

This Is Why We Do It: Faculty Motivations for Embracing Community-Engaged Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education are increasingly highlighting community engagement activities to make the benefits of higher education more visible. The most transformational community engagement is linked to curriculum, so it is faculty who must incorporate community-engaged pedagogy. This content analysis of faculty narratives about community engagement reveals motivations for faculty to engage in this work. These findings connect to social capital theory and suggest a new direction for faculty development efforts to promote community engagement.

Keywords: service learning, faculty rewards, community-engaged teaching, student success, social capital

As the political climate continues to cast a critical eye on the cost and the purpose of institutions of higher education (Alonso, 2023; Koekkoek et al., 2021; Marginson et al., 2023; Saltmarsh & Johnson, 2020), many universities are reevaluating their mission statements and goals and moving toward a stronger commitment to working with the community (O'Brien et al., 2021; Pruitt, 2022; Chittum et al., 2022; Groulx, 2021; Polster, 2023; The Community Research Collaborative, 2021).

Since 2004, Sam Houston State University, a regional, public institution, has made a more concerted effort to highlight its commitment to working with the community

on societal needs. This work began officially by a small group of multidisciplinary faculty who focused on community engagement through academic course work. We designated those courses as “Academic Community Engagement” or ACE courses. In 2012, the provost created a Center for Community Engagement (CCE) tasked with helping to support faculty in the creation and development of ACE courses. Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2019, approximately 400 courses were taught each year. During and after the pandemic, however, there was a significant downturn in ACE courses.

In 2021, our administration called us to rebuild academic community engagement at our institution after the pandemic decimated the number of courses using this pedagogy. We considered what kinds of development would bring faculty back, recruit new faculty, and sustain a commitment to academic community engagement over time. To develop strategies, we needed to understand what motivates our faculty to begin and continue to teach community-engaged courses. Thus, our review of the literature explored what motivates faculty to adopt community-engaged pedagogy in general, how these motivations intersect with individual characteristics, and if they differ for faculty who persist with teaching community-engaged courses.

LITERATURE ON FACULTY MOTIVATION

The efficacy of community-engaged courses has been well established (Chittum et al., 2022; Buch & Harden, 2011; McDaniel & Van Jura, 2020; Painter & Howell, 2020). They offer significant value for student learning and contribute to the public good (Welch & Plaxton-Moore, 2019). The broad motivations for faculty to adopt community-engaged pedagogy most identified in the literature include the impact on student learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Abes et al., 2002; O'Meara, 2008; O'Meara, 2013; Cooper 2014), personal values of social issues (O'Meara, 2013; Hou & Wilder, 2015; Richard et al., 2022), and positive contributions to the community (O'Meara 2013; Cooper 2014).

While Bandura's (1997) model and Darby and Newman's (2014) revision of it treated motivation as a single concept, Ryan and Deci (2000) argued in self-determination theory that there are different types of motivation and that those types help predict our life outcomes. They noted that autonomous motivation is when individuals

make choices based on their sense of agency, whereas controlled motivation is based on external pressures. Both types of motivation can impact the way that faculty choose to be or not be part of community-engaged learning projects. Wade and Demb (2009) presented their Faculty Engagement Model (FEM), which listed the factors that influence a faculty member's decision to be engaged in community work. The factors fall within the following categories: Institutional, personal, faculty, and professional. Their work adds the institutional dimension into consideration when exploring faculty motivation.

Abes et al. (2002) determined gender, academic discipline, and faculty rank as three statistically significant variables in faculty decisions to use community engagement in their classrooms. Since then, studies have continued to find that women trend toward using community-engaged pedagogy in the classroom (Wade & Demb, 2009; O'Meara, 2013; Garvin & Acosta, 2022). The move in higher education away from full-time tenure-track positions has potential implications for understanding faculty motivations for community engagement. O'Meara (2013) pointed to few studies that found appointment type as a motivating factor, particularly for non-tenure-track faculty. However, they recommended a deeper exploration of rank as an area for future research to expand the existing literature. Over half of the faculty in O'Meara's (2008) narrative analysis of faculty nominations for a national community-engaged teaching award identified the efficacy of community-engaged teaching in facilitating student learning and development within their academic disciplines as a motivator for this type of work. Richard et al. (2022) found the tendency for faculty from disciplines with a "tradition of service learning" to persist with teaching community-engaged courses (p. 13). Most notably, community engagement has been integral to teacher education (Root & Furco, 2001) and nursing education programs (O'Shea et al., 2013) in the United States for

decades. In engagement-minded disciplines, robust support structures exist for faculty to adopt the approach (O'Meara et al., 2011).

Additionally, many institutions have service and engagement built into the foundation of their identity (Koekkoek et al., 2021). In their review of community-engaged teaching award nomination packets, O'Meara (2008) found that half of the nominees identified their institution's mission and reputation for community engagement as a motivator. Faculty at land grant institutions where a culture of engagement is at the core of the institutional identity connected with this motivating factor (O'Meara, 2013).

Conversely, Gelmon et al. (2013) argued that some community-engaged work is under-valued in academia, particularly during the tenure and promotion processes. It can often be seen as simply service work (O'Meara, 2013). Banerjee and Hausafus (2007) also noted a lack of institutional support as a frequent barrier that holds faculty members back from this type of work. Similarly, Holland (2016) noted many obstacles to working on community engagement, including reservations about the legitimacy of community-engaged research, limited funding, and confusion about definitions. Berkey et al. (2018) noted that the "...faculty perceptions of factors such as the benefits, challenges, barriers, and supports to integrating community-engaged scholarship (CES) are crucial indicators of whether faculty initiate, maintain, and/or advance CES practices" (p.39). So, if community-engaged work is largely undervalued by many institutions (O'Meara et al., 2011), why would faculty continue to do it?

Prior research, particularly quantitative surveys, has asked faculty who are actively teaching community-engaged courses (on some campuses these are referred to as service-learning, or SL, courses) to consider barriers and deterrents to future use of this approach (Abes et al., 2002; Hou & Wilder, 2015; Garvin & Acosta Lewis, 2022).

Hou and Wilder (2015) surveyed 1,200 faculty at high research activity institutions, noting that their "data clearly showed that although recognition of SL work was not even among the top three most important motivators for adoption of SL pedagogy, among SL faculty members, it was indeed one of the most significant barriers identified for continuing the work with positive morale" (p. 4).

However, there is limited research that directly explores faculty who have continued use of community-engaged pedagogy (O'Meara, 2013). In their qualitative study with a faculty cohort 10 years after participating in a faculty learning community, Cooper (2014) found nearly all participants identified "the opportunity to get other faculty involved in the 'excitement' around learning" (p. 423) as a reason they persisted with the approach. Cooper's finding that experienced, community-engaged faculty appreciated the opportunities the pedagogy offered them to work with colleagues seems to indicate a possible connection to social capital theory. Social capital refers to "the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 248). Shortly after Bourdieu introduced the concept, Coleman (1988) noted its potential benefits to skill acquisition and training. Social capital scholars have identified three types of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking. Bonding social capital refers to resources (actual or potential) that may accrue from close social ties, for example to family members or close friends, whereas bridging social capital refers to social ties that span social groups (Gittell & Videl, 1998; Putnam, 2000). Linking social capital refers to more indirect relationships that connect people across hierarchies giving ordinary people access to people who can control resources (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Aldrich, 2012). As we considered how to shape faculty development opportunities in

community-engaged pedagogy, we realized that to encourage faculty to adopt the pedagogy AND keep using it over time, our curriculum should be informed by a discussion of social capital as well as intentional efforts to build it among cohorts of community-engaged faculty.

Our review of the literature began with faculty motivations to use community-engaged pedagogy in general. We explored how these motivations have been understood through the lenses of various characteristics, including gender, academic discipline, and faculty rank. In doing so, the following question remained: What motivates faculty who persist with teaching academic community engagement at our institution? This study analyzes community-engaged faculty narratives to see what factors motivated them to do community engagement. Results and implications for faculty, academic support units, and universities will be discussed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

One way our institution encourages community-engaged teaching is by showing it is valued. To do this, the university established a university-level award for excellence in community engagement. In 2011, to visibly recognize the faculty teaching ACE courses and forming meaningful partnerships with communities, the university president at the time established a fourth University Excellence Award: The Excellence in Academic Community Engagement Award, which has been awarded every year since 2012. Each fall, there is a call for nominations for the award. Nominees must be full-time faculty (but do not have to be tenured/tenure track), they must have been employed by the institution as full-time faculty for at least five years, and have consistently taught at least one ACE course. The eligible nominees are then invited to submit an application and supporting documentation for consideration

by a committee who rank and select the year's award recipient. The application includes open-ended questions that prompt the nominee to describe the impact of their community engagement work on students, community partners, and the college/university (see Appendix).

There is extant literature on faculty motivations to adopt community-engaged pedagogy using surveys (Abes et al., 2002; Hou & Wilder, 2015; Garvin & Acosta, 2022) and interviews (Cooper, 2014; Darby & Newman, 2014; Richard et al., 2022) as research methods. Although less common, narrative analysis is another research method that can produce important insights about faculty motivations to adopt community-engaged pedagogy (O'Meara, 2013). Because Excellence in Academic Community Engagement Award nominees demonstrated a commendable commitment to the pedagogy, they constituted an excellent population sample at our institution to inform our study on understanding faculty motivation to begin and continue to work with community. Our study used archived applications (N=36) for the Excellence in Academic Community Engagement Award from 2015 through 2021 to conduct a narrative analysis of personal documents (Merriam, 1998), as has been employed in prior research (O'Meara, 2008). This study was exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) because this research involved the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, etc., and the participants are not identified. The dataset included 36 applications, nine (25%) of which were male and 27 (75%) of which were female faculty. The first three years of the award employed a different application process and were therefore not included in our study.

Each reviewer on the six-person research team was assigned at least one year's worth of applications to review. In this initial round of coding, each reviewer read the applications, tagged, and excerpted any language that seemed to reference motivation

to incorporate academic community engagement into teaching or scholarship. For each excerpt, the reviewer assigned a descriptive code.

The six reviewers then met as a group to discuss the codes. There was remarkable similarity among descriptions the reviewers had developed independently. The descriptions that met with consensus formed the basis of our initial collective list of codes. Individual reviewers then reread their own excerpts from the applications to confirm or revise the coding based on this initial collective list of codes.

Next, the six reviewers formed dyads and each couple reviewed their partner's excerpts and re-coded these excerpts independently. Each dyad met and any differences in the coding were discussed to achieve consensus on the codes. The dyads then reported out to the full group to discuss results. Although there was significant inter-rater reliability at this stage, we realized that each researcher may have made unique selections about which excerpts to analyze. As a result, the dyads returned to the original applications their partner coded and selected excerpts independently. After comparing excerpts, each reviewer coded any excerpts that were not selected and coded by the first reviewer.

The six-person research team comprised five faculty from five different academic colleges and one staff member, so the team had varied levels of familiarity with and disciplinary approaches to qualitative analysis and coding. We decided to engage in the process of coding data manually, because it allowed us to meet both in dyad sub-groups and in the general group sessions to develop a common, shared understanding of the process and interact together, which was especially valuable given that we were coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the overall corpus of data collected and produced with subsequent initial coding required further management; at that stage we selected QDA

Miner (Provalis, 2015), a qualitative data analysis software that facilitated large volume document integration and inputting of demographic variables, department variables, and a tenure-track/non-tenure-track variable.

After the award application packets were input into QDA Miner, we were able to annotate and codify all merged documents with codes into thematic categories that occurred in a hybrid model of a priori and a posteriori coding (Charmaz, 2006). The a priori codes were supra-categories based on the model developed by McKay and Rozee (2004) and a posteriori codes were categories identified within these supra nodes. We applied comprehensive constant comparison analysis to cross-evaluate similarities and differences in dyad coding (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980). The classical content analysis process was thus iterative and coordinated among research team members to ensure saturation and inter-rater reliability (Merriam, 1998). A posteriori analysis involved identification and categorization of codes following summative data-driven analysis and allowed us to split codes, rename codes, merge codes, and subcategorize codes, all of which are effective means of ensuring consistency and integrity when managing a robust corpus of qualitative data. We then assessed the coded segments for frequency, salience, distribution, and commonality.

RESULTS

The most prominent themes for faculty motivation (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; McKay & Rozee, 2004; Wade & Demb, 2009; O'Meara, 2013) informed our study: (1) student-centered factors, (2) faculty-centered factors, and (3) community-centered factors. However, preliminary data suggested the inclusion of an additional component, namely institution-centered factors (Wade & Demb, 2009), which became our fourth evaluation criterion.

Our analysis of 36 nomination packets revealed 27 codes, 11 in the student-centered dimension, 10 in the faculty-centered dimension, and three each under community-centered and institution-centered dimensions. Student-centered factors account for the largest focus among all themes identified in the study, with *student learning career related experience* specifically accounting for 11.2% of overall themes and occurring in 32 of the 36 cases (i.e., 88.9%). The theme *student learning real world experience* ranked second in the student-centered category, accounting for 8.2% of overall themes, and it was recorded in 30 of the 36 cases (i.e., 83.3%) followed by equal endorsement of *student learning/developing new skills* (5.9%) in 77.8% of the cases and *student learning citizenship/social responsibility* (5.9%) noted in 63.9% of the cases. Other themes identified in this category underscored faculty motivations stemming from *student learning being more transformational*, *student learning cultural competence*, and *student learning compassion, caring, and empathy*.

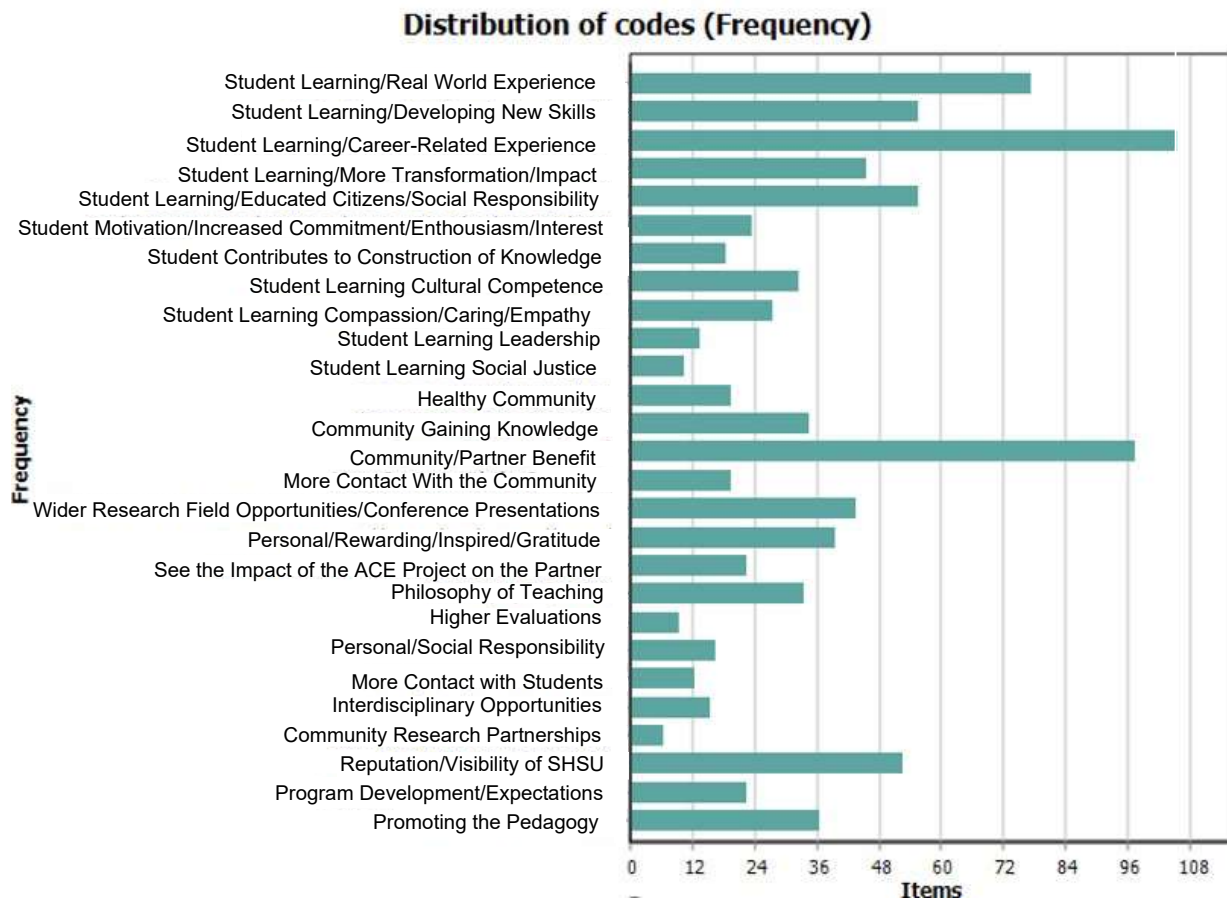
Under community-centered factors, faculty endorsed a general theme of *community/partner benefit* as most focal and accounting for 10.4% of themes and evidenced across 29 of the 36 cases (i.e., 80.6%). Overall, this theme was the second most valued by educators after the student-centered theme of *student learning career related experience*. *Community gaining knowledge* was reported as second most salient theme under the community-centered dimension (it was discussed in 41.7% of cases).

When assessing benefits of community-engaged pedagogy to themselves, educators in this study offered a variety of themes, of which the three most prevalent were, *benefit of widening field research/conference opportunities* (4.6% of codes within 55.6% of cases), *personal gratification, inspiration, and rewards* (4.2% of themes across 52.6% of cases), and *philosophy of teaching* (3.5% of overall themes in 61.1% of cases).

Finally, under institutional factors, faculty reported being motivated by *reputation and visibility of the institution* in 69.4% of cases with *institutional opportunities in promoting of the pedagogy* ranking second (3.9% of the overall themes across 61.1% of the cases). Nearly half of the faculty expressed being motivated by their engaged pedagogy leading to enhanced *programmatic development and expectations* related to community-engaged teaching at the institution.

A visual representation of frequencies under different themes revealed in our study and illustrated by Figure 1 demonstrates that the student-centered focus appeared the most salient to the sample of educators in our study. However, overall benefits to community were also central along with selected motivations stemming from institutional benefits. Clearly, there was less focus on faculty-derived benefits. The results help direct our future efforts on working with advising centers and career services to encourage students to enroll in ACE courses.

Figure 1
Frequency and Distribution of Codes: QDA



Faculty Rank

Our sample consisted of 14 clinical (38.9%) and 22 (61.1%) of tenure-track educators. The results of assessing whether faculty motivations along the four domains differed based on their status in academia (tenure-track versus clinical faculty) point to several interesting findings. First, while *student learning real world experience* was valued more by the clinical faculty, *student learning/developing new skills* was more salient to tenure-track faculty. Also, in the student-centered category, *student learning social/civic responsibility* appears to be more focal to clinical faculty. In tandem, *student learning compassion, caring, and empathy*

was discussed more by clinical versus tenure-track faculty. Conversely, institutional *promoting of the pedagogy* was more valued by tenure-track versus clinical faculty. Another difference in the institutional domain points to tenure-track faculty being more motivated by *reputation and visibility of the institution* because of community-engaged pedagogy than clinical faculty. There appears to be a difference between groups with respect to *widening research/field opportunities and conferences*. Whereas in general, this was the most frequently identified motivator in faculty-centered domain overall, it was more prominent as a theme by tenure-track faculty in our sample. However, clinical faculty

attached more value to *community gaining knowledge* than did tenure-track faculty. Our results point to the need for a more nuanced approach in recruitment of new ACE faculty. Clearly, as there are different foci of clinical versus tenure-track faculty, we could facilitate better training for those two groups of educators with attending to their specific motivations. For example, the Center for Community Engagement might consider enhancing conference opportunities for tenure-track faculty; in tandem, non-tenure-track faculty could benefit more from workshops on building students' civic responsibility and compassion, which is more central and salient to them.

Academic Disciplines

An analysis of differences based on specific academic disciplines in which our educators worked provided insights into possible nuances in what motivated them based on the field of study. Within the community-centered motivation domain, there was strong uniformity across all academic departments represented in our study on community-engaged learning being a valuable motivator in the overall *community/partner benefit* theme. However, in selected departments of Kinesiology and Educational Leadership, the *community gaining knowledge* theme was not endorsed. Faculty in the departments of Nursing and Educational Leadership specifically evidenced higher interest in benefits to *healthy community* than did faculty in other departments.

When examining the faculty-centered dimension, certain departments such as Marketing reported benefiting from *more contact with the community*, while many other departments did not discuss this theme. Similarly, *community research partnerships* tended to be favored most in Population Health, School of Teaching and Learning, and Victim Studies departments. The philosophy of teaching, while important across all the departments, is particularly highly valued by

Nursing, Computer Science, Music, and Communication departments. Significantly, *interdisciplinary opportunities* are most valuable to the Educational Leadership department. *Seeing impact on community partner* resonated the most within departments of Communication and the School of Teaching and Learning.

Under the student-centered dimension, Educational Leadership was the only department whose faculty did not discuss *student learning real world experience* in their nominations; however, both *student learning/developing new skills* and *student learning career related experience* were valued very highly in that department. It is not surprising that *student learning career related experience* was a theme endorsed most by the Nursing department faculty. *Student learning social justice* was noted as important in less than half of the departments and the most in Communication; it was in Communication as well that *student learning cultural competence* was highlighted the most. The department of Biosciences faculty focused on two student-centered categories only, namely *student learning real world experience* and *student learning, developing new skills*.

Under the institution-centered dimension, a few differences were notable. First, for faculty in departments of English and Computer Science, *promoting of the pedagogy* was the only and most prevalent institutional benefit within this area. The Educational Leadership department highly valued *promoting of the pedagogy* as well. For most departments (13 out of 16), *reputation and visibility of the institution*, because of their community-engaged pedagogy, remained a highly valued motivating factor. Slightly less faculty, although still a majority across all departments (9 out of 16), recognized the importance of their engaged pedagogy to furthering *program development and expectations*.

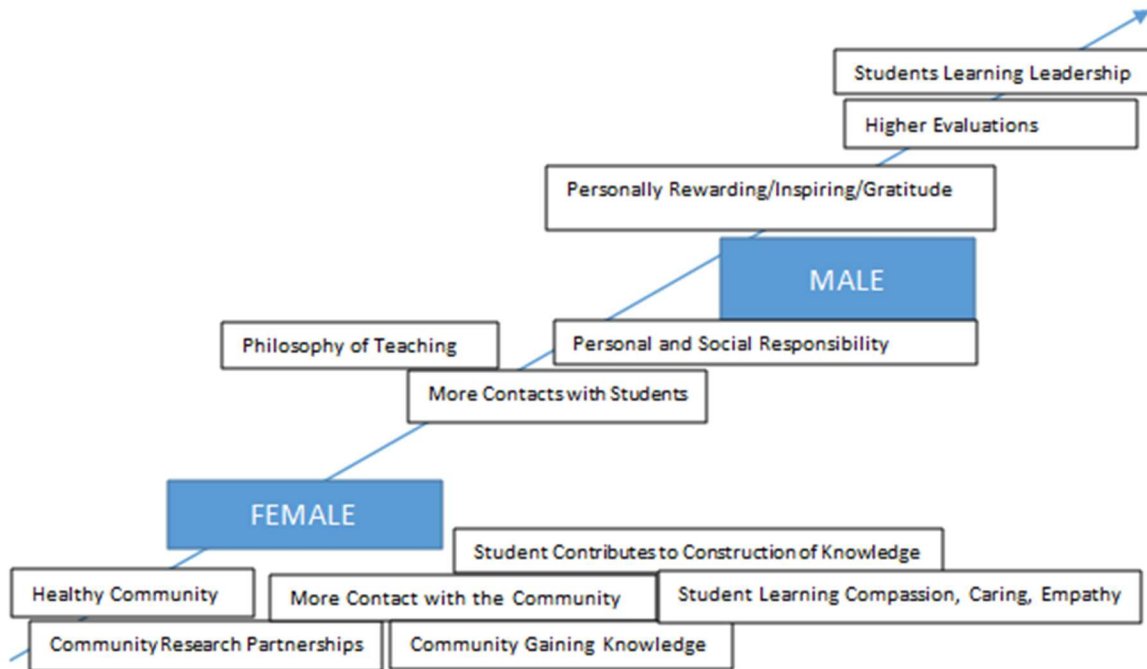
Gender

With respect to gender differences, our data suggested that some general inferences could also be drawn. The correspondence analysis graph (Figure 2) suggested that whereas males tended to focus on faculty-centered dimension themes (i.e., *higher evaluations, personal and social responsibility, more contact with students*) and a student-centered theme (*student learning leadership*), females favored community-centered themes

(i.e., *healthy community, community gaining knowledge*) and faculty-centered benefits (i.e., *more contact with the community, community research partnerships*) as well as student-centered benefits (i.e., *students contribute to the construction of knowledge, students learning compassion, caring, and empathy*). There did not seem to be gender differences in value attributed to institution-centered benefits.

Figure 2

Correspondence Plot Showing Convergence (Middle of Graph) of Themes and Divergence (Outer Boundaries of Graph) of Themes by Faculty Gender. Adapted from QDA Miner Output



Finally, when assessing associations and co-occurrence of themes, we observed that among the themes coupled with the community-centered dimension, the strongest associations occurred for the themes associated with the benefits to the institution (i.e., *reputation and visibility of the institution and promoting the pedagogy*) as well as with the benefits to the student (i.e., *student learning real world experience, student*

learning career related experience, student learning/developing new skills, student learning more transformational/more impact). Among the associations between the community-centered dimension and benefits to faculty, two themes (i.e., *seeing the impact of the ACE project on the partner and personally rewarding, inspiring, gratitude*) were the strongest. However, educators in our sample were clearly more motivated by

student and institutional benefits of community-engaged teaching combined than they were by what the community-engaged pedagogy brought to them as far as their own benefits specifically.

DISCUSSION

This study confirmed the main motivations for community-engaged teaching found in the literature to be benefits to student learning and positive impacts on community partners. Although our most expert community-engaged faculty did mention benefits of this work to their faculty careers like recognition, links to scholarly activity, and publications, these were cited much less frequently. In fact, even a major university-level award does not appear as a primary motivation for faculty to teach ACE courses.

Some disciplinary differences in faculty motivations were revealed. For example, it was a natural response for nursing faculty to focus on the benefits of healthy communities. Similarly, we would expect education faculty to give weight to ways this pedagogy furthered student learning. However, it was clear from instructor responses across ALL disciplines that the most important focus for the majority of the responses was that ACE pedagogy helped students with learning outcomes. The student benefits for using community engagement in the classroom were undeniable and corroborated by the findings above.

Much of what the faculty valued were the clear benefits for the students: real world experiences, career experience, and increased motivation for the students. These findings were similar to those of Ismayilova and Klassen (2019), who found that faculty were also inspired by their students' motivation, among others (Abes et al., 2002; McKay & Rozee, 2004; Darby & Newman, 2014; Richard et al., 2022).

We also explored an additional category of motivation focused on ways

community engagement might benefit the institution as a whole by enhancing the institution's reputation and visibility. Since 2010, Sam Houston State University has held the Carnegie Foundation's elective classification as a community-engaged campus, and the institution's leadership has placed more value on ACE pedagogy and community-engaged scholarship. Increasingly, top-level administrators have cited community engagement as a priority and a point of pride for the institution. In fact, the current strategic planning process has incorporated community engagement in ways that make it more prominent than ever before. Given the current institutional trajectory, perhaps it was not surprising that faculty reported furthering the institutional mission of community engagement as a motivating factor to teaching ACE courses.

The findings lead us to believe that we could adjust our approaches to faculty development to better prepare and motivate adoption of this pedagogy. Our study suggests we could design workshops emphasizing the creation of a community engagement academic or faculty learning community. Activities in the workshops and in subsequent events should emphasize interaction and relationship building. The focus of this form of faculty development would be to build bonding social capital by creating a group identity of "engaged scholars," complete with visible signs of their participation in this community. This network of academics can then provide guidance, partnership, and moral support to one another.

Bridging social capital refers to relationships across social groups. Examples of these relationships are acquaintances and co-workers (Putnam, 2000). When thinking about community engagement faculty development, bridging social capital is built as academics create and sustain partnerships with community organizations over time. It can also be seen in the development of interdisciplinary community engagement

projects that incorporate faculty, students, and staff across disciplinary boundaries with community partners. These types of networks bring groups together and therefore give participants more diversified access to a wider range of both formal and informal resources.

Linking social capital refers to connections that provide communities access to entities with decision-making power over resources. For the purposes of community engagement, linking social capital is seen when university-community partnerships can link community groups to resources through access to funding and higher education administration's ties to prominent people, businesses, and even elected officials (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Aldrich, 2012).

The evaluation of the community engagement award applications confirmed the main faculty motivations to do this work found in the literature: positive gains in student learning and positive impact on community. However, we also found that the impact on the institution was a consideration of these faculty with years of experience in community engagement pedagogy. Like Richard et al. (2022) discussed, we also note that faculty just beginning to teach community-engaged courses may have very different reasons to begin the work and very experienced faculty may have alternate or additional motivations for continuing the work.

However, Demir (2021) provides evidence from a review of multiple studies that building and reinforcing social capital among teachers may help in both initiating new teachers and job satisfaction and teacher retention. Social capital of teachers may also positively impact student learning, the primary motivation for faculty to adopt community engagement pedagogy (Demir, 2021, p. 6).

STUDY LIMITATIONS

While we feel this study provided insights into the range of faculty motivations to teach ACE courses, it was not without

limitations. First, this study focused on a small group of the most experienced and most successful faculty who had adopted this pedagogy. It may be that their motivations differed from other faculty members who teach ACE courses. Second, our sample represented the motivations of faculty from one university. Our campus may attract faculty whose motivations differed from faculty on other campuses. This could be particularly true for faculty at universities that differ significantly in size, were private versus public, or were Research 1 institutions. Third, our sample of faculty did not represent all academic disciplines. It was possible that faculty motivation to teach ACE courses varied across disciplines. Fourth, we analyzed applications for the university's Excellence in Academic Community Engagement Award. In doing so, we realized that the application questions and format could have guided the applicants' responses toward descriptions of some motivations more than others. It is possible that the lack of references to faculty-centered motivations like *higher evaluations* could be linked to the approach to writing a personal nomination (O'Meara, 2008, 2013). As O'Meara (2013) explained, "An advantage of this approach is that the participants had often thought deeply about their motivations and interests in community engagement in crafting the materials that served as data sources" (p. 231). However, findings from narrative sources like award nomination packets must consider the possible limitation that the nominees purposefully curate their materials to present themselves favorably before award committee reviewers (O'Meara, 2008).

NEXT STEPS

These results will inform the Center for Community Engagement's efforts to work with faculty to provide more effective training, encouragement, and support that sustains faculty engagement over time. One way to

strengthen support to faculty would be to offer targeted workshops to help faculty realize the greatest benefits from community-engaged teaching. Highlights could include ways in which community-engaged teaching furthers student learning linked to career readiness and provides real world experience and marketable skills. Our training curriculum would also be strengthened by bringing in community partners to explain the benefits they potentially gain from partnerships with community-engaged courses. Additionally, we can help faculty meet the demands of promotion and tenure by integrating community engagement in both teaching and scholarship. This can be done by creating small interdisciplinary faculty cohorts whose members will then be able to offer peer-led workshops within their home disciplines building social capital (community!) around community engagement.

While these findings provide insight into the motivations of faculty who were nominated for this prestigious award, it is limited in application. A small sample at one institution cannot supply generalizable findings; however, it has confirmed motivations found in the literature and suggested an approach to strengthen faculty development around this pedagogy. Building on Watt and Richardson's (2020) work on faculty motivation indicating that social factors may help us understand faculty resilience, we are becoming more intentional in incorporating social capital theory into training curriculum. Our next steps will be to assess its impacts on the adoption and persistence of community-engaged pedagogy on our campus. Once we have assessed faculty development approaches that work to build a faculty community, informed by social capital theory, we then plan to partner with other institutions to do a comparative study across institutions of higher education.

CONCLUSIONS

Community-engaged teaching seems to be motivated largely by the desire to provide relevant, real-life learning experiences to students. The faculty who are most experienced in teaching academic community engagement courses on our campus consistently point to the value of this pedagogy to furthering student learning. Their primary motivation for teaching ACE courses is to provide THE most effective learning experiences possible for their students. This is the real value of education. As the faculty further explained their motivations, they also cited the mutual benefits of the pedagogy to their community partners. As a result, this study finds that ACE courses support the deeper mission of higher education. Universities that offer academic community engagement courses demonstrate the worth and value of higher education at a time when universities are under increased public scrutiny.

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APPENDIX

Excellence in Academic Community Engagement Application Questions

The following list includes the application questions for the Excellence in Academic Community Engagement Award:

- Explain the link between the ACE experience and your course objectives.
- Provide evidence of positive impact of ACE coursework on SHSU students (e.g., reflections, comments, survey results, teaching evaluations).
- Provide evidence of positive impact of ACE coursework on community partner(s).
- Provide evidence of positive impact of ACE coursework on the university (e.g., internships, endowments, donations, scholarships, visibility/publicity).

- Provide evidence of collaboration with community partner(s).
- Provide evidence of scholarly activity (e.g., research, publications, grants, presentations at local, state, national, or international conferences/meetings) related to ACE activities (if applicable).
- Provide evidence of the integration of Teaching, Scholarly Activity, and Service (if applicable).

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