interpretation of the findings and discuss limitations, implications, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

With a growing body of literature documenting the benefits of community-engaged learning and the complexity of social issues demanding multi-stakeholder interventions, the number of universities engaging in campus-community engagement is likely to increase in the next decade. One of the first questions a university new to community engagement will ask is how to organizationally position these initiatives; unfortunately, after more than 30 years of scholarship on campus-community partnerships, there are no definitive answers to be found in the literature.

This study provided a quantitative analysis of how an institution's achievement of community engagement indicators was affected by the reporting structure of its coordinating office. Institutions who submitted information for the National Inventory of Institutional Infrastructure for Community Engagement survey (NI³CE) were studied from two angles: (a) whether an institution had a centralized or decentralized community engagement infrastructure, and (b) the reporting line of its community engagement office. The study found that overall, no significant differences existed between reporting structures as related to (a) an institution's community engagement practices and support funds, (b) an institution's funding and fundraising for community engagement centers, and (c) the extent of service-learning integration into an institution's departments, faculty, and courses. A summary of the conclusions, implications, and recommendations is presented below.

Implications

Unlike previous comparisons of centralization models which have primarily been anecdotal, this study offered a quantitative analysis of differences between how institutions centralize their coordinating offices for community engagement. Although quantitative evidence

has been lacking in the past, the centralization of community engagement features heavily in institutional assessment tools (Gelmon et al., 2005; Furco et al. 2009; Holland 1997). However, the absence of significant differences between centralized and decentralized institutions found in this study is consistent with the assessment tools developed by Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (Gelmon et al., 2005) and the Furco et al. (2009) rubric, which indicate no preference for a centralized, decentralized, or integrated model. The findings also lend support to Plater's (2011) philosophy of collective leadership, which suggests engagement advocates should work in concert without formalized structure to promote and support community engagement.

The present study's findings that the reporting line of a community engagement center has no impact on institutional service-learning integration, community engagement practices and funding, and funding and fundraising, is in fact consistent with the contradictory results often found in literature. Research has demonstrated that different reporting lines have different advantages and disadvantages, varying between accessibility to specific stakeholders, credibility, institutional priority, and ability to implement academic policies (Jacoby, 2004; Pigza & Troppe, 2003; Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). It is a logical conclusion, then, that in the present study, the advantages and disadvantages essentially negated one another, balancing out in the end.

Most interestingly, though, is the finding that institutions with reporting lines to student affairs did not have significantly lower service-learning integration than institutions with reporting lines to academic affairs. This finding conflicts with most qualitative research on this subject, which has shown that academically-located service-learning centers result in faculty more likely to try service-learning, more respect from faculty, and better institutionalization of service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2004; Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013). This finding raises important questions about what is actually revealed by how many service-

learning classes, departments, and faculty are implementing service-learning. This does not provide context about the impact of service-learning on community partners, students, or even how well those service-learning classes adhere to the definition of service-learning. In fact, caution should be practiced when interpreting these results as whole, since there are many engagement indicators that may be influenced by reporting structure which were not included in this study. The current findings are an analysis of only a few engagement indicators.

In addition to the limitations discussed in Chapter One, this study was also limited by the methodological choice to categorize survey responses into the variables of *practice* and *funding*. This approach diluted the ability to examine how reporting structure impacted specific engagement indicators. This is particularly problematic considering that these variables were comprised of a blend of support mechanisms often administered institutionally (e.g., dedicated institutional funding, recognition in tenure and promotion) and success indicators within control of Center directors (e.g., course designation systems, data collection). Especially when considering that reporting line is directly related to upper administration buy-in and support, isolating variables related to institutional support would reveal a clearer understanding of the impact of reporting line on engagement indicators out of the control of community engagement center staff. This is an important issue for future research.

Recommendations

Although scholars have lamented the lack of a common definition for community engagement and the varied practices occurring across the country, the truth is that each institution holds a unique identity and must develop its community engagement infrastructure in a way that makes sense for the existing culture, functions, and personnel of the intuition. As many of the institutional assessment tools suggest, the importance of working across boundaries

is key. The CCPH rubric (Gelmon et al., 2005) prioritizes that units are not siloed and serve

multiple constituencies, while the Furco et al. (2009) rubric subtracts points from units providing

services only to a limited constituency or segment of the institution.

This study's results, examined in relation to the existing assessment tools, suggest that

reporting lines are not as important as the ability for a community engagement office to serve an

entire institution. This knowledge also has implications for community partners who have

expressed preferences for institutions with one reporting line due to ease of access (Weerts &

Sandmann, 2010). Logically, one community engagement office does seem easiest for

community partner access; but the presence of several offices, assuming they serve all campus

constituencies and do not have to redirect partners, has the potential to offer multiple entry points

and increased access for community partners looking for services. For institutions focused on

creating new community engagement offices, the present study's results suggest that location

may not be as important as ensuring office(s) are not siloed and can serve multiple

constituencies.

Is NI³CE an effective tool for determining relationships between specific institutional

characteristics and the achievement of engagement indicators? Due to the lack of description for

the various coordinating structures for community engagement, there are limits to how

centralization typologies can be applied to the institutions responding to the NI³CE survey. The

application for Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, alternatively, requires more

in-depth description of coordinating structures, and is potentially a better tool for classifying

institutions into the various centralization typologies presented by Liang and Sandmann (2015)

and Welch and Saltmarsh (2013). The Carnegie application also allows input regarding service-

learning integration and other engagement indicators that could be analyzed quantitatively.

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However, there are other variables measured adequately by NI³CE that could impact the

achievement of engagement indicators, such as number of staff responsible for coordinating

community engagement and amount of institutional funding, variables which could be easily

isolated and analyzed for impact on engagement indicators such as awards or recognitions.

NI³CE can also be used to identify elements of the Furco et al (2009) rubric, such as an

operational definition of service-learning, a strategic plan for community engagement, and

integration into other high-profile efforts of the institution. As these engagement indicators are

highlighted by Furco et. as important to institutionalization, it would be interesting to determine

how various institutional characteristics impact these outcomes. Further research should be

undertaken to investigate these areas.

Summary

In many ways, community engagement is entering a new era, with researchers now

having access to national datasets of institutional statistics regarding community engagement.

The dataset provided by applicants for the Carnegie Community Engagement classification is

revealing new insights into challenges faced by campuses and areas needing improvement

(Driscoll, 2008). The NI³CE survey is currently undergoing revisions, but universities interested

in benchmarking their institutionalization compared to other institutions with similar

characteristics can request access. The National Assessment of Service and Community

Engagement (NASCE) is another dataset accessible to researchers, measuring and providing

insight into institutions' student community service and structures for supporting service

(Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education, n.d.-b). Finally, the organization

Collaboratory recently announced they were opening access to their national dataset on public

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service activities conducted by faculty/staff with surrounding communities (Collaboratory, 2021).

Community-engaged scholars can now go beyond the categorization of how institutions are managing community engagement, and instead use the newly available data to determine statistically what is working with community engagement practices. The time of categorizing and benchmarking institutions only is past, although it was an important first step. With the availability of new data, practitioners can present hard evidence that specific practices lead to the achievement of quality community engagement.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter

Office *of* Research Integrity

NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-21-291
PROJECT TITLE: Impact of Organizational Structure on the Institutionalization of Community Engagement
SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Center for Comm&Civic Engageme, Educational Research and Admin
RESEARCHER(S): Christy Arrazattee, Masha Krsmanovic

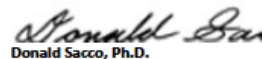IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt
CATEGORY: Exempt

Category 4. Secondary research for which consent is not required: Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, if at least one of the following criteria is met:
(i) The identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens are publicly available;
(ii) Information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects;
(iii) The research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigator's use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under 45 CFR parts 160 and 164, subparts A and E, for the purposes of "health care operations" or "research" as those terms are defined at 45 CFR 164.501 or for "public health activities and purposes" as described under 45 CFR 164.512(b); or
(iv) The research is conducted by, or on behalf of, a Federal department or agency using government-generated or government-collected information obtained for nonresearch activities, if the research generates identifiable private

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information that is or will be maintained on information technology that is subject to and in compliance with section 208(b) of the E-Government Act of 2002, 44 U.S.C. 3501 note, if all of the identifiable private information collected, used, or generated as part of the activity will be maintained in systems of records subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and, if applicable, the information used in the research was collected subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.

APPROVED STARTING: July 29, 2021

Donald Sa
Donald Sacco, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chairperson