CHAPTER 6.

BUILDING ENGAGED INTERVENTIONS IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

Keri E. Mathis
University of Louisville

Beth A. Boehm
University of Louisville

Boehm and Mathis profile the University of Louisville's efforts at becoming a more engaged university, including receiving the Carnegie Community Engaged University classification and implementing Ideas-to-Action, a quality enhancement plan that holds community engagement as one of its core principles. Yet these endeavors have focused largely on faculty research and undergraduate education, leaving graduate students out of the mix. Recent scholarship in higher education has documented a similar neglect of graduate student involvement in community engagement projects that challenge conventional types of academic research, teaching, and mentorship. The authors' positions within rhetoric and composition and within the University of Louisville's School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies have afforded them the opportunity to initiate an interdisciplinary graduate community engagement program. Thus, they describe their efforts in extending these programs to focus on engaged scholarship and on developing a year-long academy that will lead to collaborations among graduate students on community projects.

During the last decade, the University of Louisville has made several steps toward becoming a more engaged university, including applying for and receiving the Carnegie Community Engaged University classification and implementing Ideas-to-Action, a quality enhancement plan that holds community engagement as one of its core principles. These endeavors, however, have focused largely on faculty research and undergraduate education, and have left graduate education

and graduate students out of the mix. Recent scholarship in higher education pointed out a similar neglect of graduate student involvement in community engagement projects that challenge conventional types of academic research, teaching, and mentorship (e.g., O'Meara, 2008; Gilvin, 2012). The 2014 "Report of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature," in response to both persistent public questioning of the value of doctoral study in the humanities and the changing academic market for language and literature graduates, calls for a robust "public humanities," one in which scholars "combine scholarship, teaching, and creative activity;" such scholars, the report suggests, "are often collaborative, engage with diverse communities, sometimes as cocreators, and consciously articulate their value to their publics" (p. 9). While the MLA report's authors do not go very far to imagine how English scholars might engage in their communities more deeply or what the products of those engagements might be, they do seem to understand that the public humanities might benefit more traditional doctoral programs by explaining the value of the humanities to a skeptical public. Almost a decade earlier, KerryAnn O'Meara and Audrey Jaeger (2006) argued that traditional models of knowledge-making were insufficient and called for a more reciprocal relationship between graduate students (and their faculty mentors) and the public. Such reciprocity suggests that not only will the academy recognize its responsibility to use the knowledge it creates to improve society, but O'Meara and Jaeger argue that doctoral education will improve as a result: "It is imperative that graduate students develop a greater awareness of how their discipline can contribute to solving real-world problems as well as how disciplinary knowledge can be transformed through interaction with real-world settings" (p. 11).

And as the number of academic jobs for those with doctorates declines, particularly for students in the humanities, the professional skills learned by such interactions with "real-world settings" can lead to alternative careers. As Day, et al. (2012) write, "For graduate students, community engagement can provide valuable professional skills and experiences that lead to non-academic careers in business, government (including federal and state agencies), nonprofit organizations, and cultural institutions, and to non-faculty careers on campus in research organizations, outreach, and government relations" (p. 163). Students who seek the connection between their graduate study and the "real world" are not only more likely to find careers outside the academy but to find satisfaction in them. Additionally, if an institution is seeking to be diverse and inclusive, valuing community engagement is one way of attracting underrepresented students, who often "pursue higher education, in part, as a way to gain skills and knowledge that will benefit their communities" (Day et al., 2012, p. 165). Indeed, not valuing community-engaged research or failing to teach students how to do it

could make it all that more difficult to recruit, and even more difficult to *retain*, students of color, who might believe the institution values basic research at the expense of the applied or community-based work they hope to do.

In many ways, then, we are seeking an intervention that will address several problems with traditionally conceived doctoral education: 1) we challenge the idea that graduate research takes place only within the academy by encouraging doctoral students to address community problems through their research; 2) we will provide an opportunity for students whose disciplinary mentors are not engaged researchers to learn the principles of engaged scholarship and a venue to apply their skills to address community problems; and 3) we will, thereby, provide a model of mentoring that challenges the traditional "master-apprentice" paradigm by providing students with skills that their mentors don't have, skills that will give them career choices that their mentors could not imagine.

As we construct this intervention, we rely on feminist conversations from rhetoric and composition and women's and gender studies that focus on reciprocal and relational community engagement models that encourage crossing boundaries between the classroom and the community (Iverson & James, 2014). In focusing on core feminist principles such as collaboration and reciprocity, we challenge ways community engagement is often perceived as *service to* the communities on the periphery of the university's campus. Like Concannon, et al. and Brandt, et al. whose essays are included in this section on partnerships, we draw on Royster and Kirsch's *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* (2012) to focus our efforts on helping graduate students learn to *listen* rhetorically in order to both attend to the needs of community partners and to fairly represent them in their research (p. 4). And like Mary P. Sheridan, in her chapter "Knot-Working Collaborations: Fostering Community-Engaged Teachers and Scholars," we explore these tenets of community engagement, rhetoric, and feminist practice to develop a structure that will help graduate students develop professional identities as engaged scholars through threshold experiences and multiple entry points into community-engaged projects. This professional development relies heavily on feminist values and ethics in forming genuine relationships and partnerships with community members to contribute to the community and to enhance the formation of knowledge in the academy. As we build structures for graduate student professionalization at UofL, we have embraced calls from Iverson, James, Royster and Kirsch to re-envision engagement through feminist practice and demonstrate how these core principles influenced our plans and design for our newest interdisciplinary graduate program focused on engaged scholarship.[1]

---

1   Furthermore, as several scholars in rhetoric and composition and in women's and gender studies have noted, these core feminist beliefs intersect directly with scholarship on community engagement. For instance, Leeray Costa and Karen Leong note that ". . . feminist pedagogy val-

Thus, while this work at the intersection of feminism and community engagement has begun, we argue that there remains a need to develop structures for community projects and engaged scholarship from centralized administrative locations to intervene in the traditional model of graduate education, which often reinforces the binary between the institution and its surrounding communities, the boundaries between disciplines within the academy, and the static, hierarchical relationship between mentor and mentee (or between "master" and "apprentice"). Beth, a professor of English, is also the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies (SIGS); Keri is a doctoral candidate in Rhetoric and Composition and Beth's research assistant in SIGS, and Beth also serves as a co-director of Keri's dissertation. From the beginning, Beth and Keri have collaborated on designing and implementing the graduate school's newest professional development program focusing on community-engaged scholarship. Our positions within rhetoric and composition and within SIGS, as well as our feminist perspectives, have helped us imagine the program we describe here. The graduate school at UofL currently offers a professional development program called the **PLAN**, which stands for **P**rofessional development, **L**ife skills, **A**cademic development, and **N**etworking. The PLAN program provides professionalization opportunities for graduate students across a wide range of disciplines and at various stages in their programs, including workshops on refining teaching practices, developing resumes and CVs, delivering conference presentations, and publishing research. Furthermore, PLAN also includes several academies, such as the Graduate Teaching Assistant Academy, the Entrepreneurship Academy, and the Grant Writing Academy. In this piece, we describe our efforts in extending these programs to focus on engaged scholarship—in both physical and digital sites—by developing a year-long Community Engagement Academy (CEA), which encourages collaborations among graduate students, faculty, and community leaders on community projects. In doing so, we heed the multiple calls for reciprocity and crossing disciplinary and institutional boundaries to enrich the community and the scholarship being produced in the academy.

In short, we see the need to build a structure that fosters interdisciplinary and reciprocal relationships in the community. Yet we realize the many institutional challenges we will have to overcome—siloed academic disciplines that resist interdisciplinarity, set perceptions of mentorship that privilege the apprenticeship model, budgetary constraints, among others. We recognize these as threats to

---

ues many of the same ideals put forth by scholars of civic engagement, including critical analysis, self-reflexivity, and active participation to accomplish the social good" (p. 172). In developing our program, we used each of these values to inform the steps we took to ensure that participants receive both theoretical foundations for engaged scholarship and necessary practical information to enact this work.

establishing a sustainable program that can ultimately change current understandings of what graduate students should *learn*, *do,* and *become*. If we wish to see graduate students become stewards of their disciplines and civically-engaged scholars and teachers, we urge the creation of structures and practicable programs from centralized locations that encourage graduate students to cross boundaries between the academy and the public and between disciplines. By describing the development of the University of Louisville's Community Engagement Academy in this chapter, we offer one model for exploring this potential.

PLANNING ARCHITECTURES OF PARTICIPATION

We believe there exists an urgent need in graduate education to be more responsive to both graduate students as future scholars and to the communities that could simultaneously benefit from and enhance these students' research and skills. As Ernest Boyer asserted twenty-five years ago in *Scholarship Reconsidered*, "[F]uture scholars should be asked to think about the usefulness of knowledge, to reflect on the social consequences of their work, and in so doing gain understanding of how their own study relates to the world beyond the campus" (p. 69). At our own university, we recognize that many graduate students who want to be involved in their communities and to extend their learning outside the classroom, lab, or library had no opportunities within their academic programs—or within our own PLAN program—to learn the skills involved in community-engaged research. Thus, heeding Mary P. Sheridan and Jennifer Rowsell's (2010) advice to create "architectures of participation," we have designed our program to reach those students whose academic programs may not encourage or value such research. While Sheridan and Rowsell are primarily focused on digital media literacy practices in their work, we found their theory of creating participation structures useful in considering how "these constructed architectures encourage a variety of participation possibilities for people with diverse motives and abilities" (p. 47). Creating this space for graduate students, we argue, will help them creatively and responsibly explore the potential for engaged scholarship in their academic or non-academic careers after leaving UofL. As Sheridan says (Chapter 11, this collection), "if we believe that doing is central to learning, we need to provide more models of how to enact that doing," and the CEA is one such model.

We draw on many principles that are shared foundational beliefs in feminist research, rhetoric and composition, and community engagement. Some of these core beliefs include *collaboration, reciprocity*, and the discovery of a *common understanding or shared goal* among all involved parties. Royster and Kirsch (2012), for instance, comment on the value of learning to ask questions and to hear a

multitude of voices: "[W]e must learn to ask new and different questions and to find more and better ways to listen to the multidimensional voices that are speaking from within and across many of the lines that might divide us as language users . . ." (p. 4). The lines that we are attempting to blur or break down altogether, those between the academy and local community and between disciplinary units, are deeply rooted in long academic traditions and views on what constitutes scholarship; however, by putting Royster and Kirsch's suggestion into practice, we can start to take steps toward these necessary changes and enable the next generation of scholars to see the benefits of rhetorical listening for their own research and for the greater public good.

Furthermore, these values have strongly influenced our discipline's understanding of community-engaged research, creating a rich theoretical landscape on which to create this particular architecture of participation. For instance, Ellen Cushman's (1996) seminal piece "Rhetorician as Agent of Social Change," which marked the turn to public work as a central disciplinary focus, addresses the need "for a deeper consideration of the civic purpose of our positions in the academy, of what we do with our knowledge, for whom, and by what means" (p. 12). Cushman's focus on how this "civic purpose" relates to the production of knowledge with and for communities is central to the tenets of engagement, including *reciprocity*. Cushman offers these principles of engagement as the primary distinctions between "missionary activism" and "scholarly activism," with the former being activism in service *to* rather than *with* communities (p. 13). Scholarly activism, on the other hand, acknowledges the rich resources and information that community partners already possess and that we can help facilitate (and ultimately *benefit from*) in our collaboration with them. It is this type of scholarly activism that we teach and enact in the Community Engagement Academy.

Throughout the process of designing the CEA, then, we have stressed the importance of *collaboration*, a key component of reciprocity, in a number of ways, including internal collaboration within the graduate school and stakeholders throughout the university and external collaboration with community partners. Our understanding of *collaboration* is similar to Sheridan's metaphor of knot-making in that it is, like *reciprocity*, constantly evolving and being shaped by the shifting needs of the stakeholders involved (or being unknotted and re-knotted). Collaboration is thus necessarily flexible—not a rigid, predetermined relationship defined by a single party. Sheridan and Jacobi (2014) similarly define collaboration as "foster[ing] the conditions by which those with less heard voices can be ratified, reciprocal participants of the partnerships" (p. 142). Here, we have focused on three areas of collaboration that are necessarily more fluid than three neatly-confined sites: 1) across disciplines, between the university's graduate students, faculty, and staff; 2) between students, faculty, and staff and

the local community partners with whom they work; and 3) between mentor and mentee, as our own research and writing about engaged scholarship and co-development of the CEA show. As we demonstrate in the following discussion on collaboration and reciprocity in relationships, the CEA has become an example of the partnerships we hope that students can establish and facilitate on their own as engaged scholars.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration Between Graduate Students, Faculty, and Staff

To put our theories into practice, we invited faculty from a variety of disciplines (history, English, social work, public health and education were all well-represented) who are known for their engaged research to a focus group that also included graduate students interested in learning more about engaged scholarship, and staff members who have some responsibility for community engagement or graduate professional development at our institution. We knew that creating the CEA would be messier and more difficult than the other academies because those relied on experts designing workshops to teach content; the CEA would require that students not only learn content, but that they also have the opportunity to put the content into practice—to learn by doing. Additionally, engaged research is time consuming, and unlike the other academies we offer, it does not necessarily have a discrete end point. Since it often takes several years to establish trust with community groups, we knew that we could not just send students out to find their own community partners; faculty experts would have to provide supervision of some projects and perhaps work with graduate students outside their disciplines on projects that they already had developed. Such faculty labor would have to be compensated (and the graduate school's budget is not very large), while students interested in pursuing a project not clearly connected to their work assignment as a teaching or research assistant might have trouble finding the time to work on a community project, or if the student believed she had time, she might have to persuade a skeptical faculty mentor who does not value such research. At the end of the first focus group session, we had more questions than answers, but the group was excited by the prospect of creating opportunities for graduate students to learn the principles of community-engaged scholarship and agreed to continue working on the project. We had also brainstormed a long list of competencies (downloaded from Michigan State University's community engagement certificate program) that we thought an interdisciplinary group of students should have after completing a CEA.[2] We

---

2   See Michigan State's list of core competencies at http://gradcert.outreach.msu.edu/requirements/competencies.aspx

decided to do a pilot of the content in spring of 2016 in the manner of the more traditional academy, and wait until Fall of 2016 to implement the full CEA, with opportunities for students to actually do engaged research throughout the 2016-17 academic year.

During a second meeting of the focus group a month later, we worked through that list of competencies and developed a rough outline of workshops to be offered in 2016. In brainstorming these workshops, we discussed our desire for graduate student participants to consider both the theoretical and practical sides of engaged scholarship. In regard to the theoretical piece, we wanted to respond to Catherine Orr's call in her 2011 NWSA white paper in which she discusses the importance of developing and using shared language to discuss community-engaged work; she writes:

> The work of coming to terms—literally developing a common language to speak about the importance of civic engagement across disciplines, campus, units, and surrounding communities—is urgently required . . . for more meaningful exchanges about the practice of civic engagement at every level of higher education. (p. 5)

In order to develop a common language as Orr suggests and foster meaningful collaborations among the graduate students involved in our academy, we decided the first spring workshop should focus on foundations and definitions of engaged scholarship; then, the students would have some shared vocabulary to discuss engaged scholarship and their specific projects in the subsequent workshops. As a result of these conversations, we decided on the following sessions for the Spring 2016 pilot: "Community-Engaged Scholarship 101," "Making Relationships that Matter: Initiating and Sustaining Community Partnerships," "Navigating the Logistical Landscape of Engaged Scholarship," "Making it Count: Documenting and Communicating Your Engagement Accomplishments," and "Variations in Community-Engaged Scholarship."

We were comfortable designing the pilot, which looked very much like both the Grant Writing and Entrepreneurship Academies: content delivered in workshops by experts. But we made no progress on the goal of providing students with meaningful experiences applying their knowledge to real world problems. For students who worked in disciplines like social work or public health, where such experiences are already part of their training, or for those students who have internships as part of their graduate experience, there was no problem, but for students who were in the liberal arts or sciences, or even some engineering and education disciplines, who were not being mentored by a faculty member who did engaged research, it was hard to imagine how the CEA could provide them

with a site and the necessary supervision to use their disciplinary knowledge to contribute to a team of engaged researchers. And the question of compensation for faculty and student time—that was still a major barrier. But again, faculty, staff, and students remained committed to the principles of the CEA, and we agreed to meet again at the beginning of the fall semester, which would give Keri and Beth more time to explore some solutions to these issues.

During the summer of 2015, Keri and Beth continued to refine goals for the academy's pilot. The collaborative teams of graduate student researchers could lead to more collaborative research beyond the one-year duration of the CEA. For instance, specifically in regard to publishing, we saw an opportunity for students to learn from one another's researching and writing skills to gain confidence to publish in academic and non-academic sites. This type of collaboration helps aspiring scholars to break free of institutional academic structures that often lead students to read and write in isolation without seeking the expertise and skills of their peers. Writing with one another is grounded in feminist principles related to listening to and acknowledging multiple voices to create knowledge, and importantly, it provides students the support—both emotionally and professionally—to gain experience in these realms of professionalization that often get ignored in traditional graduate seminars. In "Merge/Emerge: Collaboration in Graduate School," Constance Russell, Rachel Plotkin, and Anne Bell (1998) highlight these alluring aspects of graduate student collaboration on research projects. These authors, who were graduate students at the time of this publication, reinforce the importance of the support they get from one another as friends, claiming that "collaboration with friends and colleagues helps us maintain our strength and has provided us a security we often feel lacking as young female academics" (p. 143).[3]

This type of support and the desire to collaborate with other graduate students was a happy by-product of the pilot; while we cannot promise that these interdisciplinary collaborations among graduate students will continue beyond the work with a community partner during the academy, the program nevertheless encourages graduate students to seek others' expertise, knowledge, and skills in the continuation of their studies at UofL and in their prospective academic or non-academic careers. We selected participants (a total of 17) for the Spring 2016 pilot and had a wide range of disciplinary representation, as Table 6.1 shows.

Since the cohort represented nine disciplines, we hoped that the pilot would foster meaningful interdisciplinary relationships among the participants and with the community partner. Students also included several similar reasons for

3   It is also worth noting here that these women come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, and two are doctoral students and one is a Master's student.

wanting to participate in the academy in their applications. For example, several applicants indicated wanting to become better "scholar-activists" or continue their social advocacy work. Others indicated a desire to work with students and faculty from other disciplines and to gain skills that would help them navigate logistics in building and sustaining partnerships. Finally, some saw the academy as an opportunity to strengthen research and administrative skills and enhance current partnerships. The final reflections from the academy's participants show that they had some success in reaching their goals. One student, for instance, explained, "I have benefited the most from the collaboration with other doctoral students in various academic programs. I've gained new insight from their perspectives as they are from a variety of disciplines and draw from a multitude of diverse theories and methodologies."

Table 6.1. Participants by discipline

Discipline	Number of CEA Participants
Pan-African Studies	1
Women's and Gender Studies	1
English—Rhetoric and Composition	7
Sociology	1
Urban and Public Affairs	2
Psychology—Clinical	1
Educational Leadership and Organizational Development	1
Education and Human Development	2
Social Work	1

Collaborations among graduate students within community sites can also offer aspiring engaged scholars the opportunity to define for themselves what Jeff Grabill (2012) calls "the research stance." Grabill defines "research stance" as "a position or a set of beliefs and obligations that shape how one acts as a researcher" or "an identity statement that enables a researcher to process methods and make decisions" (pp. 211 and 215). Such a research stance is crucial for engaged scholars, as community sites are particularly messy for even the most experienced researchers. On this point of messiness, Grabill adds that the research methods that students learn within their home disciplines often do not transfer easily to work with communities (p. 210). In planning and implementing the CEA pilot, we acknowledged that, in working with students outside of their disciplines and with community partners, the CEA participants would have the opportunity to develop and identify their research stance to help them address difficult questions, as Grabill notes, about *who* they are as scholars and as people, *why* they

research, and for *what* purposes (p. 215). In their final assessment of the CEA, students wrote comments like these: "It made me reflect on what I am coming in with regarding attitudes & identity. Then pushed me to explore what my role in community engagement will be"; "I feel more confident in establishing myself as a CE researcher"; "It has made me more committed to doing community engagement as a part of my work." We believe these quotations show that graduate students will be better prepared to make sound methodological choices in their work with communities and gain a better understanding of why they value this work and how it informs their identities as aspiring engaged scholars.

Reciprocity: Forming Relationships with Community Partners

While we did not have partners in mind at the outset, we always knew we would need either a site that would welcome interdisciplinary teams OR faculty who would welcome students from outside their disciplines onto their already established research teams. We also knew from the beginning that we would draw heavily on the community engagement and feminist principle of *reciprocity* in forming relationships with community partners. In designing our academy, we attempted to theorize *reciprocity*, and we borrowed Ellen Cushman's (1996) definition of the term, which states, "Reciprocity includes an open and conscious negotiation of the power structures reproduced during the give-and-take interactions of the people involved on both sides of the relationship. A theory of reciprocity, then, frames this activist agenda with a self-critical, conscious navigation of this intervention" (p. 16). Relying on Cushman's understanding of reciprocity, we focused on ways that we could introduce this theory of reciprocity in one of our opening workshops on foundations and definitions to help UofL graduate students see the necessity of acknowledging "both sides of the relationship" and understanding the importance of carefully listening to and working *with* and *alongside* community members rather than *for* them.

Furthermore, we knew that we wanted the academy to make the behind-the-scenes work visible for graduate students and the many other parties involved. As Sheridan and Jacobi (2014) suggest, this difficult work that happens in the early stages of forming partnerships with community members often remains unseen or under-valued by the institution. They examine "how feminists continue to engage in this profound negotiation, in part by understanding how feminist community engagement is made not simply visible, but also legible, to a range of stakeholders." (p. 138). As Cushman (1996) suggested when she noted the "give-and-take interactions" between both parties, Sheridan and Jacobi highlight the importance of making community-engaged work both "visible" and "legible" to the many stakeholders involved in such projects, including but

not limited to the many members of the community site(s), the faculty and staff, the graduate student researchers, and the administration. Our workshop series identified the key components and competencies of engaged scholarship (described above), including ways to initiate reciprocal relationships with community partners, and through making the beginnings and inner-workings of our collaboration with the Parklands (our eventual partner for the CEA) as visible as possible for all involved parties.

This time, putting our theories into practice required a bit of good fortune. During the summer, Beth was called to a meeting with Ann Larson, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) and Keith Inman, Vice President for Advancement at the University of Louisville to discuss a possible donation that might provide one or two graduate assistantships. A charitable foundation had funded projects in healthcare at the University of Louisville and projects in sustainability at the Parklands, one of the nation's largest donor-supported, non-profit metropolitan parks, with over 4000 acres of protected new parklands in the Floyds Fork watershed; the foundation was now interested in funding a small project that would make partners of the university and the Parklands. Earlier conversations with the foundation, university administration, and the Parklands did not produce a project that the three partners were all interested in pursuing, but they were determined to keep trying. Admittedly, it was serendipitous that Beth was called to this meeting, but the research Keri and Beth had been doing and the work with the focus group allowed Beth to pitch the Community Engagement Academy as a potential partnership project; the Dean of CEHD saw potential for her school and its work with Signature Partnership Schools in STEM education, and the VP for Advancement thought the project might appeal to Dan Jones, the chairman and CEO of the Parklands. A conference call a week later with Dan Jones, Beth, Keith, and Ann began to pave the foundation of the partnership: Dan, who holds a Ph.D. in history but chose to work outside the academy as a business manager, entrepreneur, and social entrepreneur, liked the idea that the academy structure was providing graduate students with opportunities to develop professional skills and to work in the community; the Parklands also has a strong interest in STEM education, sponsoring various field trips and camps for K-12 students and leadership seminars for adults. When he heard that our next academy is likely to be a graduate student leadership academy, he was already volunteering to help in that endeavor as well. So this partnership is truly reciprocal, since the Parklands is not only invested in having some of their needs met by our graduate students, but also in our goal of helping graduate students gain some professional skills.

After another meeting that included a representative with the foundation,

Beth asked to begin bringing Keri to the meetings, since we were working to-gether on developing the CEA. The university group (Beth, Ann, Keith, Keri, and Jessica, a grant writer) met with Dan and his associates at Dan's office in preparation for a September 1 meeting of the original focus group, a meeting that several folks from the Parklands would attend, along with the represen-tative from the charitable foundation, and our own development folks. Keri and Beth also invited some additional faculty who we felt would find the partnership with the Parklands a terrific opportunity: faculty from our new sustainability master's degree program (which is an interdisciplinary program housed in SIGS), from history (who have an interest in the history of place, a corresponding interest of the Parklands), and STEM educators from CEHD. All along, we promised (or warned) that the development of the CEA would be a messy project, since we had to collaborate both with faculty within the institution, the dean and faculty of the CEHD, the community partner, now potentially the Parklands, and a group of interdisciplinary master's and doc-toral graduate students, whose disciplines we could not comfortably predict. But if we could be transparent in the give-and-take negotiations between these various stakeholders, we felt we could construct a partnership that would ben-efit both the university's graduate students and the Parklands, and we hoped that our negotiation with the Parklands could serve as a visible example of how to initiate a productive partnership.

During one of these planning meetings, the Parklands group said they were having trouble seeing the intersection of the workshops and what students might do at the Parklands, and Beth drew a picture, with the CEA in the center and various circles with different potential project teams radiating from those work-shops. This was, interestingly, an important moment in the negotiations, since it showed that the CEA could accommodate many different types of projects, and that students and faculty could identify their own interests, and that some of the team-based topics would be of greater interest to the Parklands than others. One of the Parklands' team members, for instance, was very interested in park safety and design, and that became one of the pods where we expected that Criminal Justice and Urban Planning students could naturally contribute; their director of education at the parks was very focused, as was Ann, on the K-12 environ-mental education pod. We asked what other needs they might have, and there was interest in getting a more diverse population of park users, perhaps through UofL's partnership with schools in economically challenged neighborhoods, and with having the parks help improve health in the community, perhaps through work with both CEHD and Public Health. Keri took Beth's crude drawing and made a handout for our September meeting with the focus group, a handout that helped guide our discussions.

Figure 6.1. Potential Research Areas for CEA Participants.

The group that met in September was large (about thirty faculty, staff, and students, plus folks from the Parklands, our advancement office, and the representative from the foundation), messy (as promised) and excited to learn more about the potential partnership. Faculty and graduate students were pleased to learn that there was a site for our engaged research, even if at first they struggled to imagine potential projects that could use their disciplinary expertise, and the Parklands group was excited by the high level of interest and creativity shown by the students and faculty. All of us were encouraged by the possibility of a grant to help fund stipends for graduate students and faculty, and the Parklands folks made it clear that they had much to offer in the way of professional development and much to gain from our expertise. It was a successful meeting, and when we met after the large meeting with just the folks who would be working on the grant, we all agreed that while the conversations had gotten messier, they had

also gotten richer, and as both the foundation representative and Dan said, there was nothing that was a deal breaker and that in itself was encouraging. We solicited a subgroup from the focus group which included one Parklands member to work on the workshops, and we have a small group that worked on the grant.

Although we are still in the early stages of our partnership, what has encouraged all of us is that we have been transparent about our expectations and needs, what we can offer the partnership, and what we hope to gain from it. Our open negotiations have been modeled on the idea of reciprocity as used by Sheridan and Jacobi (2014), and we have learned that the values of the Parklands overlap significantly with the values of the University of Louisville. Those shared values include respect for people and the environment, a commitment to access and inclusiveness, and responsible stewardship. During the pilot, we showcased our partnership and its establishment during the session on building partnerships; Keri and Beth worked with Dan and Scott to deliver the session, with Keri and Beth focusing on collaboration, reciprocity and mutuality, and Dan and Scott focusing on the pragmatic aspects of developing partnerships as they built their donor-supported nonprofit park system. Students in the pilot also did a formal needs assessment, and we are using that assessment to select specific projects that will be part of the 2016-17 CEA; we want to make sure that we not only meet our graduate students' needs, but also the Parklands'.

COMPLICATING THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP: RESEARCHING AND DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACADEMY

The final site of collaboration we wish to address here is our own collaboration in researching and developing this academy. In 2008, when Beth became associate dean of the graduate school, she negotiated with the dean of Arts and Sciences for a graduate research assistant from English who would teach one class per semester to help make up for the loss of Beth's teaching and who would work ten hours a week with Beth to help her continue researching and writing in rhetoric and composition and about graduate education, and to help her develop the PLAN program. The arrangement continued when Beth became Dean, and Keri entered into the SIGS graduate research assistantship in 2014 with an interest in community engagement efforts in graduate education, which corresponded with Beth's desire to develop a future academy on community engagement. While her dissertation research focuses heavily on historical writing processes, Keri wanted to use her position in SIGS to explore how her research interests intersect with broader issues of writing and identity-formation in the community.

We see our relationship and research process as challenging traditional, rigid models of the mentor/mentee relationship in academia, as it relies on a more

genuine collaboration between both parties. This collaboration is similar to that of the environmental science graduate students in *Common Ground*, who discuss the desire for breaking down traditional academic relationships: "Collaboration also helps us transgress a variety of boundaries that are often maintained in academia, for example, between doctoral/master's student, teacher/student, academic/school teacher, and expert/activist" (1998, p. 150). In our research and development of the Community Engagement Academy, we have collaborated on every step of the process, challenging the binarized model of mentorship that has been, and often still is, the primary model for relationships between graduate students and faculty members/administrators.

Furthermore, in "Mentoring and Women in Academia: Reevaluating the Traditional Model," Christy Chandler (1996) explores mentoring relationships between women in academia. She asks, "What type of mentoring relationship is supportive and productive for women?" (p. 81). In exploring possible answers to this question, Chandler explains that there are two types of mentoring: *career-enhancing* and *psychosocial*. She then determines that the former type often adheres to the traditional academic model of mentor/protege with strict boundaries between the two individuals involved. The *psychosocial* function of mentoring, however, requires that the mentor take on several roles, including those of "role model, counselor, and friend" (p. 81). Not surprisingly, Chandler concludes that the psychosocial function of mentoring is most beneficial to female graduate students as they develop as academics and professionals. While the career-enhancing function is useful in helping graduate students identify and follow a certain path for a career choice, it is very one-directional and fails to encompass the other important aspects of mentoring that more closely follow feminist models of collaboration.[1]

In short, though there is an obvious difference in rank between us, our goals are unified by our shared desire to build structures for the aspiring engaged scholars across disciplines at UofL. The mentorship and collaboration model that we have adopted challenges the strict, traditional model of mentor and protege often practiced in the academy and is predicated on genuine collaboration and mutual care and respect for one another's goals.

CONCLUSION

Each of these relationships is important for our overall goals for the Community Engagement Academy which includes a genuine and reciprocal relationship between UofL and community partners and a renewed focus on graduate education

---

1   Other scholarship on feminist mentorship practices that we drew from here includes: Bona, et al. (1995); Jipson, et al. (2000); Mcguire and Reger (2003).

and its benefits to both individuals and to the community at large. Through these sites of collaboration, we are reimagining graduate education as an ideal space for students to grow and develop into community-engaged scholars who not only see the ways communities serve as research sites, but also recognize that they can use the disciplinary skills acquired in graduate school to "establish the common good," as Boyer called for twenty-five years ago. Furthermore, we aim to create a larger structure that fosters graduate education in community engagement and allows for healthy and sustainable collaborations at the multiple levels we describe above. In doing so, we are responding to concerns raised by Brandt, et al. about laying a foundation for learning through community engagement. They write, "When the groundwork is not laid for reciprocal partnerships prior to students' initial service, the placements often put additional stress on community partners or lead to low levels of student learning and engagement" (p. 15). In creating the Community Engagement Academy, we have worked toward establishing this important groundwork so that current and future graduate students at UofL can more easily see and imagine avenues for engaged scholarship that can ultimately contribute to their scholarly identities and their roles as stewards.

While we see these collaborations as promising and necessary in offering graduate students experience in engaged research, we have tried to be transparent about the hurdles that graduate students may face when making engagement a focus of their scholarship. As Catherine Orr (2011) reminds us, when we encourage students to do engaged scholarship, we must also make sure that students acknowledge the larger systems in which they will be doing this work and the institutional challenges they will face. For instance, students should be aware that not all departments and institutions will value engaged scholarship equally and that it could cause some difficulty for them in the tenure and promotion process. Along these same lines, for graduate students hoping to complete engaged dissertations, they should be reminded of the time that it takes to develop genuine relationships with community partners and that the time and resources available to them in graduate school will likely not be sufficient for developing and maintaining these relationships, unless they have already developed these relationships prior to beginning their graduate work or are working with a faculty mentor who has an established community-based research program.

Acknowledging these hurdles is a vital part of training engaged scholars, but at the same time, we believe the skills learned through engaged scholarship lead to promising careers for graduate students. As noted above, work with communities could steer students toward nonacademic or alternative-academic careers, but we also predict that this work will become increasingly valued in academic institutions, as well, because these graduate students will have a deeper understanding of the range of career options available to graduate students. Right

now, many faculty members focus primarily on the academic job market when mentoring students because that is all they know, yet there are growing numbers of graduate students who want more information on alternative careers, and we see our role as providing such guidance and helping students develop a language to discuss the transferable skills they have acquired in graduate school. The next generation of scholars who have training in community-based research and who have a knowledge-base and set of unique experiences (experiences that we will offer through the CEA) will be more capable of training future graduate students for multiple career tracks.

We addressed the promises and perils of community-engaged scholarship in the CEA pilot and will continue this conversation with the next academy's cohort. We have tweaked the design of the pilot to add more time and opportunity for research projects at the Parklands in the next iteration of the CEA. Unfortunately, we have also learned that the charitable foundation has put a hold on such grants for the foreseeable future, which obviously threatens the sustainability of the partnership with the Parklands. But these challenges demonstrate the messy, chaotic nature of engaged scholarship, and the Parklands has agreed to partner with us for the year. The university has also carved out some resources to support two summer internships for the Parklands. With so many moving parts in designing an interdisciplinary community engagement program, we have realized that it takes *time*, as community-engaged research does, to develop the long-lasting partnerships with people both inside and outside of the university to make this kind of program a sustainable one, and sustainability is one of the shared goals that all parties involved in this endeavor have identified. With every step in planning we make, though, we learn more from our community partners, as they learn from us, and we are optimistic that making all of the behind-the-scenes work visible will encourage others to create opportunities for engaged research for graduate students.

REFERENCES

Boyer, E. L. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 49*(7), 18-33.

Chandler, C. (1996). Mentoring and women in academia: Reevaluating the traditional model. *NWSA Journal, 8*(3), 79-100.

Costa, L. M., & Leong, K. J. (2012). Introduction critical community engagement: Feminist pedagogy meets civic engagement. *Feminist Teacher, 22*(3), 171-180.

Cushman, E. (1996). The rhetorician as an agent of social change. *College Composition and Communication, 47*(1), 7-28.

Day, K., Becerra, V., Ruiz, V. L., & Powe, M. (2012). New ways of learning, knowing, and working: Diversifying graduate student career options through community

engagement. In A. Gilvin, G. M. Roberts, & C. Martin (Eds.), *Collaborative futures: Critical reflections on publicly active graduate education* (163-182). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Gilvin, A. (2012). *Collaborative futures: Critical reflections on publicly active graduate education*. Syracuse, NY: The Graduate School Press.

Grabill, J. T. (2012). Community-based research and the importance of a research stance. In M. Sheridan & L. Nickoson (Eds.), *Writing studies research in practice: Methods and methodologies* (pp. 210-219). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Iverson, S. V. D., & James, J. H. (2014). *Feminist community engagement: Achieving praxis*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

MLA Task Force. (2014). *Report of the MLA task force on doctoral study in modern language and literature*. Retrieved from http://www.mla.org/pdf/taskforcedocstudy2014.pdf

O'Meara, K., & Jaeger, A. J. (2006). Preparing future faculty for community engagement: Barriers, facilitators, models, and recommendations. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 11*(4), 3-26.

Orr, C. M. (2011). Women's studies as civic engagement: Research and recommendations. The Teagle Working Group on Women's Studies and Civic Engagement and the National Women's Studies Association. Retrieved from http://www.nwsa.org/research

Royster, J. J., & Kirsch, G. (2012). *Feminist rhetorical practices: New horizons for rhetoric, composition, and literacy studies*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Russell, C., Plotkin, R., & Bell, A. (1998). Merge/emerge: Collaboration in graduate school. In E. G. Peck (Ed.), *Common ground: Feminist collaboration in the academy* (pp. 141-153). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Sheridan, M. P. (2010). *Design literacies: Learning and innovation in the digital age*. London, England: Routledge.

Sheridan, M. P., & Jacobi, T. (2014). Review essay critical feminist practice and campus-community partnerships: A review essay. *Feminist Teacher, 24*(1-2), 138-150.